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RECONCILIATION TOURISM: HEALING DIVIDED SOCIETIES

by

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Abstract

This paper reviews the concept of peace through tourism with respect to the role of tourism in contributing to reconciliation between the indigenous people of Australia and the non-indigenous inhabitants. The principles of this approach are illustrated through a case study analysis of a tourism operation run by members of the South Australian Ngarrindjeri community. The author notes the significance of this project for indigenous peoples from elsewhere in Australia and from other countries.

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RECONCILIATION TOURISM: HEALING DIVIDED SOCIETIES¹

Freya Higgins-Desbiolles

Introduction

Can tourism contribute to fostering of social justice and reconciliation within a divided society?

This paper provides a preliminary examination of the capacity of Aboriginal tourism experiences to contribute to the achievement of reconciliation in Australia. The analysis situates reconciliation tourism as a special type of volunteer tourism and places both of these under the umbrella of tourism as a force for peace. It begins by exploring the foundations for the concept of tourism as a force for peace and understanding as seen in international documents, institutions, case studies and tourism research. The focus then moves to Aboriginal tourism in Australia and the current status of the reconciliation movement. The experience of the Ngarrindjeri community of South Australia through their tourism and educational facility, Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre, is then utilised for a case study of reconciliation tourism. This analysis is then followed by a look to the future of reconciliation tourism in Australia and an outline of possible future research agendas in reconciliation tourism.

The impact of tourism on the economic development of a nation has been a long-standing topic of inquiry within tourism analysis (eg, Bull 1995; Lundberg 1980; Lundberg et al 1995; WTO 1980). Attention has also focused on the impact of tourism on the sociocultural fabric of communities that are engaged with tourism (eg, Smith, 1989; Lanfant et al, 1995; Turner and Ash, 1975).

This paper, however, investigates the possibility for tourism to contribute to the sociocultural development of a nation and to foster social justice and reconciliation within a divided society. The discussion begins with a macro view of the international documents and codes agreed at the international level, which are founded on the premise of tourism fostering peace and understanding; it then surveys examples from the international arena of tours for higher aims and provides a brief overview on the relevant literature to date. The focus then shifts to the Australian context where efforts have been exerted to achieving reconciliation between Indigenous and non- Indigenous Australians since the 1990s.

Tourism as a force for peace and understanding

The premise that tourism fosters peace and tolerance is one of the mainstays of

¹ This paper, published with permission, is an extended and edited version of a paper "Reconciliation Tourism: Tourism Healing Divided Societies", *Tourism Recreation Research*, 28(3), pp 35-44.

important international documents and codes.

One of the many interesting topics in the field of tourism research is that of tourism's potential contribution to global peace and understanding. Many would agree that tourism can contribute to knowledge of other places, empathy with other peoples and tolerance that stems from seeing the place of one's own society in the world. The premise that tourism fosters peace and tolerance is one of the mainstays of important international documents and codes released by bodies like the World Tourism Organization (WTO). Importantly, there are examples from around the globe of tours that are seeking conflict resolution, greater understanding and even movements for global social justice. However, it remains a matter of some dispute among tourism analysts as to whether tourism can help foster peace and secure a more harmonious world.

There are many statements, codes and documents that start from the premise that tourism fosters peace and understanding. The pathfinder in this endeavour was the 1980 Manila Declaration on World Tourism that described tourism as a "*vital force for peace and international understanding*". This was followed by the Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code that was adopted at the WTO's General Assembly held in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1985, which cited tourism's contribution to "*... to improving mutual understanding, bringing peoples closer together and, consequently, strengthening international cooperation*". The Charter for Sustainable Tourism drafted by the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism held in the Canary Islands in 1995 recognised in its preamble that "*... tourism affords the opportunity to travel and to know other cultures, and that the development of tourism can help promote closer ties and peace among peoples, creating a conscience that is respectful of diversity of culture and lifestyles*"². The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism presented to the WTO's General Assembly meeting in Santiago, Chile in 1999 asserted:

... firmly believing that, through the direct, spontaneous and non-mediatised contacts it engenders between men and women of different cultures and lifestyles, tourism presents a vital force for peace and a factor of friendship and understanding among the peoples of the world.

