Perceptions of Authenticity: Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in the Northern Territory

by

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Dedication

To my parents, who risked so much to give us a better life.

To my own family, Shaun and Kaylan, who mean everything to me.
Acknowledgements

This work would have never seen the light of day without the guidance, support and involvement of many people.

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

.................................................................

(Signature)
Abstract

Since the 1970s there has been a growing interest in Indigenous cultures globally. In Australia, the recognition that Aboriginal art and culture represents a distinct component of Australian identity has resulted in increased promotion of Aboriginal cultures and heritage sites as unique tourist attractions, mainly since the 1990s. Research indicates that there is a significant international interest in Australian Indigenous cultures. In particular, it has been suggested that tourists want to experience ‘real’ Aboriginal culture and that they desire ‘authentic and genuine’ Aboriginal cultural experiences.

Despite the fact that the concept of authenticity remains important to the different stakeholder groups of Aboriginal tourism, including tourists, tour operators and promoters as well as State/Territorial Governments, limited understanding exists as to what ‘authentic’ Aboriginal culture and, in particular, ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experiences constitute in the minds of these stakeholders. Whilst an abundance of research exists that has addressed the issue of authenticity in different tourism settings, the majority of studies have treated the concept of authenticity as something given and have used quantitative tools to analyse the authentic-inauthentic binary. However, research utilising such methods has failed to uncover the different perspectives and meanings respondents may hold of the notion of authenticity.

Notably, the perceptions of authenticity in Indigenous tourism have received little attention. The few existing studies on authenticity in Indigenous tourism settings have given emphasis to differing agendas, and have therefore provided only a piecemeal understanding of how authenticity is perceived and interpreted by the different stakeholders of Indigenous tourism. More importantly, research on Aboriginal hosts’ perceptions of authenticity is virtually non-existent. Yet, clarification of how tourists and hosts perceive authenticity in Aboriginal tourism is essential when addressing issues of accreditation and branding as well as key marketing objectives that aim to promote ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experiences.
This study seeks to address the gaps within the tourism literature surrounding authenticity in Aboriginal tourism. The aim is to understand the concept of authenticity in Aboriginal tourism from a stakeholder perspective. The study is guided by two main research questions: What are the perceptions of authenticity of tourists as well as tour providers and their employees? and Are theoretical perspectives of the notion of authenticity shared by those stakeholders? More specifically, this study investigated five important issues: 1) tourists’ perceptions of authenticity at three different Aboriginal cultural tours; 2) the perceptions of three Aboriginal cultural tour operators and their employees in regard to authenticity; 3) whether there were any discrepancies and/or similarities between the perceptions of tour operators/employees and tourists about what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience; 4) whether any of the different theoretical perspectives of authenticity were shared by tourists and tour operators/employees; and 5) whether a conceptual framework could be developed that provides an overview of salient elements explaining the formation of perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

In order to examine the research questions a qualitative research methodology grounded in the constructivist paradigm was adopted. This paradigm was chosen as it reflects the exploratory nature of the research and allows for flexibility throughout the research process. This study utilised qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method together with participant observation. Data was collected from 92 interviews, consisting of 72 tourists and 20 employees, within three Aboriginal cultural tour companies in the Northern Territory. The three different Aboriginal cultural tours chosen for the purpose of this study were: Tiwi Tours at Bathurst Island, Manyallaluk Aboriginal Cultural Tours near Katherine and Anangu Tours at the Uluru-Kata-Tjuta National Park.

The results of this research revealed that respondents hold multiple constructions of the notion of authenticity. In general, however, most respondents associated an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience with a genuine experience which does not feel contrived, staged or ‘plastic’. In particular, the study found that respondents’ perceptions of authenticity can be grouped into four elements. The first element consisted of the background and role of the Aboriginal tour guide, which was found
to be a major factor influencing respondents’ perceptions on whether the tour was offering an authentic experience. The second element is characterised by the tourists’ search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aboriginal people. Here, respondents equated authenticity with the opportunity to visit a ‘real’ Aboriginal working community and to be able to experience Aboriginal people in an everyday setting. Respondents were found to hold preconceived notions and images in their minds as to who ‘real’ Aboriginal people are and what their ‘authentic’ lifestyle should involve. In addition, the majority of respondents defined authentic Aboriginal culture as the contemporary culture of Aboriginal people. Consequently, an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience was conceived in terms of gaining an insight into the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people.

The third element that contributed to the experience of authenticity is associated with having the opportunity to see and/or purchase authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts. Respondents perceived a product as authentic if it conformed to specific criteria, such as reflecting uniqueness and originality and being handmade by a local artist. Verification of authenticity was also generated by the shopping experience itself, for example meeting the artist and watching how the craft is produced. Finally, the fourth element in the construction of authenticity is related to tourists’ perceptions of the dance performance. Some respondents recognised this as a contrived experience that lacked ‘traditional’ authenticity, while some respondents wanted to see an authentically contrived or staged cultural performance as this was regarded as an occasion for entertainment and enjoyment.

Furthermore, the findings of this study suggested that respondents generally referred to the authenticity of toured objects (object authenticity) when describing their perceptions of an authentic experience. The majority of tourists and employees employed a constructivist approach within their conceptualisation of the notion of authenticity. Only a small number of tourists appeared to hold attitudes similar to the objectivist and postmodern perspectives.
# Table of Contents

**ABSTRACT** .................................................................................................................................................. I

**TABLE OF CONTENTS** ............................................................................................................................... IV

**LIST OF TABLES** .......................................................................................................................................... VIII

**LIST OF FIGURES** ........................................................................................................................................ IX

**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS** ...................................................................................................................... X

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................ 1

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH ...................................................................................................... 3

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES ....................................................................................... 7

1.4 RESEARCH CONTEXT ............................................................................................................................. 8

1.5 LIMITATIONS ........................................................................................................................................ 10

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH .................................................................................................. 11

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE .............................................................................................................................. 12

1.8 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................................................ 14

## CHAPTER 2: INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT – ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOURISM AND AUTHENTICITY ......................................................................................................................... 15

2.1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................................... 15

2.2 SETTING THE CONTEXT OF ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOURISM .......................................................... 15

2.2.1 Cultural Tourism ................................................................................................................................ 16

2.2.1.1 What is Cultural Tourism? ........................................................................................................... 17

2.2.1.2 Cultural Tourism in Australia ...................................................................................................... 20

2.2.2 Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in Australia .......................................................................................... 22

2.2.2.1 Nature and Extent of Aboriginal Tourism Involvement ............................................................... 27

2.2.2.2 Demand for Aboriginal Tourism in Australia .............................................................................. 32

2.3 THE QUEST FOR EXPERIENCING THE ‘AUTHENTIC’ OTHER ............................................................. 36

2.3.1 The Promotion of ‘Authentic’ Indigenous Peoples and Cultures .......................................................... 37

2.4 AUTHENTICITY IN TOURISM RESEARCH ............................................................................................ 41

2.4.1 Perceptions of Authenticity in Indigenous Tourism Research ............................................................ 44

2.5 AUTHENTICITY FROM AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE ....................................................................... 46

2.5.1 Authenticity within State/Territorial Aboriginal Tourism Strategies ................................................. 49
CHAPTER 3: INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT – THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF AUTHENTICITY ........................................ 56

3.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 56
3.2 THE CONCEPT OF AUTHENTICITY ........................................................................ 56
3.3 OBJECT AUTHENTICITY ..................................................................................... 60
   3.3.1 Modernist and Objectivist Perspective ....................................................... 60
      3.3.1.1 Tourists Typology .................................................................................... 67
   3.3.2 Constructivist Perspective .......................................................................... 71
   3.3.3 Postmodernist Perspective ......................................................................... 75
   3.3.4 Applying Heidegger’s Perspective to Object Authenticity ......................... 82
3.4 AUTHENTICITY AND COMMODITISATION OF LOCAL CULTURE ....................... 84
3.5 AUTHENTICITY AND TOURIST ARTS .................................................................. 89
3.6 EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY .......................................................................... 94
   3.6.1 Heidegger’s Conceptual Framework for Existential Authenticity ............. 98
3.7 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................ 100

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .................................................................. 102

4.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 102
4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM ...................................................................................... 103
   4.2.1 Why Qualitative Research? ........................................................................ 107
4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN .............................................................................................. 110
4.4 RESEARCH METHODS ......................................................................................... 112
   4.4.1 Sampling Strategies ..................................................................................... 113
   4.4.2 Description of Study Population .................................................................. 120
   4.4.3 In-depth Semi-structured Interviews ........................................................... 121
      4.4.3.1 Description of Sample .......................................................................... 124
   4.4.4 Participant Observation ............................................................................. 131
4.5 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS ......................................................................... 133
4.6 ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS ................................................................. 134
4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .......................................................................... 138
4.8 LIMITATIONS ..................................................................................................... 140
4.9 CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................... 141
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION ........................................... 142

5.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................. 142

5.2 CONTEXT .......................................................................................... 144

5.2.1 Previous Experiences ................................................................. 145

5.2.2 Preconceived Stereotypes .............................................................. 146

5.2.3 Prior Knowledge .............................................................................. 147

5.3 GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTICITY ................................... 150

5.4 ABORIGINAL TOUR GUIDE ............................................................. 155

5.4.1 Background of Aboriginal Tour Guide ................................................. 155

5.4.2 Custodians of Land and Stories - Intellectual Property ......................... 159

5.4.2.1 Intellectual Property - Accuracy and Integrity of Information ................. 162

5.4.3 Role of Aboriginal Tour Guide .......................................................... 166

5.4.3.1 Sharing Culture: Enhancing Cross-Cultural Understanding ...................... 166

5.4.3.2 Providing Personal Stories and Explanations ........................................... 172

5.4.3.3 Language ......................................................................................... 175

5.4.3.4 Offering Tangible Experience ............................................................ 176

5.4.4 ‘Genuine’ Interaction ........................................................................ 178

5.4.5 Summary: The Relationship between Perceptions of Authenticity and the Role of the Aboriginal Tour Guide ................................................... 183

5.5 THE SEARCH FOR ‘REAL’ AND ‘GENUINE’ ABORIGINES ....................... 189

5.5.1 Visiting a ‘Real’ Aboriginal Working Community ...................................... 189

5.5.2 Experiencing Aboriginal People the Way They Are? ................................. 195

5.5.3 Desire to Experience Contemporary and Traditional Lifestyle .................. 200

5.5.3.1 Interest in Aboriginal Culture .............................................................. 200

5.5.3.2 What is Authentic Aboriginal Culture? ................................................ 201

5.5.3.3 What is Authentic Contemporary Aboriginal Culture? ............................. 212

5.5.4 Concern for Keeping Traditional Culture Strong ..................................... 214

5.6 ABORIGINAL ARTS AND CRAFTS ..................................................... 216

5.7 CONTRIVED EXPERIENCE: ENJOYMENT FACTOR ............................ 220

5.7.1 Dance Performance ......................................................................... 220

5.8 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF AUTHENTICITY SHARED BY RESPONDENTS ... 227

5.8.1 Object Authenticity .......................................................................... 227

5.8.2 Existential Authenticity ....................................................................... 231

5.9 CONCLUSION ......................................................................................... 234
CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION ............................................... 236

6.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................. 236
6.2 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY ........................................................................... 237
6.3 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH ........................................................................ 242
6.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ......................................... 257
6.5 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS ................................................................. 258
6.6 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................ 260

LIST OF REFERENCES .......................................................................................... 263

VOLUME 2:

APPENDICES ........................................................................................................... 287

APPENDIX 1.1 PUBLISHED PAPER

APPENDIX 1.2 TIWI TOURS - COPY OF TOUR BROCHURE ........................................ 310

APPENDIX 1.3 MANYALLALUK ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOURS – COPY OF TOUR BROCHURE ........................................................................ 312

APPENDIX 1.4 ANANGU TOURS - COPIES OF TOUR BROCHURES
(2006 AND 2007 BROCHURE) .................................................................................. 317

APPENDIX 2.1 EXAMPLE OF TJAPUKAI’S WEBSITE PROMOTION ............................ 323

APPENDIX 2.2 EXAMPLES OF WEBSITE PROMOTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES ................................. 329

APPENDIX 4.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS .............................................. 339

APPENDIX 4.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE .......................................... 506

APPENDIX 4.3 PERMIT TO ENTER AND REMAIN ON ABORIGINAL LAND
(CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL) .................................................................................. 507

APPENDIX 4.4 INFORMATION STATEMENTS (TOURISTS AND EMPLOYEES) ...... 509

APPENDIX 4.5 INFORMED CONSENT FORM .......................................................... 513
List of Tables

**TABLE 2.1:** THE NATURE OF ABORIGINAL TOURISM INVOLVEMENT ................................. 29

**TABLE 2.2:** VISITORS WHO EXPERIENCED ABORIGINAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES, 2000-2005 ................................................................. 33

**TABLE 3.1:** TYPES OF TOURISTIC SITUATIONS .......................................................... 67

**TABLE 4.1:** SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (TIWI TOURS – TOURISTS) ................................................................. 125

**TABLE 4.2:** ORIGIN OF RESPONDENTS (TIWI TOURS - TOURISTS) ............................ 126

**TABLE 4.3:** SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (MANYALLALUK – TOURISTS) ................................................................. 127

**TABLE 4.4:** ORIGIN OF RESPONDENTS (MANYALLALUK - TOURISTS) ..................... 128

**TABLE 4.5:** SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (ANANGU TOURS – TOURISTS) ................................................................. 129

**TABLE 4.6:** ORIGIN OF RESPONDENTS (ANANGU TOURS – TOURISTS) .................... 130

**TABLE 4.7:** TECHNIQUES FOR ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS ......................... 135

**TABLE 5.1:** THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF OBJECT AUTHENTICITY SHARED BY RESPONDENTS ............................................................................ 232
List of Figures

**FIGURE 1.1:** LOCATION OF RESEARCH CASE STUDIES ....................................................... 8

**FIGURE 2.1:** INDIGENOUS TOURISM ................................................................................. 25

**FIGURE 4.1:** RESEARCH DESIGN PROCESS ....................................................................... 111

**FIGURE 5.1:** SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTS OF RESPONDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES AN AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOUR EXPERIENCE ................................................................. 143

**FIGURE 5.2:** TOURISTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL CULTURE .......... 211

**FIGURE 5.3:** TOURISTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL CULTURE ........................................................................................................ 214

**FIGURE 6.1:** IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOUR OPERATORS .......... 243

**FIGURE 6.2:** CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - SALIENT ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FORMATION OF AUTHENTICITY PERCEPTIONS ........................................ 254
Glossary of Acronyms

ABS    Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIATSIS  Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ASCO    Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ATA     Aboriginal Tourism Australia
ATC     Australian Tourist Commission
ATMA    Aboriginal Tourism Marketing Association
ATSIC   Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CLC     Central Land Council
DFAT    Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ITA     Indigenous Tourism Australia
NHMRC   National Health and Medical Research Council
NLC     Northern Land Council
NTTC    Northern Territory Tourist Commission
NTTM    Northern Territory Travel Monitor
ONT     Office of National Tourism
ROC     Respecting Our Culture
SATC    South Australian Tourism Commission
SLA     Statistical Local Area
TNSW    Tourism New South Wales
TRA     Tourism Research Australia
WAITOC  Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Committee
WTO     World Tourism Organization
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In Australia, tourism has emerged as a significant economic driver that plays an important role in regional development. Cultural tourism, which has gained increasing attention worldwide, has made a significant contribution towards this economic growth in Australia. Over the period 1997/98 to 2000/01, there were a total of 21.9 million international, domestic overnight and domestic day visitors who engaged in a cultural activity while visiting Australia. These cultural visitors spent around $18.2 billion per annum on goods and services, accounting for 28% of total tourism expenditure in Australia (Heaney and Salma 2002:1). Most recent figures show that half of all international visitors (51%) participated in at least one cultural and heritage activity in 2006, as did 13% of domestic overnight and 7% of domestic day visitors. These cultural and heritage visitors spent a total of $19.7 billion on their whole trip in Australia (TRA 2007:1).

Core to Australian cultural tourism is the definition of Aboriginal. In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989 and other Commonwealth legislation Aboriginal is defined simply as “a person who is a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia”. The word Indigenous is these days increasingly used as a term that embraces both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people (ATSIC 1999:60). Within the literature the terms Aboriginal and Indigenous have been used interchangeably. In this thesis the term Aboriginal has been adopted to refer to Australian Indigenous people, encompassing many diverse and different groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In this thesis the term Indigenous will refer to the studies of Indigenous cultures in other countries.

The desire of international tourists to participate in Aboriginal cultural experiences has attracted the attention of government bodies and industry operators. As it has been realised that Aboriginal art and culture represent a unique and distinct
component of Australian identity, Aboriginal cultural tourism has been increasingly marketed by the tourist industry resulting in heightened demand for Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences (Zeppel 1998; 2001). This demand, coupled with the aim of increasing economic and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, has translated into a growing Aboriginal involvement in the tourism industry. Today, Aboriginal tourism ventures include cultural tours, nature-based tours, cultural centres, arts and craft galleries as well as diversified visitor facilities (TNSW 2001; Tourism Western Australia 2006; ITA 2007).

A number of demand studies for Indigenous tourism have suggested that ‘authenticity’ and meaningful interactions with Indigenous people are important motivators for tourists visiting Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Tremblay 2007). Previous research undertaken in Australia also indicated that international visitors expressed a high interest in having an ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experience (ATC 2003). At the same time, it was found that tour operators, promoters and government organisations utilise the term ‘authenticity’ as an effective catchword to promote Aboriginal cultural experiences.

Likewise, Aboriginal tourism organisations have identified authenticity as a significant attribute of Aboriginal tourism, which is fundamental in providing sustainable Aboriginal tourism experiences. Hence, the notion of authenticity still plays an important role in the tourism industry and, as Wang (2000) argued, remains particularly relevant to certain types of tourism, such as ethnic, historical or cultural tourism. This is the case since these forms of tourism involve some kind of presentation or representation of ‘the Other’ (Wang 2000).

Whilst the search for authenticity by tourists has evolved to a central concept generating much discussion throughout the tourism literature, research examining the topic of authenticity in Indigenous tourism remains a relatively unexplored area of tourism research. In particular, limited understanding exists as to what constitutes an authentic experience in the minds of tourists and tour providers. This study therefore seeks to identify the different meanings various stakeholders of Aboriginal cultural tourism may hold of ‘authentic’ Aboriginal culture and of ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experiences.
The purpose of this first chapter is to provide the background to this research including an outline of the gaps in the tourism literature, the research questions and specific objectives, the research context and the contribution that this study makes.

1.2 Background to the Research

This research was stimulated by the researcher’s interest in Aboriginal cultural tourism, and more specifically her interest in the sociocultural impacts of tourism on Aboriginal communities in Australia. The researcher’s honours thesis focused on the sociocultural impacts of tourism in the Manyallaluk community in the Northern Territory (Szyznklarz 2003). The topic of this research was instigated by one of the findings of the honours thesis, which suggested that a discrepancy exists between some tourists’ expectations and the tourism product supplied by the Manyallaluk community (see appendix 1.1 for detailed discussion of honours findings).

Since the 1990s, Aboriginal cultures and heritage sites have been increasingly used in marketing efforts to promote Australia as a unique tourism destination (Zeppel 1998). Recognising the potential of Aboriginal culture for tourism, Aboriginal tourism development emerged as an important issue for Federal and State Governments. Thus, Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry has been viewed as an avenue for increasing economic opportunities for Aboriginal people by creating employment options and consequently reducing welfare dependency (Commonwealth of Australia 1991). States and territories have released Aboriginal tourism strategies, which encourage and support Aboriginal people and communities to be involved in tourism. Where Aboriginal people were once viewed as ‘passive onlookers of tourist activity’ (Craik 1994:174), they have now become actively involved in tourism by presenting their own cultures as a tourist attraction (Zeppel 1998). Aboriginal groups have moved from “being exotic tourist attractions to controlling tourism on Aboriginal lands and owning tourism enterprises” (Craik 2001:233).

Research by government organisations into the demand for Aboriginal tourism products suggests that there is a significant international interest in Australian
Aboriginal culture and in authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences. This interest appears to have translated into actual Aboriginal tourism participation rates. Recent figures showed that in 2005 there were 16% of total international visitors who took part in Aboriginal tourism activities during their travel in Australia (TRA 2006:1). In the time period of 2002/2003, an increasing number of international as well as domestic tourists (57% and 44% respectively) visiting the Northern Territory included Aboriginal art or cultural activities as part of their trip itinerary (NTTC 2004b:26). Additionally, 9% of independent holiday visitors undertook an Aboriginal tour (NTTC 2004b:27-8).

Moreover, research examining the demand side of Aboriginal tourism indicates that tourists want to experience ‘real’ Aboriginal culture and that they desire ‘authentic’ and ‘genuine’ Aboriginal cultural experiences (AGB McNair 1996; ATC 2003; Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000; Foo and Rossetto 1998; NTTC 2004b; SATC 1998). Shaping this demand for authentic experiences are marketing and promotional strategies developed by tourism industry operators and government organisations that use authenticity, whether in a direct or indirect way, to depict ‘genuine’ Aboriginal cultures and people as well as promote Aboriginal cultural experiences.

However, Aboriginal tour operators are often faced with the dilemma of choosing between the commercial viability of their company and the accurate portrayal of the elements of their local Aboriginal culture. As Aboriginal cultural tourism relies heavily on the cultural element of Aboriginal lifestyle, traditions and customs, the voice and perspective of Aboriginal people are essential in the successful and sustainable operation of Aboriginal tourism products. In regard to authenticity, Aboriginal tourism organisations stress the protection of intellectual and cultural property rights and view authenticity and cultural integrity as important elements in the branding and accreditation of Aboriginal tourism experiences. Similarly, the Aboriginal voice is further reflected in State/Territorial Aboriginal tourism strategies which use authenticity in specific strategies and action plans that aim to facilitate sustainable Aboriginal tourism development.
Consequently, the concept of authenticity remains important to the different stakeholder groups of Aboriginal tourism, including tourists, tour operators and promoters, State/Territorial Governments and Aboriginal tourism organisations. It has been emphasised that “authenticity of a tourism setting is not a real property or tangible asset, but instead is a judgment or value placed on the setting by the observer” (Moscardo and Pearce 1999:418). This has been largely ignored by industry operators and government organisations, who have used the term ‘authenticity’ as an effective buzzword for promoting Aboriginal tourism experiences, however, with little understanding of the meaning tourists place upon it. Yet, clarification of how tourists perceive the notion of authenticity in Aboriginal tourism is essential when addressing issues of accreditation and branding as well as key marketing objectives that aim to promote ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experiences.

The issue of authenticity identified as a central theme in the sociology of tourism has set the agenda for numerous discussions and debates over the past four decades. As Taylor (2001) noted, there are at least as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it. In fact, numerous authors have presented a variety of different theoretical perspectives related to the notion of authenticity. Recent conceptualisation of authenticity suggested a differentiation between the authenticity of toured objects (object authenticity) and the subjective experiences of authenticity (existential authenticity). Additionally, three different approaches associated with object authenticity have been identified, which involve objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism (Wang 1999).

Whilst it has been acknowledged that the concept of authenticity is multifaceted in nature, limited attention has been paid to the perceptions of the different actors of the tourism industry. In this respect, Bruner (1994:408) criticised that “…it may be these contemporary intellectuals who are the ones looking for authenticity, and who have projected onto the tourists their own view…” Similarly, Wang (1999) emphasised that what is judged by experts and intellectuals as inauthentic or staged authenticity may in actual fact be experienced as authentic and real from an emic perspective. According to Wang (1999), future research should identify whether the different theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by tourists.
Whilst there is a growing body of literature examining the concept of authenticity in different tourist settings, research investigating the emic view of tourists and hosts in regard to authenticity remains limited. In addition, many of the studies employed quantitative methods such as questionnaires with predetermined categories to determine or measure tourists’ perceptions of authenticity (Chhabra, Healy and Sills 2003; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Moscardo and Pearce 1986; Waitt 2000; Waller and Lea 1998; Xie and Wall 2002). However, those measures contained fixed and inflexible responses that could not fully reflect the respondent’s own perspectives and meanings of authenticity. As a result, one may argue that the authentic-inauthentic dichotomy usually examined does not generate any meaningful information about the perceptions of authenticity.

Accordingly, the perceptions of authenticity in Indigenous tourism have received little attention. The few existing studies on authenticity in Indigenous tourism settings have given emphasis to differing agendas and have therefore provided only a piecemeal understanding of how authenticity is perceived and interpreted by the different stakeholders involved in Indigenous tourism. More importantly, research on Indigenous hosts’ perceptions of authenticity is virtually non-existent. Yet, information to be derived from comparative studies into the conceptions of authenticity held by different stakeholders may contribute to the sustainability and economic viability of Indigenous enterprises.

Thus, several gaps have been recognised that limit the understanding of the Indigenous cultural tourism phenomena. The aim of this research is driven by those gaps, which in turn determined the research design for this study. The following gaps within the tourism literature were identified:

1. a lack of knowledge as to what constitutes authentic Indigenous culture, as well as what is meant by an authentic Indigenous tourism experience;
2. a lack of qualitative studies examining the emic view of tourists and hosts in regard to authenticity in Indigenous tourism settings;
3. a lack of knowledge of the potential discrepancies or similarities between the perceptions of tour operators and visitors towards what constitutes an authentic Indigenous tourism experience;
a lack of knowledge of whether theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by different stakeholders in the Indigenous tourism industry.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

This thesis seeks to address the gaps in the tourism literature surrounding authenticity in Aboriginal tourism. The aim is to understand the concept of authenticity in Aboriginal tourism from a stakeholder perspective. This study is therefore guided by two main research questions: What are the perceptions of authenticity of tourists as well as tour operators and their employees? and Are theoretical perspectives of the notion of authenticity shared by those stakeholders? More specifically, the research objectives of this study are:

1. to identify tourists’ perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism;
2. to identify the perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tour operators and their employees in regard to authenticity;
3. to examine potential discrepancies and/or similarities between the perceptions of tour operators/employees and tourists about what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience;
4. to investigate whether any of the different theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by tourists and tour operators/employees;
5. to develop a conceptual framework to provide an overview of salient elements explaining the formation of perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

In order to address the research questions and objectives a qualitative research methodology grounded in the constructivist paradigm was adopted. This paradigm was chosen as it reflects the exploratory nature of the research to be undertaken. The aim was to employ an inductive approach that allows theory to emerge from the perspectives, actions and experiences of those studied whilst providing flexibility throughout the research process.
1.4 Research Context

Three different Aboriginal cultural tours in the Northern Territory were chosen for the purpose of this study. These were Tiwi Tours at Bathurst Island, Manyalalluk Aboriginal Cultural Tours near Katherine and Anangu Tours at the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. The location of Tiwi Islands, Katherine and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National is shown in figure 1.1.

1. Tiwi Tours

Tiwi Tours offer guided tours to Aboriginal communities on Bathurst Island in the Northern Territory, Australia. The island is situated approximately 80 kilometres north of Darwin. The tours are called Tiwi Tours after the common local name for Aborigines of the area. The company, which is owned by the Tiwi Land Council, has been operating since 1981 with one- and two-day tours being run under the agreement by Aussie Adventure Holidays, a small group holiday specialist of the Northern Territory.

Figure 1.1: Location of Research Case Studies

Source: Aussie Adventure Holidays (2006a)
The tours begin in Darwin with a short scenic flight to Bathurst Island. After visiting a museum where tourists can learn about Tiwi history and culture, visitors are taken to the arts and craft centre. The tourists spend morning tea with some Tiwi ladies where the opportunity exists for cultural exchange. The tours then offer cultural experiences such as learning about traditional Aboriginal uses of the native flora and fauna as well as visiting a Tiwi burial site and learning about some of the complex rituals. Tourists can also enjoy the natural attractions of the island such as driving through the wilderness of Bathurst Island, visiting a waterfall and swimming in a waterhole (Aussie Adventure Holidays 2006b) (see appendix 1.2 for copy of tour brochure).

2. Manyallaluk Aboriginal Cultural Tours

Manyallaluk is a small Aboriginal community with a population of approximately 150 people, located 100km south-east of Katherine in the Northern Territory, Australia. Manyallaluk is the name of the traditional site near the community and means ‘Frog Dreaming’. In the 1980s the Jawoyn Association initiated tourism in Manyallaluk. In 1993, the Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation was formed taking over the management role from the Jawoyn Association (Hatton 1999).

Today, Manyallaluk is well known for community-based cultural tourism and has won several tourism awards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism and for Cultural and Heritage Tourism. The Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation promotes and operates one-day cultural tours throughout the year, and is owned and operated by the Manyallaluk community. The cultural tours offer a hands-on learning experience, where visitors can learn traditional Manyallaluk cultural practices such as painting, weaving, spear throwing and fire lighting (see appendix 1.3 for copy of tour brochure).

3. Anangu Tours

Anangu Tours Pty Ltd is owned by the traditional Aboriginal (Anangu) owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, in Australia's Northern Territory. The tour company commenced operations in October 1995 and has since won several Australian Tourism Awards. The tours take place at Uluru and are led by local Aboriginal guides. Visitors are offered an insight into the history and meaning of Uluru as well
as an opportunity to learn about Anangu customs and lifestyles. Anangu Tours offers guided cultural tours to special sites around Uluru, visits to the Cultural Centre, specialised guide services for special interest groups, and special experiences for conferences. Tourists can choose from a variety of cultural walks with different activities, such as learning about traditional tools and weapons, practicing spear throwing and learning about local bush foods (Anangu Waai! 2006) (see appendix 1.4 for copy of tour brochure).

1.5 Limitations

Due to the implementation of a qualitative research design there are a number of limitations embodied in this research. These limitations are related to the chosen scope of the study and the lack of longitudinal features.

The research area of this study was restricted to the Northern Territory where three Aboriginal tour companies were chosen for the purpose of this research (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion on the choice of research location and tour companies). As a result, the findings of this study are context-specific and limited in scope, reflecting the perceptions of tourists, tour operators and their employees at these three tour organisations. In addition, by not including any longitudinal dimensions, this research is a cross-sectional study. The findings are a reflection of respondents’ perceptions at the time the study was conducted. It is therefore a ‘snapshot’ of a point in time and lacks the ability to reflect other time periods. Due to these limitations generalisations of the findings and the replication of the study are not possible. The data cannot be extrapolated to the wider population, however, as a case study of three tour companies the findings can have comparative value for other Aboriginal tour organisations.
1.6 Significance of the Research

Several stakeholders of Aboriginal cultural tourism could benefit from the important contributions that this study is making. These include Aboriginal cultural tour operators, government organisations, Aboriginal tourism organisations and tourism researchers.

Aboriginal Cultural Tour Operators

The protection of cultural integrity should be an important issue to any tour providers offering Aboriginal cultural experiences. At the same time, however, tour operators need to be aware of customers’ needs and expectations in order to be able to make sound business decisions that essentially affect the operation of an economically viable business enterprise. Research shows that tourists expressed a high interest in ‘authentic’ Aboriginal cultural experiences (AGB McNair 1996; ATC 2003; Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000; Foo and Rossetto 1998; NTTC 2004b; SATC 1998). It is imperative that tour operators understand the nature and implications of such demand. Understanding tourists’ perceptions as to what authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences involve will allow tour operators to tailor their product development and marketing efforts according to tourists’ expectations. This research will assist tour operators with practical directions for providing quality visitor experiences.

Government Organisations

State and Territory Governments in Australia are key stakeholders in the development of Aboriginal tourism. Since the 1990s, Federal, State and Territory Governments have aimed to facilitate Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry. This has resulted in the creation of a range of policies and Aboriginal tourism strategies that have influenced the direction of Aboriginal tourism development (Pitcher 1999). It has been argued that the success of Aboriginal enterprises can be to some extent attributed to government policies (Whitford, Bell and Watkins 2001). This in turn implies that it is crucial for policy makers to understand the nature of demand visitors place upon Aboriginal cultural tourism businesses. This will enable governments to make effective decisions over policy issues such as funding, product development and promotion. Thus, the results of this
study will assist policy makers in formulating Aboriginal tourism strategies, producing marketing programs as well as developing appropriate policies to support the sustainable development of Aboriginal tourism ventures. This will also facilitate the partnership between government organisations, the private sector and local Aboriginal tourism/community groups.

Aboriginal Tourism Organisations
Aboriginal tourism organisations that are representing the interests of Aboriginal people in the tourism industry play a key role in supporting Aboriginal tourism businesses. The findings of this study will assist these Aboriginal organisations in planning and formulating strategies for Aboriginal cultural tourism. Since this study provides in-depth knowledge as to how authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tours is perceived by a variety of stakeholders, it will support the activities of Aboriginal tourism organisations. For example, the findings of this study can be effectively incorporated in the development of marketing programs which aim to promote authentic experiences to tourists. The information could be also valuable in the decision-making process related to the branding of such experiences and issues surrounding the accreditation of Aboriginal tourism businesses.

Tourism Researchers
The study has identified several gaps in the tourism literature pertaining to the concept of authenticity relating to Aboriginal cultural tourism. This research will contribute to filling these gaps in the tourism literature and consequently provide better understanding of the Aboriginal cultural tourism phenomena. In addition, the study aims to develop a conceptual framework to explain the formation of perceptions of authenticity among Aboriginal tourism stakeholders. This will assist future researchers, who will be able to adopt this framework to studies in similar Aboriginal tourism settings.

1.7 Thesis Structure
Whilst this chapter has provided a general outline of the purpose and significance of this study, the remainder of the thesis will be presented in six chapters.
Chapters 2 and 3 present the intellectual context on which this study is based. The aim of Chapter 2 is to set out the context of Aboriginal cultural tourism and, most important, to identify the gaps on which this research is based. It first examines cultural tourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism in Australia. The chapter then investigates the notion of authenticity in relation to the promotion of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures as well as the Aboriginal perspective of authenticity. The chapter concludes by discussing the gaps in the tourism literature in regard to the perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal tourism.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the conceptualisation and different theoretical perspectives of the notion of authenticity. It outlines the three different perspectives related to object authenticity, namely objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism. This is followed by discussing the topic of authenticity concerning the commoditisation of local culture and tourist arts. The chapter goes on to outline the notion of existential authenticity and how Heidegger’s conceptual framework relates to this concept.

Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology that was implemented to address the research questions of this study. The chapter outlines the constructivist paradigm that underpinned this research and describes the research design process of this study. It then discusses the qualitative research methods employed in this research, including sampling strategies, in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Next, the data analysis methods are identified followed by the discussion on how the four criteria of trustworthiness were established. The chapter concludes by outlining the ethical considerations and limitations of the research design.

Chapter 5 presents the findings and discussion of this study. The findings are presented within several topic areas. The context and general perceptions of authenticity are addressed before discussing the remaining findings within the four elements identified. This includes the Aboriginal tour guide; The search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aborigines; Aboriginal arts and crafts; and Contrived experience: Enjoyment factor. The chapter then goes on to discuss the theoretical perspectives of authenticity that were shared by tourists and employees.
The thesis is concluded in Chapter 6, which first provides a summary of the key findings and then considers the implications of this study for various groups of stakeholders. The chapter also outlines the contribution this study makes to the body of knowledge and provides suggestions for further research in the topic area.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the study and has presented the purpose of this research project, its research questions and objectives as well as the study limitations. The significance of this research was discussed and an overview of the thesis content was given. The next chapter will present the intellectual context of this research by discussing the background of Aboriginal cultural tourism and the gaps underpinning this study.
Chapter 2

Intellectual Context –
Aboriginal Cultural Tourism and Authenticity

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the relevant literature on Aboriginal cultural tourism and, most important, to identify the gaps on which this research is based. First, however, the context of Aboriginal cultural tourism needs to be explained. The first section of this chapter therefore examines cultural tourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism in Australia. Important issues such as the nature and extent of Aboriginal tourism involvement as well as the demand for Aboriginal tourism are discussed. The second section of this literature review focuses on the notion of authenticity in relation to the promotion of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures as well as the Aboriginal perspective of authenticity. Finally, a review of the tourism literature and specifically Indigenous tourism literature identifies several gaps that exist in regard to the perceptions of authenticity within Indigenous tourism.

2.2 Setting the Context of Aboriginal Cultural Tourism

Since the 1970s there has been a growing interest in Indigenous cultures globally. In Australia, Aboriginal cultures and heritage sites were increasingly promoted as unique tourist attractions, mainly since the 1990s (Zeppel 1998). In particular, the country’s cultural distinctiveness was emphasised by using celebratory images of Aboriginality at the 1988 bicentenary celebrations followed by the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games (Hinkson 2003; Zeppel 1999). This has led to a resurgence of interest in Aboriginal tourism development among State and Federal Governments, with the Northern Territory first recognising the potential of Aboriginal culture as a growing area of tourism interest (Schmichchen 2006). However, whilst Aboriginal tourism is often marketed and portrayed as a high-growth segment of the Australian
tourism industry, Schmiechen (2006:2) warns that it remains an “extremely fragile and tenuous sector”.

The discussion of Aboriginal cultural tourism would be incomplete without first positioning this form of tourism within its context, namely cultural tourism. Hence, in order to explain the background of Aboriginal cultural tourism, this section provides a general overview and presents several definitions of cultural tourism before discussing more specifically cultural tourism in Australia.

2.2.1 Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is gaining increasing attention worldwide, as a growing number of tourists seek distinctive tourism experiences that highlight the cultural, heritage, and artistic characteristics of a destination (Craik 2001; Foo and Rossetto 1998). Whilst it can be argued that all forms of travel entail a cultural component (McKercher and du Cros 2002), what differentiates cultural tourism from other forms of tourism has to be questioned.

Rojek and Urry (1997) examined the phenomenon of cultural tourism, arguing that as both tourism and culture are now hugely overlapping and with no clear distinction between them, they cannot be kept separate. Similarly, the tourism-culture relationship has been described by Robinson (1999:3) as having ‘blurred boundaries’. Tourism therefore can be seen as a cultural practice, cultural experience or, as it is often referred to, a ‘culture industry’ (Curtin 1996; Hawkins 1989, MacCannell 1992). This ‘overlapping’ of tourism and culture could be explained by the growing ‘culturalisation of society’ and the ‘de-differentiation of social and cultural spheres’ as well as the increasing ‘culturalisation of tourist practices’ (Rojek and Urry 1997:3-4).

