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SETTING AN INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: ECOTOURISM IN AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism within Australia has become an important focus at the regional, state and national level. With ten listed world heritage sites, Australia is well placed in providing ecotourism experiences to visitors, both domestically and internationally. There are, however great challenges in balancing development pressures and conservation needs. Australia has been focusing on the natural environment and has a growing commitment to preserving a quality lifestyle for future generations as well as maintaining as much as possible of its biodiversity. It is now at the forefront of major progress in embracing Ecotourism as a sustainable future focus. Australia is one of few Federal governments with National Ecotourism policies and funding grants specifically oriented toward the development of ecotourism and maintenance of its principles. This paper addresses a number of these developments.

ECOTOURISM: A RESPONSIBLE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

Most countries have unique places that have a true distinctive charm. With ten listed world heritage sites (the most in the world),

Australia is well placed with a number of its areas still relatively intact. The great challenge of balancing expansion and development with sustainable management of the natural and cultural environments, however, is becoming one of the most difficult questions to address now, and increasingly in the future. There are certainly no easy answers to these challenges. One approach that has emerged in the last 10 years has potential to combine the difficult challenges of environmental protection with the entrepreneurial interests in forming job creating low impact tourism facilities. This method has been called in its purest sense, Ecotourism.

Australia, with its focus on the natural environment, its stable political system, its growing commitment to preserving a quality lifestyle for future generations as well as maintaining as much as possible of its biodiversity, is now at the forefront of major progress in embracing Ecotourism as a sustainable future focus. In 1992 and 1993 the Department of Tourism within the Australian Government, embarked on one of the first national programs to embrace the essence of ecotourism and its principles. Through an effective process of wide public consultation and involvement of "a broad range of individuals and organisations

including local government, natural resource managers, tour operators, tourism marketers, planners, conservation and community groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders" (indigenous people of Australia), Australia's National Ecotourism Strategy was released in March, 1994 (10). This paper will discuss the major aspects of the Strategy, the formation of the Ecotourism Association of Australia and its developments up to 1995, as well as pointing out a number of major developments which led up to the present Strategy.

ORGANISATIONS, CONFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS HAVE EMERGED

Ecotourism has become a "buzz word" of the 1990's and is an integral part of the trend toward "alternative" tourism strategies. Where mass tourism has often failed to deliver, great hope has been placed on ecotourism as a more positive and complete solution. In order to effectively address these issues, a number of organisations, conferences and publications have been developed. New publications have been produced in Australia that represent this new area of Eco-oriented tourism. *Tread Lightly* lists over 70 "environmentally friendly" holidays and excursions throughout Australia. *A Sense of Place* is a newsletter-type publication devoted to cultural, environmental and educational tourism in Australian and New Zealand. Other publications that have published articles on "responsible tourism" and "ecotourism" include *The New Traveller*, *Real Travel*, *Trekker and Australian Natural History*.

In the last few years, various tour companies have oriented their business (or targeted their marketing) toward Ecotourism.

Ecotravel, Ringtail Tours, Earthwatch, Travelearn, and Inter National Park Tours are but a few in this growing list of companies offering Nature based and/or environmentally friendly tours within Australia. The state tourism organisations have also recognised the importance of nature-based tourism. Queensland introduced Sunlover Nature and Outdoor package holidays. New South Wales has Outback Bush and Adventure tours including wildlife and various other nature tours. Tony Bishop of Far North Queensland Tourism (1) wrote recently of the Far North coast of Queensland becoming increasingly popular for both domestic and foreign tourists. Though he mentioned that most of the natural attractions "...remain as unspoilt as 20 years ago...The difference is that services and operators now make it all much more accessible."

Recently, ecotourism has had a large rise in popular discussions within Australia. Bill Gray, Corporate Communications Manager of Australian Tourism Commission supports the premise that Ecotourism is one of the major growth areas in the future: "Ecotourism is the way of the future. Our surveys have indicated a surge of interest in the environment and it is important that we do something about it. Visitors want to experience our unique flora, fauna and wilderness and it is the way we present and interpret these things that will influence the direction of tourism" (4).

In the past five years, a number of conferences and special meetings have been organised with Ecotourism as one of its key themes. The World Leisure and Recreation Association Conference held in July 1991 in Sydney Australia offered break out sessions to address aspects of Ecotourism. In early October 1992, the Australian Tourism Industry Association conference held in

Canberra had ecotourism and the environment as one of the major underlying themes. The Australian National Tourism Research Conference held each year since 1991 has presented papers with Ecotourism themes.

