Ecotourism in Western Australia

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Abstract

Tourism policy in Australia is largely a government activity (public policy-making) and is a consequence of social values and principles; the political systems; institutional structures and the government’s power to make policy decisions (Fennell & Dowling, 2003). In the 1990’s the ecotourism industry was in its infancy, and the Australian government saw value in supporting and developing a quality ecotourism industry (Ingram, 2007) and devised various ecotourism and nature-based tourism strategies.

This research broadly examines ecotourism development in Australia and then specifically within Western Australia (WA). It investigates the emergence of ecotourism policy and practice in WA, reviews the role that non-government agencies have played (Forum Advocating Cultural and Ecotourism (FACET) and Ecotourism Australia), examines the Australia Tourism Accreditation Program, (ATAP), and documents ecotourism Best Practices. These chapters set the foundation for understanding the current environment in which the three WA ecotourism businesses, which are the subject of this study, operate. The research concludes with an assessment of the ecotourism businesses against ecotourism’s seven principles.