In addition to these declarations and statements, there is an institutional structure that advocates tourism as a force for peace, known as the International Institute for Peace Through Tourism (IIPT). This non-profit organization was founded by Louis D'Amore in 1985 and was focused on:

... fostering and facilitating tourism initiatives which contribute to international understanding and cooperation, an improved quality of environment, the preservation of heritage, and through these initiatives, helping to bring about a peaceful and sustainable world. It is based on a

² This statement is available at: <http://www.insula.org/tourism/charte.htm>

vision of the world's largest industry, travel and tourism - becoming the world's first global peace industry; and the belief that every traveler is potentially an "Ambassador for Peace. (IIPT website)

This organisation has undertaken a variety of initiatives ranging from global conferences, establishment of peace parks, development of curricula, student and tourism executive ambassador programs to assist developing countries with tourism, collaborations with other organisations like UNESCO in the 2000 UN Year for the Culture of Peace as well as passing its own declarations such as the Amman Declaration on Peace Through Tourism.

Tourism for higher aims: examples from around the world

Travel can be educational and positively influence international affairs.

There are many efforts to offer tourism directed to higher aims than recreation and relaxation. Some of the more notable examples include: university study abroad programs, Earthwatch tours which give conservation skills and experience, the community development tours of Oxfam Community Aid Abroad (Oxfam CAA) in Australia³, and Habitat for Humanity's "Global Village" program in which volunteers use their holidays to help build low-cost, good housing for communities around the world.

There is also tourism that is the antithesis of conventional tourism known as "reality tours". These are tours that go to developing communities and endeavour to show what real life is like in that community, including problems of violence, poverty and disempowerment. The aim of these tours is to help tourism contribute to the solutions to these problems by educating the tourists not only to see the problems in the places they visit, but relate them to their own community and take up action to improve the world in some way as a result.

An example of this type of tour is the Oxfam CAA tour to Guatemala that takes people to visit human rights organisations, literacy projects, and development projects in this country that has suffered decades of civil war. Oxfam CAA has also created a Community Leadership Program (CLP) in partnership with the University of Queensland that is focused on teaching about community development through a four-week tour of India. What distinguishes CLP from Oxfam CAA's other tours, is that participants make a twelve-month commitment to volunteer in community development programs through Oxfam CAA or other organisations in order that their experiences of community development in India are utilised to foster "... an ongoing process of building effective community involvement in Australia around issues of human rights, international justice, sustainable development, North/South partnership and poverty alleviation."⁴

There is also the reality tours program of Global Exchange based in the United States that includes destinations such as South Africa, Ireland, Palestine/Israel, Cuba, the Mexican state of Chiapas, as well as communities closer to home in California and the

³ See: <http://www.caa.org.au/travel/>

⁴ See: <http://www.caa.org.au/CLP/index.html>

US-Mexican border area.⁵ Like the CLP of Oxfam CAA, Global Exchange is developing tours that induce change:

The idea that travel can be educational and positively influence international affairs motivated the first Reality Tour in 1989. Global Exchange's Reality Tours are not designed to provide immediate solutions or remedies to the world's most intractable problems, nor are they simply a kind of voyeurism. Rather, Reality Tours are meant to educate people about how we, individually and collectively, contribute to global problems, and, then, to suggest ways in which we can contribute to positive change (Global Exchange website).

Research into tourism as a force for peace

While tourism contact does not automatically result in better relations, some conditions are more conducive to fostering these outcomes.

Tourism research is responding with more concentrated analysis on this tourism segment and is yielding interesting insights. While the assertion that tourism fosters peace remains contentious (see for example Var et al, 1994; Brown, 1989; Din, 1988), research is yielding insights into the lesser claims that tourism can foster attitudinal change in tourists and promote cross-cultural understanding (Var et al, 1994).