The primary Australian focus on ecotourism occurred in September 1991, when an international Ecotourism conference was held in Brisbane. One hundred and thirty delegates from seven countries in the Asia/Pacific region shared 42 papers for this inaugural conference. Representatives included tour operators, facility owners and operators, academics, conservationists and public sector representatives. These papers covered a whole range of topic areas including, needs, motivations and experiences of tourists, environmental education, ecotourism and indigenous cultures, environmental impacts of tourism, policies and planning, development and management, marketing implications and a number of ecotourism case studies (11). In November, 1993 the Ecotourism Association of Australia held a National Conference in Port Douglas, Queensland entitled: Evaluating Ecotourism which brought close to 200 people, 72% of whom were in the Ecotourism business, either commercially, working for government or non-government organisations (7). In November 1995, a second major National conference will take place in Alice Springs, Northern Territory entitled: Ecotourism and Nature-Based Tourism: Taking the next steps, which will look at the business and best practice of ecotourism.

ECOTOURISM DEFINED: THE AUSTRALIAN VERSION

The Ecotourism Association of Australia (7, 8) has defined Ecotourism as: Ecologically sustainable tourism that fosters environmental, and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation. After consulting widely in Australia and overseas, the Australian Department of Tourism Evans, refined this definition (shown below) (10).

"Ecotourism is nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable.

This definition recognises that 'natural environment' includes cultural components, and that 'ecologically sustainable' involves an appropriate return to the local community and long-term conservation of the resource."

Key elements of the National Strategy definition of Ecotourism include (1). *the natural environment*, which focuses on biological and physical features. These are looked on as essential to the planning, development and management of ecotourism; (2) *ecological and cultural sustainability*, which is managed to avoid or minimise negative impacts and to confer benefits on host communities and environments, for present and future generations (of note in the strategy was that ecotourism can and should embrace the sustainable use of cultural as well as natural assets, even if cultural assets are not explicitly referred to.); (3) *education and interpretation*, which involves developing a knowledge, awareness and appreciation of

the environment. Normally through the employment of appropriately qualified guides and the provision of information both prior to and during the trip, ecotourism operators provide an appropriate level of environmental and cultural interpretation (this is essential to differentiate ecotourism from other forms of nature travel); and (4) *provision of local and regional benefits*, which involves a commitment from providers of ecotourism experiences, to equitably distribute benefits to the local community, even though ecotourism businesses may be based in other communities or involve national or multinational ownership. This may occur through the use of local facilities and local purchases of services and provisions. Employing local guides and other providers of specialised local knowledge can also be a source of local involvement as well as local participation in decision making.

THE FORMATION OF THE ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

From the 1991 Ecotourism Conference in Brisbane, a recurring need for further understanding, discussion, and leadership resulted in the formation of the Ecotourism Association of the Indo-Pacific region, now changed to the Ecotourism Association of Australia. A committee was formed to establish the goals and objectives of the EAA and to commence its role of encouraging the development of a professional ecotourism industry in Australia.

The primary objectives of the Ecotourism Association of Australia (1991) (9) (see Figure 1) have been to provide a forum for promoting and developing sustainable tourism, conservation of nature and culture,

foster appreciation, develop ethics and standards, and facilitate interactions between diverse groups.

Since the "loose" formation of the Ecotourism Association of Australia in Brisbane in November 1991 membership has formalised and grown to some 300 members. Membership is drawn from around the Australia (including a growing number of overseas members). Table 1 below sets out the status of membership: (2)