According to McKercher and du Cros (2002:1), “cultural tourism is arguably the oldest of the ‘new’ tourism phenomena”, bearing in mind historical accounts of Romans travelling for cultural reasons and young scholars pursuing travel for educational purposes as part of the Grand Tour tradition (Towner 1985). The
potential of cultural tourism was recognised in the late 1970s, when it was realised that some people travelled specifically to learn about other cultures or visit heritage attractions (Tighe 1986). Whereas cultural tourism was originally viewed as a specialist or niche form of tourism (Brokensha and Guldberg 1992; Craik 1997; Zeppel 1992), today it is seen in a much wider context and recognised as a mass-market activity (Craik 2001; McKercher and du Cros 2002). As such, Blundell (1995-96:29) described cultural tourism as a “form of international mass pleasure travel that provides tourists with the opportunities to experience the cultural attractions and the cultural distinctiveness of the area they visit”.

2.2.1.1 What is Cultural Tourism?

The term ‘cultural tourism’ encompasses many different meanings, which has led to the development of varying definitions depending on the author’s needs and interests. The difficulties of arriving at an acceptable and agreed definition that adequately explains the multi-faceted phenomenon of cultural tourism are related to the fact that the term ‘culture’ in itself reflects a complexity of meanings. Nevertheless, numerous definitions have been proposed that aim to explain the nature of cultural tourism but have often defined the term in a way that suits the purpose in question.

Several authors positioned cultural tourism within the context of different forms of tourism. These interpretations view cultural tourism, for example, as a subset of ecotourism (Ryan 2002), a form of special interest tourism (Brokensha and Guldberg 1992; McIntosh and Goeldner 1990; Zeppel 1992), as being related to ethnic tourism (Tighe 1985; Harron and Weiler 1992), or embodying a wide range of other related forms of tourism, such as heritage tourism, historical tourism, rural tourism, educational tourism, adventure tourism and Indigenous tourism (Craik 1995, 2001; Foo and Rossetto 1998). In general, however, definitions can be grouped into several categories that emphasise visitor experiences, activities and/or motivations.

For instance, in order to arrive at an operational definition that serves as a basis for statistical collections, a study commissioned by the Department of Communication
and the Arts defined cultural tourism according to visitors’ activities and attendance at:

- festivals or fairs (music, dance, comedy, visual arts, multi-arts and heritage);
- performing arts or concerts (theatre, opera, ballet, and classical and contemporary music);
- museums or art galleries;
- historic or heritage buildings, sites, monuments;
- arts or crafts workshops or studios; and
- Aboriginal sites and cultural displays. (Foo and Rossetto 1998:7)

Alternatively, the Commonwealth of Australia (1994:99) described cultural tourism by highlighting the element of tourists’ experiences in their definition: “Cultural tourism embraces the full range of experiences visitors can undertake to learn what makes a destination distinctive – its lifestyle, its heritage, its arts, its people…”. Conversely, motivational factors have been emphasised by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (1985:6), which defined cultural tourism as

movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages.

Brokensha and Guldberg (1992:3) proposed a definition that includes a mixture of experiential as well as motivational factors. The authors defined cultural tourism in terms of:

- mixing with and meeting local people, and learning about their lifestyle and culture;
- seeking education as well as pleasure, using travel for personal growth;
- attending cultural events and venues;
- travelling widely to experience and appreciate the diversity of the built heritage and the natural environment (including national parks and wilderness areas);
- seeking authentic, informed, quality experiences;
- seeking individual involvement and varied experiences, rather than organized mass tourism.

In order to explain cultural tourism within a wider context, McKercher and Du Cros (2002) suggested that cultural tourism involves four elements that are interrelated, which include tourism, the use of cultural heritage assets and the tourist as well as the consumption of experiences and products. Indeed, these four elements are
common themes in most of the definitions. Thus, cultural tourism is clearly a form of tourism and constitutes a tourism activity that is based on a community or a nation’s cultural heritage assets. Secondly, since the tourist plays a central role in cultural tourism, motivational as well as experiential factors need to be considered. Whilst some definitions assume that a cultural experience is the main activity and thus the primary motivation for travel, others suggest that culture might be of secondary importance. For example, Hughes (1996) recommended a typology of cultural tourism, built on a matrix of degree of cultural intent (primary, incidental or accidental) and the nature of cultural interest.

The emergence of cultural tourism as a significant economic industry has instigated the promotion by many tourist destinations of their cultural assets aiming to attract the ‘cultural tourist’. Research conducted in Canada and the United States suggested that cultural tourists tend to be better educated, wealthier, older, are far more likely to shop, spend more time in an area while on vacation and are more likely to travel by airplane and stay in a hotel (Richards 1996; Silberberg 1995; Tighe 1985). However, McKercher and du Cros (2002) highlighted the paradox surrounding the cultural tourism phenomenon. Even though cultural tourism has turned into a mass-market activity, the true target audience consisting of the genuine cultural tourist only represents a small minority of tourists – a niche market. Thus, the majority of mass cultural tourists are not motivated by cultural attractions, which only serve as an adjunct to their trip (Craik 1997; McKercher and du Cros 2002).

Finally, the fact that cultural tourism involves the consumption of experiences and products has generated significant criticism within the tourism literature. It is generally recognised that tourism revolves around the search for differing social/cultural settings and experiences (Craik 1997; Kelly and Nankervis 1998; Robinson 1999; Rojek and Urry 1997). This process has been critically described as the consumption of cultural difference (Hawkins 1989) as well as the economic exploitation of culture (Kelly and Nankervis 1998). This argument leads to the proposition that culture is a resource or a product. It has been suggested that culture for the tourism industry is merely a resource to be exploited and as such develops into a commodity (Kelly and Nankervis 1998).
Similarly, Craik (1997, 1995) emphasised the need to treat cultural tourism with caution, as it will “incur significant disbenefits and will undermine rather than enhance the recent commitment to cultural development” (1997:114). The author has pointed to the implications of cultural tourism – a modified culture of tourism – and has questioned whether culture is just being used for the purpose of a convenient marketing ploy. Indeed, cultural tourism can be seen as a product of postmodern tourism, which signifies differentiation, manifestations of consumerism, commodification of tourism, as well as the concern for authenticity (Rojek 1997).

2.2.1.2 Cultural Tourism in Australia

Australia is increasingly being recognised not only for its world-renowned natural attractions, but also for its wide range of cultural assets including museums, art galleries, historic and Aboriginal sites, performing arts and live concerts (Foo and Rossetto 1998). According to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (2004:2), Australia offers more than 10,000 places of natural, historic and Aboriginal significance that are listed on the Register of the National Estate. Over the past 20 years, tourism has emerged as one of Australia’s most important growth industries with cultural tourism making a significant contribution towards this growth (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2004).

Previous research (Foo and Rossetto 1998:25) into the motivation and characteristics of cultural visitors found that 60% of international tourists in 1996 visited a cultural attraction during their stay in Australia. The results of this study further suggested that a higher proportion of visitors from Europe and North America are likely to seek cultural experiences than inbound tourists from other markets, such as Asia or New Zealand. The research showed that cultural visitors tend to be younger, stay longer in Australia and have higher expenditure than the average inbound tourist (Foo and Rossetto 1998).

Between 1999 and 2006, cultural and heritage tourism experienced annual average growth of 4% for international visitors. Domestic overnight visitors grew only slightly during this period (TRA 2007:1). Over the period 1997/98 to 2000/01, there
were a total of 21.9 million international, domestic overnight and domestic day visitors who engaged in a cultural activity while visiting Australia. These cultural visitors spent around $18.2 billion per annum on goods and services (28% of total tourism expenditure in Australia), contributing approximately $7 billion to Australia’s Gross Value Added (GVA). The number of international visitors who engaged in cultural activities accounted for 2.1 million and these visitors spent on average $10 billion or 55% of the total cultural visitor expenditure. Both domestic and international cultural visitors tended to take longer trips than other non-cultural tourists, thus having a higher than average trip expenditure (Heaney and Salma 2002:1).

According to Heaney and Salma (2002:3), visiting a history or heritage building was the most popular cultural activity for international cultural visitors (66% of visitors), followed by visiting museums or art galleries (53%), attending performing arts (23%), experiencing Aboriginal arts/crafts and cultural displays (22%), visiting art/craft workshops (17%), attending festivals/fairs or cultural activities (14%) and visiting an Aboriginal community (11%). Furthermore, research results indicated that the main motivation to visit a cultural site was the desire to ‘experience something Australian’ (Foo and Rossetto 1998:28).

Most recent figures showed that half of all international visitors (51%) participated in at least one cultural and heritage activity in 2006, as did 13% of domestic overnight and 7% of domestic day visitors. The largest group of international cultural and heritage visitors were from the UK (17%), followed by Other Europe (16%) and New Zealand (14%). These cultural and heritage visitors spent a total of $19.7 billion on their whole trip in Australia. The most popular cultural and heritage tourism activity for international visitors was visiting a historical or heritage building (61%), followed by visiting museums or art galleries (56%). Aboriginal art/craft and cultural displays were experienced by 25% of cultural and heritage visitors and 13% visited an Aboriginal site/community (TRA 2007:1-2).

As previously mentioned (McKercher and du Cros 2002), not all cultural tourists travel with the pursuit of culture as their primary motivation. Only a small number of cultural tourists can be classified as ‘genuine’ cultural tourists. Accordingly, a study
commissioned by the South Australian Tourism Commission and the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development (1996) found that between 70% and 80% of tourists are ‘general’ cultural visitors. This is supported by Foo and Rossetto’s (1998) research, which distinguished between ‘general’ and ‘specific’ cultural tourists, the latter comprising 28% of all cultural visitors.

The above discussion has shown that cultural tourism is a multifaceted phenomenon which covers a wide range of other related forms of tourism, such as Indigenous tourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism. This is reflected in two of the definitions of cultural tourism, whereby tourists take part in cultural tourism when attending Aboriginal sites and cultural displays (Foo and Rossetto 1998) and are interested in meeting local people to learn about their lifestyle and culture (Brokensha and Gulberg 1992). Another important element surrounding the discussion of cultural tourism, which also appears to be central to Indigenous tourism, involves the concern for authenticity among tourists. Yet, whilst discussions on cultural tourism suggest that cultural tourists seek authentic experiences, there is no indication how these interests and concerns for authenticity are shaped within the minds of tourists. The following section, therefore, provides an overview of Aboriginal cultural tourism and analyses whether the issue of authenticity is important to tourists, tour operators and promoters of Aboriginal tourism and, most important, for the Aboriginal people themselves.

2.2.2 Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in Australia

Since the 1990s, after realising the growing interest from international visitors, Aboriginal cultural tourism has increasingly been used as a marketing tool by the Australian tourism industry (Zeppel 1998). As a result, a heightened demand for Aboriginal cultural experiences has led to greater Aboriginal involvement in the tourism industry generating the development of a wide range of Aboriginal-owned and operated tourist enterprises (Zeppel 2001). Today, Aboriginal tourism ventures include cultural tours, nature-based tours, cultural centres and art and craft galleries as well as diversified visitor facilities (TNSW 2001; Tourism Western Australia 2006; ITA 2007). Tourism New South Wales (TNSW 2001) identified several types
of Aboriginal tourism products by grouping them into six main categories. These include tours giving information on Aboriginal culture; centres focusing on Aboriginal culture; museums/art galleries presenting Aboriginal culture; performances of Aboriginal theatre, music or dance; retail outlets of Aboriginal arts, crafts or cultural items; and lastly opportunities to stay in an Aboriginal community. According to Karwacki (2004), Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences complement and are often inextricably entwined with Australia’s world-renowned nature-based and ecotourism experiences.

Aboriginal cultural tourism represents a type of special interest tourism, which can be regarded as a subset of cultural tourism that is closely linked and often referred to as Indigenous and/or ethnic tourism. According to Pitcher, Oosterzee and Palmer (1999), the terms ‘Indigenous tourism’ and ‘Aboriginal cultural tourism’ are not identical. Indigenous tourism in Australia includes “all forms of participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in tourism, as employers, employees, investors and joint venture partners” (ATSIC and ONT 1997:4). By contrast, ‘Aboriginal cultural tourism’ is a broad term that refers to all tourism products that focus on an Aboriginal theme in Australia. This may include cultural tours, festivals, art and craft production, cultural centres and dance/theatre performances (ATSIC and ONT 1997). Accordingly, SATC (1995:5) defined Aboriginal tourism in Australia more generally, as a “tourism product which is either: Aboriginal owned or operated, employs Aboriginal people, or provides consenting contact with Aboriginal people, culture or land”.

Ethnic tourism, on the other hand, involves direct exposure to culture, allowing for direct experiences with the host culture and environment. This is made possible through visits to native homes and villages to observe and/or participate in native customs, ceremonies, rituals, dances and other traditional activities (Harron and Weiler 1992). The emphasis here lies with the specific focus of the travel and direct or first-hand experience. However, it may be argued that Indigenous tourism, ethnic tourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism as well as cultural tourism are undoubtedly overlapping concepts. For example, difficulties may arise in classifying tourists who visit an Aboriginal cultural tour that is owned and operated by Aboriginal people as
their primary focus of their trip and who participate in dances and traditional activities in order to gain a first-hand experience of the local Aboriginal culture.

Hinch and Butler (1996) proposed a somewhat different definition of Indigenous tourism. They suggested that Indigenous tourism refers to “tourism activity in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction” (Hinch and Butler 1996:9). The authors stressed the importance of the amount of control Indigenous people have over tourism development, as the group that has control determines the scale, speed and nature of development. A similar view was expressed by Altman and Finlayson (1992), who argued that cultural sustainability for Australian Aborigines is dependent on Aboriginal control and the extent and nature of their participation in the tourist industry.

Hinch and Butler (1996) further distinguished between Indigenous-controlled and Indigenous-themed tourism. An indicator of Indigenous tourism is given by the extent to which the attraction is focused on Indigenous culture. Figure 2.1 illustrates this relationship. The horizontal axis represents the type of control that Indigenous people have over a given tourism activity. Two extremes are proposed, where Indigenous groups can have no control or total control. In between these extremes, Indigenous people can play different roles with varying degrees of influence over tourism, for example as employees, advisory board members and formal partners. The vertical axis corresponds to the degree to which the tourist attraction is based upon an Indigenous theme. Thus, themes range from being entirely focused on Indigenous culture to a total absence of an Indigenous theme (Hinch and Butler 1996).

Tourism ventures based on Indigenous culture that are both owned and operated by Indigenous people represent ‘culture controlled’ or Indigenous tourism. Tourism enterprises which are controlled by Indigenous people but do not have an Indigenous theme represent ‘diversified Indigenous tourism’. These are, for example, tourist accommodation and transportation, as well as native-owned casinos in the United States. Tourism activity that is not controlled by Indigenous people and where the Indigenous theme is absent is called ‘non-Indigenous tourism’. The last term, also
referred to as ‘culture dispossessed’, occurs when Indigenous people have a low degree of control in tourism activities that are developed around the Indigenous theme (Hinch and Butler 1996).

**Figure 2.1:** Indigenous Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIGENOUS CONTROL</th>
<th>Low Degree Of Control</th>
<th>High Degree Of Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Theme Present</td>
<td>Culture Dispossessed</td>
<td>Culture Controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Theme Absent</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous Tourism</td>
<td>Diversified Indigenous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Hinch and Butler (1996:10)

Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA), the national Aboriginal tourism organisation, used four distinct but related elements which define Aboriginal tourism from an Aboriginal perspective. First, Aboriginal tourism is concerned with cultural and biological diversity. The second assertion is prior informed participation of all stakeholders, and active decision-making processes accorded to Aboriginal and local communities. Third, Aboriginal tourism recognises the special connection to land and waters of Aboriginal people. Finally, this type of tourism stresses the importance of recognising customary proprietary knowledge held on a community and individual basis (Robertson-Friend 2004:589).

After extensive consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders, the Northern Territory Tourism Commission (NTTC) identified the need to distinguish between ‘Aboriginal cultural tourism’ and ‘Aboriginal interpretive experiences’. As a result, two definitions were developed that addressed the concern of Aboriginal people to differentiate between these two forms of Aboriginal tourism. The first definition applies to cultural tourism experiences which are delivered by Aboriginal people on their traditional lands. This is termed ‘Aboriginal cultural tourism’ and is defined as: “Aboriginal people on Aboriginal land sharing culture” (NTTC 2004a:17). The
second definition recognises that there are places such as cultural centres, museums and art galleries where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people provide commentary on Aboriginal culture on lands that are not their own traditional country. This scenario is called ‘Aboriginal interpretive experiences’, where “people, not on their own land, are speaking about culture” (NTTC 2004a:17). However, it is important to note that operators and employees providing Aboriginal interpretive experiences are considered to play a legitimate role in Aboriginal tourism. This is the case since some Aboriginal communities give authority to other operators to provide such experiences on their traditional lands, often in return for compensation (Karwacki 2004).

The different definitions of Aboriginal/Indigenous tourism presented in this section highlight the complexity inherent in this type of special interest tourism. In general, the main elements that can be extracted from most of the definitions include the Aboriginal theme of the product as well as the nature of Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry. The latter is associated with the kind of ownership Aboriginal people have, which in turn determines the level of control they are able to exercise over the tourism product. In particular, the definitions proposed by ATA and NTTC specifically draw attention to the informed and legitimate participation of all stakeholders as well as the important role traditional land plays in the provision of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

For the purpose of this study, the author adopted the definition of Indigenous tourism proposed by Hinch and Butler (1996). Since this definition links the amount of control Indigenous people have to the degree to which the tourist attraction is based upon an Indigenous theme, it provides a more precise understanding of the different forms Indigenous tourism may encompass. By differentiating whether the Indigenous theme is present or absent, this definition addresses also indirectly the type of experience offered to tourists. For instance, whereas other definitions would classify tourism products without an Indigenous theme that merely employ Indigenous people as participating in Indigenous tourism (ATSIC and ONT 1997; SATC 1995), Hinch and Butler’s definition identifies these tourism activities as non-Indigenous tourism. This definition was utilised within the sampling strategy employed in this
research when selecting the type of Aboriginal cultural tour organisations (see Chapter 4, 4.4.2 Sampling Strategies, Stage 1).

2.2.2.1 Nature and Extent of Aboriginal Tourism Involvement

Indigenous tourism development is now the subject of many development efforts worldwide since it has been recognised that a vibrant Indigenous tourism sector has potential to strengthen the economies of Indigenous communities and provide for both entrepreneurial opportunities and job creation. At the same time, internationally Indigenous tourism aims to foster more awareness of, and commitment to the protection and recognition of Indigenous cultural and heritage values (Karwacki 2004). In Australia, the development of Aboriginal tourism has been supported by the government as it has been realised that Aboriginal art and culture represents a unique component of the Australian identity (TNSW 1997) and can be effectively used to promote Australia’s attractiveness as a distinct tourist destination (Altman 1992). Perhaps more importantly, from the government’s perspective, Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry has been recognised as a potential source of employment and an avenue for increasing economic opportunities for Aboriginal people, thus reducing welfare dependency (Commonwealth of Australia 1991).

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: National Report (Commonwealth of Australia 1991) identified five potential areas for Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry:

1. **Employment:**
   Employment opportunities may be found in tourism-related enterprises, either in the provision of hospitality services, retail services, tours and other related activities, or in Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS).

2. **Investment:**
   Aboriginal communities could invest in Aboriginal-owned enterprises which are servicing the tourism industry.
3. **The Arts and Crafts Industry:**
Aboriginal people could participate in tourism by producing and selling artefacts. This industry has been identified as a potential growth area. Altman and Finlayson (1993) also highlighted the importance of indirect involvement in tourism, which is possible through the arts and crafts industry.

4. **Cultural Tours:**
The sale of Aboriginal culture was identified as a possible area in which Aboriginal people have an advantage over non-Aboriginal people in the tourism industry. The importance of small-scale and family-operated cultural tours has been emphasised.

5. **Joint Ventures:**
Opportunities exist for Aboriginal participation in the equity and management of tourism ventures jointly with non-Aboriginal people. This kind of participation may facilitate both the generation of income and control, without the necessity for culturally unappealing employment.

While the report outlined the potential economic benefits associated with Aboriginal involvement in tourism, it also acknowledged the likely negative impacts on community life. Thus, destructive intrusions into community life might offset the long-term benefits. Additionally, low skill levels and a lack of proficiency in speaking English limit the participation of Aboriginal people to menial occupations (Commonwealth of Australia 1991).

Altman and Finlayson (1993) alluded to several problems and negative impacts related to some of the five areas identified by the Royal Commission. For example, employment in tourism-related industries requires a high level of communication skills and literacy skills, direct and intensive social interaction with tourists, and adaptation to different cultural styles. Many Aboriginal people also live a long way from employment places. As a result, employment opportunities are limited for Aboriginal people, with many tourism jobs being unskilled or semi-skilled and only a few Aboriginal employees holding managerial positions (Pitcher et al. 1999).
Altman (1988) divided Aboriginal involvement in tourism into two categories - direct and indirect. The difference between direct and indirect involvement is stated in the fact that direct tourism involvement requires a physical interface between hosts and tourists, whereas indirect involvement does not. As identified by Altman, Aboriginal people have various direct and indirect opportunities for industry participation. The nature of involvement can include the lease/sale of resources, sale of artefacts, sale of hunting/ritual and culture, employment and enterprises. The lease or sale of resources is the only type of involvement that does not require direct interface. Alternatively, the demonstration of cultural performances and hunting is the only option that requires direct interaction. The matrix shown in table 2.1 illustrates the range of options for Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry.

### Table 2.1: The Nature of Aboriginal Tourism Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Involvement</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lease/Sale of Resources</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of Artefacts</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of Hunting/Ritual Culture</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Altman (1988:292)*

Like Altman (1988), Parsons (2002) developed a typology of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences based on the different kind of interactions between host and guest, which are subsequently related to the different types of ‘sharing experiences’ they provide. As such, Parsons proposed a continuum that characterises various types of tourism enterprises in regard to the different degrees of intimacy they make possible between hosts and guests. These were identified as low, medium and high levels of intimacy. For example, the lowest level of intimacy can be found in indirect tourism products where there is no face-to-face encounter between Aboriginal people and tourists. These may include staying in themed tourist accommodation owned by Aboriginal people, or purchasing Aboriginal arts and crafts from non-Aboriginal retailers. According to Parsons (2002), the majority of Aboriginal people in Australia who are living in remote areas and are involved in the tourism industry are engaged in indirect tourism products such as the distant sale of arts and craft products as well as the licensing of reproduction rights.
Furthermore, a medium level of intimacy can be found in the Aboriginal-owned art and crafts retail outlets. Here the face-to-face encounter takes place between the Aboriginal salesperson and the purchaser of the art product. However, the purpose of the encounter lies solely in the prospective sale/purchase rather than in the sharing of cultural knowledge. By contrast, Aboriginal cultural tourism enterprises that invite tourists onto their traditional lands and/or into their communities offer high levels of intimacy to their visitors. This may include guided tours and the equivalent of ‘farm-stay tourism’ experiences in Aboriginal communities. While the overall encounter can be classified as structured, in general such experiences offer opportunities for more unstructured and informal interaction between hosts and their guests. The longer the time frame of visitation, the more opportunities exist for such casual interaction (Parsons 2002).

Parsons (2002) emphasised that this typology is based on the core business activities of an enterprise and may therefore not necessarily be exclusive. For instance, a retail art and craft shop may offer a higher level of intimacy than normally expected of such a business. Alternatively, a guided tour may offer occasions of lower levels of intimacy by incorporating souvenir sales, staged dance performances and formal lectures into their tour itinerary. In general, however, the move along the continuum from low intimacy to high intimacy level brings along a change in the emphasis from product to the actual Aboriginal person him/herself. Whereas the focus of experiences offering low intimacy usually lies on selling a product or putting on a show, high level intimacy experiences shift the attention to being the attraction and ‘being on show’ oneself. Here, Parsons distinguishes between the level of control Aboriginal people may hold over the product, which determines whether they are ‘being exhibited’ or whether they are themselves ‘exhibiting one’s being’ (2002:15).

According to ATSIC (1996), many work opportunities in the tourism industry exist for Aboriginal Australians, however a low employment level can still be found. The following three explanations were given for the low level of employment of Aboriginal people in tourism:

1. a lack of understanding about the benefits of employing Aboriginal people in the tourism industry;
2. few Aboriginal people and communities being aware of all the job opportunities within the tourism industry;
3. tourism training being either too far away or not right for Aboriginal people.

Furthermore, many Aboriginal people are unwilling or unable to interact directly and socially with tourists, as the interpersonal aspects of such involvement could be both uncomfortable and confronting. Few Aboriginal people are prepared for the pressures created by tourists’ demands for service, and many Aboriginal people regard direct and constant interaction with tourists as intrusive (Finlayson 1992). Evidence suggests that at popular tourist destinations such as Kakadu and Uluru, Aboriginal people have revealed a preference for indirect economic participation in the industry (Altman 1988; Altman and Finlayson 1993; ATSIC 1992).

In one of his earlier studies, Altman (1989) suggested that there is little evidence that Aboriginal people wish to supply ritual culture (for example open ceremonial dances), and Aboriginal hunting and gathering practices for tourism. Parsons (1991) disagreed with this view, as changes in Aboriginal tourism have occurred, with a dozen tours being operated by Aboriginal entrepreneurs offering these services. In his opinion, this increase in Northern Territory Aboriginal tour enterprises therefore mirrored the increasing involvement in tourism of Aboriginal communities. However, Altman (1993:2) suggested that in the past twenty-seven years, Aboriginal participation in tourism has been “sporadic, small-scale and largely indirect”. However, Aboriginal involvement was predicted to grow rapidly in the next decade due to the growing government policy push for increased Aboriginal participation in the tourism sector.

In 1993, Burchett noted that most Aboriginal cultural tourism enterprises are still in the establishment phase, relying on government funding and support for community-based tourism (Burchett 1993). ATSIC and ONT (1997:6) described the scale of Aboriginal participation as small, with only 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators. Even today there are only 320 Aboriginal tourism operators throughout Australia (Bailey cited in ITA 2007: 1). The value of Aboriginal cultural tourism is estimated at around $5 million a year, which is only a small portion of the Australian industry as a whole. By contrast, the Aboriginal arts and crafts industry is
estimated to be worth near $200 million a year and is increasingly growing (ATSIC and ONT 1997:6). Although more recent research on the value of the Aboriginal arts and crafts industry is not available, figures showed that about 130,000 international visitors spent $11.5 million on purchasing Aboriginal arts or craft during the March quarter 2006 (TRA 2006:2).

2.2.2.2 Demand for Aboriginal Tourism in Australia

Research by government organisations indicates a strong interest particularly among international tourists in Australian Aboriginal culture and in authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences. A study conducted by SATC into the demand for Aboriginal tourism products found that there is a significant and growing international interest in Aboriginal tourism. From 1993 to 1996 there was a 140% increase in the number of inbound tourists visiting Aboriginal sites and culture. This represented an average annual increase of 34% per annum over this time period (SATC 1998:1). In 1999, 11% of international visitors participated in experiencing Aboriginal art/craft and cultural displays as well as 5% visited an Aboriginal site/community during their stay in Australia (SATC 2004).

During the time period 2000-2004 participation rates of international and domestic tourists in Aboriginal tourism activities did not change significantly. In 2000, 14% of international visitors experienced Aboriginal tourism activities. From 2001 to 2004, the number of international tourists experiencing Aboriginal sites and culture remained unchanged with a total of 12%. Over the same time period the number of domestic tourists taking part in Aboriginal tourism activities fluctuated between 0.5% and 0.8% (TRA 2006:1). Table 2.2 provides a summary of visitors who experienced Aboriginal tourism activities in the time period 2000-2005.

Most recent figures showed that in 2005, 16% of total international visitors participated in Aboriginal tourism activities during their travel in Australia. This is in direct contrast to the domestic participation rate with only 0.8% of total domestic overnight visitors and 0.2% of domestic day visitors taking part in Aboriginal tourism activities. Out of the 16% of international visitors who had an Aboriginal
experience, 88% experienced Aboriginal arts/crafts and cultural displays and 39% visited an Aboriginal site/community (TRA 2006:1).

Table 2.2: Visitors who Experienced Aboriginal Tourism Activities, 2000-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>International Visitors '000</th>
<th>Proportion\textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th>Domestic overnight Visitors '000</th>
<th>Proportion\textsuperscript{a}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Proportion is as a total of international or domestic overnight visitors respectively

\textsuperscript{b}NOTE: In 2005 TRA changed the methodology in which Indigenous activities were measured resulting in an increase in reporting of these activities. Comparison with previous years therefore cannot be readily made.

Source: TRA (2006:1)

Results of several research studies indicated that the dominant international market for Aboriginal tourism comprises Western markets, particularly Germany, the United Kingdom, other European countries, Canada and USA. Visitors from those countries appeared to hold the strongest potential for Aboriginal tourism experiences/product, showing a high level of participation in Aboriginal tourism (ATC 2003; SATC 1998). In 2005, visitors from the UK comprised the largest international source market for Aboriginal tourism activities (TRA 2006). The desire to experience Aboriginal tourism is also very strong among international backpackers as over half of all backpackers to Australia in 1996 visited an Aboriginal site (SATC 1998:5).

Research conducted by NTTC has shown that in the time period 2002/2003 an increasing number of international as well as domestic tourists (57% and 44% respectively) included Aboriginal art or cultural activities as part of their Northern Territory trip itinerary (NTTC 2004b:26). Whilst seeing icons (e.g. Uluru, Jim Jim Falls), experiencing the outback and the wildlife, or having an adventure was regarded as more motivating, a considerable number of visitors (23% of interstate and 29% of international visitors) also desired to experience real Aboriginal culture.
However, only 9% of independent holiday visitors essentially undertook an Aboriginal tour (NTTC 2004b:27-8).

Whilst previous figures demonstrate that Aboriginal tourism experiences are highly rated among international visitors to Australia, Aboriginal tourism does not appear to be the major reason motivating a visit (SATC 1998). Accordingly, the ATC (2003:3) emphasised that “Aboriginal tourism experiences for most visitors were regarded as desirable but did not drive destination choice or holiday itinerary planning”. Similarly, a study undertaken by the Department of Industry Science and Resources (2000) showed that Aboriginal experiences did not appear to be the primary drawcard for international visitors, though the majority of visitors were expressing some level of interest in undertaking Aboriginal cultural activities. International visitors were questioned upon arrival in Australia on what level of interest they would have in Aboriginal culture. Only 6% had a high level of interest, 31% expressed a medium level, 41% a low level and 22% said they had no interest in Aboriginal culture (Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000:9).

In an earlier study, Altman (1988) found that Aboriginal culture seemed to be of secondary importance to tourists. Tourists were more interested in the environment than Aboriginal culture. A study conducted by Ryan and Huyton (2000) in Katherine produced similar findings. Interest in Aboriginal tourism was found to be low compared to other nature-based attractions or outdoor adventure activities in the Northern Territory. The main level of interest in Aboriginal tourism was demonstrated by ‘active information seekers’. Other tourists having an interest in Aboriginal culture were most likely to have an equally high level of interest in the natural environment and adventure tourism. Furthermore, while a high level of tourist expenditure was found on Aboriginal arts and crafts, only a small number of tourists were participating in Aboriginal-guided tours in the Northern Territory. Recent research undertaken by Ryan and Huyton (2002) in Central Australia confirmed that only a small minority of visitors had a strong interest in Aboriginal cultural products, and that this interest was part of a wider tourist perception of Australian landscapes such as the ‘Outback’.
The results of the above studies show that survey findings vary regarding the level of interest related to Aboriginal culture sought by visitors. Pitcher et al. (1999) suggested that tourist demand for Aboriginal tourism products differs according to where market research studies have been carried out. Despite the fact that only a small number of tourists appear to hold a strong interest in Aboriginal cultural products, and that Aboriginal tourism does not constitute the main motivation for travel, statistics for visitors’ participation in Aboriginal cultural experiences suggest that a considerable demand for those products exists – whether comprising tourists who had a strong or medium interest in Aboriginal culture or tourists who placed only secondary importance on those experiences.

Furthermore, the findings of the research studies indicated that visitors desire authentic and credible Aboriginal experiences including the opportunity to interact with Aboriginal people (AGB McNair 1996; ATC 2003; Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000; Foo and Rossetto 1998; NTTC 2004b; SATC 1998). This seems also to be the message from market research conducted in other Indigenous tourism destinations. For example, Tremblay (2007), who analysed several demand studies for Indigenous/Aboriginal tourism originating from Australia, Canada and New Zealand, found that most of the reports suggested that ‘authenticity’ and meaningful interactions with Indigenous people were important motivators for consumers. As such, authenticity of Indigenous tourism experiences is regarded as an essential element not only within the context of Australian Aboriginal tourism, but also within overseas Indigenous tourism, such as Maori tourism and Aboriginal tourism in Canada.

In Australia, research undertaken by the ATC (2003) showed that visitors from Germany, UK and Switzerland expressed a high interest in having an authentic Aboriginal experience. The research results also indicated that some visitors who sought an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience were also aware of the negative impacts their visit might create. For instance, visitors from Europe were conscious about the privacy of Aboriginal people and did not want to intrude upon it. In addition, tourists were not sure about how authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences could be accessed. The general consensus was that any encounter should preserve the privacy of the Aboriginal people (ATC 2003).
The nature of demand and the type of expectations tourists have of Aboriginal tourism experiences were examined by a research study conducted by AGB McNair (1996) for the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. The study found that visitors were very concerned with the integrity of the experience and whether the Aboriginal culture and knowledge appeared too commercialised. For instance, visitors perceived that a dance performance loses its credibility as an authentic Aboriginal dance when Aboriginal culture was joined with Western five star dining. This kind of experience was considered as an example of the over-commercialisation of Aboriginal culture. Thus, experiences that are commercialised or out of context are seen to detract from the perceived authenticity (SATC 1998).

The analysis of the demand side of Aboriginal tourism in Australia showed that the notion of authenticity is in fact important to tourists, particularly for international visitors. Whilst these research results indicate that tourists have a desire for authentic and non-commercialised Aboriginal tourism experiences, it still remains unclear as to what visitors actually perceive as an ‘authentic’ experience.

2.3 The Quest for Experiencing the ‘Authentic’ Other

A prominent discourse running for a long time through the tourism literature concerns the authenticity of tourism experiences. Spooner (1986) suggested that the search for authenticity and difference is based on the longstanding cultural interest Western societies have shown in ‘the Other’. Academic interest in the Other began in the seventeenth century when orientalist scholarship was introduced into universities. With the commercial expansion into Africa and the Pacific in the second half of the 19th century, the nature of interest shifted towards primitivism. The social change of society brought along the emergence of the issue of authenticity. Whilst in the sixteenth century authenticity constituted sincerity, towards the end of the nineteenth century it had taken on its modern meaning. According to Spooner (1986), the concept of authenticity seems to belong to industrial, particularly ‘postindustrial’ society, where it has evolved to be an important issue of modern life. Thus, the search for authenticity is commonly portrayed as being instigated by Western societies’ loss of their authentic and primitive self due to materialism and
technological progress taking place in their lives. As a result, Western people aspire contact with the naturally, spiritually and culturally ‘unspoilt’ Other (Taylor 2001:10).

This thought was also reflected in MacCannell’s (1999) stance on tourist motivation for authenticity. MacCannell suggested the tourist seeks authentic experiences of otherness in other times and other places. This is based on the theory of the tourist showing an increased interest and fascination for the real life of others due to the alienation of experiences from modern life. More specifically, some tourists show an interest in ethnic tourism, which is characterised by the quest for the ‘ethnically exotic, in as untouched, pristine, authentic form’ as can be found (Van den Berghe 1994:8). While tourism to some extent is based on the tourist quest for authenticity, the ethnic tourists’ search for exoticism intensifies this problem even further (Hoelscher 1998; Van den Berghe 1980). However, it has been argued that the search for the exotic is self-defeating since tourism destroys the very thing the tourist has come to see – ‘the unspoiled natives’ (Van den Berghe 1980).

2.3.1 The Promotion of ‘Authentic’ Indigenous Peoples and Cultures

The tourist quest for experiencing the exotic and authentic Other has been generally reinforced through marketing and promotional devices. In that regard, it has been argued that ethnic markers inherent in promotional material become “veritable indexes of authenticity”, thereby contributing to the construction of ethnic stereotypes (Adams 1984:472). As such, it seems that the notion of authenticity within travel literature proves to be a powerful tool specifically in the marketing of Indigenous tourism destinations and experiences.

This was demonstrated by Silver (1993), who evaluated the process by which Indigenous people in Third World countries are marketed in regard to authenticity. The findings suggested that travel literature seeks to portray Indigenous peoples as authentic by constructing multifaceted images of authenticity. Authenticity is conveyed by depicting a romanticised imagery of Indigenous peoples and their lives.
– the idea of authenticity is highlighted by referring to the timeless, unchanging, primitive and exotic Other. Supporting Adam’s (1984) contention, Silver (1993) argued that the travel literature presents Indigenous peoples according to Western markers of authenticity or, in other words, how Western consciousness has historically imagined the Other to be like. Accordingly, the ‘inauthentic’ images of poverty, in which many Indigenous peoples live are avoided by such presentations. Hence, tour operators and travel agents continuously redefine and reconstruct notions of authenticity, thereby influencing the conceptualisation of the Other within the minds of Western societies.

According to Taylor (2001), there has been an increasing emphasis on the commercial and personal value of cultural authenticity. This becomes evident in the commercialisation and marketing of Maori tourism in New Zealand, with the majority of promotional material stressing the ‘authentic’ and ‘traditional’ Maori cultural experience to the tourist. Taylor (2001), who analysed the presentation of Maori within brochures and advertisements, argued that the creation of authenticity in tourism serves as a “distancing device, which prompts desire and the production of value” (2001:7). The study found that there is an essentialised notion of “Maori-ness” inherent in the presentation of Maori experiences, which to most part ignores the ‘cultural contemporaneity’ of Maori culture.

Likewise, Schutte (2003) examined the social construction of Indigenous peoples as ‘tourist attractions’ by analysing websites promoting cultural villages in South Africa. The findings showed that cultural villages serve as a display of ‘authentic’ tribal life, whereby the construction of ‘authentic’ exotic experiences constitutes the main attraction. This is exemplified by the promotional material of Duma-Zulu Traditional Village and Lodge, which provides a romanticised and essentialised presentation of Indigenous culture and their ‘tribal’ lifestyles. Its website gives emphasis to the authenticity of the site, which is claimed to be guaranteed since the Zulu King places the “royal Zulu stamp of approval on the objectives and authenticity of Duma-Zulu” (Schutte 2003:480). According to Schutte (2003), the promotional information even adds further ‘scientific’ authenticity to the attraction by highlighting that a ‘renowned and respected anthropologist’, who is closely associated with Zulu culture, resides and manages the Village (Schutte 2003:481).
The marketing and promotion of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences in Australia seem to parallel the aforementioned examples from other Indigenous destinations; the majority tend to rely on the idea of authenticity, whether in a direct or indirect way. Simondson (1995:27), who examined the portrayal of Aboriginal people in tourist marketing, argued that Aboriginal people were depicted as timeless and ‘primitive’ tribal people in a stereotyped ‘traditional’ way, which “denies the reality of Aborigines’ lives in the contemporary world”. This was confirmed by subsequent research which analysed the marketing of Aboriginal tourism in Aboriginal travel articles (Zeppel 1999) and government tourism brochures (Zeppel 1998). Both studies found that Aboriginal people were predominantly presented as the traditional, timeless and spiritually different ‘Other’, situated in remote areas of Australia. The most common image of Aboriginal culture includes the portrayal of a ‘tribal’ Aboriginal man, who is “wearing a red loincloth, painted in ochre designs, dancing or playing a didgeridoo” (Zeppel 1998:32). According to Zeppel (1998), such stereotyped cultural representation may influence tourist perceptions of authentic Aboriginal culture and consequently create visitor dissatisfaction with some Aboriginal cultural experiences.

