

Indigenous Cultural Tourism as part of the Birdsville/Strzelecki experience

Lyn Leader-Elliott

Flinders University

Abstract. This paper examines some issues relating to inclusion of Aboriginal cultural heritage in a recent heritage tourism study carried out along the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks in South Australia and Queensland. Tourism surveys show low levels of perception of 'Aboriginality' linked to the Outback, possibly connected to the poor representation of Aboriginal cultural association with the study region in tourist literature as well as on the ground. Legislative and administrative considerations led to the omission of Aboriginal heritage from the heritage tourism study, which was required to concentrate on post-settlement historic heritage. The report recommended that the Aboriginal story be told where appropriate, and that this be based on consultation with Aboriginal communities to identify places suitable for interpretation, so that a layered understanding of people and place can be developed.

Cultural Heritage and Tourism Survey of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks

In 2001, Heritage South Australia and the Australian Heritage Commission jointly funded a survey to identify places of historic heritage significance at national, state and local level in a strip approximately 100km wide, 50km either side of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks. The survey area included the three main settlements of Marree, Innamincka and Birdsville as well as Burke and Wills sites in Queensland. This part of Outback South Australia is one of the last regions to be surveyed under the State's systematic heritage survey program which was begun in the late 1970s. This survey differed from all previous South Australian regional heritage surveys in several respects. The project area extended over the state border into Queensland in two places (Birdsville itself, and the Burke and Wills sites near Nappa Merrie). And, for the first time, a regional heritage survey was combined with a tourism strategy based on heritage management principles. This is also unusual in the tourism world, where heritage management considerations are not a common starting point for regional tourism development strategies.

The primary objective of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey was the assessment of cultural heritage resources associated with the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks; to test assessment methodologies and recommend places for listing in National, State and local heritage registers; and as an input to developing a regional

heritage tourism strategy for the Lake Eyre Basin¹. Although the term 'cultural heritage' at face value could be expected to include Indigenous heritage, it was clear for this survey that it meant historic heritage, with contact history being the only place where Indigenous cultural heritage would fit within the brief.

Potential themes relevant to the survey area were identified as Aboriginal contact, exploration, pastoralism, transport and communications, social life and organisations (hotels, settlements and outback general stores) and the geology and natural history of the region. The brief specified that recommendations should be restricted to places of significant interest, and that these might 'include a building, an industrial site, a monument, a ruin, a vacant area which may be of archaeological significance, a burial place, a garden, a plantation, a geological site or a variety of other places'. The brief also required that recommendations be developed for the heritage tourism potential of significant heritage places throughout the Survey Area. The heritage tourism strategy was supported by the Australian Heritage Commission, which is responsible for historic, Indigenous and natural heritage at the national level. The heritage survey documentation was required to 'include how these places are currently being used or managed, their condition, recommendations about potential and suitability of these heritage places for use in heritage tourism itineraries and how they might be used thematically, *and in conjunction, with natural and/or indigenous heritage places in the Survey Area*'². This requirement reflected the broader ambit and interests of the Australian Heritage Commission, which has been supporting an integrated approach to heritage management since the 1998 Heritage Convention³. However, as the heritage survey itself was confined to places of historic significance in the post-settlement period, the links with Indigenous or natural heritage places could only be indicated in a general way. As part of the survey, consultations were held with pastoralists, mining industry, national parks and residents of the three towns. Four Indigenous community members were included in the consultations as active members of the wider community, but no specific consultation was held with Indigenous groups about places significant to them. This was the case even with the known Indigenous contact sites such as the Lutheran missions to the Dieri at Killalpaninna, Kopperamanna and Bucaltaninna and massacre sites such as that at Koonchera waterhole on Clifton Hills Station.

The three places in the region which are on the Register of the National Estate are Burke and Wills Dig Tree Reserve on Nappamerry Station in Queensland, the Koonchera Dune (listed for its natural environment features) and the Cooper Creek floodplain on the Strzelecki Track (AHC 2002a). While the latter is mentioned primarily for its natural environmental features, the Australian Heritage Places Inventory notes that the '[Australian Heritage] Commission has determined that this place has Indigenous values of national estate significance. The Commission is currently consulting with relevant

¹ The Lake Eyre Basin project is being funded through the Commonwealth government and is managed through the Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Group, based in Longreach.

² Writer's italics.

³ For instance, the Australian Heritage Commission has published *Protecting Local Heritage Places* (1999) and *Successful Tourism at Heritage Places* (2001) which both incorporate historic and Indigenous cultural heritage as well as natural heritage.

