NERP Tropical Ecosystems Hub – Project 10.2 Factsheet

Cairns Airport Exit Survey 2014 – Indigenous Tourism

Michelle Thompson[1], Louisa Yee-Sum Lee[1], Bruce Prideaux[1, 2]

[1]James Cook University; [2]Cairns Institute

Key messages

- Data reported in this factsheet form part of a long-term study of visitors departing Cairns Airport since 2007.
- Approximately half of visitors surveyed look for opportunities to participate in indigenous tourism experiences on holidays at least sometimes
- Participation in indigenous tourism experiences is not a major motivating factor to visit the region

Overview

This factsheet reports on visitor interest in indigenous tourists in the Cairns region. The findings are based on a sample of 326 tourists departing Cairns via the domestic terminal of Cairns International Airport, and was conducted between March and May 2014. Preliminary analysis identified a subset of 152 tourists who look for opportunities to participate in indigenous tourism experiences when on holidays, and forms the focus of this factsheet. The factsheet first profiles all respondents (n=326) and then reports specifically on those tourists who seek indigenous tourism experiences (n=152).

Data were collected as part of a long-term monitoring study investigating trends and changes in the travel motivations and behavior of tourists to the Cairns region. **Disclaimer**: The study was not designed to report on overall visitor numbers to the study region and was distributed only in English. Care should be taken if results are generalised beyond the sample reported in this factsheet.

Profile of All Respondents (n = 326)

- The sample comprised 58% females and 42% males
- 36% were aged 20-29yrs, with 13% aged 30-39yrs and 50-59yrs each, and 10% over 65 years
- A quarter were students, 21% were employed as professionals, and 16% semi/retired
- 62% had an annual income up to AU$69K
- 45% were travelling as a couple, 25% with friends and 10% family with children
- 40% have a degree qualification
- 33% domestic and 67% international visitors
- Countries of origin were North America (21%), Europe including Germany (19.1%), and UK & Ireland (15%)

Travel Behaviour (n = 326)

- 72.5% visited for the first-time, with 27.5% repeat visitors
- 66.5% spent the most nights in Cairns, with another 20% spending most nights in Port Douglas
- 43% stayed in a resort/hotel, 31% in backpacker hostels and 14% in holiday apartments/units
- 35% hired a car during their visit, while 33% went on a commercial coach tour
- Information on Cairns was sourced from: friends & relatives (43%); the Internet (40%); guidebooks (26%); having been before (17%); travel agents (17%)

Travel Motivations (n = 326)

The main motivations for visiting the Cairns region for all respondents are listed in **Table 1,** and are presented for first-time and repeat visitors. The scale ranges from 1 ('not at all important') to 5 ('very important'). For the *overall sample*, visiting the Great Barrier Reef (4.31) was the top motivation, followed by rest and relaxation (3.96) and snorkelling and diving (3.89).

Experiencing indigenous culture was ranked as neither important nor unimportant among first-time and repeat visitors, with a mean ranging from 2.59 to 3.02. In addition, domestic and international visitors ranked it at 2.78 and 2.96 respectively. Overall, this motive was ranked in the bottom 5 motives, from a list of 20.

Table1. Top 5 motives for travelling to the Cairns region by first-time and repeat visitors

Motivation (n = 326)	Mean Rank		
	Overall	First-time	Repeats
1. Visit Great Barrier Reef	4.31	4.64	3.39
2. Rest and relax	3.96	3.87	4.23
3. Snorkel and dive	3.89	4.19	3.04
4. Experience the natural environment	3.81	3.92	3.52
5. Climate	3.68	3.70	3.64
15. Experience aboriginal culture	*2.90*	*3.02*	*2.59*

Indigenous Tourism Experiences

All respondents (n=326) were asked whether they looked for opportunities to participate in indigenous tourism experiences when on holidays. Of the 294 valid responses, 16% said 'Yes', another 35.5% replied 'Sometimes', and the remaining 48.5% stated 'No'. All respondents (n=326) were also asked if they participated in an indigenous tourism experience this trip: 13% said 'Yes' and 87% said 'No'.

Those respondents who replied 'Yes' or 'Sometimes' to looking for indigenous tourism opportunities were combined into one group and were identified as indigenous tourism experience seekers. This group comprised 51.5% of the sample, or a sub-set of 152 tourists, and is the basis of further analysis.