Pizam (1996) conducted empirical surveys into tourism contact between citizens of hostile nations and was led to conclude that while tourism contact does not automatically result in better relations, some conditions are more conducive to fostering these outcomes. Ryan and Huyton (2000a), in their research into tourism demand for Aboriginal experiences made a passing note that these experiences led some tourists to a new way of seeing natural settings as “spiritual” places. McGehee and Norman (2002) have examined Earthwatch tours utilising the social-psychological perspective of social movement theory and found evidence that these experiences contribute to consciousness-raising and, in particular, lead participants to link the personal and the political.

Beaumont's (2001) recent work on ecotourism is also of relevance. Starting from the claim by proponents of ecotourism that these experiences foster an environmental ethic, she surveyed ecotourists to a Queensland National Park and found that while there is potential for this to occur, much work could be done to enhance this capacity of these experiences.

A recent book by Wearing investigates “experiences that make a difference” in what he describes as *Volunteer Tourism* (2001). Wearing provides the first sustained analysis of volunteer tourism as a subset of alternative tourism distinguished by the tourists' motivations to contribute to social and/or environmental benefits in the places they visit. He describes volunteer tourism as “... a direct interactive experience that causes value change and changed consciousness in the individual which will subsequently influence their lifestyle, while providing forms of community development that are required by local communities” (2001: x). His examination of such case studies as Youth Challenge

⁵ See: <http://www.globalexchange.org/tours/>

International, One World Travel (now Oxfam CAA Tours), World Expeditions and Adventure World has yielded valuable insights and has illuminated promising avenues for future research into tourism that fosters “genuine exchange”(Wearing 2001:172).

This chapter attempts to contribute to this area of research by investigating the capacity of tourism to contribute to reconciliation within Australian society, particularly by demonstrating how one community, the Ngarrindjeri, have utilised the tourism facility of Camp Coorong to work towards reconciliation for the future of their children and the benefit of all Australians. However, firstly, the context of Aboriginal tourism in Australia will be described and the record of achievement on reconciliation will be summarised before the case study will be examined.

Aboriginal tourism in Australia

It is useful to place Aboriginal involvement in contemporary tourism within the context of Aboriginal history and politics from which it developed.

Aboriginal involvement in the tourism industry has been of increasing importance in recent decades. While it has recently been asserted that the volume and the nature of the demand for Aboriginal tourism experiences might have been misrepresented (Ryan and Huyton 2000a and 2000b), it remains a significant phenomenon nonetheless. Aboriginal tourism products and imagery are significant to the Australian tourism industry because marketing Aboriginal “product” helps create “Brand Australia” and distinguish Australia as a destination in a highly competitive market (see *Selling Australia* 2001).

But the Aboriginal communities who would be relied upon to supply this “product” are facing much bigger issues simultaneously. While tourism from a mainstream perspective appears to be a frivolous activity because it is concerned with fun and enjoyment, from an Indigenous perspective it is a much more serious topic. As Pilger (2000) pointed out in his writing about Australia in the run up to the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the Aboriginal peoples who became a focus in the international media spotlight and were the delight of the Opening Ceremonies were suffering Third World levels of poverty, ill-health and premature death rates.

It is useful to place Aboriginal involvement in contemporary tourism within the context of Aboriginal history and politics from which it developed. It was only as recently as 1967 that Indigenous Australians received citizenship rights in Australia and this led to their receiving fair wages for their labour, allowed free movement off missions and halted the forced removal of children.

Officially, the suggestion to explore tourism as a promising source for Indigenous community development was articulated in the 1991 *Report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* where it was seen as a promising source of self-esteem and economic opportunity. This was followed in 1997 by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy (NATSITIS) which included “choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about their involvement in the tourism industry” and “a means of economic independence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander participants” as some of the aims for Indigenous tourism policy (NATSITIS 1997).

