2015 nature-based tourism industry workshops: All workshops summary

In May 2015 the State Government began a project to explore how business, government and the community can work better together on nature-based tourism.

The project began with the release of a nature-based tourism discussion paper and survey in April 2015. The survey and discussion paper attracted 240 responses.

It continued with a series of workshops that explored the ideas submitted by survey respondents.

More than 200 people attended the workshops, which were held in Kingscote, Adelaide, Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln and Kingston-upon-Murray.

The following pages present a raw feedback summary from all workshops.

This project is continuing and will feed into an action plan for South Australia’s national parks, marine parks and reserves to boost nature-based tourism in South Australia.

Ongoing project updates will be available via tourism.sa.gov.au and parks.sa.gov.au.

1. **Government:**
   - Is an enabler of the nature-based tourism industry, working in a timely and responsive way.
   - Values the visitor economy.
   - Has a state-wide decision-making framework for considering new ideas.
   - Actively encourages inter-government collaboration to work through cross departmental policy reform.
   - Actively engages with traditional owners to develop indigenous tourism opportunities.
   - Recognises and values the range of industry and community perspectives that need to be balanced when managing South Australia’s natural and cultural assets.

2. **Information management:**
   - Is key to encouraging visitation.
   - Can assist guides and independent visitors, significantly increasing visitor satisfaction and appreciation of the natural and cultural assets.
   - Improves the understanding and recognition of the value of local tourism.
   - Improves the capacity to grow local economies, including through better industry cross selling.
   - Requires a focus on open data so that parks information can be better distributed via third party websites, apps and visitor information centres.
   - Can be used to demonstrate the value of the nature-based tourism industry.
   - Can be an important part of encouraging indigenous tourism opportunities.
   - Can encourage free and independent travellers to behave appropriately in parks.
3. **Funding:**
   - Successful park management requires considering different funding models such as public-private partnerships and returning fees to individual parks or projects.
   - Models must be clear so that commercial tour operators and visitors know what their park fees contribute to.
   - Must contribute to well maintained and contemporary visitor facilities and assets at key sites.
   - Allocation must consider visitor needs.
   - Can make better use of existing assets such as the Heysen Trail and fire trails.

4. **Workforce development:**
   - Is an important part of nature-based tourism. This includes careers for young people through schools and training partners providing pathways to nature-based tourism jobs.

5. **Government’s role as a tourism operator:**
   - Should be considered as the private sector may deliver visitor experiences more effectively.
   - Should use contemporary tourism mechanisms including being part of the tourism distribution system via a commissionable pricing structure.

6. **Visitor management:**
   - Should include review of the park passes and online booking system to be more visitor friendly.
   - Could allow commercial tour operators, community groups and local stakeholders to work more actively with DEWNR on agreed goals, such as increasing awareness of appropriate behaviour, particularly at sensitive sites.

7. **Destination management:**
   - Should involve and engage the community in stewardship to achieve tourism, land management and research outcomes.
   - Should capitalise on existing regional agreements such as National Landscapes plans.
   - Should foster a stronger collective nature-based tourism voice.
   - Should consider the regional community in park infrastructure and management decisions.
   - Should include nature-based tourism in destination management plans.
   - Should include issues wider than the destination such as access, transport, touring routes and itinerary development.

8. **Private sector**
   - Should work collectively together to develop a voice for nature based tourism.
   - Should develop appropriate rewards and recognition for good operators.
   - Should consider ways to provide business development and start up support.
   - Growth into international markets is sometimes limited by the scale of individual businesses. Small businesses can be perceived as unreliable and have limited international distribution opportunities.
   - Requires greater business security, such as consistency, certainty and length of licencing and lease arrangements.
   - May benefit from a transparent and equitable process for providing exclusivity, or visitor number control, at sensitive sites.
   - Requires a clear understanding of who to talk to in government.
   - Would benefit from decreased red tape and administrative loads.
9. **Marketing and communications:**
   - Can raise awareness of nature-based tourism experiences in the community and within the industry through park open days.
   - Could be undertaken better by industry if media licencing recognised the contemporary media landscape including the pace of media opportunities and social media distribution.
   - Should better recognise nature-based tourism in the South Australia brand and regional brands.
   - Recognise parks are an important part of the visitor experience across all of South Australia.

10. **Commercialisation framework:**
    - Can create a clearer way for new business opportunities in parks to be developed through opportunities including government-driven opportunities, unsolicited bids and regular expression of interest requests.