INITIATIVES OF ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA TO DATE

Since its inception the commitment of EAA's executive committee has produced some significant initiatives (2). These primarily include: The establishment of a Quarterly newsletter to all members (since 1992); a foundation workshop and follow-up working groups to establish policy, directions, a business plan, and action strategies; organised and convened a national workshop in 1993 entitled Evaluating Ecotourism to further debate and develop guidelines on accreditation and evaluation of ecotourism; Completion of a National Accreditation survey; Regional ecotourism seminars including: the mid 1995 EAA seminar on ecotourism in Perth, Western Australia; National Ecotourism conference: Ecotourism and Nature-Based Tourism: Taking the next steps; Development of the Australian Ecotourism Guide in 1995 which lists over 300 ecotour operators, government agencies, consultants, attractions and destinations within Australia; Research study and database of existing Australian reports and current initiatives in ecotourism; provided an active role in assisting secondary and tertiary students

with projects associated with ecotourism (an estimated 650 requests in the past three years); provided advice and information to media and other organisations seeking background information on ecotourism and its operation (It is estimated that in the past two years over 100 media interviews have been undertaken.); development of a list of key ecotourism references to its members; active participation and consultation with the Australian Commonwealth Department of Tourism on development of the National Ecotourism strategy; chairing and active participation in the National Steering Committee to undertake the Department of Tourism funded consultancy into accreditation of ecotourism operations; developed a liaison with government organisations and NGOs including the Australian Conservation Foundation, e.g., the Green Jobs Unit; participated in the development of an Ecotourism degree course at Charles Sturt University; and development of codes of practice of operators and ecotourists. Figure 2 shows the code of practice for ecotourism operators that was developed by the Executive Committee of the EAA in 1992 (6).

Other contributions by the EAA include communication with various universities regarding the development of eco-oriented subjects and programs (see Figure 3) (2), major contribution to the conference program of the Adventure Travel Society 1994 World Congress on Adventure Travel & Ecotourism in Tasmania, and contribution to the Year of the Great Outdoors, Australian Tourism Commission sub-committee which worked on the packaging and promotion of environmentally oriented Australian tourism products.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

National Strategy For Ecologically Sustainable Development

In 1991, the Australian Government developed a National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development. As part of that strategy, a tourism working group was formed to develop recommendations. This group emphasised that the tourism industry can be developed and managed in a way that conserves its natural resources and built heritage base and minimises negative environmental, social and cultural impacts. The strategy produced a number of recommendations that are important for the development of ecotourism (see Figure 4):

The working group's report was produced in November 1991 and many of its recommendations were incorporated into the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development. The major focus of the National ESD Strategy recognised that environmental issues should be an integral part of economic decisions. It should involve an integrated approach to conservation and development which seeks to optimise the net benefits of resource use to the community - now, and in the future (Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Groups, 1991).

Purpose of National Ecotourism Strategy

The Commonwealth Department of Tourism's National Ecotourism Strategy was released in March 1994, by the Minister for Tourism, the Hon Michael Lee MP. The Strategy was developed to create a vision for Australian ecotourism and to recognise (1) the need for directions on a national

level to facilitate ecologically sustainable development of tourism in Australia, and (2) the need for an integrated approach to the planning, development and future management of ecotourism (10). Within the Strategy, was a vision which set the stage for the understanding of issues related to ecotourism and development of strategic objectives, actions and programs designed to be consistent with this vision. This vision is shown below:

"Australia will have an ecologically and culturally sustainable ecotourism industry that will be internationally competitive and domestically viable. Ecotourism in Australia will set an international example for environmental quality and cultural authenticity while realising an appropriate return to the Australian community and conservation of the resource."

In order to achieve its mission, a number of process aims were determined. These three aims included (a) the identification of major issues that are/will affect the planning, development and management of ecotourism in Australia, (b) developing a national framework that would include all the major players affected by or to have input into such a strategy, and (c) developing both policies and effective programs to assist these players and to help the Department achieve its mission.

A comprehensive participatory processes to develop a draft and subsequent strategy involved over 250 submissions and comments and a series of twelve workshops conducted throughout Australia over a six month period. A broad list of interested parties that were consulted includes: tourism industry associations, non-profit

associations, professional societies, state-based conservation councils and conservation groups, unions, community groups, recreational groups, natural resource planners and managers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, educational institutions, financial institutions, the media, international organisations, tourists. In addition, the strategy development process incorporated aspects of the recommendations of Australia's National Tourism Strategy, the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development as well as the Agenda 21 document of United Nations Conference On The Environment And Development. The major themes considered from Agenda 21 included integrated land planning and management, protection of oceans, seas and coastal areas and management of fragile ecosystems.

ISSUES, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

The major issues (listed below in Figure 5) affecting the planning, development and management of ecotourism in Australia were identified through the consultation process described previously.