It is evident that Aboriginal involvement in tourism has an important historical context that is distinct from that of mainstream tourism operators and the tourism industry. This context reveals that when Aboriginal people engage with tourism they may be simultaneously attempting to secure their Native Title rights, build the self-esteem of their youth through revival of culture and secure a reconciled community in which their children can grow up in safety and comfort - as well as the obvious economic benefits that tourism can provide.

Issue in focus: Uluru - to climb or not to climb

Uluru is the Australian Aboriginal name given to the National Park of which Ayers Rock is the centrepiece. The Rock, claimed to be the world's largest monolith, is the exposed remains of a huge bed of conglomerate laid down on the floor of an inland sea about 600 million years ago. Its changing colours and the spectacular view from the top have made it the Northern Territory's principal tourist attraction.

Climbing the Rock, a relatively demanding exercise, became a popular visitor activity during the 1950s, and during the following years the site was marked by unsightly and insensitive tourist developments. This changed with the establishment of the National Park and removal of development to Yulara, about 12 km from the Rock.

The area containing the Rock was returned to the indigenous Anangu people of the region in 1985, but its exploitation as a tourist attraction has continued with their support. However, the Anangu have long been opposed to the practice of climbing the Rock, which is a sacred 'dreaming place' and site of numerous cave and rock paintings.

There have been 37 deaths and a large number of injuries among climbers, and the Anangu people have erected a sign expressing their sadness at each death and urging visitors not to climb the Rock. It is Anangu custom to pursue such a change in behaviour by provision of information rather than prohibition, although the site has been closed three times since 1985 out of respect for elders who have died.

Climbing the rock remains popular, especially among Japanese and Australian visitors, but reports indicate that there has been a steady decline in the number of climbers. One recent visitor from Ireland commented, "It's like coming to a church and dancing on the altar. I'm happy to respect their culture."

(Ian Kelly - Editor)

Reconciliation in Australia

Reconciliation is about Healing, Justice and Truth.

Reconciliation is a defining issue for the Australian nation. As Geoff Clark, chair of ATSIC at the time of writing, has stated:

The future of Australia is meshed with the future for the First Peoples. We look back, to find a better way forward. Reconciliation is people being different but finding solutions together. It is about Healing, Justice and Truth. For the future, Australia's heritage must embrace all its peoples and cultures (CAR 2000).

Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians became an official aim of the Australian nation when the Australian Commonwealth parliament established the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) in 1991. It was given a nine-year mandate in which to chart a path to reconciliation through consultations with communities, education campaigns and projects. However, much of its work has been undermined by the policies that the Coalition government has pursued since taking office in 1996.

This government has promoted what it calls “practical reconciliation” in opposition to Indigenous demands for an official apology for past governmental policies and self-determination as seen in the *Treaty* campaign, for example. Thus, when the CAR released its Corroboree 2000 -Towards Reconciliation, Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation and The Roadmap for Reconciliation documents in 2000, a great rift was evident between the government’s vision for reconciliation and that of Indigenous Australians and their supporters.⁶

As a result, reconciliation has returned to a people’s movement in the absence of federal governmental leadership. While many see the highlight of reconciliation to date as the quarter of a million people who crossed Sydney Harbour Bridge on 28 May 2000 (joined in spirit by others around the nation), the hard work still continues in communities around the country. It is in this vein that reconciliation tourism operates at a low-key level, fostered by the daily efforts of people, incrementally chipping away at the barriers between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Case Study: Camp Coorong

Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre, located 2 hours drive southeast of the South Australian capital of Adelaide, was founded in 1985 as a place for South Australia’s schoolchildren to come and learn about Ngarrindjeri culture and history. The long-term goal is that this experience will contribute to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Camp Coorong is a community-based education facility and tourism enterprise managed by Tom and Ellen Trevorrow on behalf of the Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Association (NLPA). As Tom Trevorrow says,

⁶ See: http://www.antar.org.au/rec_inquiry_subs.html concerning the inquiry into “...progress towards national reconciliation, including the adequacy and effectiveness of the Commonwealth’s response...” which provides many details on these issues.