Similarly, in a more recent study Hinkson (2003) emphasised that images of ‘traditional Aboriginal culture’ prevail in the marketing of Australia as a unique tourist destination. Hinkson argued that such promotion assigns all ‘authentic’ forms of Aboriginality within a preconceived pre-colonial moment. As a result, the Aboriginal heritage of metropolitan areas is marginalised, and the heterogeneity and diversity of Aboriginal societies today are ignored. Likewise, Parsons (2002) noted that historically the ‘authentic Aborigine’ was perceived as one living primitively beyond the frontier, not in ‘civilized’ settled coastal regions. This has left many urban living Aboriginal peoples today with the responsibility to prove their own authenticity (Parsons 2002).

Further examples of direct promotion of authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences these days can be found on the internet. For instance, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, which is the most awarded Aboriginal cultural attraction in Australia, offers a variety of attractions and experiences including dance performances, a history theatre and a museum gallery of artworks as well as
interactive activities with Aboriginal people. Its website (Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park 2007) claims that “there is nothing more authentic in Aboriginal tourism today than Tjapukai” and that the Park “features authentic traditional culture and customs”. This is because elders and tribal members of the owners, the Yirrganyji and Djabugay Tribal Corporation, had their input and gave approval to everything that visitors experience in the dance theatre – they “co-created, co-designed, co-operated and co-ordinated” the Tjapukai tourism product. According to Tjapukai’s website, visitors to the Park seek an encounter or experience that is natural, authentic, personally delivered and not ‘commercialised’ (Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park 2007) (see appendix 2.1 for example of Tjapukai’s website promotion).

Similar to Schutte’s (2003) example of the promotional material of the Duma-Zulu Traditional Village and Lodge, the Tjapukai website provides justification for its claim of offering an authentic Aboriginal experience. As such authenticity of the experience derives from the approval given by the traditional owners as well as their input into the project. The emphasis here lies on authorisation, whereby Tjapukai is legitimised and approved by the Aboriginal elders and tribal members and can be therefore claimed authentic. The authenticity of the product is further accentuated by the contribution the traditional owners made to the product.

Other examples of Australian companies’ and government organisations’ websites that make use of the term ‘authenticity’ within their Aboriginal tourism promotional material include Tourism NT, Tourism Western Australia, Gunya Titjikala, Jahadi Indigenous Experiences, Kakadu Animal Tracks Safaris and Uptuyu Aboriginal Adventures. On their websites, the promises of authenticity range from gaining an “authentic cultural experience” and being exposed to “authentic Aboriginal history and culture”, to having a true outback experience with an “authentic Aboriginal flavour” (for examples of these see appendix 2.2).

This section has shown that the notion of authenticity continues to be a central element in the promotion and marketing of Indigenous tourism experiences worldwide, and particularly in Australia. It also indicates that in the context of Indigenous tourism, authenticity of experience is still regarded by promoters and tour
operators as a desirable attribute for tourists. This is further confirmed by Chang, Wall and Tsai’s (2005) study, which found that advertising effectiveness was achieved through the use of persuasive elements, which included the promotion of authenticity and the use of Aboriginal content, such as the representation of Aboriginal dancers. Moreover, previous studies have found that ‘authentic’ Aboriginal cultures and peoples are predominantly promoted within a ‘traditional’ pre-colonial sense. It is questionable whether tourists’ demand for authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences matches the stereotyped images of Aboriginal culture conveyed through promotional material. In other words, do tourists perceive authentic Aboriginal culture within a ‘traditional’ essentialist oriented framework? In order to answer this question, authenticity within tourism research and specifically the perceptions of authenticity within Indigenous/Aboriginal tourism research need to be examined.

2.4 Authenticity in Tourism Research

Within tourism studies there is a growing body of literature examining the concept of authenticity in various tourist settings. The different areas of research can be broadly grouped into several types of tourism topics, which include the perceptions of authenticity related to heritage tourism (Barthel-Bouchier 2001; Chhabra et al. 2003; Ehrentraut 1993; Halewood and Hannam 2001; MacDonald 1997; Waitt 2000), historic theme parks (Bruner 1994; DeLyser 1999; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Moscardo and Pearce 1986; Xie and Wall 2002), literary tourism (Fawcett and Cormack 2001), hospitality (Salamone 1997) and touristic dance performances (Daniel 1996; Xie 2003), as well as tourist arts, crafts and souvenirs (Cornet 1975; Duffek 1983; Errington 1998; Kasfir 1992; Littrell, Anderson and Brown 1993; Revilla and Dodd 2003). Another topic analysed by several authors involves the marketing of and portrayal of Indigenous peoples as authentic (Silver 1993; Taylor 2001) and authenticity used in food marketing (Hughes 1995).

Furthermore, the importance of the concept of authenticity has been demonstrated by several studies which examined its relationship to visitor satisfaction, motivation and expectation. For instance, Ryan (1991) discussed Cohen’s (1979a) model in terms of
linkage between expectations of authenticity and resulting (dis)satisfaction. Hence, tourists with high expectations for authenticity who are confronted with an inauthentic event that they perceive as such, tend to show dissatisfaction. Alternatively, tourists with a low need for authenticity are more likely to be satisfied in the same tourist environment. Correspondingly, Pearce and Moscardo (1986:129) emphasised that “perception of the authenticity of the experience is an important mediating variable affecting the tourists’ satisfaction”. In addition, tourists’ preferences for authenticity as well as the nature of the tourist environment play a central role when examining tourists’ satisfaction.

Similarly, Waller and Lea (1998) found that authenticity is more important for some, identifiable, groups of people than others. The authors suggested that there is a positive correlation between perceived authenticity and predicted enjoyment. Hence, people who perceive a scenario as more authentic rate it as more potentially enjoyable. Older and higher social class respondents also showed more effect of authenticity on enjoyment.

In a different study, Pearce and Moscardo (1985) investigated the relationship between travellers’ career levels and their need for authenticity. Applying the travel career ladder model to authenticity, it was found that tourists of higher career levels were more satisfied with holidays that involved either authentic environments, people or both of these features when compared to travellers of a lower career level. Moreover, the study suggested that higher career level travellers regarded holidays involving staged tourist activities as less independent and less satisfying. As such, this research has shown a relationship between tourists’ career levels and satisfaction with different settings of authenticity (Pearce and Moscardo 1985).

Yet, the topic of authenticity pertaining to tourists’ perceptions and their concerns for authentic tourism experiences has received relatively little attention in the tourism literature. Only two studies were found which focused on tourists’ experiences and their subjective approaches to authenticity (Kontogeorgopoulous 2003; Mehmetoglu and Olsen 2003). For example, Mehmetoglu and Olsen (2003) explored the emic views of solitary travellers in the Norwegian Lofoten Islands of what they perceive as authentic experiences. The different perspectives of tourists were summarised
under three categories, which included social relations (meeting people), nature and solitude/personal achievement (to be alone/do it myself).

Similarly, Kontogeorgopoulos (2003) investigated the expectations, behaviours and motivations of different groups of tourists in southern Thailand in relation to their conceptions of the meaning of authenticity. Whilst the study found differing degrees of concerns for authentic intercultural experiences among ecotourists, adventurers and backpackers, three main elements were identified among the three tourist groups. First, tourists believed that authenticity can be found in other times and in other places, such as exotic and different destinations where the inauthenticity of modern life has not taken over yet. Second, unstructured and informal interactions between tourists and hosts, which did not involve commercial transactions, were perceived as providing authentic experiences. Finally, authenticity was equated to places where no other tourists were present, which in turn rendered staged and contrived tourist settings as inauthentic (Kontogeorgopoulos 2003).

Whereas some of the abovementioned studies employed ethnographic and other qualitative data collection methods, many used quantitative methods such as questionnaires to determine or measure visitors’ perceptions of authenticity (Chhabra et al. 2003; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Moscardo and Pearce 1986; Waitt 2000; Waller and Lea 1998; Xie and Wall 2002). It is questionable, however, whether such methods, used on their own, provide meaningful insight into the visitors’ understanding and perceptions of the concept of authenticity as related to their experiences at specific tourism attraction sites. As a result, one may argue that survey results which, for instance, asked participants to rate the visited attraction as ‘authentic’ or ‘inauthentic’ do not generate any meaningful information about perceptions of authenticity. Accordingly, the use of predetermined categories and structured items developed by the researcher to measure the importance of authenticity for the visitors’ experience will not fully reflect the respondents’ conceptions and meanings of authenticity. Such methods tend to ignore the diverse subjective perspectives that tourists may hold of the notion of authenticity.
2.4.1 Perceptions of Authenticity in Indigenous Tourism Research

Despite the fact there are a growing number of studies examining the topic of authenticity, research surrounding the perceptions of authenticity related to Indigenous tourism remains a relatively unexplored area of tourism research. Only a few studies were found which addressed the issue of authenticity within Indigenous tourism settings. While not focusing primarily on the topic of authenticity, they nevertheless exposed different types of perceptions of authenticity within their findings (Dyer, Aberdeen and Schuler 2003; McIntosh 2004; Pitcher 1999). There was only one study that specifically investigated the topic of authenticity in relation to Aboriginal cultural tourism in Australia (Lane and Waitt 2001).

Lane and Waitt (2001) analysed the notions of authenticity involved in the production and consumption of tourist experiences in the East Kimberley region. The authors compared expectations and experiences concerning Aboriginal cultural tourism of tourists, tourism operators and Aboriginal people with the notions of authenticity produced in the legal context of Aboriginal land claims made through the Native Title process. For instance, local tourism operators viewed authentic Aboriginal culture either in a contemporary way, reflected in the continuity in relationships to land, or in a pre-European and pristine sense. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the concept of authenticity is interpreted as a socially constructed value. Both Native Title and tourism contribute to spatial politics as socially negotiated processes.

Pitcher (1999), who investigated tourists’ satisfaction levels with the Manyalalluk Aboriginal cultural tour in the Northern Territory, argued that the search for the genuine and authentic was a key factor contributing to tourists’ overall satisfaction with the tour. Tourists believed that the tour provided an authentic experience since it did not feel ‘touristy’ or reflected a commercial atmosphere. The encounter with ‘real’ Aboriginal people from a remote outback community was contrasted to seeing how Aboriginal people live in towns and cities. Moreover, some tourists hoped to experience the contemporary Manyalalluk lifestyle by visiting the community area. In addition, the social component of the tour, such as the contact and interaction with local Aboriginal people, was vital in the formation of an authentic experience.
McIntosh (2004) examined the nature of demand for Maori tourism including tourists’ appreciation of Maori culture in New Zealand. The author identified five central dimensions generated from tourists’ reflections on their experiences and their preferences for Maori cultural experiences. One of the five dimensions included the concern for, and the importance tourists placed on authenticity. Like Pitcher (1999), McIntosh found that tourists interpreted an ‘authentic’ experience as, for example, experiencing daily life, getting personally involved in the experience, and having a Maori guide presenting his perspective. Once again, tourists felt that an inauthentic Maori experience would involve a commercial, touristic and artificial presentation of Maori culture. Tourists’ desire to find the authentic in experiencing everyday life was further reflected in the lifestyle dimension, which suggested that the majority of respondents showed an interest in contemporary Maori lifestyle as opposed to just historic and traditional culture. This finding is congruent to the previously mentioned studies (Lane and Waitt 2001; Pitcher 1999), which identified the experience of contemporary Aboriginal culture as one of the determining factors for authenticity.

Dyer et al. (2003) explored the tourism impacts on the Djabugay community in North Queensland. One of their findings was that the representation of Djabugay culture in the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park was perceived as inauthentic by both employees and managers. Djabugay employees complained that they had to adjust their style of dance and song to suit tourists’ perceptions of what constitutes Aboriginal culture. Djabugay people were also concerned about cultural authenticity in regard to the use of the didgeridoo in the Park. Traditionally, the didgeridoo was neither made nor played by Djabugay people. Overall, the findings suggested an exploitation of the Djabugay people and their culture; commercial viability of the business was perceived more important than the portrayal of authentic Djabugay culture.

In contrast, Ryan and Huyton (2002) questioned whether it really matters that attractions are artificial considering that postmodern tourists essentially do not expect authenticity. According to the authors, the host cultures are able to draw a distinction between the superficiality of a cultural park and their own lives and therefore should not feel any negative impacts from the tourism attraction. However, the authors also pointed to the danger in promoting cultural attractions with promises of authenticity,
which could make tourists believe that they will gain insights into a complex culture. Promoters should be more honest about their ability to deliver an authentic experience in a short period of time. Ryan and Huyton (2002:644) therefore suggested the term ‘authorization’ instead of authenticity in order to address important issues of who authorises and what is authorised.

In sum, these few studies on authenticity in Indigenous tourism have given emphasis to differing agendas, ranging from authenticity in the Native Title process, tourists’ appreciation of and demand for Maori tourism, tourists’ satisfaction levels with an Aboriginal cultural tour, and tourism impacts on the Djabugay people. Whilst they have contributed to some basic understanding on the topic of authenticity in tourism, the existing literature offers limited information on how authenticity is perceived and interpreted by the different stakeholders involved in Indigenous tourism, such as tourists and Indigenous hosts as well as tour operators/managers of Indigenous tourism enterprises. Yet, information to be derived from comparative studies into the perceptions of authenticity held by different stakeholders may be essential for the sustainability and economic viability of Indigenous enterprises.

2.5 Authenticity from an Indigenous Perspective

ATA is the national Aboriginal tourism organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism within Australia. It was established in 1996, following a recommendation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy and national meetings of Aboriginal operators. ATA is a non-profit and non-government organisation which provides leadership and a focus for the development of Aboriginal tourism whilst giving emphasis to Aboriginal economic, cultural and environmental values (Robertson-Friend 2004). The association represents and protects the interests of Aboriginal people within the tourism industry as well as promotes and develops employment and training for Aboriginal people within all facets of the tourism industry. A key role of ATA is also the promotion of cultural integrity and authenticity across the tourism industry and the provision of education on Aboriginal protocols to the broader tourism industry (ATA 2007).
ATA has recently developed an accreditation program *Respecting our Culture* (ROC) to provide tourism businesses with a tool to assist in developing their business performance. The program specifically aims at the Aboriginal sector and provides a formal process to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians for the use of land and cultural sites (ATA 2007). The ROC contains three main sections:

- Cultural Protocols – which address authenticity and integrity criteria;
- Caring for Country – which addresses environmental management and impact assessment criteria;
- Business Management – which addresses business and marketing planning, operational aspects, customer service and risk management.

Authenticity and cultural integrity have been identified as crucial elements in ensuring that intellectual and cultural property rights are ascribed to particular clan groups and are respected and protected. Thus, the appropriate dreaming stories, spiritual beliefs, history, ceremony and art need to be clearly attributed to the relevant area in order to prevent cultural exploitation. ATA makes the distinction between ‘authenticity’ and ‘authenticated products’ where the key components are the source of the material and approval given by the appropriate custodian for that material to be shared. As such an Aboriginal person from another area, or in some cases a non-Aboriginal person, can receive authorisation to speak about local culture within specific cultural boundaries (Robertson-Friend 2004).

The ROC program recognises Aboriginal tourism businesses which are committed to protecting cultural authenticity and integrity. One of the benefits stated by ATA (n.d.) for Aboriginal businesses and communities who participate in the ROC program is the promotion of “authentic cultural tourism experiences which protect the integrity of local Indigenous cultures…” The ATA, however, does not explicitly provide an explanation as to what is meant by ‘cultural authenticity’ in general and more specific what exactly ‘authentic cultural tourism experiences’ for tourists entail. Within the ROC program, the term ‘authenticity’ seems to encompass a broad variety of different elements and meanings and appears to be closely tied to the ‘integrity’ of a product. This becomes evident in the application form for the ROC accreditation, which includes the maintenance of cultural authenticity and integrity as a subsection...
of cultural protocol within its checklist. The areas that need to be addressed in order to fulfil the criteria for cultural authenticity and integrity include: developing interpretation program and plan, visitor information, employee training and orientation, contributing to education and awareness within the tourism industry, and Aboriginal arts and crafts – retail (ATA 2003).

Another accreditation scheme that addresses the issue of authenticity and Aboriginal cultural heritage was developed by the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Committee (WAITOC), which is the peak association representing Aboriginal tourism in Western Australia. WAITOC’s vision is “to create a vibrant Indigenous component of Australia’s tourism industry by accelerating the participation of Aboriginal people in the presentation of culturally authentic, sensitive and sustainable tourism experiences” (Morgan cited in Tourism Western Australia 2006:2). WAITOC’s key initiatives in regard to authenticity include its assistance in ‘branding’ to establish authenticity of Aboriginal tourism products as well as the development of an accreditation program which identifies and verifies authentic Aboriginal tourism products (WAITOC 2007).

In order to gain the authentic Indigenous Tourism Business Accreditation logo, endorsed by WAITOC, the business must demonstrate that it provides an authentic Aboriginal experience. The business must therefore meet the following WAITOC sector specific component criteria:

1. the product has to be delivered by an Aboriginal person;
2. the product being delivered has to be culturally sensitive and appropriate; and
3. it must be pertinent to the operator's own cultural heritage or the operator should have permission to operate and use the region's cultural information from the relevant traditional owners (WAITOC 2007).

In comparison to the ROC accreditation program, WAITOC’s interpretation of authentic Aboriginal experiences is more specific and covers only three areas. Both programs, however, seem to address authenticity within an authorisation framework, which focuses on whether a legitimate person is delivering the product, the way it is delivered and whether the content of the product reflects the operator’s own and/or
the traditional owner’s cultural heritage. Within these Aboriginal interpretations of authenticity, the emphasis appears to lie on the role traditional owners play and on the intellectual property inherent in Aboriginal cultural heritage. In that regard, it is interesting to note that Aboriginal operators in the Northern Territory have indicated that accreditation programs are irrelevant to culture since they view the traditional owners themselves as the arbiters of authenticity and integrity (NTTC 2004a). This in turn suggests that Aboriginal people seem to place a low importance on questions of cultural authenticity, whether viewed in a traditional or contemporary sense, and instead stress the process of authorisation and authentication of products, such as who authenticates what aspect of the Aboriginal culture.

2.5.1 Authenticity within State/Territorial Aboriginal Tourism Strategies

Most State and Territory Governments have developed specific strategies targeting economic and cultural sustainable development of Aboriginal tourism. In 2004, the Northern Territory released the *Indigenous Tourism Strategy* which identifies Aboriginal cultural tourism as a ‘key point of difference’ for the marketing and promotion of the Northern Territory. The strategy aims in providing a framework for maximising that competitive advantage (NTTC 2004a:1). In 2006, the Western Australia Government launched the *Listening, Looking, Learning: An Aboriginal Tourism Strategy for Tourism 2006-2010*, which focuses on providing opportunities for Aboriginal people to develop viable tourism ventures and encouraging their participation in the tourism industry (Tourism Western Australia 2006). Other state Aboriginal tourism strategies with similar focus include the *Indigenous Tourism Strategy* developed by the Queensland Government (Tourism Queensland 2004) and *Victoria’s Aboriginal Tourism Development Plan 2006-2009* prepared by Tourism Victoria (Tourism Victoria 2006). Also in 2006, TNSW released the *Principles for Developing Aboriginal Tourism*, which serve as a guide to working with Aboriginal businesses and support the development of Aboriginal tourism within the state (TNSW 2006).
All of the abovementioned strategies were developed with the assistance of Aboriginal people. Each government underwent an extensive consultation process, which involved discussion with a variety of Aboriginal tourism stakeholders, such as Aboriginal community members and organisations as well as Aboriginal tourism industry operators. The consultation process guided the direction of the strategies. For instance, the Aboriginal tourism strategy for Western Australia has resulted from a partnership with key government agencies and WAITOC.

The terms ‘authenticity’, in particular ‘cultural authenticity’, and ‘authentic cultural experiences’ are frequently used in most of the Aboriginal tourism strategies. For example, the Northern Territory Indigenous Tourism Strategy proposed strategic directions for each of the four guiding principles that underpinned the strategy. Under the first principle of cultural sustainability, it is claimed that “tourism ventures are often at odds with cultural authenticity” (NTTC 2004a:10). As a result, it was argued that most Aboriginal tourism products cannot be based around traditional concepts of tourism, since it is difficult for the supplier to satisfy both cultural and wholesaler demands. Yet, it remains unclear what exactly is meant by ‘cultural authenticity’; one can only assume that authenticity here is viewed in an essentialist way, whereby only ‘traditional’ culture is ascribed to be authentic.

Authenticity is also addressed as one of the five main objectives within the ‘Tourism Industry Development Implementation Plan’, which is part of the Aboriginal Tourism Strategy for Western Australia 2006-2010. For the purposes of strategy development the definition for an Aboriginal tourism product includes those products that are offering an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience and are delivered by Aboriginal people (or authorised people by traditional owners). Within the framework for action, it has been suggested that Aboriginal people want to make sure that customers are getting the ‘real’ thing and adhere to cultural protocol. As a result, the strategy intends to ensure that “authentic, traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture is reflected appropriately in all Aboriginal tourism ventures” (Tourism Western Australia 2006:11). It is left open, however, what an ‘authentic Aboriginal cultural experience’ constitutes as well as what authentic culture represents in comparison to traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture.
Likewise, Tourism Victoria (2006) refers in its *Aboriginal Tourism Development Plan 2006-2009* to Aboriginal tourism enterprises or activities that promote authentic and distinctive local Aboriginal culture, whether traditional or contemporary. Within its key objectives the action plan seeks to promote authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences in relevant sector-specific marketing initiatives. Furthermore, TNSW (2006) suggests in its *Principles for Developing Aboriginal Tourism* that integrity and cultural authenticity are central to sustaining the reputation of Aboriginal tourism and are essential in offering visitors a satisfying cultural experience. Once again, there is no explanation provided for the meaning of cultural authenticity, however, the paper recognises that Aboriginal participation facilitates the integrity and authenticity of the product and ensures accurate interpretation (TNSW 2006).

Correspondingly, the notion of authenticity seems to also play an important role in other State/Territorial tourism strategies that focus on Aboriginal tourism as a subsection of the overall strategy. For instance, the *South Australian Tourism Plan 2003-2008: Inspiring Partnership for Sustainable Tourism* (SATC 2002) encourages the development of Aboriginal tourism in South Australia. In its Objective 1.9, one of the strategies to foster Aboriginal tourism development involves the adoption of national guidelines and requirements for branding an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience (SATC 2002:29). In the same way, the New South Wales *Towards 2020: NSW Tourism Masterplan* aims to facilitate authentic cultural experiences throughout the state (strategy 3.5) and advocates product authenticity and accreditation as some of the key issues to be targeted when developing a NSW Aboriginal tourism strategy (TNSW 2002).

The examination of State/Territorial Aboriginal tourism strategies and planning principles indicates that ‘authenticity’ constitutes an integral attribute of Aboriginal tourism and is frequently referred to in specific strategies and action plans addressing the promotion and sustainable development of Aboriginal tourism. It appears that the term is used as an effective buzzword, however, without offering any understanding of what exactly is meant by ‘authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences’, ‘product authenticity’ and ‘authentic Aboriginal culture’. Yet, clarification of the notion of authenticity in Aboriginal tourism is important, in particular, when addressing issues
of accreditation and branding as well as key marketing objectives that aim to promote ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experiences.

2.6 Why Another Study on Authenticity?

This chapter has shown that the concept of authenticity is a widely discussed topic and a common term used across a variety of tourism areas. One may even argue that there is an overload of literature addressing authenticity from different subject matters. As such, the following two questions should be raised: Why is another study on authenticity needed and what differentiates this research from previous studies focusing on the notion of authenticity in tourism settings? To be able to answer these questions one needs to summarise the main arguments presented in this chapter in order to illuminate the gaps in the literature surrounding the notion of authenticity.

This chapter has demonstrated that authenticity plays an important role not only for scholarship but also for the stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. The findings of research studies examining the demand side of Aboriginal tourism indicate that tourists want to experience ‘real Aboriginal culture’ and desire ‘authentic and genuine Aboriginal cultural experiences’. Paralleling this demand for authentic experiences are marketing and promotional strategies that use the term ‘authenticity’ as an effective catchword to promote Aboriginal peoples and their cultures. In addition, several studies have shown that stereotyped images were used in promotional material which depicted authenticity within a ‘traditional’ way.

Furthermore, the Aboriginal voice in regard to authenticity is represented by Aboriginal tourism organisations, which have identified authenticity and cultural integrity as fundamental in providing sustainable Aboriginal tourism experiences for tourists. Here, authenticity has been linked to the protection of intellectual and cultural property rights and the importance of cultural integrity in the product. The identification and verification of authentic Aboriginal tourism products is also central to the branding of such experiences, which is assisted by appropriate accreditation programs. Hence, this chapter has argued that the main emphasis in the interpretation
of authenticity lies in the authorisation process for Aboriginal people, which focuses on who is delivering the product and what content it has.

The Aboriginal perspective on authenticity can be further elicited from State/Territorial Aboriginal tourism strategies, which were developed in consultation with Aboriginal tourism stakeholder groups. Within these strategies authenticity is identified as a central attribute of Aboriginal tourism and viewed as integral to the branding and accreditation of Aboriginal tourism experiences. Moreover, the term ‘authenticity’ is used in specific strategies and action plans which deal with the promotion and sustainable development options of Aboriginal tourism.

This chapter has shown that the notion of authenticity remains important to different stakeholder groups of Aboriginal tourism, including tourists, tour operators and promoters, State/Territorial Governments and Aboriginal tourism organisations. Yet, limited understanding exists as to what ‘authentic’ Aboriginal culture and, in particular, ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experiences constitute. The tourism literature has not provided any answers to these issues; instead the majority of studies have treated the concept of authenticity as something given. For example, studies using quantitative tools have not dealt with different perspectives of authenticity but rather ascribed an inherent value to the concept of authenticity, which was often characterised by the authentic-inauthentic binary.

Moreover, whilst an abundance of research exists that has addressed the issue of authenticity in different tourism settings, only a few studies focused on the conceptions of authenticity. There were no studies found in Indigenous tourism research that explicitly dealt with this topic. In this respect, Bruner (1994) stressed the importance of asking how people themselves think about authenticity. According to Bruner (1994:401), the aim is to “understand the different meanings of authenticity as employed in social practice rather than to accept at face value the usually unexamined dichotomy between what is and what is not authentic”.

Most important, research on Indigenous hosts’ perceptions of authenticity is virtually nonexistent. In fact, the prime emphasis given only to the tourists’ perceptions of authenticity was questioned by Cohen (1988a:374), who noted that the perspective
should shift to the hosts, that “…whether the ‘tourees’ observed by the tourist at all possess such a concept, and if so, which traits of their own culture they consider to be ‘authentic’ is rarely, if ever raised”. Accordingly, Taylor (2001:14) stressed the importance of determining what the hosts’ perceptions are on the authenticity of their own culture. He emphasised that “…if the concept of authenticity is to have any legitimate place in discussions of culture, its definition must rest with the individuals who ‘make up’ that culture.”

In conclusion, several gaps have been identified in the tourism literature in regard to Indigenous tourism and authenticity. These are as follows:

1. a lack of knowledge as to what constitutes authentic Indigenous culture, as well as what is meant by an authentic Indigenous tourism experience;
2. a lack of qualitative studies examining the emic view of tourists and hosts in regard to authenticity in Indigenous tourism settings;
3. a lack of knowledge of the potential discrepancies or similarities between the perceptions of tour operators and visitors about what constitutes an authentic Indigenous tourism experience.

By addressing the three gaps in the tourism literature the first research question was developed: What are the perceptions of authenticity of tourists as well as tour operators and their employees?

Whilst this chapter has identified a lack of understanding as to what subjective approaches to authenticity are, it has not presented any discussion of the scholarship theories and debates surrounding this concept. In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the concept of authenticity, theoretical perspectives cannot be ignored. The next chapter will therefore address the different theories underpinning the notion of authenticity.
2.7 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to identify the gaps in the tourism literature on which this research is based. In order to achieve this, the context of Aboriginal tourism in Australia was explained. This included giving an overview of cultural tourism in general and more specifically cultural and Aboriginal cultural tourism in Australia. Within the latter topic, the nature and extent of Aboriginal tourism involvement was discussed as well as the demand for Aboriginal tourism. It was identified that tourists desire an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience, which led to the analysis of the concept of authenticity in regard to the promotion of Aboriginal peoples and cultures. Furthermore, the notion of authenticity from an Aboriginal perspective was investigated. Finally, an examination of the tourism literature, in particular the Indigenous tourism literature, revealed several gaps pertaining to stakeholders’ perceptions of authenticity in Indigenous tourism. However, before explaining the research design that was employed to address the research gaps, Chapter 3 provides an overview of the conceptualisations and different theoretical perspectives of authenticity.
Chapter 3

Intellectual Context –
Theoretical Perspectives of Authenticity

3.1  Introduction

The previous chapter provided an overview of Aboriginal cultural tourism and the topic of authenticity within Indigenous/Aboriginal tourism. In particular, Chapter 2 examined how the notion of authenticity is employed in the promotion of Aboriginal people and their cultures as well as how authenticity is viewed from an Aboriginal perspective. This has led to the identification of several gaps in the tourism literature from which the first research question was developed: What are the perceptions of authenticity of tourists as well as tour operators and their employees?

The purpose of this chapter is to present the different theoretical approaches related to the concept of authenticity. Its two differentiations, object authenticity and existential authenticity, are examined. An overview is provided on the three different perspectives related to object authenticity, namely objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism. Next, Heidegger’s (1996) approach to object authenticity is described. This is followed by a discussion on authenticity in relation to the commoditisation of local culture and the topic area of tourist arts. Finally, existential authenticity is reviewed including Heidegger’s framework of this concept. This chapter concludes by pointing to the fourth gap identified in the tourism literature, on which the second research question was based.

3.2  The Concept of Authenticity

The ambiguity and problematic nature of the concept of authenticity is reflected in Trilling’s (1972:11) statement that “the word ‘authenticity’ comes so readily to the tongue these days and in so many connections that it may very well resist such efforts of definition…” In a similar vein, Golomb (1995) pointed out that the term
‘authenticity’ is used in many different contexts and its complex nature derived from its philosophical origin creates difficulties defining the meaning of this notion. Steiner and Reisinger (2006) noted that the multifaceted history of attempting to conceptualise authenticity goes back to philosophical, psychological, sociological and spiritual discourses developed by numerous scholars. In particular, the discussion of authenticity is pertinent to philosophical writings concerned with the ontological interpretation of its meaning. Prominent philosophers who reflected upon the notion of authenticity include existentialist writers such as Camus (1975), Hegel (1977), Heidegger (1996), Kierkegaard (1985), Nehemas (1999) and Sartre (1992).

Common themes that emerged from these schools of thoughts such as the discussion on self-identity (Kierkegaard 1985), inauthentic modes of living vs. authentic existence (Camus 1975; Sartre 1992), individuality and existential authenticity (Heidegger 1996) as well as ontological anxiety (Heidegger 1996; May 1953; Trilling 1972) were also applied to tourism studies by several authors. For instance, Heidegger’s conceptual framework was employed by numerous authors in order to explain existential authenticity related to tourists’ and hosts’ tourism experiences (Brown 1996; Handler and Saxton 1988; Hughes 1995; Pearce and Moscardo 1986; Pons 2003; Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999).

The issue of authenticity identified as a central theme in the sociology of tourism has set the agenda for numerous discussions and debates over the past four decades. The most common definitions found of the term ‘authenticity’ as related to tourism activites use expressions such as ‘genuine’, ‘real’, ‘original’, ‘local’ and/or ‘traditional’ (Boorstin 1987; Getz 1994; MacCannell 1973; Relph 1976; Sharpley 1999; Taylor 2001). According to Getz (1994: 315), “authenticity means genuine, unadulterated or ‘the real thing’”. Sharpley (1999) distinguished between two applications of authenticity within tourism. The first one is derived from the tangible origin or quality of something, for example of a cultural object or event. The object is either real, genuine and authentic, or it is fake. The second application is concerned with the perception of authenticity of a holiday or tourism experience that appears to be pre-modern or traditional. More specifically in the second context, Sharpley used Cohen’s (1988a) terminology of ‘socially constructed’ and emphasised the intangible factor of perception.
Similarly, Taylor (2001) suggested that within cultural tourism authenticity in the present is associated with a conception of origins and equated with the traditional. Rather than viewing tourism sites, objects, images and even people as “contemporaneous productions, or as context dependent and complex things in the present…instead, they are positioned as signifiers of past events, epochs, or ways of life” (2001:9). Authenticity therefore represents a dialectic between subject and object, which is both spatially and temporally defined (Taylor 2001). Accordingly, Harkin (1995) identified temporality as an important element of authenticity in tourist experience. The interest in historic sites, such as battlefields, historic buildings and works of art as well as historical reconstructions, is reflected in the desire of tourists to experience authenticity in living history.

Trilling (1972:93) proposed that the original usage of the term ‘authenticity’ stemmed from experts determining the authenticity of art objects by testing whether they “are what they appear to be or are claimed to be, and therefore worth the price that is asked for them – or, if this has already been paid, worth the admiration they are being given”. According to Cohen (1988a), this museum-linked definition of authenticity has been extended by curators and historians over time and the concept of fakery has been redefined in ever more rigorous ways. Since the absence of commoditisation evolved as a central judging criterion for the authenticity of a cultural object, attributes such as ‘handmade’, ‘natural materials used’ and ‘made by a traditional local artist’ determined the authenticity of the product. In this context, authenticity was viewed by experts and intellectuals as a quality of pre-modern life – cultural products untouched by modern Western influences (Cohen 1988a; Trilling 1972).

Bruner (1994) identified four meanings of authenticity, which emerged from the author’s findings on the significance of the New Salem Historic Site. According to Bruner (1994:401), these different meanings of authenticity are associated with “verisimilitude, genuineness, originality, and authority”. In the first sense, authenticity relates to ‘historical verisimilitude’, where a historic representation resembles the original in such a way that it is mimetic, credible and convincing to the public. The second meaning of authenticity implies that it is a complete, immaculate and historically accurate simulation of the original, which is reflected in its
genuineness. For instance, the 1990s New Salem would appear genuine and real to a 1830s person visiting the site. Bruner noted that both these meanings of authenticity are used by museum professionals; however, most experts view authenticity in the first sense.

In contrast to the first two definitions, which emphasise the copy or simulation of an original, the third meaning actually refers to the original. Thus, a reproduction or simulation could never be regarded as authentic. Finally, the fourth meaning relates the term ‘authenticity’ to the concept of authority. According to this interpretation, something is “authorised, certified, or legally valid” (Bruner 1994:400) in order to be claimed authentic. For example, New Salem is an authoritative reproduction since it was legitimised and approved by the state of Illinois. Bruner notes that the last definition raises the issue of who has the authority and the power to authenticate. Or as Taylor (2001:13) asked in relation to cultural tourism, “…who should hold the power to define the authenticity of a cultural experience?”.

The above discussion shows that the concept of authenticity is pluralistic and with its heterogeneous usage impossible to derive one ‘true’ meaning. As Wang (1999) emphasised, authenticity is not a matter of black or white, but rather involves a much wider spectrum of ambiguous colours. According to Graham (2001:63), “authenticity combines the prioritisation of ‘origins’ with the ‘pathos of incessant change’ – again moving steadily through history. Its definition is a set of contradictions; static but changing; conservative but adaptable; originary but modern”.

Recent conceptualisations of the notion of authenticity suggested a differentiation between the authenticity of toured objects (object authenticity) and the subjective experiences of authenticity (existential authenticity) (Wang 1999). The former is reflected in the attributes of the displayed objects, where the recognition of the toured objects as authentic is linked to the authentic experience. The three different approaches associated with object-related (in)authenticity in tourism involve objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism. In contrast, existential authenticity is concerned with feelings of intra-personal and inter-personal authenticity; a special existential state of Being that is activated by the liminal process of tourist activities.
Here, existential authenticity is not necessarily connected to the authenticity of a given site or object (Wang 1999).

### 3.3 Object Authenticity

#### 3.3.1 Modernist and Objectivist Perspective

The first two authors who addressed the notion of authenticity within the tourism context were Boorstin (originally published in 1962, 25th edition in 1987) and MacCannell (1973). Whereas Boorstin was concerned with ‘pseudo-events’, MacCannell introduced the concept of ‘staged authenticity’ to the sociology of tourism. Both authors substantiated their arguments of authenticity on the museum-linked and objectivist conception of authenticity. Thus, they both assumed that there is an objectively real world against which experts and intellectuals measure and determine whether an object fulfils the specific criterion. Whilst Boorstin criticised the modern tourist for his search of inauthentic, specious and illusory experiences, MacCannell viewed the tourist as a ‘victim of staged authenticity’, who continues his quest for authentic experiences.

In his book chapter ‘From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel’, Boorstin argued that the modern mass tourist demands more and more pseudo-events. The author alluded to a pseudo-event as a well-contrived imitation of the real world that even ‘outshines’ the original. Boorstin (1987:79) condemned the modern society, in particular contemporary American society, which thrives on ‘diluted, contrived, and prefabricated’ travel experience. The author described the modern tourist as ‘naïve’ and ‘gullible’, who “seldom likes the authentic (to him often unintelligible) product of the foreign culture; he prefers his own provincial expectations” (Boorstin 1987:106).

According to Boorstin, the homogenisation, improvement and cheapening of travel facilities have put an end to the once heroic travel, which in Boorstin’s view has now evolved to be a commodity and a ‘spectator sport’. To support his critique on modern mass tourism, Boorstin contrasted the traveller in the past with the modern tourist in the present. Whereas the traveller used to risk his health or even life in his active
search of people, adventures and real experiences, the tourist is now passive, he goes ‘sight-seeing’ and is led by his exaggerated expectations. Furthermore, the tourist takes part in packaged tours, where he travels in guided groups and stays at American-style hotels, which in turn provides him with familiar comfort and security. Travel has therefore become “convenient, comfortable, risk-free, and trouble-free” (1987:117). The tourist’s experience is produced in an ‘environmental bubble’ and he is caught in a closed self-perpetuating system of illusions (see Urry 1991).