From these issues, five key action areas in the planning, development and management of ecotourism were determined (10). They include (1) encouraging strategic planning, (2) developing and adopting industry codes of environmental practice, (3) examining regulatory mechanisms, (4) improving public information and education, and (5) encouraging further research. These action areas were developed further into major objectives, each with detailed descriptions and directions. Figure 6 lists each objective.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT ECOTOURISM PROGRAMS

In order to achieve the above objectives, nine key programs have been/are being initiated within Australia. These include looking at accreditation approaches for ecotourism operators, market profiles and research into various areas of ecotourism, energy and waste minimisation practices for tourism facilities, infrastructure projects at ecotourism oriented sites, ecotourism education for awareness, understanding and more responsible practices, baseline studies and monitoring for important decision making and further understanding of ecotourism, integrated regional planning involving the principles of ecotourism, ecotourism business development, conferences and workshops on relevant topics. These programs are further described briefly in Figure 7 below (10).

IMPLEMENTATION AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Recognising that long range objectives also require sourcing, the Commonwealth Government committed \$10 million, over the period 1993-94 to 1996-97, to fund programs for the development and implementation of the National Ecotourism Strategy. The programs listed in Figure 7 give some indication of the types of funding areas for concentration. Along with this funding, a Forest Ecotourism program was established by the Department of Tourism and is providing funding of \$1.9 million over four years (which began in 1992) to projects that protect the environment and enhance tourist enjoyment of natural areas, specifically for forest ecotourism initiatives. These funds are a component of a package of measures developed under the National Forest Policy Statement. The program

targets ecologically sustainable forest tourism activities to achieve increased ecotourism participation, awareness and good practice in the longer term. Some examples include interpretation and signs in the Bundaleer Forest of South Australia, and the forests of the Morriset district; and walking tracks through forests in Central Victoria, at the tip of Cape York and through mangroves in the Northern Territory.

A number of product marketing activities have also been organised including (a) the "Discover the Great Australian Outdoors" campaign that has been coordinated by the Australian Tourist Commission (ATC) as part of its special interest marketing activities, (b) the development of a Natural Holiday Guide aimed at identifying ecotourism operators and creating awareness of Australia's outdoor holiday market, and (c) the staging of the 4th World Congress on Adventure Travel and Ecotourism in Australia in September 1994.

SETTING A PRECEDENT FOR WORLD ECOTOURISM

Based on looking at other national programs in the area of ecotourism, it is believed that Australia's movements in this arena are at least at par with any similar programs in the world today. In a few short years, Australia has set a precedent to follow for (a) putting a government's "money where its mouth is", (b) facilitating a comprehensive and effective participatory process, (c) establishing an effective association for the sharing of information and influencing the development of policy directions, and (d) attempting to set an example for others within Australia and overseas to develop and implement methods for sustaining the ecologically sensitive areas for future

generations and the conservation of the Earth's biodiversity. This appears to be a formidable task, however, the initial progressive steps that have been taken within Australia are already "baring some fruit" for many affected parties, not least of which are the developers and local government's themselves, whose awareness of ecotourism principles have altered

traditional approaches to business and long range planning.

This paper has attempted to shed some light in terms of the background and direction in which Ecotourism is headed in Australia. If anyone would like further information, please contact the Ecotourism Association of Australia or the Australian Commonwealth Department of Tourism.

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Figure 1: Objectives of the Ecotourism Association of Australia

1. Sustainable tourism

To promote and develop ecologically and culturally sustainable travel and tourism

2. Conservation of nature and culture

To promote and foster conservation of, and investment in the natural and cultural resources used for tourism

3. Foster appreciation

To educate and inspire tourists to appreciate the importance of natural and cultural conservation through participation

4. Ethics and standards

To develop ethics and standards for ecotourism

5. Facilitate interaction

To provide an association to facilitate interaction between travel and tourism operators, industry, government and educational institution personnel, and other persons interested in ecotourism

Table 1: Membership Types and Sectors Categories of the Ecotourism Association of Australia

Membership category	Number	Percent (of total)
Professional - Corporate	203	68%
Corresponding	37	13%
Student	46	15%
Ecotourist	13	4%
TOTAL	299	100%

Sectors	Number	Percent (of total)
Operator - Industry	149	50%
Government	43	14%
Academic	24	8%
Student	46	15%
Other	37	12%
TOTAL	299	100%

