

Centre for Tourism Research, University of Canberra

Statement of Capability

Background

The Centre for Tourism Research, based at the University of Canberra provides tourism and strategic planning consultancy services to both industry and government. The rapid growth of the tourism industry in the past two decades has focused attention on the need to plan for the sustainable development of industry in order to maximise its economic, environmental and social benefits.

Among other projects, Centre for Tourism Research consultants and research staff have worked on projects and consultancies focussed on:

- Strategic destination planning;
- Development of tourism Master Plans and implementation strategies;
- Nature based tourism;
- Educational tourism;
- Tourism education and training;
- Sectoral and product development strategies;
- Visitor satisfaction studies;
- Rural and regional tourism development;
- Evaluation of destination marketing campaigns;
- Festival evaluation and analysis;
- Event management, evaluation and analysis;
- Sport generated tourism;
- Wine and culinary tourism;
- Wine industry development and marketing; and
- The impacts of the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Recent research and tourism development projects and consultancies undertaken by the Centre for Tourism Research include:

- Tourism and Hospitality Skills ACT and Region 2006
- Brumbies Rugby Management 2006-2006
- National Capital Educational Tourism Project 2001-2006;
- Australian's Perceptions of the National Capital Project 2006;
- Casino Canberra Market Evaluation 2005-2006;
- Champions Trophy International Womens Hockey Tournament Evaluation 2005;
- Canberra Marathon Event Evaluation 2005;
- Brindabella Challenge Event Evaluation 2005;
- Economic Impact of Science Centres 2004;
- National Capital Exhibition Research Project 2004;
- Questacon Evaluation Project 2004;
- Floriade Event Evaluation 2003;
- An Event Evaluation of Subaru Rally of Canberra 2003;
- Exporting Sport: Developing a Sports Tourism Strategy for the ACT 2003;
- An event evaluation of Celebrate Christmas in the Capital 2002;
- Evaluation of the National Gallery's Italians Exhibition 2002;
- Questacon Research Reports 2002;

- Tidbinbilla Market Segmentation Study 2000;

Other Centre for Tourism Research consultancies and tourism development projects have also included

- A study of the economic value of the Australian Alps National Parks undertaken with the Australian Alps Liaison Committee;
- Visitor management and evaluation studies for Sapphire Coast Tourism, Tourism Snowy Mountains and Kosciusko Thredbo Pty Ltd;
- Short break behaviour of potential source markets for the Snowy Mountains and Sapphire Coast regions;
- Economic and market evaluation of a number of other major events, such as the National Multicultural Festival and major motor sport events (such as the FAI Rally of Canberra, GMC400 V8 Supercar Race);
- The economic impact of a proposed motor sport dragway in the ACT;
- The development of wine and culinary tourism strategies for the Canberra District Wine Industry Advisory Group (CDWIAG);
- Assessment and analysis of marketing campaigns and activities for the National Capital Authority;
- Development of a disability tourism strategy for the Snowy Mountains Region;
- Assessment of the statistics and information needs of the attractions sector for the National Capital Authority; and
- Evaluation of the tourism and economic impact of major cultural exhibitions.

The Centre is highly recognised nationally and internationally through its research record and the publication of books, book chapters and articles in leading journals.

Importantly, as a partner member of the Sustainable Tourism CRC, the Centre for Tourism Research is also able to access a national network of data and expertise. As such the Centre for Tourism Research is able to value-add to project outcomes with highly developed strategic input.

The Centre also has strong links with a number of tourism industry organisations, including:

- Tourism Industry Council, ACT & Region (TIC);
- Australian Capital Tourism Corporation (ACTC);
- The Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC);
- Sport and Tourism Division of the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism, and Resources;
- Canberra Convention Bureau (CCB);
- the National Capital Attractions Association (NCAA);
- Environment ACT;
- the National Capital Authority (NCA); and
- a range of regional tourism industry organisations such as Tourism Snowy Mountains and Sapphire Coast Tourism.

In conjunction with the Centre for Tourism Research's association with the Sustainable Tourism CRC, these links provide effective direct communication channels and forums which ensures that the Centre's research outputs deliver strategic and relevant outcomes to our clients. This means that the products we deliver are underpinned by

rigorous conceptualisation, project development and analysis, supported by an effective understanding of business, and policy development – thereby ensuring clients not only innovation, but also reliability and validity. Indeed, the Centre for Tourism Research is very focussed on delivering both tactical and strategic client outcomes in all consultancies undertaken.

Key Areas of Expertise of the Centre for Tourism Research

Strategic Destination Planning, Management and Marketing

The Centre for Tourism Research has extensive and demonstrated capability in developing destination development and management strategies, tourism 'master plans' as well as sector and product development strategies. As noted briefly above, the Centre for Tourism Research has recently successfully undertaken the development of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Tourism Master Plan, 2001-2005.

