

INQUIRY INTO TOURISM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Organisation: Tourism Coffs Coast

Date received: 28/06/2013

The Honourable Natasha MacLaren-Jones MLC
Member of the Legislative Council
Parliament of NSW
Chair – General purpose Standing Committee No.3

Re: Tourism in local communities inquiry

Natasha,

We welcome the opportunity to input into the inquiry into tourism in local communities.

Tourism Coffs Coast is a member based association and exists to support its members and their business wellbeing.

The Coffs Coast is an area dependent on tourism for its survival. There is over 9,000 businesses in the Coffs Coast area of which approximately 10% of these would be deemed core tourism product and close to another 50% would service the needs of tourists as they visit the area. The impact of a vibrant tourism industry plays an important role in the financial viability of the area along with the overall opportunities for the population of the area.

As an association we work closely with the local councils tourism and economic development units to strengthen opportunities afforded to them through their own budgets or those that are leveraged through State government dollars to support destination marketing. It appears that it is a compatible design when operators draw visitors to their individual experiences after the combined effort to draw them to the destination is enabled through this process.

While there is a certain economic benefit for individual operators for the existence of tourism products in areas such as the Coffs Coast, there appears to be a much wider economic and social benefit to the whole region. We are sure that there is a relative burden on some services and budgets to provide for the needs of tourism but believe that the overall benefits in employment, vibrancy and financial viability into business and overall economy far outweighs this. Just recently there was an amazing support of our local council to continue funding destination marketing by the whole community when there was suggestion that it may be something that could be stopped to reduce budgets.

As customers' expectations change we believe there is great value in the regulation of provision and service levels to meet varying customer needs. There must be some consideration of opportunities available to regional operators and destinations for this to be fully regulated. The travel distances, types and times need to be considered for regulation of experience levels due to the expected and achievable quantities of visitors to the area. It is a fair call to consistently look at the value of the overall experience, the expectation of \$ spend per visitor and the opportunity to market to which destinations by a regional body before real consistency of regulations become valid.

As an association we would greatly value the opportunity to work with our community and local council along with state government to understand the benefits and implications of a tourism levy. At initial investigation it certainly appears that if the whole of a community benefits from tourism as a whole, then there should well be an opportunity to raise some form of tourism levy to add to the dollar value of the marketing spend of each destination.

Once again we thank you for your opportunity to input into this initiative and can be contacted through our executive officer, _____ or info@tourismcoffscoast.com.au should you require any further information.

Regards

Director

www.tourismcoffscoast.com.au



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