Whilst the modern tourist described by Boorstin is isolated from the host environment and does not seek contact with the local people, the traveller used to travel the world in order to encounter the natives. In those days, Boorstin (1987:102) asserted, the traveller actually experienced the living culture since he saw “what really went on there”. The travel industry now keeps “the natives in quarantine while the tourist in air-conditioned comfort views them through a picture window” (Boorstin 1987:99). Hence, the local culture has become a commodity – spontaneous cultural products have been adjusted to meet tourist expectations and are now specially spectacularised staged attractions that serve the tourist audience.

A similar perspective was adopted by Craik (1997), who proposed that although tourists think that they want authenticity, most look for some degree of negotiated experiences. This was referred to as a tourist ‘bubble’, a safe, controlled environment. Tourists can selectively step out of this environment to ‘sample’ predictable types of experiences (Craik 1997:115). Extreme forms of this tourist ‘bubble’ are totally artificial theme parks such as Disneyland, Sea World and Spaceport USA. These forms of entertainment offer a controlled environment with a predictable variety of entertainment. Craik (2001) also suggested that tourist experiences are manufactured and artificial, and by representing the ‘fronts’, they are never authentic. “Cultural tourism is inevitably about the production and consumption of simulacra, or products that make only a pretence to authenticity” (2001:117).

Yet, Boorstin’s modern tourist specifically seeks and is content with artificial and staged attractions. This is in direct contrast to the tourist described by MacCannell
MacCannell disagreed with Boorstin’s view that tourists seek superficial and contrived experiences and want to be isolated from the host environment. The tourist is rather motivated by the desire to consume authentic experiences: “…tourists demand authenticity just as Boorstin does” (MacCannell 1999:105). MacCannell further criticised Boorstin for his simplistic view towards the distinction he makes between the traveller and the modern tourist. According to MacCannell (1999:106-107), Boorstin’s analysis was generated out of nostalgia for an earlier time where “clear-cut divisions between classes and simpler social values based on a programmatic, back versus front view of the true and the false” existed. Hence, Boorstin in MacCannell’s view fails to analyse social structural arrangements of tourist settings but instead concentrates on ‘individual-level interpretations’. Moreover, MacCannell claimed that Boorstin expressed a typically intellectual and upper-class attitude in regard to tourists; Boorstin was expressing his dislike towards other tourists whilst separating himself (the traveller) from the common modern tourist.

An interesting critique of Boorstin’s account was offered by Culler (1981), who analysed tourism and authenticity from a semiotic perspective. Culler (1981) proposed that Boorstin’s analysis lacks an understanding of the semiotic nature of the tourism phenomena. According to Culler, Boorstin assumes a dichotomy between authenticity and inauthenticity: what is reproduced and represented as well as written about exemplifies the inauthentic, while the rest is authentic. Hence, tourists pay for artificial and contrived experiences, yet at the same time “the real thing is free as air” (Boorstin 1987:99). However, Culler alleged that the ‘real thing’ must be marked as real and as sight-worthy otherwise a sight that is not differentiated, which is unmarked is not a notable sight. Culler (1981:137) therefore highlighted the problematic and ironic nature of authentic tourism experiences:

To be fully satisfying the sight needs to be certified as authentic. It must have markers of authenticity attached to it…The paradox, the dilemma of authenticity, is that to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated a sign of itself, and hence not authentic in the sense of unspoiled…The authentic sight requires markers, though part of our notion of authenticity is the unmarked.
Whilst both authors, Boorstin and MacCannell, were primarily concerned with the impacts on society modernisation has brought about, MacCannell’s main criticism was directed towards the inauthentic daily life of the modern man, which is typically characterised by its mundane everyday routine and shallowness. MacCannell suggested that modernisation has changed the stability of interpersonal relationships and social structures of modern society as it was inherent in premodern types of society. The progressive detachment of the modern man from his own real life is reflected in his increased interest and fascination for the real life of others. Thus, the tourist becomes like a pilgrim of the contemporary secular world, seeking authentic experiences of otherness in other ‘times’ and other ‘places’.

MacCannell discussed this concept of staged authenticity when applying the work of Goffman (1959) to tourism. MacCannell, in his book *The Tourist* (originally published in 1976, third edition in 1999), proposed that tourist settings can be viewed within a continuum where the front and back represent the ideal poles. The ‘fronts’ are areas that are deliberately set up for tourist display and consumption such as viewing platforms. The ‘backs’ are private areas such as private homes and restaurant kitchens. According to MacCannell, tourists want to get behind the fronts to experience the backs and gain authentic perceptions and insights. The author noted that tourists living in a modern society, which is dominated by inauthentic experiences and simulations, continue their quest, not always successfully, for authenticity.

Thus, tourists want to experience life as it is really lived by the locals, they want to be ‘one of them’, they want

…to see behind the others’ mere performances, to perceive and accept the others for what they really are…to get in with the natives, and at the same time, they are deprecated for always failing to achieve these goals.

(MacCannell 1999:94)

What tourists assume as real might in reality be a show that only resembles reality. As MacCannell pointed out, often a back region is a false front region, which has been specifically set up for tourism purposes. Thus, becoming a victim of staged authenticity, the tourist is never likely to be satisfied. Being caught in the staged authenticity of tourism spaces, there is no sudden conversion process that changes
the modern tourist back into Boorstin’s traveller since the continuum of tourist settings “is sufficiently developed in some areas of the world that it appears as an infinite regression of stage sets” (MacCannell 1999:105).

MacCannell’s front-back dichotomy of tourist settings has been described by Culler (1981) as a dialectical relation, which is similar to the basic semiotic structure prevalent in tourism settings. MacCannell suggested that in their search for authentic experiences, tourists pay to be taken behind the scenes, such as spending a weekend at a ducal castle and having breakfast with the duke. Once again, whilst tourists might perceive this as being an apparently authentic experience, from a semiotic perspective it is not the true back area that tourists enter. Instead, as it was demonstrated by Culler (1981), the authenticity markers attached to these touristic attractions indicate that these regions have already been coded and therefore specifically constructed for tourist purposes.

Craik (1998) borrowed the concept of the raw-cooked analogy from Levi-Strauss (1976) and applied it to MacCannell’s notion of front and back regions in tourism. For example, the fronts can be interpreted as manufactured or ‘cooked’ attractions for tourism purposes. According to Craik, such tourist precincts are created to generate interest in the features of the destination and are examples of the conventional tourism places. Yet, an increasing number of tourists, in particular adventurous tourists, seek to experience the raw (uncooked) part of a destination, which in turn can cause difficulties for the tourist industry as well as for the government. False ‘backs’ are therefore constructed in order to meet the tourist desire to explore what lies behind the ‘cooked’ attraction by experiencing the ‘real’ thing or how the simulacra are constructed.

MacCannell’s thesis of the structural arrangements of tourist spaces and his idea of ‘staged authenticity’ was adopted by several authors, who empirically examined some of these concepts within different tourism settings (Buck 1978; Chalfen 1979; Fine and Speer 1985; Papson 1981; Schmidt 1979). For example, Buck (1978) investigated the boundary maintenance in an Old Order Amish community in southern Pennsylvania. His findings provided support for MacCannell’s stance of staged authenticity, since the Amish community offered staged experiences of
commercial front regions to tourists, whilst keeping the Amish community’s back
regions away from the tourist gaze, which in turn helped to maintain their way of
life. Cohen (1995) thus argued that staged representations and attractions might play
an important role for ethnic and tribal groups in preserving their native culture whilst
benefiting economically from tourism.

Whilst MacCannell’s theories on authenticity in tourism as well as the structuring of
tourist spaces evolved to be widely known concepts, his view and theoretical
approach have also been criticised and challenged by many authors. For instance, it
was pointed out that MacCannell’s data collection was based on informal methods
and was therefore unsystematic and not representative (Cohen 1988b; Moore 1985).
Whilst MacCannell conceived authenticity in a primitive sense, the notion
nonetheless remained undefined (Cohen 2002).

The main criticism was directed towards MacCannell’s characterisation of the
tourist, which was described as too simplistic and overgeneralised (Cohen 1979b;
1988a). As Cohen (1988a) pointed out, not all tourists are personally equally
alienated from modern society, and not all tourists have an equal interest in the life of
others and are engaged in a continuous search for authenticity. Indeed, Bruner (1991)
found in his study that most tourists were quite satisfied with their society and were
not alienated from their modern environment.

According to Cohen (1988a), there is also a problem inherent in MacCannell’s view
of the tourist. The modern tourist is portrayed as being naïve and easily fooled with
the infinite construction of staged authenticity of tourism settings. MacCannell
assumes that the expert or social analyst is able to differentiate between real life,
between the real ‘back’ and the fake ‘fronts’. However, the tourist is depicted as
unsuspecting, less sophisticated and lacking adequate knowledge in order to perceive
and understand the difference. MacCannell therefore did not take into consideration
that the expert and the tourist might perceive authenticity in very different ways
(Cohen 1988a). Thus, despite being considered as inauthentic by experts, tourists
may indeed experience something as authentic and real from their own perspective
and feeling (Wang 1999). MacCannell’s approach does not acknowledge aspects of
touristic behaviour such as being playful or ‘ludic’, enjoying the freedom from
everyday obligations, or seeking social togetherness (Cohen 1988b). The above-mentioned arguments in turn introduce the approaches of constructivism, postmodernism and existential authenticity, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In criticism of MacCannell’s notion of staged authenticity, Chhabra et al. (2003) argued that staging does not preclude authenticity, as it contains elements of the original tradition. Similarly, Taylor (2001) presented a scenario where the boundaries between staged performance and ‘lived identity’ become blurry. For instance, it has to be questioned what happens when an Indigenous performance group incorporates parts from the tourist program for their own Indigenous audience.

As mentioned above, MacCannell’s model has evoked criticism throughout the tourism literature as it ignored the ability of tourists to understand and interpret the staged authenticity they experience. Cohen (1979b) alluded to the fact that there are many different types of tourists with diverse characteristics, representing a heterogeneous group of tourists. A weakness of MacCannell’s work is the “tendency to present a highly idealized global view of ‘the tourist’ ” (Cohen, 1979b:20).

In this respect, Cohen (1979b) proposed a framework (see table 3.1), which takes both the tourist and host community’s views into account. Cohen (1979b:27) identified four different relationships between the tourist’s impression of the scene and the tourist setting:

1. This is a situation that is ‘objectively real’ as well as accepted as such by the tourists. Thus, the setting is authentic and the tourist recognises it as such.
2. The tourist establishment stages the scene for the tourist, but the tourist is not aware of the staging and therefore believes it to be real. The tourist fails to recognise its contrived nature.
3. The setting is ‘objectively real’, but the tourist believes it to be staged and is, therefore, suspicious of its authenticity.
4. The scene is admittedly staged by the hosts/the tourist establishment and the tourist recognises it as such.
Table 3.1: Types of Touristic Situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Scene</th>
<th>Tourist’s Impression of Scene</th>
<th>Staged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real</td>
<td>(1) Authentic</td>
<td>(3) Denial of Authenticity (Staging Suspicion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Staged Authenticity (Covert Tourist Space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Contrived (Overt Tourist Space)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cohen (1979b:26)

Following Cohen’s (1979b) approach, Pearce and Moscardo (1986, see the critique in Turner and Manning 1988) offered an extension to the literature on authenticity by suggesting that previous models have not considered the possibility that tourists can achieve an authentic experience through relationships with people within tourist settings. Pearce and Moscardo (1986:125) argued that authenticity can be achieved through “environmental experiences, people-based experiences, or a joint interaction of these two elements”. In fact, their study showed that tourists can hold different perceptions of authenticity, depending on their environmental experiences and the importance they place on the interaction and development of relationships with other people. Thus, the distinction between backstage and frontstage settings has been applied to the actors in these settings, highlighting the difference between frontstage people (those who are in the tourist spotlight) and backstage people (those who might support frontstage people or who are not involved in tourism activities).

3.3.1.1 Tourists Typology

In response to MacCannell’s the tourist and Boorstin’s modern tourist, several authors developed a typology of touristic experiences and related those to how different types of tourists seek different authentic experiences (Cohen 1979a, 1979b; Redfoot 1984). Hence, how tourists perceive and respond to different types of settings has to be considered (Sharpley, 1999). Accordingly, Murphy (1985) noted that the degree of curiosity and desire for authentic experiences will vary depending on the type of tourist.
Cohen (1979a, 1979b) developed a tourist typology based on the cognitive-normative dimension of strangeness and familiarity, which refers to the way a stranger conceives and relates to the host environment. The author’s aim was to combine the two opposite types of tourists presented by Boorstin and MacCannell into a phenomenology of tourist experiences. Thus, Cohen (1979a, 1979b, 1988a) identified five modes of (desired) touristic experiences: the recreational, the diversionary, the experiential, the experimental and the existential. Those modes place the meaning of experiences within the context of how the tourist views his own society. This tourist typology was based on MacCannell’s view of the modern man, who is alienated from his modern society and therefore embarks as a tourist on his search for authenticity. Developing MacCannell’s claim further, Cohen (1988a) proposed that not all modern people are equally alienated and therefore it can be assumed that not all tourists will seek the same level of authentic experiences. Instead, Cohen suggested, these two variables are interrelated. Thus the greater the alienation, the more intense will be the desire for authenticity. It therefore has to be questioned where the ‘spiritual centre’ of the tourist lies, whether he identifies with his own modern culture or whether he searches for meaning elsewhere.

At the one end, as the name already implies, the recreational tourist will seek recreational experiences and will not be concerned for their authenticity. This type of tourist can be compared to Boorstin’s modern tourist; this individual is not alienated from ‘the Center’ of his own society and therefore he only recuperates from the daily stress and does not show an interest in the host culture. At the other end, Cohen described the existential tourist, who is completely alienated from his own society and finds his new ‘elective spiritual center’ in the authenticity of ‘the Other’. This type of tourist is deeply concerned with the authenticity of the host environment and his experience can be compared to the journeys undertaken by traditional religious pilgrims.

Moreover, the experiential tourist can be placed in the middle of this tourist type continuum and resembles MacCannell’s tourist. The experiential tourist can be characterised by his desire to gain an authentic experience of the Other. In contrast to the existential tourist, this tourist, however, does not embrace the Other. Instead, he identifies with his own modern culture as opposed to the host culture. The
diversionary tourist, who is located between the recreational and experiential modes, is alienated from his own society but does not seek authentic experiences. Finally, between the experiential and the existential types, the experimental tourist is still searching for his elective centre in the Other and at the same time seeks an authentic experience (Cohen 1988a).

The typology developed by Cohen was further utilised and adopted by Redfoot (1984). Redfoot developed a tourist’s typology in relation to experiencing ‘touristic realities’. The author suggested four types of touristic experiences consisting of the first-order or ‘true tourist’, the second-order or ‘angst-ridden tourist’, the third-order or ‘anthropological tourist’, and lastly the fourth-order or ‘spiritual tourist’. This typology demonstrates the intensity of tourist desire for reality, whereby each order illustrates a progressive movement towards a more immediate experience of authenticity. Redfoot introduced the notion of anxiety which each type of tourist may experience over reality, as well as examining the prevalent modernist criticism directed towards the inauthenticity of tourist experiences.

The first-order tourist is described as the most ‘unheroic of travellers’. This type of tourist travels with prefabricated expectations formed by advertising and visits officially authenticated landmarks. Furthermore, the ‘true tourist’ travels with family or a tour group and takes many photographs of famous sites. This tourist is not interested in the ‘real’ contact with the local environment and therefore avoids an ‘immediate encounter with being’ (Redfoot 1984:293). In contrast, the second-order tourist differentiates himself psychologically and physiologically from other ‘mere tourists’ to the point that he even feels anxiety and shame to be regarded as a typical ‘tourist’. The angst-ridden tourist therefore develops conscious strategies in order to gain ‘real’ experiences as opposed to inauthentic common tourist experiences. Hence, travelling alone or apart from packaged tour groups and visiting places off-season are some of the behavioural characteristics of the second-order tourist.

Redfoot (1984:298) proposed that the second-order tourist is in search of ‘touristic ecstasy’, which was defined as “that emotional high achieved by the experience of authenticity in the lives of people in exotic places”. Thus, the tourist’s interest lies in capturing and experiencing everyday activities of ‘native’ people, which would be
under normal circumstances regarded as uninteresting. However, the tourist only plays the role of an outsider; he is not interested in adopting the particular lifestyle of the native people as this would soon evolve to be ‘routinized drudgery’. Moreover, the tourist is caught in feeling ‘anxious ecstasy’, since he is nervous and doubly anxious that it still might not be the ‘real thing’. The angst-ridden tourist therefore undermines his possibility of an authentic experience through his anxiety whether his experience is ‘certifiably real’ (Redfoot 1984:299).

The anthropological tourist takes considerable hardship and pain upon himself in order to not experience the anxious ecstasy that characterises the second-order tourist. The anthropological tourist therefore stays for a longer period with the native people with the aim to experience the everyday life and reality of the exotic other. Nonetheless, the anthropologist employs strategies to subjectively separate himself from the natives to avoid ‘going native’. Furthermore, the anthropologist’s quest consists of saving the remnants of the diminishing primitive cultures in an archive for future generations, and once again this experience is overshadowed by the anxiety that the experience might not be real. The anthropologist realises his dilemma, though, of being only “‘spectators’ of the vanishing realities that history is mercilessly obliterating” (Redfoot 1984:301).

Whereas the third-order tourist explicitly distances himself from the primitive, the fourth-order tourist rejects the modern culture of his own environment and instead seeks to go native. Redfoot (1984:302) describes this type of tourist as the modern-day pilgrim, who seeks the ultimate spiritual reality in other cultures such as in the Mystic East: “this spiritual tourist is committed to getting behind the ‘veil of illusions’ to absolute reality”. But again, this search for authenticity can be also doomed since the spiritual tourist could become victim of his own expectations created by marketing and image-making strategies.

Redfoot (1984) criticised the modernist perspective that all tourist experiences (in particular the first-order touristic experiences) are inauthentic on the grounds that this view has not taken into consideration the tourist’s enjoyment of personal relationships and time spent with family and friends during holidays. According to Redfoot, those personal relationships can be most rewarding and ‘real’ for the first-
order tourist, whilst the authenticity of the site is often quite unimportant in the context of his travel experience.

### 3.3.2 Constructivist Perspective

Whilst modernists/realists judge object authenticity against a fixed truth or knowable reality and view authenticity in terms of the ‘original’, the constructivist position treats authenticity as a result of social constructions. From the constructivist perspective, authenticity is a judgment or value made by any observer rather than independently determined by intellectuals and experts. Most important, constructivist authenticity is not inherent in the object and discernible empirically; it is rather subjective, emergent and variable. In this view, authenticity is interpreted as a fluid concept, which is constructed by tourists and hosts alike and dependent on their perspectives, beliefs and expectations. Since individuals can develop different constructed meanings, various versions of authenticities regarding the same objects can exist (Reisinger and Steiner 2006b; Wang 1999).

The constructivist ideology is based on a relativist ontology and therefore assumes that realities “are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions” (Guba and Lincoln 1994:110). Reality is thus seen as a product of people’s own interpretations and constructions. Moreover, constructivism stresses that there is no independently pre-existing world or unique ‘real world’ which holds key to the ultimate truth and knowledge. Instead, “what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind” (Schwandt 1994:125).

The constructivist perspective was advocated and employed by many authors within tourism studies and across other disciplines (Adams 1996; Bruner 1973, 1989, 1993, 1994; Cohen 1988a; DeLyser 1999; Handler and Linnekin 1984; Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983; Lane and Waitt 2001; Spooner 1986; Taylor 2001). One argument related to constructivist authenticity is based on the approach of the ‘invention of culture’ tradition, which highlights the fluid concept of cultural origins and traditions (Hanson 1989; Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983; Wagner 1975). Thus, according to this
approach, traditions and customs go through a continuous process of cultural
development and are constructed for contemporary purposes rather than representing
a stable heritage that has been handed down intact from generation to generation
(Hanson 1989).

Applying this argument to the theory of constructivism and the issue of authenticity,
Bruner (1994) noted that constructivism views culture as emergent since it is always
alive and never static. Moreover, all cultures continually invent and reinvent
themselves resulting in cultural remaking. According to Turner and Bruner (1986),
everyone enters society in the middle and culture is always in process. Bruner
therefore expressed criticism towards the common distinction made between copy
and original. In his opinion, every new cultural performance or expression is a copy
since it is always instigated by a prior performance. Yet, each performance is also an
original itself since it is adapting to its new environment. As Geertz (1986:380)
pointed out “it is the copying that originates” or as Graham (2001:60) noted in
respect to the history of authenticity in Irish culture, “to chase the authentic, is to
trace the origins of something that will always let us know that it has another origin
further back”. However, Bruner also argued that calling one form a copy undermines
the differences in the societal context within which the originals and the copies were
produced.

In a similar vein, derived from the arguments of the ‘invention of tradition’, Cohen
(1988a) introduced the notion of negotiability and the factor of time to the conceptual
interpretation of authenticity. Where MacCannell (1999) referred to authenticity in a
‘primitive’ sense, Cohen (1988a) argued that authenticity is rather a socially
constructed concept, which is negotiable. This negotiability is reflected in what the
author called the ‘emergent authenticity’ or ‘gradual authentication’ since a gradual
emergence from the visitors’ perspective is possible. Thus, cultural products and
traditions that were initially classified as inauthentic and contrived may over time
become generally recognised as authentic, even by experts and intellectuals. For
example, an apparently contrived and tourist-aimed festival may after some time be
accepted as a ‘revival’ of a former ancient custom and as such perceived as an
authentic local custom. Any ‘new-fangled gimmick’ can therefore over time and
under certain conditions evolve to an authentic expression of local culture. This is
exemplified by Disneyland, which is nowadays a central part of contemporary American culture. Cohen (1995) described such process as ‘naturalizing’, where contrived attractions that were initially aimed for tourist consumption blend with the physical, historical or cultural environment.

Crick (1989) adopted a similar approach going one step further by questioning what in a culture is not staged, what cultural authenticity consists of, and what is so abhorrent about inauthentic phenomena. This line of argument suggests that without the influence of tourism, cultures are continuously changing. Therefore, in a sense all cultures can be seen as staged or inauthentic.

Moreover, as noted by Wang (1999), the constructivist ideology stresses the importance of the stereotyped images, expectations, beliefs, consciousness and preferences held by visitors, which are successively conveyed into their individual perceptions of authenticity. For example, Culler (1981), who employed a semiotic analysis of tourism, suggested that essentially the tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself – in an example of a cultural practice. The tourist therefore responds to the process of semiotic articulation of the tourist attractions. Using Boorstin’s (1987) example, Culler (1981) explained that tourists look for what is ‘Japanesey’ rather than what is Japanese, since they are interested in attractions and sights that are marked by various sorts of representations as being typically, interestingly Japanese. Hence, in this sense it has been argued that tourists seek ‘symbolic’ authenticity; a set of signs or symbols that mark touristic attractions as authentic (Bruner 1991; Wang 1999).

Thus, constructivists argue that authenticity is a projection of tourists’ stereotyped images as well as their feelings, expectations and beliefs. In fact, pre-existing stereotypes strongly influence tourists’ perceptions of non-Western locations and their construction of the ‘exotic Other’ (Andsager and Drzewiecka 2002; Bruner 1991; Hall 1997; Laxson 1991; Silver 1993; Van den Berghe and Keyes 1984) Those stereotyped images are often generated and reinforced within Western societies through mass media and tourism marketing devices such as photography (Albers and James 1983) and travel brochures (Adams 1984) as well as narrative, fictions, art and films (Sturma 1999). In particular, it has been argued that the marketing and
portrayal of Third World countries and their people in promotional material reiterate cultural as well as colonial stereotypes and consequently prevent locals from defining a national identity of their own (Britton 1979; Echtner 2002; Echtner and Prasad 2003; Mohamed 1988; Morgan and Pritchard 1998; Palmer 1994; Sturma 1999; Wilson 1994).

Bruner (1991) demonstrated this by pointing out that tourists are not interested in a real assessment of native people. Rather, their expectations that are reinforced by travel brochures are clearly imaginary – a “projection from Western consciousness” (1991:243). This is why African culture is invented anew for tourist consumption; the ‘culture’ that is performed for tourists is the primitive culture of the Western imaginary. Bruner (1991:241) further stated:

…the tourist narrative is a Western story, not an African one. The African narratives of fighting apartheid in South Africa, of striving for economic development, of drought and civil war – the stuff of the nightly television news – is a completely different discourse, one that does not enter into the touristic framework or into advertising for tourists. Western tourists are not paying thousands of dollars to see children die in Ethiopia; they are paying to see the noble savage, a figment of their imagination.

In addition, the constructivist perspective asserts that authenticity is constructed in multifaceted and pluralistic ways according to the type of tourist experiencing the toured objects (Littrell et al. 1993; Pearce and Moscardo 1985; Silver 1993; Wang 1999). Since authenticity is a product of individual perspectives, different tourist types may interpret authenticity in different ways. Respectively, tourists seek authenticity in varying degrees of intensity and conceive authenticity in different degrees of strictness depending on the type of experiences desired (Cohen 1988a).

Lastly, constructivist authenticity is also context-bound as was demonstrated by Salamone (1997), who examined the two San Angel Inns – the original in Mexico City and its ‘daughter’ inn at Disney World, Florida. Salamone claimed that both versions of the San Angel Inns are authentic, each in its own way. Both restaurants convey their message of idealised aspects of Mexican culture, and rather than being contradictory they complement each other. The Mexico City Inn reflects success in a traditional Mexican context, whereas the World Showcase Inn is tourist-orientated
and romanticises Mexico’s past. Hence, Salamone pointed out that it is important to consider under what conditions and for what purpose culture is regarded as authentic.

In general, it may be argued that constructivism can be employed to ‘relativise’ the concept of objective authenticity (Cohen 2004:325). It has been argued that the ‘objective’ judgement of professionals such as curators, historians and anthropologists may be also interpreted as the result of social constructions (Cohen 2004; Brown 1996). Indeed, Cohen (2004) pointed out that objectivity is perceived as a social fact provided that there is a general consensus among professionals. However, once differences of judgment appear within this group, its constructed nature of objective authenticity is equivalent to the constructed authenticity as perceived by tourists. This argument highlights once more the problematic nature of the objectivism perspective as to who authorises authenticity and who has the power to authenticate. It is also open to discussion as to who qualifies as a professional and whose professional knowledge should be considered.

3.3.3 Postmodernist Perspective

The social theory of postmodernism is a multi-faceted concept, which involves a diversity of postmodern views and approaches. Discussions surrounding postmodernism and de-differentiation dominated the 1980s stemming from earlier debates on industrial and post-industrial society. These developments in postmodernist forms and modes of theorising prompted the emergence of contemporary conceptualisations of ‘postmodern tourism’, which involved the linkage between postmodernist culture and tourism-related practices and experiences (Rojek 1993; Wang 1999).

In a detailed analysis of postmodern tourism literature, Uriely (2005) suggested that ‘postmodern tourism’ was used as an umbrella term encompassing a variety of developments. These include the emergence of alternatives to the conventional mass tourism; the flourishing of nature-related and environment-oriented holidays; the growing attraction of nostalgia and heritage-related sites; and the growing quest for simulated and theme-oriented tourism attractions (Uriely 2005:208). Furthermore,
Uriely (2005) identified two main developments in postmodern academic publications, which were related to the topics of simulations and the ‘other’. Whereas the former examined hyperreal experiences and contrived attractions such as simulated theme parks, the latter focused on the search for authenticity and the growing interest in natural attractions. The postmodern perspective highlights a very different approach pertinent to the concept of authenticity in touristic experiences. Yet, in order to understand the postmodernists’ position on authenticity the main arguments of postmodernism as related to tourism need to be examined first.

According to Rojek (1993), central to the ideology of postmodernism is the rejection of ontological and epistemological categories inherent in modernism theory. Curry (1991) noted that compared to the modernists’ point of view, the postmodernists interpret the world in a much richer and more complex nature. Where the traditional modernists advocated a rational-humanist approach in finding universal solutions to social, economic and political questions, postmodernists emphasise the inconsistency of knowledge and the discontinuities of change. Within postmodernism, the distinctions between ‘class’, ‘religion’, ‘race’ and ‘nation’ are dissolved, as opposed to modernism which involved the ‘structural differentiation’ of various institutional and normative spheres, such as the economy, family, the state, science etc. (Lash 1990; Rojek 1993; Urry 2002). As such, Lash (1990) identified the “de-differentiation” as a central characteristic of postmodernism theory.

Urry (2002:75) argued that postmodernism refers to the cultural sphere – to a “system of signs or symbols, which is specific in both time and space”. In his opinion, postmodernist cultural forms are anti-auratic and can therefore be mechanically and electronically reproduced. Contemporary culture is thus characterised by its depthlessness, fragmentation, reproduction and simulation. Postmodernists speak of reality as the expression of social consciousness where the present consists of processes of simulation of objects and experiences (Rojek 1993). This is what has been described as life in ‘hyperreality’, where the fake appears more real than the real (Baudrillard 1983; Eco 1986). Baudrillard (1983:2) defined the state of hyperreality as “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality”.
In this context, Baudrillard (1983) claimed that today’s society lives in a world of simulation. The author used the notion ‘orders of simulacrum’ to explain the three different historical orders between simulacra and ‘the real’ (1983:83). The first order he called ‘counterfeit’, which was apparent in the period from the Renaissance to the industrial revolution. This phase saw the emergence of representations such as artefacts reflecting nature, religion and society as well as their remodelling. Within this period the connotation between reproduced object and the original was distinct; the sign referred explicitly to the original. The second order of ‘production’ emerged with the start of the industrial era where serial productions of objects became possible. Thus, the reproduction of the same object blurred the division between original and object, developing into what Baudrillard (1983:97) described as “undefined simulacra one of the other”.

Lastly, the third and present order is referred to as the order of ‘simulation’. According to Baudrillard, life within contemporary society is built upon a series of representations to the degree that reality merely consists of representations – the boundary between the original and the fake or the copy has disappeared. As Baudrillard (1983:103) noted, “today’s world is a simulation which admits no originals, no origins, no ‘real’ referent but the ‘metaphysic of the code’”. Mass media, television culture and Disneyland are used as prime examples by many postmodernists who argue that these are clear manifestations of the replacement of reality with representation in modern society (Baudrillard 1983; Eco 1986; Fjellman 1992; Kroker and Cook 1986). As Eco (1986:44) remarked, “Disneyland tells us that technology can give us more reality then nature can”.

Ritzer and Liska (1997) outlined several factors that show the close linkage between the postmodernist theoretical perspective and tourism. The authors argued that while consumerism and commoditisation have been identified as central characteristics of the postmodern era, the new role tourism plays as a medium that effectively promotes and sells those commodities has to be highlighted. For instance, the authors mentioned the growing popularity of combining recreation with shopping experiences as well as the difficulty of differentiating between shopping malls and theme parks. As Ritzer and Liska argued, the new ‘means of tourism’ encompass the many new means of consumption. Indeed, cruise ships, Las Vegas hotels, theme
parks, fast-food restaurants and many tourist destinations resemble shopping malls and are part of the increasing horizontal and vertical integration of commercial activities. Most important, the credit card can be seen as a ‘meta-means of tourism’ and consumption since it is the essential tool that permits and drives consumerism (Ritzer and Liska 1997:105).

Accordingly, Rojek (1993) argued that leisure and tourism could be now viewed as mere consumption activities, where the quest for authenticity and self-realisation evolves to be irrelevant. Alternatively, this is now replaced with a quest for visual spectacle, sensation and play, the longing for excitement and pleasure, as well as with the search for the ‘extraordinary’ experience. Rojek exemplified this argument with the declining popularity of British seaside resorts; their once distinctive feature of sand and sea has become only one of the many attractions and experiences available in the postmodern world.

This leads to the discussion of how the processes of de-differentiation in postmodernism relates to tourism settings and experiences. Uriely (2005) pointed out that original conceptualisations of the tourist experience stressed its distinctiveness from everyday life. Whereas early tourism studies suggested that modern individuals seek novelty, change and/or authenticity in order to escape the daily routine, the postmodern perspective emphasised the fading of this distinction due to the creation of simulated environments through mass media, TV, virtual reality displays etc. (Lash and Urry 1994; Munt 1994; Rojek 1993; Urry 2002).

For example, as Rojek (1993) alleged, for postmodernists there is no clear division between work and leisure, past and present. Instead, the “…past bursts into the present through stage representations…” (1993:4). Similarly, Lash and Urry (1994) asserted that experiences that were once typical to tourism such as the enjoyment of gazing at distant sights and experiencing different cultures are now available in various contexts of everyday life. Thus, such experiences are nowadays accessible without having to travel to different destinations. Lash and Urry (1994) therefore argued that people are essentially tourists most of the time, irrespective of whether they are at home or taking a vacation abroad. The authors called this the “end of tourism”. In this context, Munt (1994:104) claimed that “tourism is everything and
everything is tourism”, or as Ritzer and Liska (1997:109) stated, “…anything and everything is coming to be defined as tourism”.

Whereas modernists viewed the tourist as a passive consumer of staged experiences, the ‘post-tourist’, on the other hand, realises that he or she is essentially a tourist engaged in the game of tourism. Feifer (1985) conceptualised the characteristics of a post-tourists by identifying three features. First, the post-tourist does not have to leave the comfort zone of his own home in order to ‘gaze’ on tourist sites, which is made possible through modern technologies. Second, the post-tourist indulges in the multitude of choices available to him. Third, most importantly, post-tourists recognise their part in the game of tourism. As Urry (2002) noted, the post-tourist treats the world as a stage that offers a variety of games that can be played.

Correspondingly, Rojek (1993) highlighted three main features that identify the post-tourist. According to Rojek, the post-tourist accepts the commodification of tourist experiences. Instead of detesting the nature of tourism and its contrived attractions, the post-tourist, by comparison, treats it in a playful way. Secondly, tourism is viewed as an end in itself, rather than a means for self-realisation and a search for authentic experiences. Rojek (1993:133-34) therefore explained that:

The modern quest for authenticity and self-realisation has come to an end. Instead we are in a stage of post-leisure and post-tourism in which we can relax enough not to bother about self-improvement or capturing the essence of every sight.

Lastly, post-tourists identify themselves positively with intertextuality. Hence, the post-tourist is attracted to the ‘interpenetration’ between different aspects of the tourist attraction. For instance, gift shops, restaurants and other tourists are equally important to the tourist experience as is the visited site itself (Rojek 1993:175).

Contrary to MacCannell’s (1999) stance, Ritzer and Liska (1997) asserted that tourists today are not in search of authenticity but instead seek, even insist, on inauthenticity. Once again, this has been related to the rising popularity of tourist attractions such as Disney World, Las Vegas, cruises and shopping malls. Living in a world of simulation, tourists accustomed to that way of life are not in a search of authentic experiences as those are more difficult to find and tend to be
uncomfortable. For example, a bush experience with food at the campfire seems for many tourists more uncomfortable and unpredictable than a dining experience at a fast-food restaurant or hotel. As a result, a meal at the campfire could be acceptable as long as it is a simulated experience on the lawn of a hotel. Thus, the enjoyment of contrived and inauthentic experiences is justifiable in the postmodern world (see also Brown 1996). However, the authors also acknowledged that some tourists may be able to find to some degree authentic settings, however these tend to be often more expensive than the simulated inauthentic settings.

In this respect, Kontogeorgopoulos (2003) argued that the more concerned a tourist is to achieve cultural authenticity, the greater the sacrifice he will make in terms of comfort, familiarity, money, convenience or time to pursue an authentic experience. According to Kontogeorgopoulos (2003), these tourists can be described as more 'alternative' compared to other tourists who are less willing to make such sacrifices. For instance, the author found that the adventurer type of tourist visiting southern Thailand equates authenticity with 'rough' travel to remote traditional communities. In order to experience authenticity, the adventurer tolerates inconvenience and discomfort for a short period of time, such as sleeping on floors with cockroaches as well as feeling hungry and tired. However, as the author pointed out these efforts are more endured than enjoyed.

Similarly, Cohen (2002:271) noted that whilst pristine wilderness, ‘genuine’ primitives and ‘undiscovered’ localities are vanishing, many tourists put themselves in considerable danger and discomfort as well as incur significant expenses in order to experience them. On the other hand, it seems ironic how attractions that are considered as staged authenticity, such as theme parks, shopping malls, and other commercial tourist establishments, facilitate to some degree environmental and cultural sustainability. Contrived attractions may therefore help to draw away the attention from more fragile, genuine and ‘real’ natural environments and cultural sites.

In general, the element of playfulness stands out as a central theme in postmodern tourism. The notion of treating tourism activities as a form of play can be utilised to explain the postmodern perspective of authenticity and contrived experiences. For
instance, Cohen and Taylor (1976) identified the tourist as being capable of ironically commenting on and laughing about the staged authenticity of tourist settings. This has been elsewhere described as the ‘ironic consciousness’ of the post-tourist (Feifer 1985; Urry 2002). Similarly, Cohen (1985a, 1995, 2002) alleged that tourists playfully engage in an “as if” game by pretending that the experience is authentic:

Indeed, for many tourists, tourism is a form of play, which like all play, has profound roots in reality, but for the success of which a great deal of make-believe, on the part of both performers and audience, is necessary. They willingly, even if often unconsciously, participate playfully in a game of “as if”, pretending that a contrived product is authentic, even if deep down they are not convinced of its authenticity.

(1988a:383)

The process of convincing, or what Cohen termed ‘make-believe’, is in the postmodern era achieved by modern technology which, according to Fjellman (1992), can make the inauthentic appear more authentic. For example, tape-recorded bird singing can sound more authentic than the real natural bird singing. In this respect, McCrone, Morris and Kiely (1995) argued that authenticity is a matter of technique, and reality depends on how convincing the presentation is. Hence, “the more ‘authentic’ the representation, the more ‘real’ it is” (McCrone et al. 1995:46).

It is therefore argued that authenticity in postmodernism is irrelevant and meaningless – the enjoyment factor of consumerism overrides the concern for authenticity or as Cohen (1995:21) stated, “there is an aesthetic enjoyment of surfaces”. Hence, inauthenticity, for postmodernists, is not a problem since it is “irrelevant whether something is real or false, original or copy, reality or symbol (Reisinger and Steiner 2006b:72). The postmodernist perspective involves the deconstruction of authenticity and its subsequent justification of the contrived and the imitation (Wang 1999).