Indigenous communities about the amount of information to be placed on public record.’ (AHC 2002b).

Killalpaninna alone of the Indigenous contact sites in the region is listed on the South Australian Heritage Register (AHC 2002a).

The Region

The Birdsville Track runs from Marree in the South to Birdsville, just north of the Queensland border. The Strzelecki Track swings east from Lyndhurst and ends at Innamincka, although for the purpose of this survey the road continuing north of Innamincka to the Queensland border near Betoota has been included. The 50km corridor either side of the tracks extends into Queensland in the Birdsville and Nappa Merrie areas.

Figure 1.

The Survey Area was a 50 km strip either side of the tracks highlighted (source: Heritage SA).

The region is arid, and includes Sturt’s Stony Desert, the Tirari Desert and the Strzelecki Desert. The multiple watercourses of Cooper Creek and the Diamantina flow intermittently from Queensland to Lake Eyre in the south west. In flood years, they spread for kilometres, filling lakes such as the Coongie Lakes and overflow creeks such as the Strzelecki. In drought years, they are reduced to a series of water holes, often far apart. The landscapes are varied, with wetlands, red and white sand dunes, gibber plains, clay pans, salt lakes and mound springs. Summer temperatures are fiercely hot, and winter nights can be very cold. The climate and environment provide a challenging and highly variable set of circumstances both for people who live there, and for the travellers who visit.

Before European and Afghan settlement in the nineteenth century, Aboriginal people from fourteen or so language groups lived in this demanding country (Tindale 1974). In 2002, the ongoing association of Aboriginal people with this country is being asserted through native title claims. The South Australian office of the National Native Title Tribunal advised on 14 November 2002 that the following claims were currently before them. In the Queensland area around Birdsville there is the Wangkangurru/Yarlunyang Native Title Claim. In the South (moving from north to south) are Wangkangurru/Yarlunyang, Yandruwandha/Yawarrarrka, Dieri Mitha, Barngarla, Edward Landers Dieri Peoples, Kugani and Adnyamathanha #1 Native Title Claims.

German missionaries (Moravian and Lutheran) established missions at Kopperamanna and Killalpaninna on outflow lakes of the Cooper in 1866 and 1867 respectively. Both groups spent some time at nearby Bucaltaninna in the 1860s and 1870s. The Moravians stayed only a short time, but the Lutherans continued their

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missionary work until 1915, when they too abandoned their settlements on the Cooper (Bell et al 2002). Pastoralists have occupied the region from the 1870s and pastoralism is now the dominant land use in the region. The pattern of pastoral occupation has been punctuated by periods of prolonged drought during which retreat to the south or elsewhere was the only option for survival. Pastoral stations became small communities of habitation within an environment to be treated with caution. Other uses of the land in the now include the oil and gas industry, national parks and tourism.

Tourism in the region

The Australian Tourism Commission (ATC) has always featured Outback imagery in its international promotional material. All states except Tasmania are promoting the Outback experience they offer to visitors through their websites and their written material. Places as diverse as Mildura, Longreach, the Desert Parks, Western Australia's Canning Stock Route and the Larrapinta Trail out of Alice Springs are marketed as Outback centres or experiences. The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) is positioning South Australia as the gateway to the Outback, and is heavily promoting the Outback experience. The Great Cattle Drive, involving the droving of cattle from Birdsville to Marree during the Year of the Outback in 2002, was used as a publicity focus by the SATC throughout 2002.

Perceptions of pastoralists and townspeople within the survey region are that tourism is growing rapidly and that this is leading to increasing numbers of people visiting the outback who do not understand outback codes of behaviour such as camp hygiene, asking permission to enter land away from public access routes, and safe driving in the desert. As the number of visitors to the region continues to grow, the pressures on the fragile environments and heritage places of the Outback will increase. This pressure is particularly acute during events such as the filling of Lake Eyre, race meetings and the Cattle Drive.