National Environmental Research Program

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Cairns Airport Exit Survey 2014 – Indigenous Tourism (Cont.)

Profile of Indigenous Tourism Experience Seekers (n=152)

- The subset comprised 65% females and 35% males
- 40% were aged 20-29yrs, with 16% aged 30-39yrs, and 10% each aged 50-59yrs and over 65 yrs
- 31.5% were students, 21.5% were employed as professionals, and 15% semi/retired
- 64% had an annual income up to AU$69K
- 43.5% were travelling as a couple, 30% with friends and 8.5% alone or a family with children
- 47% have a degree qualification
- 22% domestic and 78% international visitors
- Countries of origin were North America (27.5%), Europe including Germany (22.5%), and UK Ireland (17%)

Travel Behaviour (n=152)

- 83% visited for the first-time, with 17% repeat visitors
- 73% spent the most nights in Cairns, with another 17% spending most nights in Port Douglas
- 37.5% stayed in a resort/hotel, 36% in backpacker hostels and 14% in holiday apartments/units
- 29% hired a car during their visit, while 40% went on a commercial coach tour
- Information on Cairns was sourced from: friends & relatives (44%); the Internet (41%); guidebooks (36%); and travel agents (23%)

Travel Motivations (n=152)

The travel motivations of those respondents who look for opportunities to participate in indigenous tourism are listed in Table 2, on a scale from 1 ('not at all important') to 5 ('very important'). The Reef tops the list of motivations, and experiencing aboriginal culture has a slightly higher mean rank of 3.16, compared to the overall sample.

Table 2. Top 5 motives for travelling to the Cairns region by Indigenous Tourism Seekers

Motivation (n = 152)	Mean Rank
1. Visit Great Barrier Reef	4.46
2. Snorkel and dive	4.09
3. Experience the natural environment	3.96
4. See Australian wildlife Rest and relax	3.80
5. Visit Wet Tropics rainforest	3.74
14. Experience aboriginal culture	*3.16*

Participation in Indigenous Tourism

When indigenous tourism experience seekers (n=152) were asked what type of indigenous tourism they looked for, 71% preferred elements of cultural history (71%), followed by food (56%), art (50%), festivals (43.5%) and dance (23.5%).

Only 13% of all respondents (n=326) participated in an indigenous tourism experience on this trip. Participants (n=42) comprised of indigenous tourism seekers (79%), and a small number (21%) who indicated not looking for indigenous tourism opportunities.

Results in Table 3 show that indigenous experiences took place in Cairns and the surrounding region, including dance, boomerang throwing, and part of tours with a tour operator.

Table 3. Regional indigenous tourism experiences

Indigenous experience	Description	Freq
Kuranda	Park, wildlife park, Village, dance	6
Rainforestation	Dreamwalker	4
Mossman	Gorge, Gorge Dreamworks	6
Aboriginal	Cultural centre, dance	5
Tour operator	Reef daytripper, Tropic wings, Ocean Freedom	3
Tjapukai		2
Other locations	Domestic: Brisbane, Carnarvon International: Maori, wine tours	2 2

The majority of tourists who participated in an indigenous tourism experience rated it good (81%) or fair (14%). Less than 5% rated their experience as poor or awful.

Purchase Behaviour

12% of all respondents (n=326) purchased indigenous artifacts on this trip. However, only 22.5% of those who purchased an artifact also participated in an indigenous tourism experience. The majority (77.5%) of purchases were made by visitors who did not participate. The most popular artifacts were boomerangs (67.5%), followed by indigenous art (37.5%), clothing (20%) and didgeridoos (2.5%).

The majority of respondents who made a purchase stated it was either very important (47%) or important (38%) that the indigenous product was made locally, and 15% indicated it was not important. When asked if they would be willing to pay more for locally made indigenous products, 38.5% stated 'Yes' with another 42.5% indicated 'Maybe', and 19% indicated not paying more for locally produced artifacts.

Find this project at www.nerptropical.edu.au
Theme 3: Managing for resilient tropical ecosystems
Program 10: Socio-economic value of GBR goods and services
Project: 10.2 Socio-economic systems and reef resilience

For more information about this project, copies of this fact-sheet or a technical report with more details, please contact:
Prof Bruce Prideaux
JCU School of Business
bruce.prideaux@jcu.edu.au

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