This Master Plan provides a comprehensive analysis of international, national, and regional influences on the sustainable development of tourism in Australia's National Capital, and articulates a range of 'whole of destination' strategies focussed towards developing the ACT's attraction base and re-imaging the destination. Specifically, it is designed to:

- provide a vision for the ACT's tourism industry;
- establish a direction and business planning framework for the Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation – the ACT's primary destination management and marketing organisation;
- create a cohesive tourism industry team, with both private sector industry and Government working in partnership;
- provide a series of actions which will achieve identified beneficial outcomes for individual industry members and the industry as a whole; and
- inform the ACT community, as well as regional, national and international tourism communities of the nature and direction of the ACT's tourism industry.

Importantly it also incorporates the [ongoing] development of a complimentary suite of sectoral and niche market sub-strategies, including:

- a nature based tourism strategy;
- an attractions strategy;
- a tourist accommodation strategy;
- a tour and transport strategy;
- a wine and culinary tourism strategy;
- an education tourism strategy;
- festival, event and sport generated tourism strategies;
- cultural and arts tourism strategies;
- a 'backpacker' tourism strategy;
- an indigenous tourism strategy;
- a tourism training strategy;

- tourism entertainment and retail strategies;
- tourism information services strategy; and
- a regional partnership strategy.

In this capacity, the Centre for Tourism Research, was responsible for:

- the conceptualisation and implementation of an extensive industry and Government consultation process;
- the ongoing management of the consultative and Master Plan development process;
- the conceptualisation and development of the innovative modular structure of the ACT Tourism Master Plan, ensuring that is a dynamic and 'living' destination development strategy;
- the development and articulation of a range of both 'whole of destination' and sectoral/niche product implementation strategies.

The Centre for Tourism Research has also undertaken a range of regional and rural tourism development consultancies. These include:

- market analysis and perceptions studies for the Sapphire Coast region (NSW South Coast) and the Snowy Mountains region;
- the development of a disability tourism strategy for the Snowy Mountains region; and
- regional festival and event analysis and management.

Significantly, in the context of destination planning, management and marketing, the Centre for Tourism Research also has extensive experience in understanding and managing visitor satisfaction and community attitudes towards tourism development via the management of several major Sustainable Tourism CRC projects including:

- a ground breaking 12 month study of visitor satisfaction in both a 'whole of destination' and specific component (eg visitor services or accommodation) context; and
- a major study examining community attitudes towards tourism development in the ACT.

The Centre for Tourism Research's capabilities in these areas are enhanced by the fact that Centre personnel have extensive backgrounds in business development and tourism industry backgrounds, especially in the context of developing and managing tourism industry organisations and industry based tourism marketing bodies.

Analysis of Tourism Impacts

As tourism and tourism activity, such as events, become recognised as increasingly important economic, social and environmental drivers, it is imperative that Governments, decision makers and industry stakeholders be able to identify and manage tourism impacts.

The Centre for Tourism Research has extensive capabilities and experience in the analysis of tourism impacts. The Centre has particular expertise in the economic and social analysis of major events, such as the GMC400 V8 Supercar Race, the Subaru Rally of Canberra and the Floriade Spring Festival as well as the attractions sector. The Centre has also conducted evaluations and analysis of a number major cultural and sporting events, such as the National Multicultural Festival, the National Gallery of Australia's Monet & Japan Exhibition, as well as the National Mountain Bike Championships and National Runners Week in the Snowy Mountains.

The Centre for Tourism Research's expertise in the analysis of tourism impacts also extends identifying and forecasting the outcomes of proposed tourist developments such as the development of a permanent dragway in the ACT, and identifying nature based tourism development opportunities.

Tourism Education and Training

With direct linkages to the University of Canberra's Tourism Teaching Program, the Centre for Tourism Research has considerable expertise in curriculum design and the development and delivery of tourism education and training programs. Particular areas of tourism education and training expertise include:

- tourism training need analyses;
- tourism planning, development and management;
- tour guiding and management;
- interpretation;
- tourism marketing; and
- tourism policy.

Regional and Rural Tourism Development

The Centre for Tourism Research has particular strategic planning and destination development expertise in the areas of regional and rural tourism development. Centre personnel have worked extensively in rural tourism product development and marketing, having undertaken consultancies and research projects focusing on:

- market development and analysis for rural and regional areas;
- agri tourism development and marketing, including wine and culinary tourism;
- tourism value and activity in rural and sensitive areas, such as the Australian Alps and heritage mining towns.

The nature of these projects has also provided the Centre for Tourism Research with considerable experience in issues surrounding rural economic diversification and the management of tourism in sensitive areas.

Government and Industry Relations

As governments and communities increasingly look towards tourism as a social and economic development tool, the interface between decision makers, government agencies, the tourism industry and the broader community is an increasingly important consideration for successful and sustainable tourism development. Centre for Tourism Research personnel have extensive experience in facilitating and developing effective government, industry and inter-sectoral relationships.

Indeed, a substantial proportion of the Centre's consultancy projects (especially those relating to strategic planning, destination marketing and impact analysis) have significant public policy implications, requiring considerable government and industry consultation and facilitation.

Contact

Please contact the Director, Centre for Tourism Research Dr Brent Ritchie on Brent.Ritchie@canberra.edu.au or (02) 6201 5016 to discuss research opportunities or partnerships.