While there is no detailed information on the numbers of visitors to the survey area or what they do when they are there, a broad picture of visitors to it can be estimated from figures which relate to the whole of the Outback region of South Australia. This region stretches north approximately from Port Augusta to the Northern Territory and Queensland across the whole width of the State. Flinders Ranges figures are collected separately. The South Australian Tourism Commission's *Flinders Ranges and Outback SA Tourism Profile* of August 2002 gives the total number of overnight visitors to the Outback as 235,000, of whom 54,000 were overseas visitors. About half of all interstate and international visitors visited both the Flinders Ranges and the Outback on their trips, whereas South Australians are more likely to visit one or the other, but not both in the same trip. Over 40% of domestic holiday visitors to Outback South Australia are South Australians. New South Wales accounts for 17% of visitors, Queensland for 15% and Victoria 12% (SATC 2002). Most of the tourism in the region covered by the survey area is generated by independent travellers, with some coach and 4 wheel drive safari group tours. The main mode of transport is 4 wheel drive vehicles. These figures are consistent with national patterns of Outback travel, which show that 'many domestic visitors to the

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Outback are from surrounding regions or are travelling on a longer trip with several stops. International visitors are also likely to be on a trip of several stops but are more likely than domestic visitors to travel by air than by car. (Robertson and Bradaric 2002:13).

The 1997 tourism strategy for the Flinders and Outback region indicates that the main activities undertaken there by tourists, in order of participation, are;

- scenic drives and sight seeing
- photography
- flora and fauna
- visiting historical sites
- bushwalking
- bird watching
- 4WD touring
- experiencing Aboriginal culture
- gem collecting (SATC 1997).

The 2002 Outback Tourism Profile prepared by the South Australian Tourism Commission lists the following top activities undertaken there by visitors to the Outback part of the region (excluding the Flinders Ranges):

- walk around/take in sights (60%)
- eat out/restaurants (28%)
- visit friends/relatives (18%)
- Visit history/heritage buildings (16%)
- pubs/discos/night life (13%)
- pleasure shopping (13%)
- bushwalking (12%)
- industrial tourism attractions (10%)
- Picnic/BBQ (10%)
- guided tour/excursion (8%)
- visit national parks (5%) (SATC 2002).

It is interesting to note that experiencing Aboriginal culture has disappeared from the list of stated activities over the five years between the two reports⁴.

Motivations and Expectations of Visitors about the Outback and Aboriginal Culture

As no detailed information is available on who visits this area, likewise there is none on the motivations and expectations of people who travel to the part of the Outback which comprised the study area. Given the range of interests, activities and types of visitors that have been identified in the tourism strategy documents relating to this region (SATC

⁴ The data in South Australian Tourism Commission 2002 are drawn from the Bureau of Tourism Research's National Visitor Survey 2001. The 1997 Flinders and Outback Tourism Strategy (SATC 1997) does not give the source of its information, and simply ranks the activities rather than ascribing figures to them.

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1997, 2001), it is reasonable to assume that different people are seeking different sorts of experience and that they will travel in different ways. The information that is available shows a startling lack of awareness of Aboriginal connections with Outback country.

Black and Rutledge (1995) carried out a survey of perceptions of the Outback amongst international and domestic visitors in the early 1990s. Their sample of 1451 people from Townsville, Kuranda and Cairns included local residents, domestic tourists and international tourists, and both people who had visited the Outback (61%) and those who had not. Respondents were asked to name four features that best represent the Outback. Results were collated, with the top twelve themes emerging as vastness, people, heat, wild life, dust, natural environment, peacefulness, dryness, plant life, desert, flies and Aboriginality. Aboriginality was therefore the lowest theme in the list of features that were perceived to represent the Outback. Features identified as part of 'Aboriginality' in the study were Aborigines, Aboriginal culture, paintings, settlements and sites. People who had *actually visited* the Outback (2.3%) were *less likely* to perceive Aboriginality as a feature of the Outback than those who had not visited the Outback (4.1% of responses)⁵. Experiencing Aboriginal culture was not mentioned in the lists of activities and experiences in which the respondents had participated. Yet nearly 26% of respondents had bought a souvenir which had an Aboriginal theme - art, artefacts, paintings, crafts, didgeridoo, boomerangs or spears (Black and Rutledge 1995:15-24). It seems odd that, with this reasonably high level of interest in buying souvenirs with Aboriginal themes, so few respondents identified Aboriginal art or culture as part of the potential Outback experience.

These results contrast with other studies which claim relatively high rates of interest amongst international visitors in visiting the Outback, experiencing Aboriginal art and craft and cultural displays, and visiting an Aboriginal site or community (Bulenda 1995:92, Zeppel 2001a, ATC 2002). Without further research, the reasons for these divergences of perception, and variance between expressed interest and behaviour can only be a matter of speculation. One finding which may have some relevance is that from a 1998-1999 survey of selected international visitors to Australia, from which it emerged that the main barriers to experiencing Aboriginal culture were 'lack of time and ...an inability to gain the required information about the activity to make plans' (ATC 2002:15). Furthermore, visitors interested in Aboriginal culture 'claimed that they saw "little" or "no" promotion of Aboriginal tourism while in Australia' (ATC 2002:16). This observation holds true for the Birdsville/Strzelecki region, where there is a profound lack of information on Aboriginal history and culture in most tourism literature (see below) .