We don't put a value on the dollar - we put education and love and understanding first, and I suppose that's what may make us different compared with other businesses... We're not doing this to get rich - we're doing it to help solve a problem (A Talent for Tourism, 1996:7 and 9).

Since becoming involved in tourism in the 1990s, Camp Coorong has been cited as one of five successful Aboriginal tourism ventures (Schmiechen, 1993:3). Its record of achievement is visible through its use as a case study in tourism documents and videos such as: *A Talent for Tourism* (1996), *On Our Own Terms* (1996) and *Strong Business, Strong Culture, Strong Country* (1996). Camp Coorong has also received a number of tourism awards.

Camp Coorong offers a variety of services and experiences. The facility provides: dormitory style accommodation, three family-size cabins with self-catering facilities and ensuite baths, an ablutions block, conference facility, and large kitchen and dining room. The experiences on offer include:

- a bush tucker and bush medicine walk through Bonney Reserve, a rare part of the Coorong with remnant vegetation;
- a basket-weaving workshop;
- a field trip to the Southern Ocean via Parkna Point where a large midden is viewed; and
- a tour of the Cultural Museum or Keeping Place located at the facility.

Each of the experiences offered contributes to the effort at fostering reconciliation:

- The bush tucker/bush medicine walks conducted at Bonney Reserve are held on a site where a fringe camp⁷ existed as late as the 1980s. During the walk, tourists are told of how the Ngarrindjeri ancestors once lived, how European invasion has impacted on this lifestyle, how the natural environment has been severely damaged by non-Indigenous water and land use practices, and how the Ngarrindjeri community lives today and uses the bush tucker and bush medicine available.
- Basket-weaving is taught in the context of its place in weaving cultural ties among the Ngarrindjeri community and connecting the people to their environment. The story of how the art of basket-weaving was revived and restored to the larger community reveals how the Ngarrindjeri have had to negotiate the demands of contemporary living with maintaining traditions. It also sheds light on how traditions and cultures of Aboriginal peoples are held to external yardsticks of authenticity, a situation that was played out with tragic consequences in the Hindmarsh Island Bridge controversy (see Higgins-Desbiolles 2002 for further discussion). During this session, the video made by the South Australian Museum entitled *Ngurunderi: A Ngarrindjeri Dreaming* (1987) is shown which tells how Ngurunderi's journeys and actions are recounted and remembered through the Ngarrindjeri landscape.

⁷ The fringe camps are important in the argument on Native Title because they show that the Ngarrindjeri have an unbroken relationship to their lands and waters. This can be more difficult to prove for nations who were more comprehensively removed.

- The visit to the Southern Ocean via Parkna Point provides an opportunity to view a very large midden that is one of many located in the dunes of the Coorong National Park. A talk is held here explaining how the Ngarrindjeri moved camps methodically through the seasons, how burial grounds were placed adjacent to the campsites (of which the middens are the remains) and how the science of archaeology has supported the information passed down in Ngarrindjeri oral traditions. This is also where issues of contemporary import are raised, including the fear that tourism and recreational users of the National Park will violate these places, and the problematic relationship with the South Australian Museum and other museums around the world who hold remains or artefacts which the Ngarrindjeri would like returned for proper burial or keeping.
- The visit to the Camp Coorong Museum or Keeping Place provides an opportunity to learn about the laws that governed Ngarrindjeri lives in the past including Aboriginal exemption papers which made certain Aboriginal people “honorary members of the White race”; the life on the mission at Raukkan (formerly Point McLeay mission); Ngarrindjeri contributions to Australian society such as serving as soldiers in Australian forces in the Boer War, World Wars I and II; and the injustice that was meted out in return (for example, when returned Ngarrindjeri servicemen were denied access to services that other war veterans received).
- The four to five-day tour that covers the entirety of Ngarrindjeri lands provides an opportunity to discuss all of the issues above and a good deal more. On this tour, visitors can realize the breadth of Ngarrindjeri lands, the variety of environments, and the diverse groups that make up the Ngarrindjeri (*lakalinyeri* or clans), and be reminded that Aboriginal Australia is made up of a diversity of peoples, cultures, traditions and societies. It is during this tour that one can learn about the political/social structures that governed the Ngarrindjeri prior to European invasion, including the highly democratic, representative structure of the *tendi* that has been revived in recent times to serve contemporary Ngarrindjeri purposes. This tour includes some of the stories from the Dreaming as it stops at sites where the acts of Dreaming ancestors such as Ngurunderi have left their marks upon the land (for example, the Bluff at Victor Harbor and the Granites near Kingston).