Figure 2: Code of Practice for Ecotourism Operators

1. Strengthen the conservation effort for, and enhance the natural integrity of, the places visited;
2. Respect the sensitivities of other cultures;
3. Be efficient in the use of natural resources (water, energy);
4. Ensure waste disposal has minimal environmental and aesthetic impacts;
5. Develop a recycling program;
6. Support principals (i.e. hotels, carriers etc.) who have a conservation ethic;
7. Keep abreast of current political and environmental issues, particularly of the local area;
8. Network with other stakeholders (particularly those in the local area) to keep each other informed of developments and to encourage the use of this Code of Practice;
9. Endeavour to use distribution networks (eg. catalogues) and retail outlets to raise environmental awareness by distributing guidelines to consumers;
10. Support ecotourism education/training for guides and managers;
11. Employ tour guides well versed in and respectful of local cultures and environments;
12. Give clients appropriate verbal and written education (interpretation) and guidance with respect to the natural and cultural history of the areas visited;
13. Use locally produced goods that benefit the local community, but do not buy goods made from threatened or endangered species;
14. Never intentionally disturb or encourage the disturbance of wildlife or wildlife habitats;
15. Keep vehicles to designated roads and trails;
16. Abide by the rules and regulations of natural areas;
17. Commit to the principle of best practice;
18. Comply with Australian Safety Standards;
19. Ensure truth in advertising; and
20. Maximise the quality of experience for hosts and guests.

Figure 3: Ecotourism Educational Offerings in Australia

Educational Institution	Description of ecotourism oriented offerings
Charles Sturt University Albury, NSW	Bachelor of Applied Science in Ecotourism
University of Newcastle Newcastle, NSW	Bachelor Social Science (Recreation and Tourism) has subject called Leisure Tourism and Environmental Issues. Also incorporates ecologically sustainable development as part of its planning subject. Postgraduate (Honours, Masters, PhD) research available in ecotourism specialisation.
University of Technology Sydney, NSW	Incorporate ecotourism as a topic and a specialist elective.
University of NSW Sydney, NSW	Recreation and tourism subject, which includes aspects of ecotourism.
University of Sydney, NSW	A number of postgraduate students in the Department of Geography are working on ecotourism.
Deakin University Melbourne, Victoria	Undergraduate and graduate diploma - a unit in ecotourism available for a full fee paying Graduate Certificate in Ecotourism.
Victoria University - Melbourne, Victoria	Degree in Business has three units that deal with ecotourism related issues - working towards a specific ecotourism subject.
Bond University Gold Coast, Queensland	Master of Laws (Tourism) includes two subjects, Travel and Tourism Law and Special Topics in Tourism Law, that include elements of ecotourism.
Griffith University Gold Coast, Queensland	Undergraduate studies have a subject, Ecotourism, which covers environmental management.
James Cook University Townsville, Queensland	A unit called Tourism and the Environment; the graduate diploma has a specialist option, Ecotourism and the Environment - also potential for PhD and masters in ecotourism.
Cairns TAFE Cairns, Queensland	Core subject called Cultural and Environmental Tourism.
University of Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.	A Masters focuses on sustainability of tourism development.

Figure 4: The Tourism Working Group Recommendations for Action

1. strategic integrated planning;
2. environmental impact assessment;
3. protected areas;
4. regulation of tourism development;
5. indigenous people- involvement in tourism;
6. tourist signs and interpretation;
7. education and training;
8. tourist and community awareness programs;
9. research;
10. anticipation of climate change.

Figure 5: Description of Issue Affecting the Planning, Development and Management of Ecotourism

Issue	Description of issue affecting the planning, development and management of ecotourism
<i>Ecologically sustainable</i>	minimal impact and ecologically sustainable approaches to tourism planning, development and management
<i>Planning and regulation</i>	the need to simplify the processes used in the planning and regulation of ecotourism, increase their effectiveness and integrate approaches across government boundaries and between agency jurisdictions
<i>Management of natural resources</i>	factors affecting the management of natural resources to meet the challenges of growth in ecotourism, including the resource constraints that could be imposed by additional use
<i>Infrastructure</i>	the development of appropriate infrastructure
<i>Monitoring of impacts</i>	the need for monitoring of impacts to assist in decision-making and the effective management of the resource
<i>Marketing</i>	the challenges associated with marketing unique and often seasonal products, particularly in distant markets
<i>Industry standards and accreditation</i>	the need for appropriate industry standards and the possibility of establishing a national system of accreditation to ensure that services and products meet certain standards
<i>Ecotourism education</i>	ecotourism education to assist in establishing industry standards and encourage tourists and operators to adopt minimal impact practices
<i>Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders</i>	opportunities for the involvement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in ecotourism as land owners, resource managers and tourism operators
<i>Viability</i>	particular challenges affecting the viability of ecotourism enterprises and
<i>Equity considerations</i>	equity considerations arising from competition for the use of natural resources and from the way in which they are managed.