Cultural heritage and tourism

There is little manufactured tourism product within the region. The attractions of this part of the Outback are derived from its varied arid landscapes, natural environmental systems and its cultural heritage – Indigenous, European and Afghan. The Outback is rich with historical associations, stories of courage and endurance; triumph and loss. Its

⁵ Writer's emphasis.

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natural and cultural heritage are the magnets that draw most people into the region. The tourism strategies recommended in the Birdsville/Strzelecki report are designed to ensure that this heritage can be preserved as a continuing resource, while making it accessible to visitors. The nature of this core tourism product in the region is such that it cannot be readily commodified.

The townships of Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka are small and currently not geared for heavy tourist pressure. Apart from specific events, such as the Birdsville Races, the townships do not cater for tourists at a level comparable with tourist centres such as Uluru or Coober Pedy. With the emphasis on the journey, and the process of movement, the tourist experience can be fairly superficial unless there is an awareness of what the environment means, and how people have lived within it through the centuries.

One of the main ways in which this understanding can be developed is through communicating the layers of meaning associated with a place, using different forms of interpretation. Guide books, guided tours, heritage trails, brochures and signs are all methods of interpretation. The cultural landscapes of the Birdsville/Strzelecki are complex, with the layers of human history inextricably linked with the watercourses and lakes and the dry lands between. Aboriginal trading parties, European explorers, pastoralists and the overlanders of stock all followed the watercourses.

The consultancy team was aware that the survey area is rich in Aboriginal places; there are middens, stone workings, burial and engraving sites as well as places associated with Dreaming stories. Because South Australian laws and administrative structures separate historic and Aboriginal heritage, it was not possible for the survey to incorporate information on any places with significant connections with Aboriginal people, apart from contact sites. Historic, Indigenous and natural heritage are assessed and administered by different agencies, making a consistent approach to heritage management extremely difficult. Built and maritime heritage are administered by Heritage South Australia whose primary roles (Anon. 2002a) are:

to identify, conserve, protect, promote and provide policy on the built and maritime heritage of South Australia within the context of relevant legislation. ... Heritage SA does not deal significantly with Aboriginal, archival, folklife or natural heritage, nor with built heritage judged of local significance.

Heritage South Australia administers legislation relating to the non-Indigenous historic environment and manages the State's heritage survey program. Indigenous heritage is administered through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs which facilitates 'appropriate identification, recording and conservation of Aboriginal culture and history throughout the State through the administration of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* (Anon. 2002b).

This legal separation made for incomplete assessment of places of cultural significance, and a tourism strategy that could point the need for consultation and inclusion, but could not be inclusive because the research task and outcomes were constrained by the legislative framework.

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The heritage survey was able to discuss the history of contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the region, drawing from existing published work by authors as different as George Farwell (1950), Lois Litchfield (1986), Helen Tolcher (1996), and anthropologist Luise Hercus (1985, 1986 and 1990). The Indigenous people were displaced by settlement and dispossession of watering points along stock routes and the telegraph line. Co-existence with the pastoral industry occurred as well, with many Aborigines involved in the running of stations. They were involved in the running of pastoral empires, stock management, horse riding and tracking. The region includes places such as Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna where missionaries came into contact with Indigenous peoples and the settlements of Oodnadatta and Marree (Farwell 1950, Litchfield 1983) where many lived (and live).

It also includes sites of terrible murders and Indigenous massacres such as Koonchera, Lake Hope, Appamanna, Innamincka and Coongie in South Australia and at Cooninghera and Oontoo in Queensland. Journalist George Farwell wrote 'The Dieri and the Wonkonguru were luckless enough to stand directly in the path of a lawless and acquisitive wave of new settlement' (Farwell 1950:165). Hercus, who has studied the oral histories of the Indigenous peoples of the north-east, has identified six major massacres in a relatively small area of the region, including that at Koonchera waterhole on Clifton Hills (Hercus 1991). At Koonchera, between 200 to 500 people were killed in a surprise raid on members of the Yandruwandha, Yawarrawarrka, Karangura and Ngamini peoples camped along the southern shore of the waterhole in large numbers for the Mindiri ceremony, in about 1885 (Leader-Elliott and Iwanicki 2002).