Camp Coorong was originally designed to cater to South Australian school groups of all ages in order to support their curricula in Aboriginal Studies. However, it has expanded to serve a variety of clients including university students in such specialized programs as medicine, environmental management and cultural studies; environmental groups; reconciliation groups such as Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation; staff and volunteers of non-governmental organizations concerned with social justice; motoring tourists on the Melbourne to Adelaide route; tour groups on privately run tours such as ecotours and four-wheel drive, adventure tours; and Indigenous groups. Of the tourists who come, there are many local, state and national visitors (the domestic market) and international visitors from about 45 countries.

Perhaps the most exciting tours for the Ngarrindjeri are the visits by Indigenous groups. These include members of the Ngarrindjeri community who come to re-connect to culture and country; visitors from other Aboriginal groups who come to network and learn from Camp Coorong’s experience; and Indigenous people from around the world who come to share their experiences so that global networks are

forged. For example, Port Adelaide's Tauondi Aboriginal College's students in the Cultural Tour Guiding program come frequently to learn about culture and dealing with tourists.

From a review of the Guest Books placed in the Museum of Camp Coorong between 1990 and 2002, some insight can be gained into how the experiences at Camp Coorong have affected participants. Non-Indigenous entries include the following:

- *Education is the key to reconciliation – may the stories live forever.*
- *May this Camp prosper and teach Australia its forgotten history.*
- *Reconciliation is a difficult process. Camp Coorong helps to overcome our ignorance.*
- *Much to learn, much reconciliation to take place. All the best in getting back your identity and recognition.*
- *A wonderful idea that can help make a difference to how we all live together – we hope.*
- *It hurts but we need to know the truth.*
- *Thank you for teaching me not to feel guilty but to seek awareness instead.*
- *Hope for the Future.*
- *A most gentle and enlightening experience.*

Some of the Aboriginal and other Indigenous visitors to the Camp have written such comments as:

- *Affirms my pride in being a Ngarrindjeri.*
- *Great to see our material out of the museums and within our own Keeping Places.*
- *Proud to be a Nunga.*
- *Deadly. Long live our struggle for cultural freedom.*
- *Thank you very much, brothers and sisters – Nacho yungondalya yunkandalya – oh how we yearn for the voices of the past.*
- *I saw photos of my grandfather and father. Made me proud to be a Ngarrindjeri descendant.*
- *Exactly what's needed for educating foreigners.*

Fostering Reconciliation Tourism

A historic statement of apology was offered and a protocol agreement was negotiated.

One event in 2000 which made the Ngarrindjeri community proud and provided an opportunity for the non-Indigenous community to share in the occasion was the opening and exhibition of *Aboriginal Art to Keeping Places and Cultural Centres* in which the National Gallery of Australia organized a travelling exhibition of art previously contained in their gallery and other galleries to go out to Keeping Places such as Camp Coorong. This served as recognition of the significance of Camp Coorong's Museum and a sign of reconciliation between non-Indigenous curators and Indigenous communities about how Aboriginal art and artefacts should be displayed and for whom.

Another significant milestone was a centennial celebration of a corroboree originally held on Ngarrindjeri lands in 1899. In 1999, a corroboree called *Ngarrindjeri Ngrilkulun* was held at Raukkan over a weekend in which Indigenous performers from around the nation and the world joined Ngarrindjeri performers in a celebration of culture, survival and life. This marked the time when this small town (and former mission) hosted over 5000 visitors to share in the cultures and celebrations. A similar event was held in 2000 at Camp Coorong (*Kurangk Ruwe* in Ngarrindjeri language), which included some of the educational opportunities offered by the Camp.