Yet, despite the fact that post-tourists seek immediate pleasures, demand extraordinary experiences and are not concerned about authenticity, at the same time tourists are now aware of the impact their visit can create upon natural environments and hosts cultures. Post-tourists therefore accept that staged authenticity prevents
host communities from negative impacts associated with tourism development (Cohen 1995, 2002).

### 3.3.4 Applying Heidegger’s Perspective to Object Authenticity

The most recent discussion on object authenticity was put forward by Reisinger and Steiner (2006b), who analysed the different perspectives on authenticity prevalent in the tourism literature. Based on the argument that there is no consensus among scholars towards a common meaning and importance of object authenticity, the authors argued that scholars should abandon the concept altogether. Reisinger and Steiner suggested that since a shared understanding of the concept does not exist, there is no basis available from which to develop further tourism research. Consequently, scholars should not be employing “unstable, highly contentious concepts” (2006b:81). Therefore, the authors applied Heidegger’s (1996, 1969) philosophy to object authenticity, to justify their argument and propose a solution to the opposing perspectives of objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism.

According to Reisinger and Steiner (2006b), Heidegger is not concerned with the authenticity of objects because he views things simply as they are. This means that everything that tourists experience, every moment of their existence, is in itself real and authentic – what they see, touch, hear, smell and taste. Thus, “whatever tourists experience is what IS, how the world is, how the culture is, how tourism works” (2006b:80). Heidegger, therefore, combines but simultaneously rejects the perspectives of objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism. Whilst he believes in the existence of a reality independent of human experience, he disagrees with the notion that the world might be an illusion. In contrast to the constructivist and postmodernist perspectives, Heidegger believes that whatever is given is to be appreciated, used and learned from. Hence, if Heidegger applied the concept of authenticity to objects, then “whatever appears…would be authentic, whether it was natural, an artefact, or a fiction” (2006b:78).

Reisinger and Steiner argued that to some extent Heidegger’s philosophy parallels constructivism as he also believes that each person’s experiences and perspectives of
the same thing may be different. Heidegger’s approach to viewing reality is also similar to objectivism by acknowledging that there is a reality beyond subjective experience. However, at the same time Heidegger believes in human partnership with what-is – a real world objectively open to all individuals.

Furthermore, Heidegger (1996) differentiated between two modes of being human, which involve being practical vs. theoretical. Reisinger and Steiner employed this dichotomy to the tourist types described in the tourism literature, such as the different tourist types proposed by Cohen (1979a) and Plog (1974). Being practical involves being actively involved, experiencing things as they are, and being open to authentic experiences. By contrast, tourists who are theoretical are not open to all the possibilities; they deal with what is as they represent it to themselves. Hence, these types of tourists are closed to authentic experiences since they “approach their experiences with a head full of ideas about what is authentic, what is disgusting, what is scary, what is unacceptable, and what is too hard…” (Reisinger and Steiner 2006b:79).

Whilst Reisinger and Steiner (2006b) proposed a possible alternative to interpret object authenticity, their argument to abandon this concept altogether is too extreme. In their opinion, the notion of object authenticity should be a unified and agreed upon concept inherent in the different ideologies and schools of thought. However, such a view is too simplistic as it rejects the diversity in thinking and understanding. For example, Reisinger and Steiner (2006b:80) advocate that applying a Heideggerian perspective, scholars should let toured objects be as they are for tourists since “tourists explore their own experiences and understand the world they visit on their own terms”. Yet taking this argument further would imply that any research on tourists’ perceptions, such as tourist satisfaction levels, expectations or motivations, is deemed irrelevant and unnecessary. Consequently, if the world is taken as merely what it is, it may be argued that any research is not worthwhile. Nevertheless, although different conceptualisations of object authenticity exist, it is questionable why the different experiences and understandings of tourists themselves are not important enough to be explored.
Reisinger and Steiner’s (2006b) proposition was challenged by Belhassen and Caton (2006), who argued that the concept of authenticity, which is pluralistic and ‘slippery’, does not need to be settled to one ‘true’ meaning, but rather should be treated as “analytical tools that facilitate tourism discourse” (2006:854). Thus, new and more informed understandings emerge through the discussion and deliberation of different perspectives held of this concept, which in turn provoke growth and progress in the discourse of important tourism phenomena. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the concept of authenticity is still highly relevant to many tourists, tourism brokers and host communities. For instance, the word ‘authenticity’ is frequently used by travel agents in their marketing tools and must therefore be important to potential tourists.

As Belhassen and Caton (2006) pointed out, the notion of object authenticity is still alive in the minds of many tourists and the fact that the word ‘authenticity’ is interpreted in different ways by different tourists does not preclude social research on such a topic to explore the different meanings. Indeed, as long as the notion of authenticity plays a significant role in the reality of the tourism industry, it must remain relevant to scholarship.

### 3.4 Authenticity and Commoditisation of Local Culture

Closely tied to the topic of authenticity, another area of debate in the tourism literature emerged, which was concerned with the impacts the modern quest for authenticity has on local culture and the meaning of traditional artefacts. As a result, two opposing schools of thought evolved around the concept of commoditisation, with the first one viewing the impacts of commoditisation on the host culture as destructive whereas the second emphasised its positive qualities. In general, however, commoditisation of cultural products and activities is often perceived in a negative sense since it is thought that this process lessens the value and inherent meaning of formerly pristine and authentic cultural practices. A definition of commoditisation was supplied by Cohen (1988a:380), who described this as a
process by which things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, thereby becoming goods (and services), developed exchange systems in which the exchange value of things (and activities) is stated in terms of prices from a market.

Within the early studies in tourism, the topic of commoditisation of traditional culture was addressed by Boorstin (1987) and MacCannell (1999) and then further examined by Greenwood (1989). Both MacCannell and Boorstin claimed that tourism leads to the commoditisation of culture, which consequently generates a culture which is different and for that reason less authentic than it was in pre-tourism times. Here, a clear distinction is made between the yet untouched and authentic cultural practices by modernity, and in contrast activities and products which are specifically performed or sold for tourists and are therefore rendered to be inauthentic, contrived or staged. Boorstin (1987) asserted that locals change and adjust their festivals in order to satisfy tourists’ demand to the point where they create pretence of their most solemn rituals and celebrations. The author even attacked the hosts who in his opinion were once ‘earnest honest natives’ and have now become ‘dishonest mimics of themselves’.

In a similar way, Greenwood (1989) described the change of traditional culture and how commoditisation affects the hosts and their cultural identity. According to Greenwood (1989), local people risk losing the authentic intrinsic meaning of their culture and transforming it to mere ‘local color’. Using the Alarde, a public ritual in the Spanish Basque, as an example, Greenwood (1989:178) stated, “the ritual has become a performance for money. The meaning is gone”. Culture in his view is being packaged, priced and sold, and treated as a natural resource or commodity. He derived the concept of commoditisation from the logic of the capitalist system and development, where everything including culture can be treated as a commodity. As a result, local culture sold as a tourist attraction is often altered and perhaps even destroyed.

Greenwood’s analysis of commoditisation and its impacts on local culture has been widely disputed in the literature. For instance, Boissevain (1996) and Cohen (1988a) criticised this view as being an overgeneralisation as arguments and examples against this position can be easily found. Boissevain (1996) pointed to the benefits of
commoditisation and staged authenticity, arguing that both could protect the back regions of local communities by keeping tourists focused on the commercialised front region. Correspondingly, Cohen (1995) alluded to the benefits of staged representations for ethnic minorities and tribal groups. Hence, contrived and staged reproductions keep the authenticity-seeking tourist away from intruding into the ‘real’ lives as well as natural environments of the hosts. Local people can therefore benefit economically from tourism activities whilst protecting their culture from outside disturbance. However, ironically such preservation of cultural traditions creates even more contrived tourist attractions (Cohen 1995).

Nevertheless, as was found by several studies, commoditisation has helped to preserve and strengthen cultural traditions and has facilitated the development of a local identity (Cohen 1988a; Deitch 1989; Macdonald 1997; McKean 1989; Smith 1989). The same argument is presented by Macdonald (1997), who conducted a study on a heritage centre on the Isle of Skye. As the heritage centre has used a format of staged sets and mannequins, one may argue, using Greenwood’s and MacCannell’s approach, that due to the commercialisation and standardisation, culture has become inauthentic - a commodity without meaning. On the contrary, the heritage centre is viewed as strengthening Gaelic language and culture, determining local identity and at the same time being commercially profitable.

Alternatively, it has been argued that tourism is a form of neocolonialism, which exploits the native people and takes the wealth out of the host country (Nash 1989). Bruner (1991) alluded to the irony of Indigenous tourism experiences, where the primitive life that the foreign visitor seeks has been altered by a previous generation of the Western visitor. As such, the tourists desire something that they have previously destroyed. This phenomenon was described as “imperialist nostalgia” (Rosaldo 1989) and “tourist nostalgia” (Bruner 1991). Indeed, as MacCannell (1984) pointed out, ethnic people were in the past discriminated against because of their ethnicity but are now accepted as moral if not economic equals.

Another line of argument in regard to commoditisation of culture and its impacts on authenticity is based on the globalisation theory. Globalisation is scorned for the destruction of local authenticity (Arnould, Price and Zinkhan 2003; Go, Lee and
Russo 2003; Hughes 1995) through what has been described as ‘disorganized capitalism’ (Lash and Urry 1987). For example, Hughes (1995) suggested that globalisation, the expansion of capitalism and the resulting widespread process of commodification have changed the symbolic content of cultural life that was manifested in the model of authentic places. According to Hughes (1995), the traditional concept of authenticity was characterised by kinship and territorial separation, which facilitated the integrity of cultures. As a result a meaningful ‘sense of place’ developed that was based on shared language and social practices, which in turn was expressed into a local identity. As Hughes (1995:790) stated, “authenticity involved the immersion of a resident’s life into the rhythm and flow of the host community”. This territorial integrity of places, however, has become ‘de-territorialised’ through the homogenisation process of cultures, diluting the symbolic content of cultural activities and artefacts (Appadurai 1986, Hughes 1995).

Likewise, MacCannell (1984, 1992) alluded to the negative impacts globalisation and commoditisation have on ethnic people and their culture. In his book chapter “Cannibalism Today”, MacCannell (1992:303) pointed to the ‘institutionalization of primitive-performances-for-others’, which developed under the influence of late-capitalism. New touristic forms have emerged, where ‘ex-primitives’ and ‘ex-peasants’ have adopted ‘modern’ ways and now earn their living by ‘being-themselves-for-others’. Whilst this could be seen as an ideal way for primitives to co-exist, MacCannell (1992:19) remarked that such representations do not instigate the true image of the once primitive:

But on witnessing these displays and performances, one cannot escape a feeling of melancholia; the primitive does not really appear in these enactments of it. The ‘primitivistic’ performance contains the image of the primitive as a dead form...The image of the savage that emerges from these ex-primitive performances completes the postmodern fantasy of ‘authentic alterity’ which is ideologically necessary in the promotion and development of global monoculture. The ‘primitivistic’ performance is our funerary marking of the passage of savagery...we have witnessed the demise of the original form of humanity.

Furthermore, MacCannell (1984:385) introduced the term ‘reconstructed ethnicity’, which refers to “the maintenance and preservation of ethnic forms for the entertainment of ethnically different others”. MacCannell proposed that the new
reconstructed ethnic forms have emerged as a result of the global network of interaction where ethnic groups use their ethnicity as a commodity. The author called this process a “distinctive form of modern alienation, a kind of loss of soul” (1984:385). MacCannell viewed the effects of reconstructed ethnicity as detrimental for the local culture and identity of ethnic people. The author questioned how ethnic people who serve as the actual attraction can benefit or learn anything ‘ethnic’ from themselves. Once an ethnic group is involved in tourism the intrinsic function of the community changes; social relations and practices become diluted in the context of being a tourist attraction. Most important, however, various subgroups of the society will stop to develop, and essentially the “total culture ceases to develop” (MacCannell 1984:388).

Therefore, MacCannell claimed, ethnic tourism only represents a ‘rhetoric of ethnic relations’ or ‘rhetoric of appreciation’ whilst in reality older forms of repression and exploitation are noticeable. Since local people will view themselves as representatives of an authentic way of life, any changes to their lifestyle will have economic and political consequences for the whole community that will affect every detail in their lives. As such, changes will become subject for ‘discussion, authentification, clearance’. Hence, the touristic requirement of having an ‘authentic’ ethnic identity evolves to be a constraint for the community, which in turn can be compared to the negative ethnic stereotyping in the past.

By contrast, Redfoot (1984) claimed that the arguments put forward by the critics of how capitalism has impacted on travel and tourism are narrow-minded and not very convincing. He stated that:

To my knowledge none of these critics have offered a convincing model of what a non-alienating, non-exploiting form of touristic experience would look like after the revolution. Utopian attempts, however, to abolish capitalism have not generally resulted in a more immediate “encounter with being” – except, perhaps, in the rather limited sense that they have often reduced existence to a very real struggle for survival.

(1984:304)

Whereas MacCannell and other critics proposed that tourism instigates the creation of an ‘authentic’ image of the native community which is frozen in time and that reflects a ‘museumised’ version of their traditional lifestyle, opponents of this
perspective instead perceived the concept of authenticity and the relationship between culture and tourism in a dynamic and flexible way. From this perspective, the impacts of commoditisation upon local cultures are viewed in a more positive way. Here, authenticity is interpreted from a constructivist point of view; a cultural product or activity once perceived as inauthentic can over time be accepted as authentic (‘emergent authenticity’ – see previous discussion under constructivism) and can obtain a new meaning for the producer or performer. Moreover, this process can be beneficial to the ethnic and cultural identity as well as self-representation of the host community.

For instance, Cohen (1988a) argued that commoditisation does not necessarily diminish the meaning of a traditional culture either for locals or for tourists. Likewise, the meaning to performers does not have to be lost because the act is commercialised and they have been paid for performing. Instead, it might even in some cases assist to preserve and maintain cultural traditions, in particular where a culture has already been influenced by Western industrial goods. Indeed, Cohen noted that commoditisation often occurs to a culture when it is in decline. In contrast, even if a culture still flourishes, its members might perceive the commoditisation process differently than the external audience or an expert. From their perspective, commoditisation might not present a concern, and such a change could be viewed as ‘an often astonishing degree of continuity between the old and the new situation’ (Cohen 1988a:382).

3.5 Authenticity and Tourist Arts

Tourist art and craft as well as other souvenirs purchased during a vacation can hold significant symbolic value and many functions for the buyer (Gordon 1986; Littrell 1990, 1994; Littrell et al. 1993). For instance, souvenirs have been identified as tangible reminders and serve the purpose of “capturing or freezing a non- or extra-ordinary experience” (Gordon 1986:137). In particular, the associated perceived authenticity of local products plays a vital role in the touristic consumption process and confers tremendous weight and value upon cultural objects (Anderson and
Cohen (1988a) asserted that ‘tourist art’ is one of the most salient examples of the commoditisation of a range of cultural products through tourism. According to Cohen (1992:12), “tourist arts are, almost by definition, commercialised arts”. The commercialisation of artefacts is often perceived as negative. For instance, tourist art has been scorned as ‘airport arts’ (Bassani 1979; Cornet 1975; Graburn 1967; MacKenzie 1977) and is frequently viewed as a degeneration of ‘authentic’ traditional arts and crafts. However, critiques of this approach pointed out that tribal and ethnic art has never been static. Instead it is argued that ‘traditional’ arts have undergone a continuous changing process throughout history due to internal forces and external contacts (Cohen 1992, 1993b; Errington 1998), though the influence of tourism may intensify and increase the speed of this process.

Accordingly, perceptions of craft authenticity can go through a changing process, which is reflected in what Cohen (1988a) called ‘emergent authenticity’. Hence, even ‘airport art’ once produced specifically for the tourist market and therefore considered inauthentic could over time be respected and judged as authentic products (Cornet 1975). As Cornet (1975:54) stated, “some of today’s fakes could in this fashion become tomorrow’s authentic pieces, time having assure them of a curious rehabilitation”.

As a result, it is difficult to determine the standards of authenticity to be used for traditional arts and crafts. As previously mentioned, the question of the authenticity of traditional art objects can be highly controversial among ethnographers, collectors and museum officials. Cornet (1975) proposed two different approaches to defining the authenticity of arts and crafts. The first view, which is held by collectors and museum officials, looks at the object in terms of a work of art with an appropriate place in the history of art. The second standpoint is taken by scholars such as ethnographers, who are interested in the aesthetic value and usefulness of an object and thus employ a more objective perspective in judging its authenticity. Taking both groups of values into consideration, Cornet (1975) introduced three criteria to the definition of authenticity. First, the art is produced by a traditional artist. Second, the
object is made for a traditional purpose and lastly, it conforms to traditional forms. Hence, a work is authentic “to the extent that it belongs to the space and time which fit the corresponding style” (Cornet 1975:55).

Whilst art experts and ethnographers might employ rigorous set criteria in assessing the authenticity of an object, tourists define craft authenticity in a wide variety of ways (Littrell et al. 1993). Furthermore, Cohen (1993a) emphasised that craft authenticity is not a theoretical concept that can be utilised to derive an ‘objective’ evaluation. The author illustrated the problem of assessing the authenticity of craft objects, with the example of Dan Kwien’s designs and styles of pottery, which have been introduced from many cultures unrelated to that of the locality but are produced by inherited pottery techniques. Therefore, how authenticity is conceived is dependent on the purchaser’s knowledge, perspective and depth of concern with authenticity (Cohen 1993a). Likewise, Spooner (1986) stressed that whilst certain objective material attributes are used to define authenticity, they alone are not sufficient to explain authenticity. Rather, subjective interpretations are involved.

Cohen (1988a) suggested that different tourist types often focus on diacritical traits of the cultural product whilst disregarding other ones. Those traits if judged as authentic are then sufficient to generate an authentic perception of the product as a whole. Therefore, some tourists regard a ‘commercialised object’ as authentic provided that it contains traditional designs and was handmade by local artists. Thus, the product could be accepted as authentic despite the fact that it may have been made of different materials, in a different form and was intended for the tourist market. However, other tourist types may employ stricter criteria for their judgement of craft authenticity.

In general, it is argued that the essential conditions that form tourists’ perceptions of craft authenticity are products’ features such as being locally handmade, of traditional design and made by a native person (Errington 1998). Hence, products that are handmade by local artists are often considered as unique and genuine. By contrast, mass-produced items that are made elsewhere are frequently classified as artificial and plastic (Asplet and Cooper 2000). In fact, handcrafts in this industrial age are perceived as products of exotic or different people and are therefore
associated with a simpler time and/or simpler people (Gordon 1986). Accordingly, Spooner (1986) argued that the search for authentic products derives from Western societies’ longstanding cultural interest in the Other, in particular the Orient as well as primitivism, which in turn is based on the search for difference and rejection of the commonplace.

Cohen (1993a) proposed two contrary approaches that are likely to be used by tourists when evaluating the authenticity of arts. The author differentiated between the ‘conservative’ and the ‘liberal’ perspective but also suggested a middle position between these two. As the word implies, the conservative would assess the products less authentic the more heterogenetic they were. The liberal approach would not be concerned whether the products were traditional or innovative so long as the manufacturing process reflected the traditional skills of local artists. The middle position would view craft authenticity in terms of its emergent nature, recognising that some innovative products may in due course be considered as part of the local tradition and thus become authentic.

Although it has been generally recognised that some tourists search for and bring home the ‘authentic’, only a limited amount of empirical research has been undertaken into the tourists’ perceptions of craft authenticity (Duffek 1983; Littrell 1990; Littrell et al. 1993; Revilla and Dodd 2003). Despite the fact that each of these studies focused on different native crafts, the results reflect parallel themes among tourists’ perceptions. Littrell et al. (1993) examined how midwestern US tourists define craft authenticity and whether those perspectives are related to tourism styles, tourists’ ages and gender. The findings showed that tourists define authenticity in terms of the craft’s uniqueness and originality, workmanship, cultural and historic integrity, aesthetics and use, as well as genuineness. The characteristics of the craftsperson and the shopping experience itself were also judged as important criteria contributing to the object’s perceived authenticity. It may be argued that these themes respond to some extent to the abovementioned approaches possibly taken by tourists, which were suggested by Cohen (1993a).

According to Littrell et al. (1993), most tourists looked for authenticity in the craft’s uniqueness and originality. Hence, tourists sought ‘one-of-a-kind’ craft items and did
not perceive authenticity in crafts that were mass-produced. Accordingly, factors such as unusual, newness and lack of availability contributed to the definition of authenticity. The second theme, workmanship was interpreted as being “handmade, made with high quality raw materials, take lots of time to produce, and exhibit fine attention to detail” (Littrell et al. 1993:205). Tourists were also concerned about the historical and cultural integrity of the product, which was evident in sought features such as “coming from that area” and “with a design that relates to the history of the community” (1993:205). In this context, the craft’s authenticity was attributed to past times and places.

Furthermore, perceived authenticity was associated with aesthetics, function and use of the object. This theme included personal taste and preferences as well as the desire for aesthetics of past eras and other cultures. The characteristics of the craftsman and the materials used was another factor contributing to the product’s authenticity. For instance, some tourists placed special attention on the fact that the craft was handmade by a person who lives in the area. Accordingly, Errington (1998:141) observed that ‘authenticity’ more and more designates that the artist himself is an authentic native person. Here, “authenticity has been transferred from the object to the author”.

In addition, whilst some tourists preferred the use of Indigenous materials, such as local clays or grasses, they were not concerned about its contemporary form and content. Finally, shopping experience itself was a means to verify the craft authenticity in person. Thus, tourists sought interaction with the artisan, such as meeting and watching how the craft is being made. This finding confirmed an earlier study which investigated the meaning that special textile crafts hold for tourists. Here it was also found that authenticity-seeking tourists preferred a shopping experience that consists of unique or challenging interactions with a craftsman. In addition, cultural authenticity was related to a wide variety of textile characteristics, such as raw materials, colours, design and production techniques of the craft (Littrell 1990).

Similarly, Revilla and Dodd (2003) examined the aspects that contribute to tourists’ perception of the authenticity of Talavera pottery, a unique art form produced in Puebla, Mexico. The authors claimed that tourists associate authenticity with five
main factors: appearance/utility, tradition and certification, difficult to obtain, locally produced and low cost. In contrast to the findings of Littrell et al. (1993), the majority of tourists bought Talavera in craft stores and did not place a high importance on buying the products directly from the craftsmen.

Nonetheless, whilst these tourists’ perceptions on the authenticity of product features seem obvious and clear, Errington (1998) pointed out that such definitions introduce the complexity of authenticity even further. For example, problems arise in defining who a native person really is, what is considered as ‘traditional’ style or design, and what ‘handmade’ ought to mean. Consequently, it is difficult to draw a precise line within these definitions. As a result such criteria used to judge authentic primitive art are hardly feasible (Errington 1998).

### 3.6 Existential Authenticity

The discussion surrounding authenticity in tourism experiences has moved gradually from an ‘etic’ view of the concept (objectivist authenticity) to a more ‘emic’ perspective of authenticity (constructed authenticity) and finally to a completely subjectivised standpoint, namely what Wang (1999) termed ‘existential’ authenticity (Cohen 2004). Selwyn (1996) was the first author who accentuated the distinction between objective/constructive and existential authenticity. Selwyn differentiated between authenticity as ‘knowledge’ as opposed to the authenticity of ‘feelings’, which he called ‘cold’ and ‘hot’ authenticity. In the first sense, the term ‘authentic’ refers to the quality of knowledge related to, for example, the nature, culture and society of tourist destination. The latter emphasises the projections of feelings stemming from social relations and sociability. For instance, Selwyn refers to these feelings as ‘alienation-smashing’ (1996:7).

The emergence of the notion of existential authenticity is also evident in Brown’s (1996) and Daniel’s (1996) studies. Brown (1996) explained that tourists not only search for the authentic Other but also seek authenticity in themselves, which he referred to as experiencing an authentic ‘good time’. Daniel (1996) claimed that dance performances in tourism settings can be experienced by both tourists and
performers as authentic and creative. Whereas touristic dance performances are often considered as diminishing authenticity and artistic creativity, the study found that tourist participation in dances can provide genuine and intense experiences for tourists and performers alike:

…the dance performance transforms their reality. For many tourists, the dance becomes their entire world at that particular moment. Time and tensions are suspended. The discrepancies of the real world are postponed. As performing dancers, tourists access the magical world of liminality which offers spiritual and aesthetic nourishment... both performers and tourists are often able to experience authenticity bodily and thereby, simultaneously express authenticity and creativity. The intensity and energy exhibited in the resulting dance performance secures authenticity and creativity within the touristic setting through the culmination of differing qualities of movement and through the profound experience within the performer while dancing.  
(Daniel 1996:789, 794)

Wang (1999) proposed the concept of existential authenticity to tourist experiences as an alternative to objective and constructive authenticity. The author developed this concept by adopting Selwyn’s two types of authenticity and applying earlier ontological conceptions, such as Heidegger’s (1996) and Berger’s (1973) notion of existential authenticity. Within existential authenticity, the author identified two different dimensions consisting of ‘intra-personal’ and ‘inter-personal’ authenticity. Both these dimensions were divided into two further classifications: intra-personal authenticity referring to bodily feelings and self-making or self-identity and inter-personal authenticity addressing family ties and ‘touristic communitas’.

According to Wang (1999), tourists who seek tourist experiences that are existentially authentic are not concerned about the authenticity of toured objects. They are rather in search of their authentic selves – an “existential state of Being”, which is activated by certain tourist activities (1999:359). Thus, as Wang explained, existential experience consists of the authenticity of Being and generally refers to “one is true to oneself”. The authentic self emerges as an ideal in response to the existential conditions of modernity which are highlighted by self-constraints, reason and rationality. Therefore the ideal of authenticity is best explained by either nostalgia or romanticism. People are nostalgic about ways of life supposedly found in the past and childhood, which portray people as freer, purer, more innocent and more spontaneous about themselves. Romanticism on the other hand stresses
naturalness, sentiments and feelings. Tourism is thus used as a means to experience and enjoy such a lifestyle, which is less serious, less utilitarian, simpler, more spontaneous and more authentic. Hence, the routine of daily lives can be broken through activities such as camping, picnicking, campfires, mountaineering, adventures, walkabout etc. in natural environments. Here the object authenticity is often irrelevant. The emphasis lies on experiencing the authentic self (Wang 1999).

Wang (1999) went into more detail explaining existential authenticity when he referred to the two components of intra-personal authenticity, including bodily feelings and self-making or self-identity. According to Wang, touristic experiences may involve the desire for bodily pleasures, such as relaxation, entertainment, rehabilitation and sensual pleasures. The author used a beach holiday as an example for the bodily source of the authentic self. Because tourism makes it possible for individuals to not only express but also consume sensual pleasures and feelings, a bodily experience of personal authenticity is created. In contrast, the intra-personal authenticity involving self-making explains the motivation for tourists seeking adventure and off the beaten track holidays. Wang argued that many individuals are not able to find self-realisation and pursue their authentic selves in everyday life. To escape their mundane and monotonous roles in ordinary life, they seek challenges and adventures in tourist activities such as mountain-climbing and ocean cruising.

Moreover, Wang (1999) described inter-personal authenticity as being reflected in family ties and touristic communitas. Hence, sharing memorable and pleasant moments with family can be seen as a typical example of experiencing authentic togetherness and an authentic ‘we-relationship’ whilst being on holidays. Finally, Wang applied Turner’s (1973) concept of communitas to the inter-personal relationships among tourists themselves. As Turner’s pilgrim, the tourist experiences communitas by seeking freedom from structural attributes and reaches a liminal state of being whilst forming an undifferentiated bond with other tourists through social togetherness. Indeed, as Urry (1990) argued the consumption of tourist services is in itself a particular social composition of other consumers. Similarly, Selwyn’s (1996:21) notion of ‘hot’ authenticity stresses the importance of social solidarity, however, the emphasis lies here on experiencing the pre-modern Other as ‘authentically social’.
Whilst Wang (1999) proposed an attractive alternative to explaining the authenticity-seeking paradigm within tourist experiences, Wang’s suggestions of the underlying motivation of the tourist seeking existential authenticity (in a postmodern world) are questionable. On the one hand, Wang (1999:358) put forward the idea that due to “accelerating globalization under postmodern conditions” the concept of the authenticity of the original is difficult to sustain. On the other hand, Wang’s tourist, dissatisfied with societal constraints, the rationality in modernity and the monotonous routine of his everyday life, yearns for self-realisation, self-identity, in short his ‘authentic self’:

Thus, under the condition of modernity, the authentic self emerges as an ideal that acts to resist or invert the dominant rational order of the mainstream institutions in modernity...For many individuals, work and everyday roles impose constraining and monotonous routine in which individuals find it difficult to pursue their self-realization.

(1999:361, 363)

In fact, part of Wang’s argument is a familiar one, being similar to MacCannell’s thesis of the modern, alienated man who embarks on a quest for authenticity as a result of his own inauthentic daily life. The significant difference, however, lies in the content and personal objectives reflected in each of the tourist’s quests. Whereas MacCannell’s tourist seeks authenticity in the real lives of others in ‘other times and other places’, the essence of existential authenticity involves the search for the authentic self or, in other words, being true to oneself. However, assuming that tourism is now characterised by a postmodern culture, then the alleged post-tourist as described by Feifer (1985) and Rojek (1993) does not fit into Wang’s conceptualisation of the existential authentic-oriented tourist. If the post-tourist is described as playful, seeking immediate pleasures, excitement and visual spectacle, whilst at the same time searching for extraordinary experiences in a contemporary world highlighted by consumerism and by the processes of de-differentiation, then it is doubtful whether such a tourist type essentially experiences his everyday life as ‘monotonous’ and ‘rational’.

Perhaps this contradiction can be explained by an interesting argument presented by Cohen (2004), who suggested that two major trends have emerged within postmodern tourism. First, due to the declining interest in the ‘quest for otherness’,
an ‘asymptotic merger of tourism and ordinary leisure’ becomes apparent, where the new ‘otherness’ may be experienced in everyday leisure activities (2004:318). The second trend is highlighted by the merger of tourism and exploration, visible in the quest for an encounter with the ‘totally Other’ (see Cohen 2004 for detailed discussion). Developing his argument further, Cohen proposed that the latter resembles a continuation of the modern quest for otherness by tourists with a “persevering modern inclination”, who intensively challenge the increasing sameness of postmodern travel by, for example, exploring extreme forms of adventure tourism.

Underpinning this quest for extreme otherness is the ambition to overcome the dangers and risks of the trip. Here, Cohen argued, a fusion may be noticed between object and existential authenticity. According to Cohen (2004), both Wang and Selwyn, who highlighted the distinction between both types of authenticities, overlooked the conditions fostering existential authenticity. Even though the surroundings may be often regarded as irrelevant or inauthentic in experiencing existential authenticity, in Cohen’s (2004:322-23) point of view, “the most exalted instances of the experience of existential authenticity are engendered in the presence of ‘authentic’ natural sites which strike the tourist as majestic or sublime…”. Examples include the ‘mystique’ of the deep forest, the view from a high mountain top and the loneliness of a desert night (Cohen 2004:232). This line of Cohen’s argument, which identified a new emphasis on natural environments, parallels Wang’s suggestion that tourists looking for intra-personal authenticity seek nature and adventures to accomplish their inner goals.

3.6.1 Heidegger’s Conceptual Framework for Existential Authenticity

Steiner and Reisinger (2006) employed Heidegger’s (1996) conceptual framework for existential authenticity to explain its relevance to tourism activities. Steiner and Reisinger (2006:302) criticised other authors who in their view have shown ‘inadequate philosophical engagement’ with Heidegger’s notions by adopting the concept of existential authenticity to their tourism studies. For example Wang’s (1999) explanation of existential authenticity was challenged on the grounds that
Wang transferred the concept of object authenticity to human authenticity resulting in the self turning into another object which can be authentic and inauthentic.

According to Steiner and Reisinger, some of the main characteristics of Heidegger’s philosophical framework include the importance of personal identity, the relationship between history and identity and anxiety and courage/resoluteness as well as the personal and worldly dimensionalities. The term ‘authenticity’ in Heidegger’s sense implies that someone is being themselves existentially, existing according to their nature or essence. Existential authenticity is experience-oriented and is therefore experienced only temporary. Thus, tourists can be momentarily authentic in different situations and should not be described as authentic or inauthentic tourists in an enduring sense.

Fundamental to Heidegger’s notion of human authenticity is his belief that individuals live in a world of possibilities and have the capacity to make their own choices. Each person develops a unique perspective of the world stemming from one’s individual and communal past, which Heidegger referred to as ‘heritage’ and ‘destiny’. The unique perspectives in turn determine the unique possibilities and form the bases for human authenticity. Hence, different tourists have different experiences and as such constitute different meanings. According to Heidegger, the world exists as a network of interconnected things, which enables human experiences and meaning (Steiner and Reisinger 2006).

Steiner and Reisinger (2006) used Heidegger’s theory on Dasein to explain how tourists project themselves, which makes them authentic or inauthentic. If tourists project an authentic self in the existential moment, then they will create their unique possibilities and consequently have their own experiences. Other tourists may ignore their own unique possibilities and instead pursue common shared tourist experiences. Such loss of individual identity and the projection of a conformist self is derived from inauthenticity. Hence, tourists being authentic would show a desire to get off the beaten track and would welcome excitement and surprises as well as enjoy any experiences along their way. By contrast, tourists being inauthentic would prefer guided tours and mass tourism experiences; they would not be interested in discovering meaning for themselves. Some examples of tourism activities which may
facilitate existential authenticity include visiting family and friends and seeking a sense of togetherness and belonging, adventure tourism, recreational tourism and pilgrimage tourism. However, one may discover existential authenticity in any other tourism activities that may be otherwise perceived as mundane and unexciting (Steiner and Reisinger 2006).

3.7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present an overview of the conceptualisations and different theoretical perspectives of authenticity. The concept of authenticity was discussed within its two main differentiations, namely object authenticity and existential authenticity. The objectivist, constructivist and postmodern perspectives pertaining to the concept of object authenticity were reviewed. The topic of authenticity was also examined in relation to the commoditisation of local culture and the subject matter of tourist arts. Existential authenticity, an alternative notion to object authenticity, was presented and further explained by using Heidegger’s framework.

Whilst this chapter has identified several theoretical perspectives and presented numerous debates surrounding the concept of authenticity, it remains unclear whether the different stakeholders of tourism themselves share the same views or hold similar views to the ones proposed by scholars. Thus, the following gap in the tourism literature has been identified:

- a lack of knowledge whether theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by different stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Consequently, a second research question can be formulated originating from this gap: Are theoretical perspectives of the notion of authenticity shared by those stakeholders?
The following chapter of this thesis will address the research design and methods as to how the gaps identified in the tourism literature were filled with this particular research.
Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 discussed the literature pertaining to cultural tourism, Aboriginal cultural tourism and the topic of authenticity within Indigenous/Aboriginal tourism. It set out the theoretical reason for this study by identifying several gaps in the understanding as to what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience. In particular, a lack of qualitative studies examining in-depth tourists’ and hosts’ perceptions of authenticity in Indigenous tourism was identified. Chapter 3 provided a review of the literature surrounding its conceptualisation and various interpretations of meanings. It identified that a lack of knowledge exists in regard to whether theoretical perspectives proposed by scholars are shared by different stakeholders in the Aboriginal tourism industry.

Chapters 2 and 3 built the theoretical foundation for this research identifying the two main research questions that guided this study: What are the perceptions of authenticity of tourists as well as tour operators and their employees? and Are theoretical perspectives of the notion of authenticity shared by those stakeholders? The purpose of this chapter is to present the research design that was utilised to address the specific research objectives originating from the two research questions:

1. to identify tourists’ perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism;
2. to identify the perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tour operators and their employees in regard to authenticity;
3. to examine potential discrepancies and/or similarities between the perceptions of tour operators/employees and tourists about what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience;
4. to investigate whether any of the different theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by tourists and tour operators/employees;
5. to develop a conceptual framework to provide an overview of salient elements explaining the formation of perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

The first section of this chapter describes the reasons for the choice of research design and the philosophical paradigm that informed the research process. The second section outlines the research design process followed by a discussion of how the qualitative research methods associated with the constructivist inquiry were implemented. The next section addresses the data analysis methods used and details the techniques that were employed to demonstrate the trustworthiness of this study. The chapter concludes by outlining the ethical considerations and limitations of this research design.

4.2 Research Paradigm

In undertaking any research and choosing among methodological approaches, the researcher needs first to consider the underlying philosophical paradigm that informs the research process and which is fundamental to decision making (Jennings 2001; Phillimore and Goodson 2004). As Phillimore and Goodson (2004) emphasised, it is difficult to judge the findings of a study without knowledge of the different beliefs and details of the ways in which the research techniques were applied. In fact, the researcher’s actions throughout the research process are underpinned by a basic set of beliefs, which is known as a paradigm that directs disciplined inquiry (Guba 1990). Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) defined a paradigm as a “basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways”. Thus, an inquiry paradigm is characterised by three main elements: ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Ontology refers to the study of being and is concerned with issues of existence. It raises questions about the nature of reality while referring to the claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social inquiry makes about the nature of social reality (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). Epistemology is the theory of knowledge that deals with the origin, nature and limits of human knowledge (Guba 1990; Guba
and Lincoln 1989). It defines the relationship between the researcher and that being researched or, in other words, how the researcher conceptualises his role in producing knowledge (Creswell 1998). Because epistemology addresses how knowledge is created, its position lays the foundation for the knowledge-building process. As a result, an epistemology is tied to or intimately linked to a theory (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006). Methodology, on the other hand, is a more practical part of philosophy, which deals with methods, systems and rules for the conduct of inquiry. It is the study of how researchers collect knowledge to answer the research question (Guba and Lincoln 1989).

This study is guided by a constructivist philosophy and methodology, which was developed by Guba and Lincoln (1989, 1994; Lincoln and Guba 1985) in response to their rejection of conventional assumptions associated with logical positivism (Lincoln 1990). Originally this theoretical framework was termed ‘naturalistic inquiry’ (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen 1993; Lincoln and Guba 1985). Guba and Lincoln subsequently introduced the term ‘constructivism’ to characterise and explain their paradigm (Guba and Lincoln 1989, 1994). In order to understand why this paradigm was chosen as most suitable for this study, it is first essential to examine its underlying philosophical and theoretical assumptions.