In the region itself, the Indigenous history and presence is not readily apparent to the traveller or the casual observer. There are exceptions, such as the Arabunna Community Centre at Marree, which includes a small museum of Aboriginal artefacts. Tourist brochures for the region have minimal information on Aboriginal presence in the region, and none gives any information on Aboriginal history or cultural links with the land. For instance, the Aboriginal derivation of Innamincka (Yidnininckanie) and the existence of Aboriginal carvings at Cullyamurra Waterhole are the only mentions of Indigenous places in the *Flinders Ranges and Outback 2000 Visitor Guide* for the Strzelecki Track. The section on the Birdsville Track in this guide mentions the Killalpaninna mission an attraction (FROSAT 2000). A self-styled 'glove box guide to South Australia's wildlife, waterways and the Outback' has an enigmatic reference to Innamincka having 'the Yauraworka and Yantruwanta existence' (Gibb 2002). No other reference is made to Indigenous presence or history for the Birdsville, Strzelecki or Oodnadatta Tracks.

Most tourist guidebooks covering this region concentrate on the natural environment, and the history they do present is mostly the history of non-Indigenous exploration and pastoralism. The mission sites are regularly mentioned in tourism literature, with particular emphasis on Killalpaninna which is more accessible than the others. Some massacre sites such as Koonchera are mentioned in some sources, such as

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the Royal Automobile Association and Lonely Planet guides to the Outback, and the Westprint map of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks (Nicol 1994, O'Byrne 1998, Deckert 2002). Ron and Viv Moon's *Discover Australia by 4WD* (2000:376) has one sentence which acknowledges a past Aboriginal presence along the Birdsville Track:

Aboriginal people used the deserts for many thousands of years before the coming of the European, and their trade routes crossed the region, with Flinders Ranges ochre and Lake Eyre pituri being some of the goods traded over extremely long distances.

Johnson and de Courcy (1998) treat the Aboriginal association with the region more thoroughly than any of the other sources consulted for this study, drawing on *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* (Horton 1994), for their information. Their information on the Birdsville Track includes a page of information on the Diyari people (Johnson and De Courcy 1998:106) and several pages on Aboriginal culture and history in the area around Innamincka. The pre-contact life of the peoples of the Cooper Creek is discussed briefly, together with anecdotes of Sturt's meetings with them, and a page on 'Pastoralism and the Aboriginal people' (Johnson and de Courcy 1998:67-70). On the whole, however, there is resounding silence about the Aboriginal people of the region. There is no discussion of the different meanings of the land and the landscape for Indigenous peoples and settlers, or of what Zeppel (2001:134) sees as a requirement for Indigenous tourism - 'the interpretation of Indigenous cultural landscapes'. Missing too is any awareness of the centrality of the concept of country for Indigenous peoples as expressed by Deborah Bird Rose: 'Country is a place that gives and receives life. Not just imagined or represented, it is lived in and lived with....Country is the key, the matrix, the essential heart of life' (Rose 1996: 7-11).

The narrow band of information provided to travellers in this section of Australia's Outback is consistent with Zeppel's (1999) finding that there was 'limited acceptance of Aboriginal people and acknowledgment of Aboriginal cultures in NSW regional visitor guides', that 'few brochures acknowledge local tribes' or current land custodians, and that '[d]etails about Aboriginal missions and massacre sites are not included in NSW tourism brochures as local history' (Zeppel 1999:129).

The narrow information range is probably also connected to the low levels of perception amongst many travellers that the Outback is a place where they might come in contact with or experience Indigenous cultures. And it certainly means that travellers relying on these sources and others like them cannot develop an understanding of the layers of cultural depth and meaning in this country. To compound this lack of information in tourist literature, there is effectively no representation of Indigenous histories and cultures on the ground, apart from the Arabunna Community Centre. Indigenous heritage as defined in a recent publication from the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC 2002c) is not represented at all.

Indigenous heritage is dynamic. It includes tangible and intangible expressions of culture that link generations of Indigenous people over time. Indigenous people express their cultural heritage through 'the person', their relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects all of which arise from Indigenous spirituality.

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Indigenous heritage places are landscapes, sites and areas that are particularly important to Indigenous people as part of their customary law, developing traditions, history and current practices. All Indigenous heritage places have associated Indigenous heritage values.

Indigenous heritage values include spirituality, law, knowledge, practices, traditional resources or other beliefs and attachments.