Figure 6: Objectives of the Australian Department of Tourism's National Ecotourism Strategy

Issue	Objective number	National Ecotourism Objective
Ecological Sustainability :	Obj. 1:	Facilitate the application of ecologically sustainable principles and practices across the tourism industry.
Integrated Regional Planning	Obj. 2:	Develop a strategic approach to integrated regional planning based on ecologically sustainable principles and practices and incorporating ecotourism.
Natural Resource Management	Obj. 3:	Encourage a complementary and compatible approach between ecotourism activities and conservation in natural resource management.
Regulation Issues	Obj. 4:	Encourage industry self-regulation of ecotourism through the development and implementation of appropriate industry standards and accreditation.
Infrastructure	Obj. 5:	Where appropriate, support the design and use of carefully sited and constructed infrastructure to minimise visitor impacts on natural resources and to provide for environmental education consistent with bioregional planning objectives.
Impact Monitoring	Obj. 6:	Undertake further study of the impacts of ecotourism to improve the information base for planning and decision-making.
Marketing	Obj. 7:	Encourage and promote the ethical delivery of ecotourism products to meet visitor expectations and match levels of supply and demand.
Industry Standards And Accreditation	Obj. 8:	Facilitate the establishment of high-quality industry standards and a national accreditation system for ecotourism.
Ecotourism Education	Obj. 9:	Improve the level and delivery of ecotourism education for all target groups.
Involvement Of Indigenous Australians	Obj. 10:	Enhance opportunities for self-determination, self-management and economic self-sufficiency in ecotourism for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders.
Viability	Obj. 11:	Examine the business needs of operators and develop ways in which viability can be improved, either individually or through collective ventures.
Equity Considerations	Obj. 12:	Seek to ensure that opportunities for access to ecotourism experiences are equitable and that ecotourism activities benefit host communities and contribute to natural resource management and conservation.

Figure 7: Programs Initiated by the Department of Tourism to Meet its National Ecotourism Objectives

Program letter	Program title	Brief description of program intention
Program A:	Accreditation	This program will explore the development and implementation of an industry-led national system of accreditation for ecotourism operations.
Program B:	Market Profiles And Research	This program will facilitate further market research to supplement studies already conducted by the ATC (Australian Tourism Commission), the Bureau of Tourism Research, State and Territory government agencies and other organisations.
Program C:	Energy & Waste Minimisation Practices	This program will promote the use of cost-effective energy and waste minimisation practices in ecotourism contexts.
Program D:	Infrastructure Projects	This program will fund infrastructure projects in and adjacent to ecotourism destinations. For the purpose of this program, infrastructure may include construction or restoration projects, protective structures such as boardwalks and viewing platforms, and projects that demonstrate innovative eco-design and the application of environ. friendly technology.
Program E:	Ecotourism Education	This program will develop and implement a communications strategy that promotes an increased level of awareness and understanding of the principles of ecotourism to a range of audiences, including the media, the tourism industry, education and training bodies, and consumers.
Program F:	Baseline Studies And Monitoring	This program will provide assistance for projects - such as baseline studies, predictive modelling and monitoring - that assess and contribute to the management of changes to natural environments caused, or likely to occur, as a result of ecotourism. Such research activities link with improved management practice.
Program G:	Integrated Regional Planning	This program will fund pilot projects or case studies that demonstrate the effective integration of ecotourism planning at the regional level. Projects will involve collaborative approaches between local communities, natural resource managers, local governments and other levels of government.
Program H:	Business Development	This program will aim to improve the level of business skills among ecotourism operators through workshops, short courses or distance education modules focusing on business practices and ecotourism management issues.
Program I:	Conferences And Workshops	Limited support will be available to assist the organisation of major national and international ecotourism conferences in Australia. Funding may also be provided for regional workshops or to produce material that can be distributed in Australia and overseas.