

NATIONAL LANDSCAPES PROGRAM

Australia's Coastal Wilderness National Landscape

Tourism is an \$81b industry employing nearly half a million Australians. It is particularly relevant to regional Australia, increasingly being the mainstay of many regional areas.

Inbound tourism is worth \$27 billion. Worth more to Australia's foreign exchange than natural gas, wheat or wool.

Visitors to Australia come to experience our unique nature. 68% of inbound visitors seek at least one nature based experience. 55% seek two and 48% three or more. Nature is our key international competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded and environmentally degraded world.

Despite recognition of the importance of nature based tourism Australia has never taken a strategic approach to the identification of our superb world class experiences for selling to the world – until the National Landscapes initiative.

International marketing has previously focussed on 'Shrimp on the Barbie' and 'Where the bloody hell are you' presenting little more than Reef, Rock and Opera House. This country is the same size as the contiguous United States of America yet we have not showcased our best.

The National Landscapes Program is a Commonwealth initiative between Tourism Australia and Parks Australia (the managers of Kakadu and Uluru). It is directed by a Reference Committee made up of the Australian Tourism Export Council, Ecotourism Australia, Indigenous Tourism Australia, the Tourism and Transport Forum, James Cook University (tourism and conservation management) the World Commission on Protected Areas, and the Commonwealth agencies responsible for tourism and world/national heritage.

At the Australian Tourism Exchange (our annual tourism exposition to the world market) in Perth on 15 June 2008 the Chairman of Tourism Australia Mr Rick Allert AM, announced the first 8 of the National Landscapes (out of an eventual list of 20). These are now up on **Australia.com** and form the basis of selling our environment to the world. They are: Kakadu Region, Red Centre (Uluru to Alice Springs), the Great Ocean Road, the Australian Alps, the Green Cauldron (world heritage listed NSW/Qld border ranges rainforests), the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, the Flinders Ranges and Australia's Coastal Wilderness.

Australia's Coastal Wilderness (ACW) extends from Bermagui in NSW to Lakes Entrance in Victoria. It is the best accessible temperate forest coastal wilderness in the world. Even without National Landscape recognition and marketing it is already the 16th most important earner of inbound tourism dollars.

The ACW has already undertaken a destination branding process under the aegis of Tourism Australia's "Brand Australia". It is managed by a Steering Committee comprising cross-border representatives of regional tourism, national parks and local government. They have embarked on their next stage which is master planning to provide the visitor facilities and services, information and interpretation and infrastructure commensurate with a site of international tourism significance.

The National Landscapes Program services the Brand Australia target market. The target market is defined as the 'experience seeker'. This visitor has certain characteristics that must line up with marketing and the offer of our world class experiences:

- It is a high yield low volume market
- They are well educated, informed and aware
- They have high expectations of sustainability issues
- They are culturally aware with a keenness to engage with local culture with a particular interest in Indigenous culture
- They research their visits on the Internet and generate a very high 'word of mouth' message to other prospective visitors
- They seek adventure and freedom
- They are after self awareness and life changing experiences

The Brand for ACW is:

Get close and share our love of nature. Discover the freedom of living in and caring for our unspoilt coastal wilderness of tall forests, lakes and beaches

All master planning and information/marketing will feed of this brand positioning statement. The essence is:

caring for our unspoilt coastal wilderness of tall forests, lakes and beaches