This paper has not examined difficulties the Ngarrindjeri have encountered with government agencies such as National Parks and Wildlife of South Australia, the South Australian Tourism Commission and local councils. However, of relevance here is a dispute that recently transpired with the Alexandrina Council that led to important outcomes for Reconciliation for the Ngarrindjeri.

The Alexandrina Council approved a major re-development to the wharf area of Goolwa⁸ in advance of the 2003 Wooden Boat Festival, which allegedly proceeded without adequate consultations with the Ngarrindjeri community (Williams 2002). When bones of a mother and child were unearthed during the excavations for the project, a crisis ensued. Following consultations between the Council and representatives of the Ngarrindjeri Native Title Committee, the Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee and the *Tendi*, an historic statement of apology was offered by Alexandrina Council to the Ngarrindjeri community and a protocol agreement was negotiated.

Although this event needs to be explored further for the invaluable insights it could yield, for the moment the protocol agreement can be seen as a rare model of the kind of understandings that will need to be negotiated between Aboriginal communities and tourism agencies, government agencies and other relevant organisations if tourism is to be an acceptable force in Aboriginal communities.

The Future of Reconciliation Tourism in Australia

The spirit of the Dreaming ancestor, Tjilbruke, was invoked to bring peace and compassion.

Reconciliation remains as elusive as ever in Australia. Reconciliation tourism will be an important and on-going catalyst in its achievement, whether it receives the support of Australian governments and organisations or whether it remains indefinitely a people's movement. Recent initiatives contributing to reconciliation tourism include a wave of new travel guides on Indigenous Australia, and festivals and events focused on reconciliation. These and tourism ventures such as Camp Coorong continue the quiet, daily work of dissolving the barriers between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Among the publications that have been introduced recently to the travel guide market, some are partly or wholly focused on reconciliation through tourism. Paul Kauffman has written *Travelling Aboriginal Australia: Discovery and Reconciliation*

⁸ A site adjacent to the controversial Hindmarsh Island Bridge.

which includes, among other things, information about the reconciliation movement, Mic Dodson's *Always Ask - guidelines for visitors to Indigenous communities* and a description of places to visit by geographical areas of Australia (2000). Melinda Hinkson has written *Aboriginal Sydney*, which is described as a guide to the places of historical and contemporary importance to Aboriginal peoples in the Sydney region (2001).

One of the world's largest publishers of travel guides, Lonely Planet, has produced *Aboriginal Australia and the Torres Strait Islands: Guide to Indigenous Australia* (2001). This book is valuable to reconciliation tourism on a number of levels, including its detailed content, the methodology pursued in its compilation and in the feedback loop established to inform all future Lonely Planet travel guides to Australia and its regions. It is over four hundred pages in length and provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of the salient issues concerning Aboriginal Australia before giving a detailed travel guide divided by geographical areas. More importantly, it was produced in a spirit of reconciliation, and took some three years in the making in order to commission Indigenous writers, provide them with professional development, consult with the appropriate elders in the locales and receive final clearance from Indigenous leaders Mic Dodson and Les Ahoy. Lastly, Lonely Planet embarked on its own journey of learning by taking the experience and advice gained from Indigenous contributors and advisers in this guidebook to improve the coverage of Indigenous issues in future Australia titles.

Reconciliation has also been a theme for many important festivals and events held recently in Australia. The 2000 Sydney Olympics and its associated *Festival of the Dreaming* gave a primacy of place to Indigenous cultures that will have a long-term impact upon international demand for Indigenous experiences and which then may reverberate through the domestic market. Michelle Hanna has examined both of these events as potential sites for reconciliation in her work *Reconciliation in Olympism* (1999).