The constructivist paradigm is built on the thesis of relativist ontology, which assumes multiple, socially constructed realities that are ungoverned by any natural laws, causal or otherwise (Guba and Lincoln 1989). Relativism has been defined as viewing knowledge as relative to time and place, that is, never absolute across time and space (Patton 2002). Every view of the world is therefore relative to society, subculture or even an individual (Gibbs 2002). However, Appleton and King (1997) emphasised that whilst a relativist theory of knowledge is employed it is important to recognise that people may hold similar views about the nature of social reality within and across cultural groups. Consequently, constructivist researchers aim to discover the constructions that various actors in a setting hold in order to achieve synthesis on the issues involved (Guba and Lincoln 1989).

Thus, the philosophical underpinnings of the constructivism paradigm hold a propensity toward the antifoundational by refusing to adopt any permanent or
‘foundational’ standards by which truth can be universally known (Guba and Lincoln 2005). In this respect, Guba and Lincoln claimed that constructions are ‘created realities’: “They do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them; they are not part of some ‘objective’ world that exists apart from their constructors” (1989:143). This definition explicates the constructivist perspective on ‘truth’, which is a matter of the most informed and sophisticated construction on which there is consensus among individuals at a given time (Schwandt 1994). Constructions, in turn, are formed during the research process through the interaction between researcher and study participants. This last point introduces the epistemological stance of the constructivist paradigm, which is directly interlinked with its ontological position.

Epistemologically, the constructivist paradigm asserts a subjectivist and transactional approach in dealing with the issues that define the nature of the inquiry (Green 2002). As such, it recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the knower and the subject; and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings (Appleton and King 1997; Charmaz 2000; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Schwandt 2000). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), it is impossible to separate the researcher and the participant because it is their interaction that creates the findings that will emerge from the inquiry. Since the constructivist researcher sees reality in terms of multiple constructions, these multiple views can be only accessed through the transactions between the researcher and the research participants in order to arrive at a ‘joint’, or collaborative, construction of a case (Guba and Lincoln 1989:138).

Methodologically, the aforementioned aim of the constructivist to achieve consensus or synthesis through eliciting joint constructions, is reflected in the hermeneutic-dialectic approach. The hermeneutic aspect, which is interpretive in character, involves the depiction of individual constructions as accurately as possible (Guba 1990; Guba and Lincoln 1989). Appleton and King (1997) emphasised that the hermeneutic process fosters the understanding of the essential meaning of the constructions instead of merely producing “a superficial grasp at a purely descriptive level” (1997:14). The dialectic aspect consists of comparing and contrasting convergent and divergent viewpoints in an effort to generate a higher-level synthesis.
of them all (Appleton and King 1997; Guba 1990; Guba and Lincoln 1989; Hollinshead 2006).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), all research is interpretive since it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world. Therefore, in choosing a paradigm, methodology and the appropriate research methods to investigate the phenomenon in question, the researcher had to consider her own theoretical position that frames her overall world view. As such, the researcher’s theoretical perspective of relativism was found to be aligned with the philosophical framework provided by the constructivist inquiry, whereby a realist ontology associated with the positivist paradigm was rejected. Additionally, from an epistemological perspective, the relationship between researcher and study participant has also been an important consideration in deciding for the constructivist research paradigm. By acknowledging the existence of multiple constructed realities, the aim of the research was to mutually create understanding and discover new knowledge through the exploration of the various constructions that people (including the researcher) hold. Only this type of interaction, where the researcher does not maintain objective distance but rather seeks interactivity with the study participants, was seen to provide access to the multiple views of reality that may exist.

It is important to note, however, that this research project centred on visitors’ expectations and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tours and sought to compare those to the perceptions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal tour operators and their employees (see appendix 4.1 for summary of research findings). This initial research focus was discovered and justified by searching for gaps in the tourism literature, whereby a lack of qualitative studies assessing tourists’ and tour operators’ expectations and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural products was found. In particular, the existing literature pointed to a lack of general knowledge about the specific expectations that tourists may hold when deciding to participate in an Aboriginal cultural product. At the outset of the study, the issue of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences was identified as one aspect for investigation among several others that was included in the semi-structured interview guide (see appendix 4.2), in order to probe participants on their perceptions and expectations of the tour.
The constructivist approach was adopted as it seemed to reflect the nature of the research to be undertaken. The researcher aimed at employing a research paradigm that allowed for flexibility and which highlighted the voice and the individual experience of the tourist and employee. The latter characteristic of the constructivist paradigm was particularly important for this study since being able to develop an understanding of the visitors’ expectations and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tours, the different ideas, viewpoints and perspectives needed to be explored. However, this demanded that the viewer would be part of what is viewed, enabling interaction and essentially conferring meaning upon it.

Due to the exploratory nature of the initial research purpose, the researcher wanted to remain flexible throughout the research process and be open to unexpected issues arising. Particularly, the focus of inquiry was guided by context and emergent themes rather than by predetermined outcomes. Thus, the constructivist inquiry proved to be an important means for the researcher to discover new knowledge and generate understanding about the issue of authenticity in Aboriginal cultural tourism. As the research unfolded, the topic of authenticity emerged as a central finding of the study. The constructivist inquiry allowed the researcher to change the research focus and reframe the original research questions, thereby further investigating the issue of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural experiences.

4.2.1 Why Qualitative Research?

This research employed a qualitative methodology due to the nature of the constructivist paradigm, which underpinned the research process. Qualitative research has been defined in many different ways as the term itself incorporates a complex, interconnected family of terms facilitating many different methods and approaches (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). In general, the phrase ‘qualitative methodology’ refers to research that produces descriptive data, such as people’s own written or spoken words and observable behaviour (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). According to Flick (2002:13), qualitative research is multi-method in focus and is “oriented towards analysing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity.
and starting from people’s expressions and activities in their local contexts”. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) defined qualitative research as involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

In contrast to a positivist paradigm, qualitative research aims to develop concepts and understandings from patterns in the data, rather than testing hypotheses, preconceived models and theories. Whereas quantitative researchers aim to break down complex relations into variables that can be precisely measured, qualitative research seeks to emphasise the importance of context for understanding the social world. Moreover, qualitative methods produce rich and detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases. Whilst this increases the understanding of the cases studied, it also reduces generalisability (Neuman 2000; Patton 2002; Taylor and Bogdan 1998).

Within qualitative research grounded theory, which was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is a popular and widely used approach. The purpose of grounded theory is to develop an inductively derived theory that is faithful to the evidence. Thus theory emerges from the data rather than preceding it. The emphasis of grounded theory therefore lies on new theory generation. Fundamental to grounded theory is that data collection and analysis occur simultaneously through an ongoing process of constant comparative method. Hence, theory evolves during the research process through the continuous interplay between analysis and data collection (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

The selection of a qualitative methodology for this study was governed by the research questions, and subsequently by the inquiry paradigm that informed the research process. Whilst the use of quantitative methods is not objected by the constructivist theoretical framework, qualitative over quantitative methods are predominantly employed. This can include in-depth interviews, focus groups interviews, participant observation and documentary evidence (Appleton and King 1997; Erlandson et al. 1993; Lincoln and Guba 1985). The rationale for the preference for qualitative methods stems from the paradigm’s ontological and
epistemological grounding. The ‘emic perspective’, which is associated with the holistic-inductive paradigm was preferred over the ‘etic perspective’ since it provides an understanding of the phenomenon from the insider’s view and allows for the identification of multiple realities (Fetterman 1989).

Whereas the emic approach seeks to understand the phenomenon being studied from “within” a culture (Denzin 1989), the etic position is based on a structured systematic set of ‘rules’ to interpret the study setting from an outsider’s perspective, thereby searching for cross-cultural universals (Jenning 2001). Given that the constructivist researcher is a subjectivist, whereby interaction is derived from the use of humans as the primary data-gathering instruments, qualitative methods for this research were deemed more appropriate for capturing multiple perspectives and eliciting in-depth data of human behaviour within an Aboriginal cultural tourism context.

Furthermore, a grounded theory approach was adopted for this research as it appeared to reflect the original purpose of this study to produce rich data on visitors’ and tour operators’ expectations and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tourism. In fact, grounded theory is embedded within the constructivist approach in that the findings flow from the process of induction rather than from predetermined frameworks and categories. In this case, grounded theory approach was used to generate theory where little was known.

However, the emphasis here lay in approach, implying that neither rigid prescriptions involving technical procedures as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), nor the avoidance of prior reading and understanding of the phenomena under study (Glaser 1992), were followed. This research rather stressed the inductive process of theory development and aimed to generate new understanding and theory in the field of Aboriginal cultural tourism. Hence, the researcher aimed to explore the expectations and perceptions of visitors and tour operators in-depth and thus develop a meaningful picture derived from and based on the data itself. By using a bottom-up approach, the topic of authenticity emerged from the inductively derived theory that was developed, which in turn sharpened the focus of the research questions.
Finally, the choice of qualitative research was heavily influenced by one of the aims of this study, namely to investigate the Aboriginal voice within Aboriginal cultural tourism. It has been emphasised that qualitative research is an important tool for Indigenous communities that facilitates dialogue across differences and enables detailed interpretations of social life, which is based on an emic perspective (Smith 2005). Furthermore, there is a high level of synergy between interpretive social sciences paradigms and principles from Indigenous epistemological and methodological viewpoints, thereby making a qualitative methodology most appropriate for some research studies (Schaper, Carlsen and Jennings 2007). Within Indigenous studies aspects such as cultural protocols, values and behaviours are often addressed as integral parts of the methodology (Smith 1999). For instance, reciprocity in qualitative research involving Indigenous people has been identified as an important issue in building trust between the researcher and study participants in order to establish an ongoing reciprocal process (Hodgson and Firth 2006; Schaper et al. 2007; Schuler, Aberdeen and Dyer 1999). In addition, cultural considerations, such as potential low literacy levels of some Aboriginal employees as well as cultural differences related to information gathering, made a qualitative research methodology most suitable.

4.3 Research Design

The research design process of this study, which unfolded as the research project evolved, incorporated several different stages. Figure 4.1 depicts a diagrammatic representation of the research design features. It provides a framework of this research by giving an overview of how the constructivist paradigm informed the study and details the process of inquiry.

The first stage of the process involved a thorough literature review in the field of Indigenous tourism in general and Aboriginal tourism in Australia in particular. This literature review established several gaps pertinent to the topic of Aboriginal cultural tourism in Australia, which formed the initial research questions to the study. Thus, the original research objectives concentrated on the expectations and perceptions of
Figure 4.1: Research Design Process

- Literature Review
- Research Objectives
- Constructivist Paradigm
  - Multiple socially constructed realities
  - Subjectivist & transactional approach
  - Hermeneutic-dialectic process
  - Grounded Theory Approach
  - Emergent Design
- Thematic Data Analysis
- Sampling Techniques
  - Purposive Sampling
  - Convenience Sampling
- Qualitative Methods
  - Participant Observation
  - In-depth Semi-structured Interviews
- Establishing Trustworthiness
  - Credibility
  - Transferability
  - Dependability
  - Confirmability
- Preliminary Findings
  - Thick description of three cases
- Reframing of Research Objectives
- Data Analysis

FINDINGS

Ethical Considerations

Expectations and Perceptions of Aboriginal Cultural Tours

FINDINGS

-111-
both visitors and tour operators and their employees in regard to Aboriginal cultural
tours in Australia. The next stage entailed choosing a research paradigm that not only
reflected the researcher’s ontological stand but was also appropriate to investigate the
research questions. As previously discussed, the constructivist paradigm was chosen,
which together with the research objectives guided the research process.

The key elements of constructivist inquiry that were employed in this study included
purposive and convenience sampling, thematic data analysis and the use of
qualitative methods as well as the establishment of trustworthiness through the
criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Within the
constructivist inquiry, data analysis is connected to data collection which means that
data analysis occurs throughout the entire research process. Therefore, this stage of
the research design process is illustrated as a circle on the diagram, which
interconnects the four elements and aims to represent the continuous interplay
between each of them. This interplay between the collection of qualitative data, its
analysis and the establishment of methodological soundness allowed for the
emergent design of the project, whereby the topic of authenticity evolved to be the
central finding of this study. After data collection was completed the literature was
once more revisited, with a shift in focus to the concept of authenticity in general,
and its linkage to Indigenous tourism in particular. The outcome of the second
literature review together with the ongoing data analysis resulted in the reframing of
the original research questions.

Throughout the research process ethical implications of involving people, in
particular Aboriginal people, in the study imposed certain considerations. Thus,
underpinning this research process were a number of ethics-related issues regarding
informed consent, reciprocity, respect of Aboriginal knowledge system,
confidentiality of identity, and access to research results.

4.4 Research Methods

According to Flick (2002:5), “the object under study is the determining factor for
choosing a method and not the other way round”. Similarly, Cartledge (2002)
emphasised that the method needs to come to the research and not the research to the method. Methods should be therefore designed so open that they do justice to the complexity of the object under study. In accordance with the constructivist paradigm that advocates using a mix of qualitative methods, this study utilised qualitative semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method together with participant observation.

4.4.1 Sampling Strategies

Since this research was situated within the constructivist paradigm, which asserts the construction of meanings based on multiple social realities, the aim of the sampling strategy was to select diverse individuals who may hold multiple interpretations of the phenomenon in question. Thus, in order to discover and compare divergent viewpoints that various actors in a setting hold, a two-stage sampling strategy was utilised to ensure that the sample was a reflection of the diversity of tourists’ perspectives that exist in regard to Aboriginal cultural tour experiences. In the first stage, the sampling strategy consisted of selecting the research location and the tour organisations, as well as the timing of the data collection phase. The second stage involved the selection of the study participants from each tour company.

Stage 1

Several criteria were developed that were used as determining factors in selecting the research location and the appropriate tour organisations as well as the time period the researcher would collect data at each setting. The choice of the different Aboriginal cultural tour companies was led by both practical and theoretical considerations. The following criteria were established:

- The tour company should be well known for its Aboriginal cultural experience. As such, the selected tour companies should have a clear presence in promotional material, which would ensure that interviews are held with tourists who are able to provide information on their specific expectations of Aboriginal cultural tourism. Furthermore, the tours should operate on a regular basis and attract at least 1000 visitors during the high
season. This would provide the researcher with sufficient numbers to interview participants during the time period of data collection.

- With the adoption of Hinch and Butler’s (1996) definition of Indigenous Tourism (see Chapter 2, 2.2.2 Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in Australia) Aboriginal people should exercise a high degree of control in the tourism business. As such, the tour company should be owned by Aboriginal people and employ some Aboriginal people in their tour operation.

- The location of the tour companies should be in a tourist destination that is well known, in particular among international tourists, for Aboriginal cultural tourism. Such tour organisations would provide the researcher with the necessary target population consisting of tourists who would have an interest in Aboriginal cultural tourism.

- The tour companies should be dispersed across the region selected to ensure a range of cultural experiences offered. Such geographical dispersion would also allow for a sample containing various visitor types.

- The location of each tour company should be easily accessible to the researcher. This was a practical consideration for the selection of the tour organisations.

- Each tour company should offer a variety of activities with some differences in content among them.

- To ensure sufficient tourist numbers were available during the sampling process the time period of data collection should correspond to the high season of tourist visitation.

Employing these criteria the three different Aboriginal cultural tour companies chosen for the purpose of this study were: Tiwi Tours, Manyallaluk Tours and Anangu Tours. The three tour companies selected met the criteria outlined since they
are well known worldwide for their Aboriginal cultural experience and attract more than 1000 visitors during the high season. In addition, all three tour companies are owned by Aboriginal people and employ Aboriginal people in their tour operations.

Several reasons influenced the decision to include three tour companies in the sample from which three case studies were to developed. Since the principal aim of this research was the collection of rich and detailed information that concentrates on depth, three tour companies seemed to be a reasonable number that would facilitate the objectives of this study. Hence, the data gathered at the three tour organisations was to be compared and contrasted with each other. Furthermore, in terms of practicality, limited resources of time and people influenced the choice of three tour companies. Researching more than three tour companies seemed too overwhelming for a single researcher given the limited time available during high season in which the data collection had to take place.

The Northern Territory was chosen as the general research location since it is renowned for its outback experience, is rich in diverse Aboriginal cultures and offers a variety of Aboriginal tourism attractions. The Northern Territory is closely associated with Aboriginal culture, which is an increasing motivator for tourist visitation (NTTC 2004b). In fact, research conducted by SATC on visitors’ perceptions in regard to the best regions in Australia to experience Aboriginal culture found that the Northern Territory is recognised as the place to explore Aboriginal culture. Eighty seven percent of respondents ranked it first, followed by Western Australia (43%), Queensland (25%) and New South Wales (17%) (SATC 2002:29).

In 2005, while New South Wales attracted the largest number of international visitors who participated in Aboriginal activities, the Northern Territory received the highest number of domestic visitors who took part in Aboriginal activities (TRA 2006). Research has shown that Aboriginal art and culture appear to be a supporting reason for visiting the Northern Territory for many visitors. The opportunity to experience ‘outback’ Australia and world renowned scenic areas, such as Uluru and Kakadu, is a primary motivation for travel to Northern Territory for the majority of visitors (AGB McNair 1996). However, it was also found that some visitors showed an interest in
Aboriginal culture, which was part of a wider tourist perception of the Australian ‘outback’ (AGB McNair 1996; Ryan and Huyton 2002).

The research area needed to be further narrowed to include tour companies from the different regions of the Northern Territory. The selection of regions was based on the Northern Territory Travel Monitor (NTTM) (the main source of quantitative statistics on tourism in the Territory), which divides the Northern Territory into four main tourism regions to obtain statistical output. These regions, which include the Top End, Katherine, Tennant Creek and the Centre, are based on a combination of Statistical Local Area (SLA) boundaries defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The researcher decided to include three tour companies that are evenly dispersed throughout the different regions in the Northern Territory in order to accommodate the fluctuations in visitation numbers due to seasonality.

Tiwi Tours is located in the Top End region. Manyallaluk Tours operates in the Katherine region and lastly Anangu Tours can be found in the Centre region of the Northern Territory. Hence, it was hoped that the dispersion of the tour companies across the Northern Territory would generate a pool of various visitor types that would enable the collection of rich data. Additionally, the accessibility of the tour companies to the researcher played an important role in the selection process. The tours needed to take place at an easily accessible and convenient location. Consequently tours, for example, operating within Arnhem Land were excluded.

Furthermore, the variety of activities offered by the tours seemed important, as this was thought to influence the perceptions of tourists and provide for different pictures in expectation and perception formation. For example, Tiwi Tours was the only tour that offered a visit to the local museum and a smoking ceremony which included a short dance performance. Manyallaluk Tours and Anangu Tours, on the other hand, provided more hands-on activities to their visitors. However, all tour companies shared similarities since they all offered guided walks accompanied by Aboriginal tour guides, who imparted information about their own Aboriginal culture.

Finally, the last criterion was related to the time period of data collection. Tourism activity in the Northern Territory is highly seasonal. The largest proportion of
holiday visitors usually visits during the September and June quarters. There are also

differences in visitor composition between the Top End region and the Centre region.
The Centre region has the greatest proportion of international visitors, who are less
seasonal, whereas the Top End seasonality is largely driven by the interstate market
(NTTC 2004b). Thus, the dry season (May to September inclusive) was identified as
the main period for data collection. However, the researcher wanted to avoid high
peak visitation periods since the collection of qualitative data required time and a
relaxed environment to be able to interview visitors and staff during the tour. It was
therefore decided to start data collection in April at Tiwi Islands, proceed with
Manyallaluk Tours in May/June and finish at Anangu Tours by July/August. These
time periods allocated to each data collection phase were approximate only since the
emergent nature of the qualitative inquiry needed to leave room for flexibility in the
research process.

Stage 2
The second stage of the sampling strategy involved the selection of the study
participants at each tour company. Whereas quantitative research typically draws a
representative sample from a much larger collection or population, qualitative
inquiry focuses in depth on relatively small samples that are selected by using a non-
random sampling method (Patton 2002; Neuman 2007). Within the constructivist
paradigm, the major aim of the researcher is not to generalise the findings to a
broader population but to maximise discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and
problems that occur in the particular context under study (Erlandson et al. 1993).
This study utilised purposive and convenience sampling techniques for the selection
of study participants.

Purposive sampling refers to the selection of information-rich cases for in-depth
investigation, whose study will illuminate the research questions. Information-rich
cases are defined as those from which one can obtain information that is of central
importance to the purpose of the research (Patton 2002). Purposive sampling, which
is fundamental to constructivist inquiry, increases the range of data exposed and
maximises the investigator’s ability to identify emerging themes as well as the
possibility of uncovering multiple realities (Erlandson et al. 1993; Lincoln and Guba
1985).
The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants that would most contribute to the understanding of the research question and also fit the purpose of the study. By using this sampling technique, a process of elimination was necessary in order to narrow all possible participant sources (Erlandson et al. 1993). Hence, criterion sampling, as devised by Patton (2002), was employed for this study for purposefully selecting information-rich cases within the three tour companies. Criterion sampling involves the study of all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance. For example, employees of the three tour companies had to meet the criterion of having worked for the tour company for at least one year in order to be selected as possible study participants. This criterion narrowed the target population to participants who had gained experience in their work and were therefore considered information-rich cases for the purposes of this study.

Purposive and criterion sampling became necessary during data collection involving tourists since it was realised that the visitors’ target population needed to be further defined. Originally, the researcher assumed that the visitors’ population and sampling frame were precisely defined as the target population appeared to be structured. Since the aim of the study was to investigate visitors’ expectations and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tours, the researcher did not seek to target a particular person out of the population but was rather interested in the whole structured population consisting of all visitors taking part in the tours. Thus, it was assumed that the tourists shared some common set of characteristics, such as holding an interest in Aboriginal cultural tourism and/or having a primary motivation for participating in an Aboriginal cultural tour.

However, during the course of data collection it was realised that some individual members of the population were in fact different. Several tourists explained that the reason they took part in the tour was because they had to accompany another person, such as wife, husband, friend etc. These visitors had no interest or showed only a low level of interest in Aboriginal culture; they simply were taking part in the tour because of another person. Similarly, at Anangu Tours a couple of tourists who were approached by the researcher stated they had no specific interest in Aboriginal culture and had booked the tour solely for the purpose to see Uluru. As a result, study participants had to meet the criterion of participating in the tour because they had an
interest in Aboriginal culture. This information was obtained from participants by asking them why they were taking part in the Aboriginal cultural tour.

Due to the data collection taking place predominantly during the tours, convenience sampling was used in addition to purposeful sampling. As, understandably, a condition of access to the tourists was to find participants who volunteered to be interviewed, convenience sampling was employed as the second sampling strategy. Convenience sampling refers to the selection of those cases which are the easiest to access under given conditions (Flick 2002). Hence, tourists and employees were approached during the tours and asked if they were willing to participate. For example, of those employees who fit the criterion of having worked for the tour company for at least one year, employees who were available during the tours to the researcher and also confident in answering questions in English were approached. The researcher was aware that convenience sampling could lead to a sample that contains participants of the same age, sex or race. To ensure that some differences existed in the sample the researcher aimed to select participants who reflected the diversity of the population.

Finally, an important issue often raised when using the purposive sampling strategy involves the question of sample size. Qualitative research focuses on quality, than quantity, and as such researchers are more interested in information richness than information volume (Erlandson et al. 1993). Due to the emergent nature of the inquiry, the question of sample size remains open within constructivism. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended sample selection to the point of redundancy, which is the primary criterion for the sample size. Thus, in purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations, whereby the main objective lies in maximising information. Redundancy is achieved and the sampling is terminated when no new information is elicited from new sampled units (Lincoln and Guba 1985). As aforementioned, the researcher assigned only approximate dates for the individual data collection phases. At each research location, the researcher collected data until no additional information was found, whereby only confirmation of previous theories was established.
4.4.2 Description of Study Population

In order to address the research questions the overall study population was divided into two individual study populations that were of interest to this project. The first encompassed the tourists component, which included domestic and international tourists visiting Tiwi Tours, Manyallaluk Tours, and Anangu Tours in the Northern Territory. In terms of visitor numbers, Manyallaluk Tours is attracting approximately 1,500 tourists per annum (S. Harm 2005, pers. comm., 20 May). In 2003, a total of 1,485 tourists visited Bathurst Island and participated in the Tiwi Tours (M. Allen 2004, pers. comm., 15 November). Tourists taking part in the Anangu Tours totalled 14,213 in 2003 (L. Berryman 2004, pers. comm., 17 November).

At Tiwi Tours the researcher participated in all tours that took place in the time period of data collection. There were eleven tours that were run with a total of 61 tourists. Thus, the tourists’ study population at Tiwi Tours that was available to the researcher in the time period of data collection consisted of 61 tourists, out of whom 18 (30%) were male and 43 (70%) were female tourists.

Manyallaluk Tours was operating tours four times a week; Monday to Thursday only. In May, Manyallaluk Tours experienced a slow start to the tourist season. During the time the researcher was collecting data at Manyallaluk, there were a total of ten tours with 23 tourists taking part in the tours. Consequently, the tourists’ study population at Manyallaluk consisted of 14 (60.9%) female tourists and 9 (39.1%) male tourists.

During the two weeks the researcher was conducting the interviews, Anangu Tours was running every day a morning tour and an afternoon tour. The researcher aimed at joining each tour, however, several times the researcher was not able to take part since the tour was fully booked and there were no more seats available on the tour bus. The researcher was able to participate in 17 out of 25 tours. The tourists’ study population at Anangu Tours available to the researcher during the data collection period comprised 467 tourists, including 198 (42.4%) male and 269 (57.6%) female visitors.
The second study population consisted of the three tour operators and their employees. In the case of Tiwi Tours, which is owned by the Tiwi Land Council and is operated under agreement by Aussie Adventure, this included members of the Council as well as managers and employees working for Tiwi Tours. At the time of data collection, Tiwi Tours consisted of twelve employees – one operations manager from Aussie Adventure responsible for Tiwi Tours, two island operations managers, three morning tea ladies, one yardman and five tour guides.

Manyallaluk Tours is part of Jawaluk Pty Ltd., which is owned by Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation and Jawoyn Association holding a share in the business. Here the study population included employees within management positions at Jawoyn Association as well as all employees working for Manyallaluk Tours. At the time the data collection phase took place, Manyallaluk Tours employed one tour coordinator as well as twelve tour guides who held various responsibilities such as providing information to tourists during a bush walk, leading group activities and helping with the lunch preparations.

Anangu Tours Pty Ltd is owned by the traditional Aboriginal (Anangu) owners of Uluru National Park. The study population for Anangu Tours was made up of all their employees. In 2005, Anangu Tours employed a total of 24 employees, comprising three staff within management, two interpreters, four drivers/guides, fourteen tour guides and one person working in the information office.

### 4.4.3 In-depth Semi-structured Interviews

Fundamental to constructivist inquiry is the gathering of information by observing and by talking with and listening carefully to the people who are being researched. Since humans are used as the primary data-gathering instruments, interviews as a qualitative research method are a central element of constructivist inquiry. Constructivist researchers utilise interviews to uncover multiple perspectives and elicit in-depth data of human behaviour (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Interviews encourage participants to explore issues from their own perspective. Interviews also help the researcher understand the participant’s interpretation of their experiences.
and the meaning that they attribute to them (Rubin and Rubin 2005). In particular, within constructivist research, interviews take more the form of a dialogue and an interaction between researcher and study participants. As such, interviews help the researcher “to understand and put into a larger context the interpersonal, social, and cultural aspects of the environment” (Erlandson et al. 1993:85). Whilst a variety of interviewing techniques exist, the most common is the semi-structured interview, which is guided by a set of basic questions and issues to be explored (Erlandson et al. 1993).

In accordance with the constructivist inquiry, in-depth, face-to-face interviews were held with tour operators, their employees and tourists visiting the three Aboriginal cultural tours. The interviews were undertaken over a period of three months between April and July 2005 at Manyallaluk, Bathurst Island and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. The researcher collected qualitative data during a period of four weeks at Tiwi Tours and a period of five weeks at Manyallaluk. The data collection phase at Anangu Tours, which consisted of a data collection phase of two weeks, was shorter compared to the first two tour companies. This was the case because Anangu Tours offered twice as many tours in the same time period; the company operated two tours a day, on a seven days a week basis. Hence, after two weeks, the researcher came to the conclusion that there was no new information forthcoming from study participants.

For the purpose of this study a semi-structured interview guide with predetermined topics and open-ended questions was used (see appendix 4.2). An interview guide outlines a set of topics, questions or issues that are to be explored during the interview with each interviewee. The interview guide keeps the interactions focused but allows individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. Whilst a particular subject has been predetermined, the interviewer is still free to build a conversation by exploring, probing and asking questions within the particular subject area, which in turn allows for practical flexibility during the interviewing process. Thus, the semi-structured format provides a framework within which other topics of importance can emerge and participants are able to express their experiences and viewpoints. In addition, the interview guide ensures that all key themes are addressed, which increases the comparability and comprehensiveness of the data (Patton 2002).
Although the emergent design of the constructivist paradigm precludes the development of a prior definite design, as well as advocating the use of an unstructured interview that subsequently evolves to a more structured form (Lincoln and Guba 1985), this research utilised a semi-structured format due to the cultural context the study took place in. Firstly, the researcher needed to conform to ethical guidelines concerning research involving Aboriginal people, whereby interview questions had to be submitted for prior approval to the university’s ethics committee. Secondly, this form of interviewing allowed for practical flexibility and contingencies of cultural differences related to information gathering. The use of an interview guide with predetermined topics facilitated interaction and encouraged rapport between the researcher and Aboriginal study participants. The semi-structured format did not impede on the emergent design of the study. This method of interviewing within an Aboriginal context has been also recommended by previous studies (Donovan and Spark 1997; Hodgson and Firth 2006).

The particular topics and questions contained in the interview guide were formulated to address the original research objectives of the study. The topics that were of interest to the researcher were derived from conducting a literature review on Indigenous tourism and more specific Aboriginal tourism in Australia. Therefore, the content of the interview guide covered topics related to tourists’ and employees’ expectations and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tours.

Interviews with a total of 72 tourists and 20 employees were held, and the duration of each ranged from 20 minutes to 120 minutes. On average two interviews per tour were conducted, depending on how busy the tour was and on the availability of research participants. The interviews were audio-tape-recorded and notes were taken during the interviews. These notes kept track of what was said and were used for follow-up questions to clarify issues mentioned by the participants. The notes also formed a basis from which themes and theories were developed. Reading the notes and listening to the tapes after the interviews improved subsequent questioning.

Tourists were approached before, during and after the tours on occasions such as while travelling in the tour bus, during/after lunch and in between activities – basically when the opportunity arose. Since the objective of the study was to obtain
rich information about participants’ expectations and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tours, the researcher aimed at interviewing respondents at the start of the tour as well as after the tour was finished. This strategy allowed the researcher to explore visitors’ expectations of the tour and compare those to their perceptions and perspectives at the end of the tour. This strategy proved to be effective at Tiwi Tours and Manyallaluk Tours since the itinerary of both tours allowed for sufficient time to interview respondents during as well as at the end of each tour. For example, at Tiwi Tours the researcher usually questioned participants during morning tea and before their departure at the local airport. This was not always possible at Anangu Tours as their tours were half-day tours. Thus, some interviews with Anangu Tour participants were scheduled after the tour at the Yulara tourist resort.

Interviews with tour operators and their employees were mostly conducted separate to the tours, when the researcher organised appointments with the study participants. Only some Aboriginal employees preferred to be questioned during the actual tours, which was also the only occasion for the researcher to schedule the interview. This was the case at Manyallaluk Tours, where the researcher was not permitted to enter the community area and therefore only came in contact with Aboriginal employees during the tours. Despite the fact that these interviews were undertaken during working hours, they took place in periods of spare time in a relaxed environment, where the Aboriginal employee was able to express his/her viewpoints in detail.

In regard to language barriers, only one interview with an Aboriginal employee of Anangu Tours was conducted with the help of a translator. This particular participant preferred the use of a translator since she explained that she was able to express herself better in her own native language. One of the tour managers who was fluent in the native language of the Anangu people assisted as a translator during the interview. All other interviews with Aboriginal people were conducted in English since the study participants had sufficient English skills.

4.4.3.1 Description of Sample

In total, the tourists sample consisted of 72 participants, which consisted of 30 respondents at Tiwi Tours, 20 respondents at Manyallaluk Tours and 22
respondents at Anangu Tours. The tour operator and employee sample entailed 20 participants, made up of nine respondents at Tiwi Tours, seven respondents at Manyallaluk, and four respondents at Anangu Tours.

**Tiwi Tours - Tourists**

At Tiwi Tours, a total of 30 respondents were interviewed, out of whom 19 (63.3%) were female and 11 (36.7%) were male. The largest group of respondents (30%) were in the 35-44 age group. Almost two thirds of all respondents were aged over 44 years. The sample did not produce any participants in the age group 18-24 and only 2 respondents were between 25 and 34 years of age.

Respondents were asked to state their occupation, and their responses were sorted and coded according to the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO)* (ABS 1997). Professionals were the largest occupational group, accounting for 53.3% of the total sample. The largest subgroups within the Professional category were Health Professionals (20% of total sample) and Education Professionals (16.6% of total sample). A significant proportion of respondents were retired (16.6% of total sample). The results of the socio-demographic profile of respondents are provided in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents (Tiwi Tours – Tourists)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(N=30)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; Admin.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professionals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interm. Clerical, Sales &amp; Serv.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers &amp; relat.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In regard to the origin of study participants, 60% were domestic tourists and 40% were international tourists. The majority of domestic tourists were from NSW, comprising 23.3% of the total sample. Respondents from Europe represented the largest grouping of international tourists with 23.3%. Table 4.2 illustrates a summary of the findings on the origin of respondents.

Table 4.2: Origin of Respondents (Tiwi Tours - Tourists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNATIONAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe sub total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America sub total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania sub total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total International</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOMESTIC:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Domestic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tiwi Tours – Tour Operator and Employees**

The sample for the tour operator and employees of Tiwi Tours consisted of nine respondents. This included the President of the Tiwi Land Council, the Operations Manager of Aussie Adventure, the Marketing Manager of Aussie Adventure, two Island Operations Managers, three Tiwi Tour guides and one Morning Tea Lady. Out of the nine respondents, five were of non-Aboriginal and four were of Aboriginal background.
Manyallaluk Tours - Tourists

At Manyallaluk Tours the sample size comprised a total of 20 tourists, including 12 (60%) female and 8 (40%) male participants. The majority of respondents (60%) were aged over 44 years. The sample contained one respondent in the age group 25-34. However, there were as many respondents (20%) between 18 and 24 years of age as there were between 45 and 54 years of age. The results of participants’ occupation showed that the largest group (30%) consisted of respondents who were retired, followed by Professionals (15%) and Associate Professionals (15%). Table 4.3 provides a summary of the findings on the socio-demographic profile of respondents.

Table 4.3: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents (Manyallaluk – Tourists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(N=20)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; Admin.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradespersons &amp; relat.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Cleric. &amp; Serv.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample produced an equal number of domestic and international tourists (50%), with the largest group of respondents (25%) coming from Germany. An equal number of respondents were from NSW and WA, with each comprising 15% of the total sample. A summary of the results on the origin of study participants is shown in table 4.4.
Table 4.4: Origin of Respondents (Manyallaluk - Tourists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERNATIONAL:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe sub total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total International</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMESTIC:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Domestic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Manyallaluk Tours – Tour Operator and Employees*

The sample for the tour operator and employees of Manyallaluk Tours comprised seven participants, of whom three were non-Aboriginal and four were Aboriginal. Interviews were conducted with several members of the Jawoyn Association, who were involved in the management of Manyallaluk Tours. This included the General Manager, the CEO and the Tourism Manager of Jawoyn Association. The study participants of Manyallaluk Tours consisted of the Tour Coordinator as well as three tour guides.

*Anangu Tours – Tourists*

At Anangu Tours, a total of 22 respondents were interviewed, of whom 14 (63.6%) were female and 8 (36.4%) were male. The largest group of respondents were in the 45-54 age group (27.3%), followed by participants aged 65 years and older (22.7%). Almost two-thirds of all respondents were aged over 44 years. Only two respondents were between 18 and 24 years of age. Professionals were the largest occupational group, accounting for 50% of the total sample. The largest subgroup within the Professional category were Education Professionals representing 45.5% of the total
sample. The results of the socio-demographic profile of respondents are provided in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5:** Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents (Anangu Tours – Tourists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(N=22)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; Admin.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv. Clerical &amp; Serv.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interm. Clerical, Sales &amp; Serv.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers &amp; relat.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the total sample, 68.2% were international tourists and 31.8% were domestic tourists. Respondents from the USA represented the largest group of the international tourists with 36.4%, followed by tourists from Europe with a total of 27.1%. Table 4.6 illustrates a summary of the findings on the origin of respondents.

**Anangu Tours – Tour Operator and Employees**

The sample for the tour operator and employees working for Anangu Tours comprised four participants, who were two Operations Managers of Anangu Tours, the Assistant Manager, and one tour guide. Three participants were of non-Aboriginal background and one respondent was Aboriginal. Due to the difficulties of scheduling interviews with Anangu employees only one respondent was of Aboriginal background. The researcher had only contact with Anangu employees during the tours where interviews were not possible due to time restrictions. Interviews had to be therefore scheduled after the tours. In addition, an interpreter
had to be arranged to assist during the interviews. As a result, it was difficult to find Anangu employees who were available and willing to take part in the study after the tour was finished.

Table 4.6: Origin of Respondents (Anangu Tours – Tourists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNATIONAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Europe sub total</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North America sub total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oceania sub total</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total International</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOMESTIC:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Domestic</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Tourists’ Characteristics**

The comparison of the three study populations suggests some strong similarities among the three samples. First, within all three samples the proportion of female tourists was larger than the proportion of male tourists. Second, across the three samples, the majority of respondents were over 44 years of age. Third, the occupational group of Professionals, such as Health and Education Professionals, comprised the largest group of respondents followed by participants who were retired. Whilst the sample was not meant to be representative of a population, it is nonetheless consistent with previous research which has found that there is a higher
demand for cultural tourism experiences (Silberberg 1995) and Aboriginal tourism experiences among women than men (Pitcher 1999; Ryan and Huyton 2002; SATC 1998). Furthermore, it has been suggested that interest in Aboriginal tourism is relatively high amongst Professionals, particularly Education Professionals such as school teachers, university professors and lecturers (Pitcher 1999; Ryan and Huyton 2002; SATC 1998).

However, whilst previous research has found that international tourists constitute the predominant market for Aboriginal tourism products (SATC 1998; TRA 2006), the differences in visitors’ origin among the three samples appear to reflect the differences in visitor composition between the Top End due to seasonality. Whereas the sample of Tiwi Tours produced a high proportion of domestic tourists (60%), the sample of Aṉangu Tours contained a large number of international tourists (68.2%). This seems to be a reflection of the Top End seasonality being largely driven by the interstate market and the Centre region receiving a high proportion of international visitors, who are less seasonal (NTTC 2004b).