Linking Heritage and Tourism

The Birdsville/Strzelecki heritage tourism strategy was based on principles put forward in two Australian documents which were developed specifically to address issues arising from the interaction of heritage and tourism. The Australian Heritage Commission's *Successful tourism at heritage places* (AHC 2001) sets out principles and guidelines for tourism operators, heritage managers and communities. *Tourism with Integrity* (Leader-Elliott 1999) is a self-assessment manual for cultural and heritage organisations which want to succeed in the tourism industry. Together, these two documents provide a theoretical framework and practical tools that can help heritage and tourism to work together successfully (Leader-Elliott 2001).

The factors identified in *Successful tourism at heritage places* as essential for successful heritage tourism operation are:

- A clear and shared understanding of the significance of places involved
- Respect different cultures including indigenous cultural needs
- Establish community support and ownership
- Develop and maintain active partnerships over time
- Develop appropriate site management practices
- Adhere to sound business and planning principles
- Deliver a quality visitor experience
- Continually improve business, marketing and site management practices

Both documents recognise that for heritage and tourism to work together successfully, partnerships must be built between the three sectors most directly involved – the tourism industry (including travellers/visitors themselves), heritage managers and members of the communities who identify with heritage places. (AHC 2001:9; Leader-Elliott 1999).

The strategic framework devised for the Birdsville/Strzelecki tourism plan included these principles:

- sustainable tourism in this fragile environment requires careful strategic management;
- specific measures will be required for individual sites to protect them against damage;
- the tourist experience will be enhanced if tourists have the opportunity to understand the meaning of the places they see;
- landholders' rights to control access onto their properties should be respected;
- Aboriginal associations with place and Aboriginal culture should be presented and interpreted wherever possible in this region, provided that this is acceptable to relevant Aboriginal communities;
- any presentation or interpretation of Aboriginal associations with place should be determined in collaboration with the Aboriginal communities concerned;

- decisions on presentation and interpretation of sites on pastoral land should be made in consultation with leaseholders;
- existing community initiatives to present and interpret historical and other places of interest should be encouraged and reinforced
- communities should be involved in interpretive programs wherever possible.

Examples of some of the tourism recommendations of the report are given here to illustrate the ways that these principles have been applied:

- Interpretation should tell the stories of people who have lived along the Tracks, the physical and cultural landscapes and the shaping of the environment.
- Where possible and appropriate, interpretation should include information on Aboriginal associations with place. Decisions on inclusion of information connected with the Aboriginal cultural meaning of places should be made in consultation with the Aboriginal communities concerned.
- Existing community interpretation activities be encouraged and strengthened where appropriate, and interpretive signs be developed and planned in consultation with local people.

Principles such as those outlined in James (1999) and Janke (1998) were also taken into account in framing the strategic framework and recommendations in relation to Aboriginal culture and heritage. A general recommendation was made that Indigenous communities be consulted to identify aspects of Indigenous history, culture and landscape values that might be represented and interpreted to visitors, and ways in which any such interpretation might be carried out. Other recommendations were that:

- The Aboriginal story be told for places already in the public eye and wherever appropriate.
- Interpretive signage on landscapes, such as at Mungerannie Gap, Moppa Collina, and Strzelecki Crossing, should include their Aboriginal meaning and story if this is acceptable to the relevant communities and observes correct protocols.
- Aboriginal places suitable for interpretation be identified along the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks.
- Contemporary and recent Aboriginal experience be included in interpretation and story telling where appropriate as well as the more remote past and Dreaming stories. Life in the townships and settlements could be included as well as pastoral life on the stations.

The constraints imposed by the segmentation of State heritage legislation imposed a methodology which precluded a holistic approach to cultural heritage assessment in this region. It was not possible to discuss with traditional owners whether they might want to have some knowledge of their stories and their country included as places for which interpretation might be suitable. Indigenous community members consulted identified some places of post-settlement heritage interest, expressed an interest in telling their own memories and family stories and accepted the open nature of the recommendations made.

Australian and international tourists can only develop an integrated cultural awareness of place and space if the information is available to them to do this. It is important to work collaboratively to develop ways in which the depth and richness of Indigenous association with the land can be presented and interpreted, while respecting

the need for the spiritual meanings of many places to remain out of the public domain. Consultation with Indigenous communities is essential for the identification of places which have potential for interpretation, to the ways in which they might be interpreted, managed and presented.

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Lyn Leader-Elliott, Lecturer in Cultural Tourism, Flinders University / lyn.leader-elliott@flinders.edu.au

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