The Laura Dance and Cultural Festival, held biannually in Queensland, has attracted thousands of visitors to experience Aboriginal culture. In 2001 it featured reconciliation as its theme, using art and culture to bridge the divide between Australia's peoples.

The controversial Adelaide Festival of 2002, directed by Peter Sellars, portrayed themes of inclusivity, community, social justice and Indigenous presence. This festival made a space for reconciliation through several facets of its construct. Firstly, Sellars appointed two outstanding young Kurna professionals of the arts community of Adelaide, Karl and Waiata Telfer, to serve as two of ten Associate Directors of the Festival.

The Opening Ceremony, called the *Kurna Palti Meyunna*, was conceptualised through Kurna spirituality as the spirit of the Dreaming ancestor, Tjilbruke, was invoked to bring peace and compassion. All of the Indigenous peoples visiting from near and far were called upon to carry out seven days of ceremonies prior to the opening. Non-Indigenous people were asked to respectfully stay away. This opening was followed by a series of free events showcasing Indigenous performers from the local area, the state, the nation and the world who used the event to communicate with each other as well as perform for the non-Indigenous in the audiences.

Finally the associated film festivals, *Shedding Light* and *Casting Shadows* featured films made by Indigenous directors and/or with Indigenous themes that again reminded festivalgoers that Indigenous Australia should be central to all things Australian. Perhaps part of the controversy that dogged this Festival grew from resentment against this message or its source (a North American cultural industry leader).

Conclusion

As former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (2000) observed, "... reconciliation is not something that will happen on one day in one particular year. It is an ongoing process which involves both government and people". As this paper has demonstrated, tourism will have a role to play in the fostering of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Communities such as the Ngarrindjeri who run Camp Coorong are committed to using tourism as a means to foster the understanding and better relations that are prerequisites for achieving reconciliation.

It is important for tourism planners and government agencies to realise that Indigenous tourism cannot prosper without acknowledging the vital importance of reconciliation in Australia and contributing to its achievement. This is certainly one of the important lessons to be learned from the experience of the 2000 Olympics - that instead of being a site for disruptive Indigenous protests under the international spotlight, the Olympics instead showcased what Australia could and should be.

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Action agenda: future research

This paper has addressed the topic of reconciliation tourism only in a preliminary fashion by examining how one community uses the opportunity of tourism to work towards the attainment of reconciliation; therefore much remains for future research on this topic, as well as volunteer tourism and the broader category of tourism as a force for peace. Although the tourism literature is beginning to address Indigenous tourism in a focused way, only a few analysts have even superficially addressed the reconciliation motivation in Indigenous communities' engagement with tourism (Ryan, 1997; Sofield and Birtles, 1996; Zeppel, 1999).

This may reflect the current neoliberal environment where value is conferred only on the economic dimensions of tourism. Yet the work of facilities such as Camp Coorong is contributing to social outcomes for Australian society which are of benefit in tangible and intangible ways. However, it may take recognition of consumer demand for this market niche to be accorded attention by the tourism industry, governments and analysts.

In particular, future research will need to address the type of tourists drawn to reconciliation tourism, as modelled in Ryan and Huyton's work (2000a and 2000b) on demand for Aboriginal tourism experiences and as called for by Wearing (2000) in his outlining of a research agenda for volunteer tourism. A note of caution has been sounded by Ryan (2002) about the ambivalence, or perhaps even hostility, that the domestic *pakeha* (non-Maori) market has to Maori tourism product in New Zealand. This appears

in part to be due to societal tensions that could be directly relevant to the Australian context and this requires further exploration.

Another promising vein of research would be longitudinal studies to determine if, and how, exposure to reconciliation efforts leads to transformation of tourists, encouraging their involvement in reconciliation or other social justice movements. Another area ripe for exploration is how societal structures of government, industry and other organisations play a reactive, enabling or ambivalent role in these processes, as alluded to in the case of Alexandrina Council described above.

Finally it could prove lucrative to make the macro-micro connections of tourism as an agent of social movements, for instance, by examining how the international Indigenous networks forged at Camp Coorong play out in the global arena.

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