4.4.4 Participant Observation

The combination of interviewing and participant observation adds to the richness of data collected (Jennings 2001). Particularly within the constructivist inquiry, participant observation constitutes an essential element that forms a reciprocal relationship with qualitative interviewing methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. Interviews and observation facilitate understanding of a social context in an interactive way, whereby interviews provide leads for the researcher’s observations and observations in turn offer probes for interviews (Erlandson et al. 1993; Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Participant observation enhances the quality of the data obtained during fieldwork as well as the interpretation of data, whether those data are obtained through participant observation or by other methods. It also encourages the continual formulation of new and reassessment of initial research questions grounded in field experience and observation. As a result of the increasing familiarity with the context, new insights
into the phenomena are gained and new hypotheses are developed. Participating in the research context also forces the researcher to place his/her particular focus within the wider context (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002).

In order to experience the dynamics of the tours and gain a better understanding of the research context, participant observation was used during the data collection period at each tour company. The researcher took part in the tours and participated in the tour activities. When time permitted, notes were taken immediately after participating in these activities, throughout the tours and after their completion. The principal aim of participant observation was to observe tourists’ and employees’ behaviours during the tours and create meaning of their comments, questions and interaction with each other. This included tourists’ reactions towards cultural presentations as well as employees’ reactions towards tourists. In particular, through participant observation the researcher sought to gain practical insights into tourists’ perspectives of and reactions towards these tours, including issues such as perceived authenticity, the role of Aboriginal tour guides, cross-cultural interaction and the type of activities offered. These observations were then compared to the participants’ responses to interview questions concerning these issues.

According to Patton (2002), observations can be distinguished according to whether they are ‘overt’ or ‘covert’. People might behave differently when they are aware they are being observed than when they are not. Thus, covert observation might reveal more than overt observation, when people know that they are being studied. However, ethical issues are important to consider in the decision of the type of observation. Here, Lincoln and Guba (1985:274) recommend that “ethics demand that covertness be eschewed except in very exceptional circumstances”. Consequently, this study employed a methodology consisting of an overt participant observation using a non-interventionist approach, whereby study subjects were neither manipulated nor stimulated (Denzin and Lincoln 1998).

In addition, practical considerations made the researcher assume an overt role of participant observation that is ‘participant-as-observer’. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:285) defined participants-as-observers as “observers who become participants in the activities of the group by revealing their identities and the goals of
their research”. This was necessary as the researcher conducted interviews with visitors and employees during the tours and therefore had to reveal her identity and research interests. Hence, at the start of each tour an employee of the tour company introduced the researcher to the tourists and explained the purpose of the study. This introduction proved to be very useful as some visitors were very interested in the research and initiated interaction with the researcher as well as shared their opinions on topics such as the tour, Aboriginal culture and their experience with Aboriginal people.

4.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Data Analysis Technique
Thematic analysis was used as the qualitative data analysis technique. In thematic analysis the process of coding is utilised to identify themes or concepts within the data, which in turn links the data to an emergent theory. Essentially, coding involves initial identification of topics, often referred to as open coding. Next, as the coding scheme becomes more developed axial and selective coding are used, which enables the development of an argument central to the research study. The categories into which themes will be sorted are not decided prior to coding the data, rather they are ‘induced’ from the data (Ezzy 2002).

The analysis of qualitative data was assisted by the use of the computer software NUD\-IST Vivo (NVivo). Qualitative research requires that the researcher explores and sensitively interprets complex data. Unstructured data require ways of indexing, searching and theorising. NVivo, a theory-generation program, is a powerful tool for relating, categorising, characterising, and coding data (Bazeley and Richards 2000; Gibbs 2002). This software was chosen as it was designed for grounded theory, which is an important element of constructivist inquiry. The special qualitative-analysis facilities of the computer software were used for organising and exploring as well as coding and categorising data for this study. NVivo assisted the researcher in retrieving the vast amount of data that was yielded from the three case studies and in searching for themes by creating categories and codes.
Data analysis within the constructivist inquiry is based on continuous data analysis during data collection, which means that the researcher takes into account elements and insights from previous interviews or observations and pursues them the next day (Lincoln and Guba 1985). For this study, all interviews were recorded on audiotapes and notes were taken during the interviews and during observations. At the end of the day the researcher listened to the tapes and reviewed their contents. This process allowed the researcher to identify important themes/issues and to form new hypotheses. Further questions which needed to be explored emerged for the next session of interviews. The transcribing process was also started in between fieldwork days and was continued after the data collection process was completed. Thus, the findings of this study flowed from the process of induction rather than from predetermined theories and categories.

4.6 Establishing Trustworthiness

Due to its ontological and epistemological stance, the conventional criteria for trustworthiness (internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity) are not appropriate to the constructivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). As a result, Guba (1981) devised four criteria, ‘credibility’, ‘transferability’, ‘dependability’ and ‘confirmability’, which serve as substitutes for the conventional terms. Additionally, Guba suggested several operational techniques that can be used to establish these criteria, including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing and member checks. Table 4.7 provides a summary of all techniques that can be used to demonstrate the trustworthiness of research using the constructivist inquiry. This study addressed the four criteria proposed by Guba (1981) by utilising prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing and member checking as operational techniques to prove the trustworthiness of this research project.

Credibility

By implementing the credibility criterion the researcher establishes truth value and enhances the probability that the findings will be regarded as credible. Credibility is also demonstrated when the findings are approved by the constructors of the multiple realities.
Table 4.7: Techniques for Establishing Trustworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion Area</th>
<th>Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td>(1) activities in the field that increase the probability of high credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) prolonged engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) persistent observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) triangulation (sources, methods, and investigators)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) peer debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) negative case analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) referential adequacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5) member checks (in process and terminal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transferability</strong></td>
<td>(6) thick description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependability</strong></td>
<td>(7a) the dependability audit, including the audit trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confirmability</strong></td>
<td>(7b) the confirmability audit, including the audit trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All of the above</strong></td>
<td>(8) the reflexive journal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Lincoln and Guba (1985:328)*

To demonstrate credibility, techniques can be used such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, member checks and the use of a reflexive journal (Erlandson et al. 1993; Guba 1981; Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Prolonged engagement allows the investigator to spend sufficient time at the research site in order to learn the ‘culture’ of a social setting, build trust and develop a rapport with respondents. Spending an adequate amount of time at a site gives locals the opportunity to adjust to the presence of the researcher and the researcher is able to check his or her developing perceptions (Guba 1981; Lincoln and Guba 1985). The researcher of this study used prolonged engagement at each of the three tour companies to gain an in-depth knowledge of the tour environment, its employees and visitors. The researcher spent an extended period of time at each research setting, which allowed her to form a meaningful relationship with the employees of the tour organisation. This was in particular the case at Tiwi Tours and Manyalalluk Tours, where the researcher occasionally helped out with the tour preparations. Thus, the relationship with employees was built upon trust, which was especially important for the recruitment of Aboriginal interview participants, who valued a reciprocal communication process.

The second technique employed in this research involved persistent observation. Persistent observation allows inquirers to test their growing insights and sort out
relevancies from irrelevancies (Erlandson et al. 1993; Guba 1981). Lincoln and Guba (1985:304) emphasised that, “if prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth”. Between interviews the researcher engaged in observations, which either involved taking part in the tour activities or interacting with employees. The aim was to identify elements that were most relevant to the research problem. Thus, tourists’ behaviour as well as their interaction with employees was observed during the tours. Observations enabled the researcher to compare previous data from interviews to the context as well as use information derived from observations to probe interview participants.

In addition to prolonged engagement and persistent observation, the researcher used peer debriefing and a reflexive journal in order to build credibility. Peer debriefing helps build credibility by providing the inquirers the opportunity to discuss and test ideas and questions. The debriefer might be a faculty colleague or member of a dissertation committee. A reflexive journal functions like a diary, in which the investigator records information on a regular basis (Erlandson et al. 1993; Guba 1981). For this study, peer debriefing via email and phone with the researcher’s supervisors during fieldwork provided the opportunity to discuss important issues and receive feedback. Throughout data collection entries in a reflexive journal were written, which consisted of thoughts, ideas, observations and issues, which needed further exploration.

Finally, the technique of member checking was used to verify interpretations with participants. Member checking involves continuously testing data and interpretation with members of stakeholding groups (Guba 1981). According to Erlandson et al. (1993) member checking can take place at the end of an interview by summarising the data and also during interviews by verifying data from earlier interviews. Informal conversations with various members and verification of the draft copy are also possible methods for member checks.

During the interviews, issues and themes were verified with respondents. At the end of the interview the researcher clarified and confirmed important topics that emerged during the interviewing process. Follow-up questions were asked to elicit more understanding if needed. In addition, informal conversations were held with
employees of the tour organisations, which assisted the data collection period. Due to the nature of the research, whereby the majority of interviews were conducted with tourists, it was not possible to send the transcriptions of interviews to study participants for member cross-checking purposes. However, several participants, who were employees, were contacted to affirm the accuracy of the information they had provided. Additionally, in order to receive feedback and confirmation that the researcher’s interpretations are true reconstructions of participants’ statements, a summary of preliminary findings was sent to the three tour operators, followed by a draft version of the final results of this study. The results were accepted by the three tour operators, and no concerns or problems were raised.

**Transferability**

Transferability is concerned with the issue of whether the findings of a study have applicability in other settings or with different respondents. Transferability can be achieved through two means, namely purposive sampling and thick descriptions. Within the constructivist paradigm, generalisations are context-bound and are therefore not possible. Only working hypotheses can be made together with a description of the context. During the study the researcher conducts purposive sampling, which aims to maximise the range of collected information, as well as gather ‘thick’ descriptive data. After data collection the researcher develops thick descriptions of the context (Guba 1981; Lincoln and Guba 1985). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used purposive sampling, which allowed for information-rich cases. In addition, descriptive data was collected during the study and was then reported in detailed descriptions of the context.

**Dependability and Confirmability**

Dependability refers to the consistency of a study. If its findings were replicated with the same or similar respondents in the same or similar context, then the findings should be consistent. Confirmability is concerned with the neutrality of a study, whether the findings “are reflective of the informants and the inquiry, and not a product of the researcher’s biases” (Decrop 1999:158). The concept has shifted from objectivity towards data confirmability (Guba 1981). Both dependability and confirmability can be established by leaving an audit trail to determine the trustworthiness of the study (Erlandson et al. 1993). Lincoln and Guba (1985)
suggested several types of materials for the audit trail, such as electronically recorded materials, written field notes, interview notes, data analysis procedures and reflexive notes.

During data collection and data analysis the researcher made an audit trail available, which allows an evaluator or another researcher to follow the thinking processes and methods of the original researcher. The materials for the audit trail include raw data (interview guide and notes), data analysis products (electronically recorded data on Word files and NUD*IST), process notes (reflexive journal) and materials related to intention (peer debriefing notes).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an important element of all research and should always be at the forefront of any researcher’s concerns, in particular where the inquiry involves dealing with people. Research involving human beings is complex and researchers must respect the rights of the individual (Fehring 2002). Berg (2001:39) reminds researchers of their obligation to “ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of the people and communities that form the focus of their studies”. When undertaking research with Aboriginal people, several additional ethical issues needed to be embedded in the research process of this study.

In order to conduct this study with the best standards of ethical research and human rights involving Aboriginal people, the researcher adhered to both the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research established by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2003) and the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies developed by the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS 2000). To be granted ethics approval from the University of Western Sydney’s Ethics Committee the researcher had to address six principles, which included reciprocity, respect, equality, responsibility, survival and protection, and spirit and integrity. Ethical issues that were complied with during the research
process consisted of informed consent, reciprocity, respect of Aboriginal knowledge system, confidentiality of identity, and access to research results.

Informed consent was obtained from the Tiwi Land Council, the Jawoyn Association and the managers of Anangu Tours. Tiwi Land Council approved the study and referred the researcher to the operation manager of Aussie Adventure. Before giving approval to the study, the Jawoyn Association consulted with the Manyallaluk Community Council, who fully supported the research. Similarly, the managers of Anangu Tours presented the proposed study at an Anangu community meeting, where the traditional owners granted permission for the research study. Additionally, the researcher had to apply for a permit to enter and remain on Aboriginal land at the Central Land Council (CLC), which was granted on 23 February 2005 (see appendix 4.3). An important condition that was placed upon the researcher was the sharing of the research results with the three tour operators.

The researcher therefore sought feedback on the preliminary findings as well as the final results of the study with each tour organisation. Providing the tour operators with an opportunity to raise their concerns and clarify any issues concerning the researcher’s interpretations of their statements, the researcher aimed to ensure that their voice was heard and that all parties involved were content with the research outcomes.

Throughout the research process the researcher had to adhere to and implement the NHMRC (2001) principles of “Informed Consent”, which outlines the ethical and legal requirements of consent. This included important guidelines on the provision of information and the principle of voluntary participation. Thus, the consent of a study participant must not be subject to any coercion, or to any inducement or influence. Prior to the actual interview, the researcher explained to each participant the background of the study, including its purpose and benefits, and the voluntary nature of his/her participation in the research. Participants were also ensured of confidentiality, their anonymity and that they were free to terminate the interview at any time with no questions asked. Following the University of Western Sydney’s ethics regulations, the researcher provided every participant with a written information statement (see appendix 4.4) to retain and an informed consent form (see
appendix 4.5) to sign. Reasonable time was provided in order to give the participants the opportunity to read and understand the consent form as well as ask any questions.

The audiotapes of the interviews were stored in a secure place during fieldwork. Work in progress was contained on a password-protected laptop until transferred into secure storage. The data is now kept in secure storage at the University of Western Sydney, which only the researcher has access to.

4.8 Limitations

Due to the qualitative nature of this research design, which was informed by the constructivist paradigm, the results of this study are limited in scope, reflecting the perceptions of tourists, tour operators and their employees at the time the study was conducted. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the aim of the constructivist researcher is to develop an idiographic (specific to time and place) body of knowledge. Idiographic interpretation of data looks at the particulars of the case rather than at lawlike generalisations as the nomothetical interpretation. Considering the nature of this research, generalisation of the findings is limited. Given that only a limited number of interviews was conducted, caution should be taken when extrapolating data to the wider population.

Further limitations that might have affected the findings of the study were associated with cultural differences that existed between the non-Aboriginal researcher and the Aboriginal study participants. Despite the fact that all Aboriginal participants had sufficient English skills, some of the academic terminology used in the interview questions had to be explained for the participants to understand. The researcher thereby risked being an influence on the responses given by the interviewees. The same issue became evident in some interviews with Aboriginal participants where the respondents were not very ‘talkative’ and only provided short answers to questions. At times the researcher had to probe for more information and rephrase some questions by using examples. By doing this the researcher had to be careful not to unintentionally lead the participant to a certain answer. Whilst this interviewing method risked introducing elements of researcher-imposed bias, it has been also
identified as an effective strategy to encourage rapport when interviewing Aboriginal respondents (Donovan and Spark 1997; Hodgson and Firth 2006).

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the philosophical paradigm and research design which underpinned this study. The research was guided by a constructivist philosophy and methodology. This chapter first justified why the constructivist inquiry was chosen for this study and then detailed the qualitative methods utilised to address the research questions and objectives, which included in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation. For the selection of study participants, purposive and convenience sampling were employed as the sampling techniques. The next section outlined the data analysis methods that were used to derive at the findings of this study, which involved thematic analysis. This was followed by a discussion of how the four criteria - credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability - were implemented to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the constructivist research. Finally, this chapter explained the ethical issues and rules that the researcher had to consider and adhere to when conducting research with people, in particular, Aboriginal people. The chapter concluded with identifying the limitations of this research.

The next chapter will present the findings and discussion of the study. It details the perceptions of tourists as well as the perceptions of tour operators and their employees towards authenticity at three different Aboriginal cultural tours. Chapter 5 integrates the literature and the findings of the qualitative research to generate a basis of discussion.
Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters established the theoretical background as well as the philosophical paradigm which underpin this research. Chapters 2 and 3 have set the theoretical foundation for this study by identifying four gaps in the tourism literature from which the following two research questions were developed: What are the perceptions of authenticity of tourists as well as tour operators and their employees? and Are theoretical perspectives of the notion of authenticity shared by those stakeholders?

This chapter examines tourists’ and employees’ perceptions of authenticity by discussing the findings and linking them with the literature. Whilst this research intended to do a comparison between tourists’ and employees’ perceptions of authenticity, the analysis has shown that there were not any significant differences between the perspectives of these two groups. This chapter therefore integrates the findings of both tourists’ and employees’ perceptions into one discussion. The results of the inductive data analysis are presented in a thematic structure. First, the tourists’ context is described, which appeared to have an influence on tourists’ perceptions of authenticity. Next, the general perceptions of authenticity are discussed. This is followed by presenting the remaining findings within the four main elements, which were identified to capture the salient factors contributing to the authentic experience. The four elements are: Aboriginal tour guide; The search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aborigines; Aboriginal arts and crafts; and Contrived Experiences: Enjoyment factor. Figure 5.1 depicts a diagrammatic representation of the complete research findings. The chapter concludes by examining the theoretical perspectives of authenticity that were shared by tourists and employees.
Figure 5.1: Summary of the Elements of Respondents’ Perceptions of What Constitutes an Authentic Aboriginal Cultural Tour Experience

1. CONTEXT
   - Previous experiences
   - Preconceived stereotypes
   - Prior knowledge

2. GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTICITY
   = GENUINE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

influences

3. ABORIGINAL TOUR GUIDE
   - Background of Aboriginal tour guide
   - Custodians of land & stories – intellectual property
   - Role of Aboriginal tour guide
   - ‘Genuine’ interaction

4. THE SEARCH FOR ‘REAL’ & ‘GENUINE’ ABORIGINES
   - Visiting a ‘real’ Aboriginal working community
   - Experiencing Aboriginal people the way they are?
   - Desire to experience contemporary and traditional lifestyle
   - Concern for keeping traditional culture strong

5. ABORIGINAL ARTS & CRAFTS

6. CONTRIVED EXPERIENCE: ENJOYMENT FACTOR
   - Dance Performance
5.2 Context

The analysis of visitors’ perceptions of authenticity would be incomplete without recognition of the tourists’ context, which influences expectations and motivations and is likely to shape visitors’ perceptions of and satisfaction from the cultural experience. In particular, expectations seem to play a crucial role in determining perceptions of travel phenomena. As Mayo and Jarvis (1981:30) pointed out:

To an extent, a person perceives what he expects to see…Such expectations have a critical effect on what the visitor actually perceives because they determine what he pays attention to.

Tourists’ expectations, motivations and satisfaction have been found to be closely linked with each other (Gnoth 1997; Ryan 1991; Van Raaij 1986). Gnoth (1997), introducing a model of tourism motivation and expectation formation, suggested that the expectations and attitudes held towards any tourism entity are determined by both the tourist’s felt needs and value system. Once these needs and/or values have been activated and applied to a holiday setting, the generated motivation plays a significant role in expectation formation. Gnoth (1997:283) further stated that “expectations, in turn, determine performance perceptions of products and services as well as perceptions of experiences”.

As tourists seek places/destinations that are in contrast to their everyday environments, anticipation of this travel experience becomes more important. Marketing efforts of the destination and various forms of non-touristic social practices such as literature, film, TV and magazines feed these expectations (Urry 1990). Similarly, Smith and Duffy (2003) pointed out that tourist ‘realities’ are all negotiated and are largely dependent upon images and expectations created through diverse media. Whereas some of these images may be consciously constructed by governments or the tourist industry, others are more peripheral, such as watching nature programs on television or reading the National Geographic. According to Smith and Duffy (2003), authenticity becomes an issue for tourists when their expectations are unmet or their desires unfulfilled.
In this respect, it was argued that perceptions of host culture need to be understood within visitors’ awareness, knowledge and images or impressions held of that culture (McIntosh 2004). In particular, it was emphasised that tourists arrive at a cultural attraction with their own agenda and contexts, which Macdonald (1992) termed ‘cultural imaginings’, based on personal interests, previous experiences and knowledge. These factors in turn will form tourists’ experiences and will influence their reaction to the attraction setting (McIntosh and Prentice 1999).

Furthermore, McIntosh and Prentice (1999) alluded to the importance of individual psychology on the consumption of cultural tourism encounters, whereby salient visitor characteristics such as motivation and past experience interact with perceived attributes of the attraction. Consequently, tourists ‘encode’ the information attained in ways that are personally meaningful. As such, experiences of authenticity are likely to be distinctly personal and therefore diversely dependent on the individual interpretation of the context provided at cultural attractions (McIntosh and Prentice 1999).

It was not the aim of this study to investigate how visitors’ perceptions were formed, such as whether certain factors (e.g. advertising, media, personal circumstances etc.) had an influence on tourists’ expectations and therefore perceptions of authenticity. However, the findings revealed some linkages between tourists’ expectations and their subsequent perceptions of authenticity which seemed to be based on previous Indigenous tourism experiences, preconceived stereotypes visitors held of Aboriginal people, and prior knowledge tourists had of Aboriginal culture.

5.2.1 Previous Experiences

Whilst explaining their viewpoints of authenticity, several tourists compared their experiences to previous tours or vacations that involved personal encounters with Indigenous people. For instance, a number of tourists judged the authenticity of the dance performance at Tiwi Tours by referring to previous Aboriginal dance performance they had witnessed. As one visitor explained:
“I have seen a couple of other Aboriginal dances where they were able to do it in their full artwork or paint and I think that’s a lot more authentic and people would appreciate more.” [TT29]1

Several tourists at Manyallaluk hoped to visit the community area since they expected to experience the Aboriginal people’s day-to-day life and expected to be part of it. The community area was described as the place where the ‘real life’ of Aboriginal people takes place. Here, some tourists based their expectations on previous experiences with Indigenous people in Fiji and Sri Lanka, for example:

“So we came here for that reason with being to several other Aboriginal cultural experiences, but thought it would be nice to live in a community and just see day-to-day happenings in a community.” [MT17]

“But we have been to Fiji a couple of years ago and we stayed in villages there from the Fijian. A couple of them were very isolated villages and we actually lived in a house with a village person and we did village things we did with them…You were part of their lives…So we thought that’s what we were coming to, but it wasn’t, it was different.” [MT18]

“For instance in Sri Lanka I got some invitations in some of their houses and to see how they live a lifestyle in their homes.” [MT3]

5.2.2 Preconceived Stereotypes

The results suggested that some tourists hold preconceived stereotypes and images of Aboriginal people which were based on their experiences with Aboriginal people in Australia. They experienced the negative side of Aboriginal people elsewhere and as a result hoped to find the ‘real’ Aboriginal people. As such, tourists were not searching for reinforcement of their stereotypes but instead wished to find the opposite – ‘genuine’ Aboriginal people, who work and maintain their traditional culture and, most important, who are not alcoholics. This is supported by comments such as:

“I wanted to see an authentic community. What is the real Aboriginal thing? Even where my daughter was it was so different to this community here. I did feel that it was genuine because it seemed to me that the people didn’t drink. It said outside that it was dry and it seems to me that it really was dry. Lots of the people do have

1 The following coding has been applied to respondents’ quotes: Tiwi Tourists (TT), Tiwi Employees (TE), Manyallaluk Tourists (MT), Manyallaluk employees (ME), Anangu Tourists (AT), Anangu Employees (AE).
alcohol problems and these people appeared not to have them. So I felt there was more a chance to have an authentic experience in a place like that.” [MT19]

“We want to go there to see the Aboriginal people, not the ones who live in town and who are alcoholics and just lie there and drink. You know the real thing. We have just been on Kakadu Safari our guide there she told us she met a lot of people, how totally different they are than the people that we see on the streets in the cities...Just want to see how they are. Because they tried to make them civilised so quick and they had to get used to something totally different, and that’s not them, their culture, the way they live. You don’t see it when you are walking on the street.” [MT5]

“I think what was important for me was to be able to cancel out the images for the Aboriginal communities that have a drink problem actually. I think that’s what it was. I didn’t want to be taking that home with me. It is a very real problem and I have learnt a fair amount about the background of things, but it was more to know what was under the surface what people have built their lives on. And that has a very strong cultural background, which I didn’t have much knowledge of.” [TT10]

“You hear a lot of (stereotypes) when I first came to Australia, I heard a lot of people are prejudiced against Aboriginal people and I just wanted to dispel some of that. I mean I wanted to get to know the Aboriginal people through the Aboriginal people eyes and not through other people’s stereotypes about them.” [AT20]

Visitors’ comments were further confirmed by a remark made by a non-Aboriginal employee:

“I also feel that they are also looking for what they perceive an Aboriginal person or Indigenous person to be.” [TE1]

5.2.3 Prior Knowledge

The findings of this study indicate that a number of tourists’ perceptions of authenticity were influenced by their knowledge of Aboriginal culture they held prior to their participation in the cultural tour. For example, one visitor from Denmark who took part in Tiwi Tours was expressing his disappointment of the tour since he expected Tiwi people to be more primitive and live in simple conditions without the influence of modern Western commodities. Accordingly, the tourist interpreted authenticity as being able to experience an old and pristine Indigenous culture. This was explained by the tourist as follows:

“I expected something primitive, native people trying to perhaps be integrated, slowly integrating in Australian society. No cars, not much electricity. I thought it was a little bit more primitive than this...I thought they would live in some primitive
houses, something like this but perhaps a little bit more primitive...That’s why we came here. Authentic means an old culture, not have changed too much.” [TT11]

As the tourist explained to the researcher, his expectations of authenticity were based on a book that he read before he came to Australia. However, the tourist acknowledged that the book was too old to provide him with an updated picture as to how Tiwi people are living today. The tourist went on to note:

“Perhaps because my book is ten years old, I think that many things have happened in the ten years, it is changing.” [TT11]

Several tourists explained that they were not able to judge whether they gained an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience since they did not have any prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture. Whilst tourists recognised that authenticity is important, they were not able to determine with certainty if the tour offered an authentic experience. Consequently, tourists commented that they relied on their impressions and their feelings. They also had to trust the Aboriginal tour guides that they were representing and demonstrating their culture in an authentic way. The tourists discussed this by stating:

“Yes, I don’t know how I could keep track of that. But I guess yes, that would be important. I would have to believe what I am told. I don’t have any real references to check it. I haven’t done any research myself. I read a little bit at the Cultural Centre, so I will be looking for some of those highlights. But other than that I have to believe what I am told...felt that way to me.” [AT18]

“I know it’s a touristy thing, I think it was fairly authentic. The things that they showed us were actually done a long time ago. And I am sure that’s the way it was done. Not knowing much about the culture, I just have to base it on an impression.” [AT5]

“I don’t think that I had the information to judge whether it was authentic. Because I don’t really know anything about Aboriginal cultures, so I can’t say whether this was the true version of it or whatever. I think that both here and at Djabugay, that the people themselves seemed very genuine to me. I sort had a trust of what they were telling me. I would say that I don’t assume that I got the whole story. I felt that what I received was genuine on their part.” [AT7]

“And because of my lack of knowledge, would I know what authentic was anyway?” [TT10]

“I am assuming what they presented is a true representation of what they do. Don’t know, but I am assuming that.” [MT6]
There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the above comments. First, visitors’ prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture seems to be rather limited. This is supported by previous research on Aboriginal tourism, where the majority of visitors were found to know ‘little’ about the culture of Aboriginal Australians (ATC 2003). Second, because of the lack of prior knowledge visitors felt that they were not in a position to judge whether the information provided by the Aboriginal tour guides was authentic. For example, some tourists explained that they did not have any ‘real references to check it’, haven’t done any ‘research’ and did not have the information to assess whether it was the ‘true version’.

Tourists were therefore looking for a reference point or an expert opinion to compare against the information given by Aboriginal tour guides. As tourist [AT18] stated, he learned about Anangu culture in the Cultural Centre and this knowledge would serve him as an indicator of the tour’s authenticity. It can be therefore argued that the visitors’ views are closely related to the objectivist perspective, which judges object authenticity against a fixed truth or knowable reality. The findings suggest that the tourists believed that the authenticity of the tour was empirically discernible and could be judged against prior gained knowledge or independently determined by experts of Aboriginal culture. The latter is reflected in a statement made by one female tourist who questioned: “How can I be a judge of this?” [TT10]

One male tourist outlined in more detail the criteria for authenticity that he would base his judgments on. He explained that he was cautious making any judgments on authenticity since he thought that authenticity is dependent on many different factors which influence the genuineness of the product. Those factors, which the tourist did not have knowledge about, were, for instance, the relationship of the tour guide to the community and the influence of the tour company upon the nature of the product. He stated that:

“I don’t really feel like that I have any means of judging how genuine it is. I learnt some things that seemed to me convincing but I think I would need to know much more about how for instance, how does she relate to the whole community she comes from, whether one gets a different story than if it was somebody else who was talking to us? How much is this being manipulated by whatever the company is, which provides the tour and maybe has a cure what consumer want, which maybe determines the nature of the product. So there is all sort of things that make one a bit
cautious in making any judgments. I learnt a little, but how many conclusions one may draw from the little I have learnt, I think I feel I am not in a position to say.” [AT11]

On the other hand, a constructivist view was employed by two visitors who pointed out that cultures are continuously changing. Therefore, the meaning and perceptions of what is authentic have evolved and changed during the course of time. Here, Cohen’s (1988a) notion of emergent authenticity in the mind of the visitors becomes apparent. The effects of globalisation on Indigenous cultures were also noted by one tourist. They explained that:

“I wanted it to be real. And what’s real is a good question because it has obviously changed over time, but still I think this is good.” [TT15]

“Everything evolves and that’s the thing with globalisation.” [TT10]

5.3 General Perceptions of Authenticity

In general, most of the tourists associated an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience with a genuine experience – a tour that is ‘real’, ‘natural’ and ‘informal’. The term ‘genuine’ was frequently used to describe how the cultural experience should feel like. In contrast, the notion of something being ‘contrived’, ‘staged’ and ‘plastic’ were employed by tourists to explain the opposite feelings that were related to an inauthentic tour environment. This is evidenced by the following statements:

“I expected it to be genuine to be real and hear the real stories. I don’t like pretence or fabrications.” [AT4]

“But it’s things that are contrived I suppose.” [TT10]

“I sometimes think that Indigenous tourism is staged. I don’t like it when it’s staged. I think that a lot of people want to come and see a show. They don’t put on a show on this tour.” [TT7]

“You wanted it to be authentic. You don’t want it contrived and you don’t want it dressed up and artificial. Artificial would be too glossy. I am not looking for five star or anything. So I like this that it is natural and informal and it’s bush like, I think that’s authentic. I don’t want to come in to something that’s all plastic and spotless and not on the ground. I wanted it to be real.” [TT15]
“The feeling that what you see is actually genuine and it is not pretended, not most of people are just putting on an act. Whether it is really quite genuine and I think it is.” [TT6]

As such, the majority of tourists did not seek a staged experience, which was associated with a show. In fact, several visitors noted that they had visited the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park near Cairns. By comparing their experience to Anangu Tours, the tourists explained that Anangu Tours felt more genuine:

“Because in Kuranda it was still too showy, whereas this one was not like a show.” [AT16]

“It was more genuine than the one we went to Kuranda.” [AT21]

Likewise, one male tourist gave an example of a Polynesian cultural performance he experienced whilst visiting Hawaii. His perception of what he regarded as having a certain degree of authenticity was also dependent on whether something was staged and felt like a show. Interaction in terms of asking questions and talking with Aboriginal people was viewed as a key factor impacting upon the extent of authenticity perceived. The tourist argued:

“Because really what do you get out of it? You are just watching a performance. I mean you could go to a place like the Polynesian cultural centre in Hawaii, which to me is like a theme park, and it has some degree of authenticity, but it has got no interaction at all. You don’t get to ask them many questions or anything. I mean there is a place for it I wouldn’t mind doing it and I would probably do it near Cairns, when I go up there later, but I think there is a reason for having specific tours and I think that’s good. So I liked the focus of this one, that’s why I went on it.” [AT9]

Furthermore, several tourists explained that they enjoyed that the tour was not ‘touristy’ or ‘commercial’, which would have made it to a show. Whilst one female tourist viewed the purpose of any tour as being commercialised, she explained that there was no pressure put on tourists to purchase artefacts and the tour overall did not feel commercialised. The tourists commented:

“In fact I was expecting something possible a little bit more spectacular but which would have been inclined to be more touristy, more commercial. Which is not exactly the case here. I was expecting more like a show. But then again this looked a little bit more natural maybe.” [TT23]
"I think by definition it has to be commercialised because this is one way they can put cash back into the community. But it’s not overly, like they are not constantly pushing people to buy things. Not at all in fact, I think there is no pressure to purchase anything. I would say not commercialised very much at all. People are just interested. You just come along and have a lovely day.” [TT4]

Another female visitor explained commercialisation by comparing two different Indigenous tour experiences she had – a Hawaiian dance to a Maori dance performance. In her opinion the Hawaiian performance was too commercialised since an enormous stage and a large crowd generated a big event and prevented interaction with local Indigenous performers. According to this tourist, the less commercialised an event or tour is, the more ‘real’ it becomes. As such, personal interaction with Indigenous people was viewed as a central factor of a non-commercialised tourist environment. The tourist explained this by stating:

“They had on the Hawaiian dance thing, and I think that’s what I envisioned and it was better because it was less commercial when I went to the Maori one, it was more real, whereas the Hawaiian one was very commercial. You know the huge big stage and they did the dancing and the Hula, showed everybody how to dance. The less commercial the better, yes definitely, the more real it is. Doesn’t have to be glitter and glamour. Just see how people live...When I say commercialised there, it became a big event, every night, the more people they could pack in the better. And it was that huge stage and you could not interact with people.” [TT22]

These findings are comparable with previous studies of tourists’ perspectives of Indigenous tourism, which have provided similar conclusions. For example, McIntosh (2004:9) suggested that some experiences of Maori culture were perceived by tourists as ‘fake’, ‘commercial’ ‘touristy’ as well as ‘staged’. Similar to this study, tourists described an authentic experience of Maori culture as including personal involvement, experiencing daily life and having incidental contact with Maori people as opposed to gaining commercialised experiences. In addition, tourists sought to see “…things really how they are” rather than seeing a show (McIntosh 2004:10). It also corresponds closely with Pitcher’s (1999) study on tourists’ satisfaction levels with Manyallaluk tours, whereby tourists perceived Manyallaluk tours as authentic since their experience was ‘real’, ‘genuine’ and ‘not touristy’. Once again, the ‘non-commercial’ tour atmosphere was emphasised contributing to the authenticity of the experience.
The findings of the present study show further points of similarities to previous studies into visitors’ demand for and interest in Aboriginal tourism in Australia. A study conducted by AGB McNair (1996) found that visitors were very concerned about over-commercialisation of Aboriginal culture and knowledge. As such, a satisfactory Aboriginal experience was perceived as one that maintains the integrity of the experience as opposed to offering a ‘plastic’ experience. Accordingly, SATC (1998) emphasised that many visitors place a very high level of importance on the authenticity and credibility of Aboriginal tourism attractions. Therefore, experiences that are commercialised or out of context are thought to diminish perceived authenticity.

However, a study undertaken by ATC (2003) found that tourists felt that gaining an authentic Aboriginal experience was likely to be problematic. With the desire to have an authentic experience and interact with Aboriginal people in a ‘non-commercial’ and ‘genuine’ way came the question as to how authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences could be accessed. Likewise, Notzke (1999) argued that having a genuine Indigenous experience based on personal interaction with Indigenous people sounds simple but in reality proves to be quite difficult. As Notzke (1999:71) highlighted, “putting on a paid performance for a visiting public is much easier than sharing one’s life in a genuine manner”.

By comparing visitors’ and employees’ perceptions of authenticity, employees’ views closely paralleled visitors’ perceptions. Employees were questioned on their perceptions of what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience and whether they believed that the tour they were employed with offered an authentic experience to tourists. Except for one employee who viewed any tour as an experience purposely staged for visitors, all employees regarded the particular tour as being authentic. Corresponding with tourists’ perceptions, the majority of employees explained that tourists seek authenticity in terms of desiring a genuine cultural experience. According to the employees, such an experience gives visitors an insight into the culture and lifestyle of Aboriginal people and offers a true depiction of ‘just the way that it is’. As such, Aboriginal culture itself is not on stage and the tour does not offer an ‘artificial’, ‘idealistic’ and ‘plastic’ environment. In particular, employees of Tiwi Tours emphasised that authenticity is gained by experiencing a
real contemporary Aboriginal community with real local people. Comments included:

“...It isn’t a show, you know like some places have some sort of orchestrated, on a staged shows that the Aborigines do, I don’t think that’s what people are after. I think they want to see it just the way that it is and that’s what they get here, I mean it’s not showy. Except let’s say when the guides and women are up dancing, there are plenty of opportunities of interaction and even going back to the dancing, like I said with the smoking ceremony I think the tourists are even drawn in with that. So it’s not like at any point the Tiwi or their culture is on stage here, it just is as it is and the tourists have the opportunity to get as interactive as they choose to.” [TE1]

“I think the main thing that attracts people is the genuine cultural experience, which is not available for many people. And I think that would be the biggest draw card...” [TE6]

“...I would prefer to use the term genuine tour. So in this case you see what you get. And this is how it is. It is not packaged, it is not sugar-coated, it is not idealistic or anything. This is it basically. It is not like we produce nice displays and everything like that. It is actually a community that you go through, and rubbish is a problem and you see the housing and we talk about the housing and the rubbish and everything else. But this is what it is. When you go away from there, you think yourself that you have seen the real Nguu on Bathurst Island. You have not seen a nice little village built there with people walking around with grass skirts. You see the people as they are. The idea is to go away with an understanding of what they are experiencing, what their history is like, what their culture is like etc., etc. So you go home and little wiser and with a hell of a lot more questions. It is genuine.” [TE4]

“I mean there is nothing plastic about it, they haven’t got artificial humpies put up around the place, they are not using lights, are not using rap music to do a Corroboree. It is authentic because it is the people doing what they do. There is nothing about it that is not natural....” [ME4]

The above comments show that employees’ perceptions as to what constitutes an authentic experience match tourists’ perspectives as to what they perceive an authentic tour should be like. Both sides concur that the major emphasis lies on a genuine and natural encounter with Aboriginal people. However, although expressions such as ‘genuine’, ‘not staged’ and ‘non-commercial’ explain to some degree the perceived dichotomy of authenticity/inauthenticity within Aboriginal tourist settings, they are still too broad and may encompass a variety of meanings. For this reason four dimensions were identified which capture the salient factors contributing to the authenticity of the experience: The Aboriginal tour guide; The search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aborigines; Aboriginal arts and crafts; and Contrived experience: Enjoyment factor.
5.4 Aboriginal Tour Guide

5.4.1 Background of Aboriginal Tour Guide

The background of the tour guide was a major criterion influencing tourists’ perceptions on whether the tour was offering an authentic experience. A large proportion of tourists emphasised that having an Aboriginal guide is an important element of authenticity. Accordingly, some tourists explained that it would not have felt the same if the tour guide was from a non-Aboriginal background. Comments included:

“In the main I think it was, because of the guide. The guide made it authentic.” [TT9]

“Very often you take tours that are play-acting. Someone acting in a role and they are not really in that role...This was authentic. This absolutely was authentic. Because you had the people there so the Aboriginal person makes it authentic.” [AT19]

“If you go on an Aboriginal tour you got to have an Aboriginal guide.” [TT8]

“I don’t think I would feel the same if it would be the bus driver or even the young women who did the translation.” [AT1]

Although most people might take an Aboriginal tour guide on an Aboriginal cultural tour for granted, research into visitors’ experiences with guided tours, which included information on Aboriginal culture, indicated that only one-third of the tours had an Aboriginal person providing information on Aboriginal culture (Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000). Additionally, a study conducted by AGB McNair (1996) showed that most visitors to the Northern Territory were gaining their information and knowledge about Aboriginal culture and history from European tour guides. In fact, only a few tourists of that study came into contact with Aboriginal spokespeople. The study found that the bus driver served as a major source of cultural information to tourists. As a consequence, the limited nature of contact with Aboriginal people was a source of dissatisfaction for visitors (AGB McNair 1996).

