

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Ms J Carney

to Minister for Tourism

Niche Market Development

1. Minister are you looking to develop niche markets?
2. If so, what niche markets are you targeting?
3. What research has identified these niche markets?

ANSWER

Yes, the NT Tourist Commission has identified a number of “niche” markets that require a specialist marketing approach. Whilst research is not used to “identify” these markets, ongoing research is used to substantiate and validate marketing opportunities. Niche markets are identified by the Commission as those markets that are more likely to be influenced by the Commission’s marketing activity in a more targeted manner, through specialist promotion and marketing activity.

There are many other markets that some may consider “niche” such as bird watching, trekking, 4WDing, camping etc. The NT Tourist Commission does not specifically target these as they are reached through mainstream marketing activity undertaken by the Commission. This has been substantiated through 2004 Market Segmentation studies conducted by independent consultants, Open Mind. This research identified 11 market segments, five of which are more likely to be predisposed to visiting a tourism destination such as the Northern Territory. These five segments are collectively referred to as the “spirited” traveller. They are specifically interested in holidays that offer a nature and culture experience which can include activities like camping, trekking etc.

The backpacker market is an important niche market to the Northern Territory and is identified as that portion of the market who either stay in hostel/ budget style accommodation and or participate in typical backpacker adventure style of activity.

Fishing is also an important niche market for the Top End. This market includes “hard core” fishers as well as those who may travel to the Northern Territory for a nature and culture experience and decide to try their hand at fishing whilst here.

And finally the last identified niche market is Gay and Lesbian (G & L) tourism, not because of the experience G & L people are seeking is any different to that of the Northern Territory’s identified “spirited traveller” but to more easily target this relatively affluent sector in a marketing sense.

Since 1998 the NT Tourist Commission has utilised Tourism Research Australia’s figures collected through the International Visitor Survey (IVS) and the National Visitor Survey (NVS) to determine visitor numbers to the Northern Territory, as well as profile and activity undertaken by

those visitors. These surveys have identified that in 2004, the Backpacker market accounted for approximately 10% of all visitors to the Territory. Specific figures for the G & L and Fishing markets are not captured by these surveys and it is recognised that both these markets are considerably smaller in size. As a result the marketing spend for both of these markets by the Commission is considerably less.

In addition to both the IVS and NVS surveys, the NT Tourist Commission developed in 2004 a Gay and Lesbian strategy. The strategy was developed through a process of consultation and research with stakeholders. The National Recreational Fishing Survey was conducted in 2001 by the former Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development (Fisheries Division) where it is estimated that 25% of all recreational fishing in the Northern Territory is conducted by visitors to the Territory with estimated expenditure of \$8.5 million .

More recently the NT Tourist Commission has dedicated personnel and resources to work with the backpacker industry in order to identify opportunities for marketing and product development within this sector. This process has included conducting of research with local operators and backpacker tourists throughout the Territory.