The same argument presented by visitors was reflected in the comments of non-Aboriginal employees, who emphasised that the tour provides an authentic
experience because Aboriginal people work as guides on the tour. One non-Aboriginal employee explained this by stating:

“I think again that comes back to the fact that there is actually Aboriginal people involved in the tour as opposed to they are going to Kakadu they get disappointed because there is no Aboriginal people that they get interaction with…” [TE1]

This was supported by another non-Aboriginal employee, who emphasised that an authentic experience is based upon the fact that only Aboriginal people are able to tell their real stories to tourists. In contrast, white people are passing on second-hand stories that have been changed and are therefore not considered original anymore. Thus, Aboriginality guarantees that visitors listen to first-hand stories told by a member of the particular cultural group. As the employee explained:

“Just having that opportunity basically to go and spend time with those people, rather than hear about those people, or hear about their stories or hear about this person said to me this and that, coming from a white person. It has to come directly from that person when you want to feel to get an authentic sort of experience. Because second-hand stories are never authentic. It doesn’t matter who trained you or what book you read it from, whatever, it’s still a second-hand story and will always get changed in some way in shape or form. So speaking to somebody directly, having a story told you directly from that person I think is the key of authenticity really.” [AE2]

Similarly, Howard, Thwaites and Smith (2001) suggested that Paakinjji people regarded an authentic and worthwhile cultural exchange with the tourist as a critical part of the tour experience. In that sense, it was argued that if a non-Aboriginal tour guide tried to interpret the Aboriginal site at Mutawintji National Park the same way, the message would be less effective because of the different experience visitors would gain (Howard et al. 2001).

Visitors expected to have a tour guide who, in addition to being Aboriginal, was a member of the particular community. Tourists noted that they preferred to have a guide who had grown up and had lived in that area for some time. For example:

“This one seems to be vaguely recommended by quite a few people saying that it is real and that there are people living here and doing this. It appears to be that there it’s not people who perhaps grown up somewhere else and then come here and decided to do it. A lot of people have been here for a long time, grown up here, so it
does seem to be genuine…That it is a genuine tour and you got the feeling that these were people from here…” [MT1]

“Also, I had some expectations on the guides that they would be able to tell us a lot about the island and I hoped that they would be Tiwi Islanders. So that you always had the information passed a little bit more genuine I feel, when it is the true people of the island, who inform you about it.” [TT27]

Similarly, one female tourist viewed authenticity in terms of having an Aboriginal tour guide who lives in the community and leads an Aboriginal lifestyle. She also differentiated between urban and remote Aboriginal people, depicting remote Aborigines as being ‘really, really Aboriginal’:

“I don’t know if there is a fake one, something like that if it is Aboriginal. I would define authenticity because the tour guide lives in the Aboriginal village and she really has got an Aboriginal lifestyle, she is not living in a big city driving in a car and wearing modern clothing. She is really, really, Aboriginal. It is different, because you also have Aborigines in Sydney or Melbourne, but they grow up in the city and they have a lot of different stories. She knows a lot, about their history and stuff”. [AT8]

Correspondingly, one non-Aboriginal employee stressed the importance of having local Aboriginal tour guides who impart knowledge about their own culture to visitors:

“… And I think the fact that they are genuine Aboriginal people, people that live on the island are the ones who are delivering the stories and the culture to them, that’s what gives them the authenticity.” [TE6]

A few tourists explained how it is important for them to see and feel that the local tour guide has grown up learning the traditional culture and therefore believes in what he is teaching to visitors. One female visitor gave an example of a previous experience she had with Maori people in New Zealand. In her opinion, authenticity meant that the tour guide is not just an actor being paid for what he is doing, but a person who believes in his culture and enjoys presenting it. The knowledge about his culture has been acquired through growing up with it, which involved a process of gradual learning rather than just using a ‘script’. This makes Indigenous tour guides unique and differentiates them from other non-Indigenous tour guides. The tourist explained:
“But they were learning it at school, they were well versed in their culture. They explained everything, they did the dance, they explained it all what it meant. They explained about their school how they could get a degree in their language. For me that was real. That wasn’t somebody an actor who you pay to get on the stage to do it. It was somebody from the culture doing it, they are not an actor, it is something they have learnt. You know this person, they believe in it. They were so confident and comfortable with it. This wasn’t something that somebody has given them a script, this was something they knew and they believed in it, they felt.” [TT22]

This was supported by another female tourist, who emphasised the importance of having a knowledgeable Aboriginal tour guide who is able to interpret and convey cultural information in a meaningful way to tourists. The tourist contrasted this to a tour guide who ‘recites some canned spiel’ to visitors. She noted that:

“The tour guides on this particular tour were more interpreters than they were tour guides. In other words they really made an effort to interpret this culture to you. Of course you have to be knowledgeable in order to do that. But the tour guides, you did not have a sense of them reciting some canned spiel that they had memorised. That they really were knowledgeable and made the effort to interpret this culture to you.” [AT19]

Thus, tourists placed a strong emphasis on the characteristics of the tour guide and employed specific criteria in assessing the authenticity of the experience. As such, authenticity in the tourists’ perceptions designated that the tour guide himself was an ‘authentic Aboriginal person’. Hence, an authentic experience is associated with the objectification of the tour guide, whereby the internal qualities of the ‘Other’ are evaluated (Taylor 2001). The criteria used in judging the authenticity of the tour guide included traits such as being Aboriginal, having grown up and still living in the area, as well as the guide’s cultural upbringing that gave him the in-depth knowledge and belief in his culture.

However, it may be argued that some of these sought characteristics highlight the complexity of authenticity. For example, problems might arise in defining who an Aboriginal person really is. Visitors, in particular international tourists, appear to be judging Aboriginality by the dark skin colour of the tour guide. Yet, such misconceptions might lead to problems and misunderstandings should some tourists recognise Aboriginal tour guides as less authentic based on their lighter skin colour.
Similarly, the criterion of having grown up in the area and being a ‘lifetime’ member of the particular community may not be conceivable taking into consideration that Aboriginal Australians represent a relatively mobile population (Biddle and Hunter 2005; Smyth 1992; Taylor 2006) with kinship identified as the main driving force of Aboriginal mobility (Memmott, Long and Thomson 2006). Aboriginal Australians are more likely to change residence over a given period of time (Biddle and Hunter 2005) with successive census results indicating that Aboriginal people change their usual place of residence at consistently higher rates than the non-Aboriginal population. However, it was also argued that on average Aboriginal people engage in residential relocation at least as much as the rest of the population (Taylor 2006). Nevertheless, tourists are not taking into account that some Aboriginal people may be temporarily living and working in a community and may therefore not have any cultural connection to the specific area. This is the case with some Aboriginal tour guides who currently work in Manyallaluk but originally grew up elsewhere.

5.4.2 Custodians of Land and Stories - Intellectual Property

Authenticity was linked for some tourists to the relationship Aboriginal people have with their land and the stories that have been passed on for generations. For instance, one tourist emphasised the importance of receiving information from Aboriginal people who continue to practice their culture and traditions. She described those Aboriginal people as the ‘custodians of the stories’ who are also attached to their land, which makes them the ‘custodians of the land’. Accordingly, the tourist distinguished between local Aboriginal people who are having a cultural and spiritual connection to their land and other Aboriginal people who would have come from a different part of Australia and only work in that area. The tourist explained:

“From the people, whose land it is. I guess I am aware that Europeans have come in and taken over in the last two hundred years. So I think Aboriginal people, who hold on to their culture, their knowledge and their beliefs, I would like to hear from them, they are the custodians of the stories. Authentic being from the people who are the custodians of the land, attached to it, rather than people that are working here.” [AT12]
Likewise, another tourist highlighted the significance of hearing the stories from Aboriginal people who have passed on their culture and traditional stories for many generations and years:

“I don’t like the stories to be made up, you know pretence. I want to hear what the Aborigines actually have to say. They have carried their stories for thousands of years, so I wanted to hear their stories.” [AT4]

Similarly, one female tourist argued that being allowed to visit Aboriginal people on their traditional land makes the tour authentic. By stressing the unique affinity which Aboriginal people continue to have with their traditional land, the tourist identified Aboriginal land as a significant element of Aboriginal culture and life. In her opinion, it does not matter that the Aboriginal lifestyle has changed over time. Authenticity is rather reflected in the fact that several generations have lived on that land and that these Aboriginal people today are owners of their land from which they derive an income. Thus, according to the tourist, as a visitor being given the opportunity to visit Aboriginal people on their traditional land constitutes the essence of authenticity. This is detailed by the tourist who stated:

“For me authenticity means getting as close as it can to being in your own space, because land is such an issue. So when you are on your own island, which has been here for generations and you can still have this land, that’s authentic for a start. And if you use the land to help you provide a better life for you and your people, that’s as authentic as you can get in this day and age. Because we came here to their island to see them that’s the best you can do, because there are thousands of Aborigines out there who can’t get you anywhere near their land anymore. So there is authenticity in that. So we have seen where they live now and where they have lived for generations. Even if they live differently now, this is still their land and for Aboriginal people land is the greatest thing to be authentic about.” [TT20]

The above remark indicates that the tourist not only acknowledged the linkage between land and self-determination but also highlighted the problematic issue of the politics of land use and land tenure for Aboriginal people. According to the tourist, there are thousands of Aboriginal people who do not have access to their traditional land. Indeed, the majority of Aboriginal people have, at some point in the history of their families, been dispossessed of their land and dispersed against their will (CLC and NLC 1994). Currently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (who represent under 3% of the total Australian population) own or control approximately
20% of the Australian continent as a result of statutory land rights schemes and the recognition of native title, which is equal to 150 million hectares (DFAT 2007).

Since the passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 Aboriginal people have gained title to a considerable part of their traditional lands. At present approximately 47% of the Northern Territory is held under Aboriginal freehold title (CLC 2007). However, whilst some Aboriginal people have regained large areas of their traditional lands (most often land unwanted by non-Aboriginal people), others whose traditional country is in more fertile parts had already lost their land to the pastoral industry before the advent of the Act. As a result, thousands of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory remain landless. These Aboriginal people, who are refugees from the giant cattle stations that occupy most of the Northern Territory land mass, cannot claim land under the Land Rights Act which only allows claims over vacant Crown land (CLC and NLC 1994).

Consistent with visitors’ views on authenticity being evident in the ongoing cultural relationship Aboriginal people hold with their traditional land, a number of non-Aboriginal employees interpreted authenticity in the same way. Correspondingly, the findings of Lane and Waitt (2001) showed that local tourism operators in the East Kimberley recognised the continuity of Miriuwung and Gajerrong peoples’ relationships to land in the area and interpreted this as part of authentic Aboriginal culture. According to one non-Aboriginal employee, the tour guide’s knowledge about his culture, which has been passed on for thousands of years, assures authenticity. Similarly, the other non-Aboriginal employee explained that the opportunity for contact and interaction with an Aboriginal person who is culturally attached to the area provides an authentic experience. Thus, receiving information directly from a person who is a custodian of the land and stories generates an important element of authenticity, as evidenced by the following responses:

“You can’t get much better knowledge than straight from the horses’ mouth. These are the people who have lived here for 22 000 years and you can’t get better knowledge than that. It is their culture.” [AE3]

“From my point of view a true Indigenous experience is actually meeting and talking and spending time with that traditional person of direct relationship to that area.” [AE2]
5.4.2.1 Intellectual Property - Accuracy and Integrity of Information

Closely related to the abovementioned interpretation of authenticity was the discussion of cultural content of the tours and intellectual property by several non-Aboriginal employees. It was argued by the non-Aboriginal employees of all three tour companies that authenticity is provided due to the fact that the Aboriginal guides themselves determine the cultural content of the tour. The employees emphasised that there is no interference from non-Aboriginal people as to how Aboriginal tour guides are supposed to present their culture and what information they want to include. For instance, the way the dancing is presented at Tiwi Tours is chosen by Tiwi tour guides. Likewise, the information provided during basket weaving and on the bush tucker walk at Manyallaluk Tours is entirely determined by the Aboriginal guides. Non-Aboriginal people do not interfere in this process since Aboriginal tour guides hold extensive knowledge about their culture that has been taught over generations. Hence, in the opinion of the employees, the cultural information passed on to the visitors is accurate and very genuine. As the non-Aboriginal employees commented:

“We have a content we put together for the tour. Like at morning teatime for instance where there is nearly an hour of time where they spend with the Tiwis. They pretty much do all that themselves. If the tourists want to talk to the Tiwi people, they are all there, the guides are there, the Morning Tea Ladies are there. How the dance is done, what dances they do and so on is actually their choice. By doing that and not making it a choreographed very structured thing, it keeps it very much their culture. It is not a white person interfering and making something happen that looks very great. We are actually letting them putting on their culture as they would normally do for other functions around town or for a birthday party, wedding or funeral, whatever. It is in fact simple, they are actually doing it themselves…So that part of the cultural content, it is actually very genuine…” [TE5]

“Because there has been nothing changed. The guys at Manyallaluk have been given a structure in which to do the activities so that there is a structure to it. They haven’t been told how to do the activity, how to do the basket weaving. They do it the way they have always done it. The same with the painting. They didn’t sit down and have a class how to do it. They do it. They do it every day. The same with bush Tucker walk. Obviously there has to be a structure to the walk but what they are talking on that walk is what they know. It’s not something that they need to roll out a piece of paper and read off the piece of paper…They have been taught this is the way to do what you do. And it’s not our role to tell them how they do those things. It’s their area of expertise.” [ME4]
A non-Aboriginal Anangu employee went on to further point out that Anangu tour guides decide which intellectual property of theirs they want to share with tourists:

“So with Anangu Tours, the Indigenous tour guides have planned all the products. So they have designed the core cultural touring element and they make decisions on all the intellectual property that is used to market the product. And they, on each day, make a decision as to what intellectual property, what activities they want to deliver depending on the skills of the person on the day...The guides are very very motivated to show people to get the right information about this part of the world. That's part of their cultural obligation is all visitors who come to your country understand your country. And that comes out very loud and clear to people who come on the tours”.

The arguments of non-Aboriginal employees were supported by a female Aboriginal employee from Anangu Tours, who stressed the importance of Anangu intellectual property - in this case their Tjukurpa - and the correctness of this information passed on to tourists. The Aboriginal employee viewed authenticity as imparting cultural information to visitors that is true and real. She further emphasised that only a member of Anangu culture is in the position to teach visitors the truth about their stories and their land. Accordingly, the employee noted that non-Aboriginal people, such as other tour guides, should not be telling Tjukurpa stories to tourists since it is not their culture and as a result they do not know the full story and therefore pass on ‘false’ information. This is detailed by the employee who explained:

“X is saying that these stories are real, we don’t just make them up...X is saying that there is no false stories that are shared at all, we teach the truth about the stories and the truth about this place. And this is what our company is all about. It started up by those older people to teach people as much as we can in such a short amount of time but not from anybody who just walks in off the street. They can come here and they can listen to a story once and then they can tell all these people. But it’s not their place to tell all these people. It started up by those older people to teach people as much as we can in such a short amount of time but not from anybody who just walks in off the street. They can come here and they can listen to a story once and then they can tell all these people. But it’s not their place to tell all these people either because it is not their Tjukurpa. It is not their culture. X is saying you can come and learn from us and that’s when you learn the truth. I listen to all these tour guides in this area and a lot of them don’t know these stories but they tell those stories anyway and they are telling false Tjukurpa, they are telling false law. We make sure that law is straight. Because we keep that law strong in our heads and in our hearts...There is all these different Tjukurpa around the rock, there is so many people that come here and there is so many different tour guides around the area, but the only time when you get the true story is when you learn it from us, because those people they don’t know the full story”.

It may be argued that the interpretation of authenticity of both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal employees revolves around the issue of authority. Here, Bruner’s (1994)
fourth definition of the notion of authenticity can be employed that highlights issues of authorisation, certification and legal validation. According to Bruner (1994), one needs to ask who has the authority to authenticate, which in turn is a matter of power. For example, New Salem Historic Site is the authoritative reproduction of New Salem, which was legitimised by the state of Illinois. The same applies to the intellectual property presented on Aboriginal cultural tours, which is authenticated by the Aboriginal people/community of the specific tour. As it was stressed by the Aboriginal Anangu employee, only Anangu people have the right to tell their Tjukurpa since it is their culture and knowledge. As a consequence, any other tour guides telling visitors about Tjukurpa are not authorised to speak on behalf of Anangu people and are therefore imparting ‘false law’.

The issues pertinent to the use of Aboriginal intellectual property within the tourism industry have been previously raised by several authors (Robertson-Friend 2004; Simons 2000; Whittaker 1999). According to Whittaker (1999), claims to non-material knowledge are problematic since conflicting notions exist as to what ‘knowledge’ actually means. Whereas Western knowledge is viewed as value-free and most importantly freely available for dissemination, Aboriginal knowledge on the other hand is owned very differently since it belongs to cultural communities, individual families, tribal groups and to Aboriginal people more generally. As a result, the use of knowledge without appropriate permission, access and recognition is illegitimate knowledge. The consequence of such use is aggravated when it generates financial compensation from which the Aboriginal traditional owners are excluded (Whittaker 1999).

Although the Aboriginal Anangu employee did not mention issues relating to lost financial compensation, she showed a great concern about the implications of an ineligible person passing on ‘false’ knowledge. This concern the Anangu tour guide expressed over the illegitimate use of Aboriginal intellectual property by other non-Aboriginal tour guides is also shared by many other Aboriginal people in Australia (Robertson-Friend 2004). For example, the report on Australian Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Rights (Janke 1998) suggested that Aboriginal people were concerned about various uses of their heritage, including the appropriation of
Aboriginal spirituality. In particular, issues of cultural integrity and authenticity were at the heart of these concerns.

According to Janke (1998), Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property rights refer to Aboriginal Australians rights to their heritage, which are also known as Aboriginal heritage rights. The heritage of Aboriginal people is a living one, whereby heritage is defined as consisting of the intangible and tangible aspects of the whole body of cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured and refined by Indigenous people and passed on by them as part of expressing their cultural identity.

Janke (1998:XVII)

The report showed that Aboriginal people were of the belief that they should receive compensation or royalties for use of Aboriginal cultures where appropriate and where prior informed consent has been granted by an Aboriginal group. For this to be accomplished, however, Aboriginal people require the right to own and control Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property (Janke 1998). Cultural control is seen by Aboriginal people as a key element of Aboriginal tourism, which is considered crucial to maintaining authenticity and preventing cultural exploitation and cultural appropriation (Robertson-Friend 2004).

The recognition and protection of Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property has been addressed by ATA by establishing the Respecting Our Culture (ROC) Tourism Certification Program. ROC encourages the tourism industry to operate in ways that respect and reinforce Aboriginal cultural heritage. Two of the four criteria that the ROC Program addresses include the observation of cultural protocol as well as the maintenance of cultural authenticity and integrity (ATA 2003). In order to receive accreditation, some of the criteria that tourism enterprises need to fulfil in regard to cultural protocols include consultation with the traditional owners and/or host Aboriginal community in which the business operates as well as receiving approval to visit Aboriginal cultural sites, community places, events or activities. In regard to maintaining cultural authenticity and integrity, tourism businesses need to confirm that the information given to tourists has been verified by local traditional custodians,
is suitable or public knowledge, and provides an accurate story about the local area. The business should also be committed to provide tourists with an Aboriginal cultural experience which is directly supplied by local Aboriginal people. Particularly, the information passed on to tourists should introduce them to present-day Aboriginal culture and social issues by demonstrating that it is a living and dynamic culture (ATA 2003).

5.4.3 Role of Aboriginal Tour Guide

The findings indicate that the role of the Aboriginal tour guide was considered by tourists as an important element that served as a determinant of the perceived authenticity of the tour experience. The expected role of the tour guide included the sharing of cultural knowledge by providing explanations and telling personal stories to tourists. The use of native language thereby increased the authentic experience. Furthermore, being offered a tangible experience of traditional tools and bush food was also seen as creating authenticity.

5.4.3.1 Sharing Culture: Enhancing Cross-Cultural Understanding

Sharing culture and the facilitation of cross-cultural understanding was viewed by both visitors and Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal employees as an important aspect of an authentic experience. Two tourists were pleased to see that the Aboriginal people were sharing their culture with tourists and were not only trying ‘to make money’. Hence, for some visitors it seemed to be important that the tour guide’s desire and eagerness to share his knowledge of his culture with visitors was reflected in his motivation to work as opposed to only doing his job for mere financial gains. As the tourists explained:

“These are people that are culturally, that’s their culture they have grown up with it and they have found they have a talent or a flair or whatever it is and that’s coming from within them. It’s not something that they come to do to make money for it. I think what I found so far it’s not what they are doing. They are not out to make money, they are just out doing what they like doing. So from my point of view that it probably more important to me.” [TT21]
“...who were here sharing something of theirs with you rather than just trying to make some money.” [MT1]

One female tourist noted how positively surprised she was to encounter Aboriginal people who were very keen to welcome tourists and share with them their culture and living:

“I am mostly surprised how open the people are, how eager they are to bring us in and invite us to share in what they are making and what they are doing and how they are living.” [TT18]

It was argued by Selwyn (1996) that much of contemporary tourism is still based upon the ‘Quest for the Other’, whereby the Other was described by Selwyn as the ‘authentically social’. According to the author, the attractiveness of a tourist destination stems from its special ‘spirit of place’. This unique atmosphere is derived from the sociability of its residents. As such, in successful tourist destinations the natives are expected to be friendly and make tourists feel welcomed. This concept of the ‘Quest for the Other’ could be applied to this research. The desire of tourists to have an authentic experience, which is based upon the notion that Aboriginal people choose to share their cultural knowledge with tourists rather than solely being interested in making money, is of similar nature to the search of the ‘authentically social’. Here, visitors as well seem to hope to be able to encounter ‘the social Other’ in Aboriginal people - native people who have not been influenced yet by Western (capitalist) ambitions of moneymaking. Thus, tourists yearned to meet friendly and sociable Aboriginal people who would still hold pre-commoditised and noble aspirations towards their culture and life.

Indeed, Aboriginal employees explained that Aboriginal people are very keen and interested in sharing their culture with visitors. Authenticity in their opinions is generated through the unique cross-cultural interaction between Aboriginal people and tourists. The comments made by Aboriginal employees clearly indicate how much intrinsic enjoyment Aboriginal people obtain from teaching their culture to visitors. At the same time they also appreciate learning from tourists about their cultures. Thus, an authentic experience is developed for both visitors and Aboriginal tour guides through the production of meaning derived from reciprocal sharing and
learning as well as the resultant genuine relationship between visitors and tour guides. Several Aboriginal employees explained:

“X is saying, I think the best thing is the fact that we are trying to go along and to meet all these brand new people and share with them our life, our history, our culture, our Tjukurpa. People enjoy listening and learning from us because it is ours. The interaction between any people from anywhere around the world is always a good thing. We love to meet those people and those people love to meet us as well. That Tjukurpa, we love to teach it and we love to share it with those people. And we think that’s the best thing that they would enjoy is spending time with us and sharing our culture with us”. [AE4]

“They want to learn about our culture, talking to them. People who come from all parts of the world, very very long way and we greet them, welcome them and start talking them, telling them about our culture, the bush, bush medicine and how we treat our children. When we tell them they just sit and listen and the more we tell them the more they listen. Like Kalama ceremony, dancing, singing…Maybe coming to our island, seeing what is going on. See different people. Sometimes people have never seen black people. Get to know the people…Something different you know. People have never heard of or have seen our culture like that. Our culture today is very important to our people.” [TE8]

“It is good sharing our culture with non-Tiwis and Europeans, other people…I didn’t know if I could be a tour guide. But when they started asking me about, ‘What is this? What is that?’ with the artefacts and the stories, I just told them a story from what my grandfather and my grandmother and my uncles and aunties shared the stories with me…I think the whole tour is about coming face to face with a Tiwi person and the Tiwi people. Sharing the culture and experiencing Tiwi people.” [TE3]

“They come up with a lot of questions and it is good to share with them. And they share their culture as well where they come from. It is just culture, learning.” [TE7]

In fact, non-Aboriginal employees of the present study further confirmed from their experiences as to how important sharing and cross-cultural learning is for Aboriginal employees, for example:

“…It is not staged, it is not a routine. There is a routine there, but you wouldn’t notice half the time. So in that respect it is quite a genuine experience. As a result you realise it because they are doing it because they want to, not because of any other reason really.” [TE4]

“The guides are very very motivated to show people to get the right information about this part of the world. That’s part of their cultural obligation is all visitors who come to your country understand your country. And that comes out very loud and clear to people who come on the tours. So I think that it’s not something that you can lay your finger with one simple mechanism to assess if this has integrity or not, but I
think it’s just a general feeling people pick up from the individuals they go out with.” [AE1]

“And these guys are sharing their knowledge and they love it. Most of our guys have never been anywhere than Uluru, they have never been to a city. When these people come over to Uluru from Europe and America, they don’t even know where these places are but they are willing to learn from them. And that really excites them to be able to share that knowledge with other people. And one of the biggest thing on our tour at the end is the guys give out their business cards to each of the tourists with their name and they ask them to send them back a photo from their country, so they have a word “Napardji, Napardji”, which is sort of “You help me out, I help you, I teach you, you teach me”. One of those sort of things. And the amount the photos they get send back and letters of thank you and things like that makes them happy on the inside because they have shared their story but also learnt about somewhere else. Because they are very knowledgeable and they like to learn things… To them it’s like: ‘Wow, an opportunity to learn and to share’, which is what it’s all about. Sharing with other people, which is good. They got some horrific stuff send back too. Videos, books, T-shirts, you name it, comes through the mail as a thank you. And they love that, they have all the photo albums that we make up for them keep all the letters, and they love to show the kids, sit down, they sit there for hours going through these things.” [AE2]

In addition, further responses made by Aboriginal employees indicate that whilst they believed that sharing their culture with visitors was a central part of the tour, it was at the same time viewed as a means of promoting understanding and gaining respect for their people and their culture. Aboriginal employees explained that they hoped that tourists would find out who they really are and the way they live their lives. Some Aboriginal employees mentioned that the visitors are then able to tell other people about them and their culture. As one Manyallaluk Aboriginal employee noted, tourists gain a first-hand experience and as a result witness themselves what Aboriginal people are doing, which will prompt them to tell other people at home that they have visited a ‘good place’. It may be therefore argued that Aboriginal employees use tourism as a vehicle to create a more positive image of their people and culture, both domestically and internationally. For example:

“I think to learn our culture and probably find out who we are as a people. It would be like when I went to someone else’s country I would wanted know a bit more about their culture. That could be an experience to be part of the Tiwi culture and knowing what they do.” [TE3]

“Most important is, I think, to see what we do here, like painting. Some people from all over the world are coming in and when they are here in Manyallaluk they can see what we are doing, they proof it. They can see us what we are doing and they are relaxing and they can proof what we are doing here. And when they are going back
they can send more people coming saying Manyallaluk is like this. Good place and they show activity.” [ME1]

“Learning about us, learning about the Tiwis. The experience would be to learn about the Tiwi culture. I think that’s the main one. Knowing about our culture and showing our artefacts. Our art doesn’t only just show art, it is a story. Something that they can take this story back and put it up on the wall and visitors will see it and ask ‘What is this about?’ And you can tell the story and it is an interesting story. You know, that you come from the Tiwis and people might find out a little bit more about us.” [TE7]

“Just us as Tiwi people and the way we are. We are really friendly. We smile a lot we never stop smiling. I have never been to a community on the mainland and seen any local smile. You talk to any Tiwi people and they give you a smile when they talk to you. I think the main thing for us is people, understand the way we are. And respect the way we do things today.” [TE2]

This finding is comparable with conclusions from previous studies which have investigated the perceptions of Aboriginal people of tourism impacts upon their communities (Dyer et al. 2003; Hodgson, Firth and Presbury 2006). It was suggested that Djabugay as well as Manyallaluk employees took pride in and enjoyed teaching and presenting their culture to tourists. Cross-cultural understanding was one of the positive benefits of tourism identified by both studies. In particular, Djabugay employees believed that tourism provides them with the opportunity to communicate positive images to visitors, thus reducing stereotypical impressions of Aboriginal people and enhancing understanding. For example, it was explained by Djabugay employees that tourists would leave the Park knowing something of the Djabugay culture, therefore “spreading the word” when they returned overseas, resulting in “just a bit more understanding of Aboriginal way of life” (Dyer et al. 2003:91).

Likewise, Howard et al. (2001), investigating the roles of Aboriginal tour guides, found that the main aim of Aboriginal tour guides was to change visitors’ attitudes and perceptions of Aborigines and Aboriginal culture. This was achieved by challenging people’s understanding of Aboriginal culture as well as creating personal links between themselves and the tourists. As a result, it was suggested that Aboriginal tour guides create long-term understanding, attitudes and behaviours towards Aboriginal culture by attempting to remove stereotypes and misconceptions (Howard et al. 2001).
Interestingly, the aim of Aboriginal employees of the present study to create a positive image seems to be closely aligned with the outcomes that some visitors expect from their interaction with Aboriginal people on the tour. For example, one female visitor from the US explained that she wanted to dismiss the white person’s stereotypes of Aboriginal people she had experienced in Australia. Another male tourist specifically sought to be educated by Aboriginal people so in future he could take part in conversations about Aboriginal people by being more informed and knowledgeable about their situation. The two tourists said:

“You hear a lot of when I first came to Australia, I heard a lot of people are prejudice against Aboriginal people and I just wanted to dispel some of that. I mean I wanted to get to know the Aboriginal people through the Aboriginal people eyes and not through other people’s stereotypes about them.” [AT20]

“I am happy to listen to it, because the only way they are going to improve their situation is by taking control of it and educating us. Because if we then go back to Perth, go back to our jobs and there are stories about this and that Aboriginal, there are a lot of people in Perth that have racist views against Aborigines. They are uninformed and I have experienced that, spoken to Aboriginal people, ‘No, you are wrong this is actually the way it is, or this is what I have seen. It may be one community out of a hundred that is actually trying something or being successful in what they are doing, but there are people out there trying to change that’.” [MT3]

Several conclusions may be drawn from the above results. First, it was pointed out that Aboriginal people are sharing their culture and knowledge with visitors because they simply want to. Hence, the genuine interaction between tourists and Aboriginal people is based upon the fact that the Aboriginal people show a great desire and motivation to share their culture with visitors, which in turn prevents the experience being of a staged and artificial nature. As one of the above non-Aboriginal employees explained, tourists’ perceptions of authenticity are largely dependent on the feelings tourists develop of the tour and in particular of the Aboriginal tour guide. The employee mentioned that the tour is not a contrived experience since tourists notice that Aboriginal people are keen and very motivated to impart the right information about their culture and land to the visitors.

Second, as one of the non-Aboriginal employees from Anangu Tours explained, the desire for cross-cultural learning is based upon Anangu people’s cultural obligation to facilitate understanding about their land and culture to visitors. However, in return,
Anangu people expect tourists to share their own culture with them, which may be through letters, photos, videos etc. By comparing comments from both visitors and Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal employees, it seems that the visitor’s quest for the ‘authentically social’ is indeed realistic and proves to be fulfilled. Visitors’ desires to interact with ‘genuine’ Aboriginal people who are doing their jobs predominantly because they are culturally inspired rather than financially motivated are in turn matched with Aboriginal people’s motivations and cultural obligations to share their knowledge with visitors to their home land. (Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that the researcher did not investigate how important financial aspects as compared to cultural motivations were for Aboriginal employees).

Third, the ambitions of Aboriginal employees to communicate a positive image to tourists in order to reduce common stereotypes held about Aboriginal people parallels to some extent visitors’ expectations of the tour. Visitors hope to see Aboriginal working communities which are dry and value their traditional culture whilst addressing their current issues and problems. As such, it may be suggested that Aboriginal cultural tours not merely facilitate cross-cultural learning and understanding, but also effectively promote reconciliation within Australia.

5.4.3.2 Providing Personal Stories and Explanations

Several tourists regarded the experience as authentic since the Aboriginal tour guide was describing how life was in the past for Aboriginal people – the guide was telling about ‘primitive times’. Tourists expected to hear explanations about rock paintings, tools and bush food, such as how certain tools were made and used. Authenticity was evident for one visitor in the fact that a female Aboriginal tour guide learnt her culture and stories directly from her grandmother and that she was recalling memories from past experiences. As a number of tourists stated:

“I think it was actually. I mean she was like many of the native people, she was very genuine and she told us like life was... It was as authentic as it could be, she was describing life in the past, primitive times.” [AT13]

“Because she explained how for example with the rock paintings, describe what that was all about. And how her grandmother had explained to her the culture and
making of the hair skirt and that sort of thing. She was recalling her memories, so for that, yes, I thought that was authentic.” [AT17]

“This is what the tool is, this is men’s this is women’s, he got pretty deep into it. For me that’s the nature of authenticity, as how are things used and provide some contact for the world they are getting it from, how do they use it, why certain things were done as they were.” [AT9]

“I think in this day of age the authentic thing is to explain the food that their father used to eat. And how they used to go about it. That has to be authentic. It is not authentic today, because they don’t eat that food as a stable diet...But I think when they talk about their fathers and what they used to do and how they used to live.” [MT18]

One female visitor explained her feelings of how the tour seemed more authentic since she believed that true information was given to her by the two local Aboriginal tour guides. The tourist was pleased to hear from the tour guides what they do in terms of hunting and food gathering. The meaning of authenticity was described by the tourist as believing in and trusting the Aboriginal guides that they were passing on true and factual information to the tourists. This is detailed by the tourist who explained:

“I mean people say that when you are on other tours, they talk about what the local people do in terms of hunting and that. But you don’t really believe it. Whereas here I do believe it. Maybe because there is a little bit more authenticity... I believe because we have two Tiwi Island people here talking about what they do and they note when perhaps X would say something, as of saying ‘Yes that’s right, we do that’. So it seem like it is being confirmed by the local people. So authenticity would be when Aboriginal culture is being presented in a factual way. I mean I think what I am hearing that is probably correct what other people have been saying but it could be quite attractive to tourists to say ‘Yes all Aborigines go out and hunt and gather and eat turtles and that’. You are face to face with the person who says ‘Yes we do that, we go out and get some of these worms and you know last weekend...’, unless he is a very good liar you tend to believe him. That is authentic.” [TT2]

Hence, the perspective of this tourist was that factual information about Aboriginal culture is only then provided when local Aboriginal people are present to talk about their experiences or at least confirm the non-Aboriginal tour guide’s information. This confirmation can be as simple as just a gesture of noting or mentioning an activity of traditional Aboriginal life. Consequently, it appears that the feeling of whether information provided appears authentic is developed from careful
observation by tourists of both visual cues and verbal indications made by the local Aboriginal guides.

Howard et al. (2001) suggested that Aboriginal tour guides are unique since they are part of the fabric of the site as well as part of the actual tourist experience. Tourists visiting Mutawintji National Park appear to seek interpretation of the value of an area within an Aboriginal tour guide’s own cultural context. Accordingly, Aboriginal tour guides were explaining the site to visitors within their own cultural context by not only interpreting the stories of the site but also telling their own stories. Such interpretation was aimed at creating more personal links between themselves and the visitor (Howard et al. 2001).

Correspondingly, the findings of this study indicate that tourists expect more of an Aboriginal tour guide’s role than they normally would of a non-Aboriginal tour guide. The researcher’s observations during the tours further confirmed this suggestion. Similar to the results of Howard et al. (2001), some tourists sought interpretation of the site and stories by gaining insight into the Aboriginal tour guide’s own cultural background. This became evident during the cultural tour, when many tourists asked the tour guide personal questions, such as whether he was married, how many children he had, and how old he was. The tour guides were happy to answer the questions and they sometimes talked about their family, for instance telling tourists how they take their children during vacations out bush and how they still go hunting these days. Tourists seemed to be very pleased hearing such stories from the tour guides’ personal lives. Thus, it may be argued that the Aboriginal tour guide himself, including his personal life, is part of the authentic cultural experience. As such, the role of the tour guide encompasses the interpretation of landscape and stories, which is tied to his own personal background and life experience.

It should be noted, however, that not every Aboriginal tour guide may feel comfortable in establishing such personal links with tourists. Whilst some Aboriginal people may be willing to share personal information with tourists, others may regard such questions as a sign of disrespect and an intrusion into their privacy.
5.4.3.3 Language

Several tourists of Anangu Tours noted that the way the Aboriginal tour guides delivered and presented the information by speaking in their native language added to the authenticity of the tour experience. The fact that the tour guide explained things in his/her Aboriginal language prevented the tour being perceived as staged and plastic, for example:

“I thought he would speak English, but I thought it was kind of cool that he spoke his native language, because he probably doesn’t speak English and it added a lot more authenticity. I think it was great. I mean it was that way it didn’t seem as staged, it didn’t seem as plastic as like pre-packaged for tourists. It seemed make things really authentic.” [AT20]

“Yes, I liked it, I just thought it was authentic. I knew she could speak English, she could understand English, she would have had to. But the way they presented it, it was very good.” [AT14]

In general, the majority of visitors taking part in Anangu Tours perceived the use of native language by the Aboriginal tour guide coupled with an English-speaking interpreter as very positive. In contrast, previous research into product development found that consumers who showed a high interest in an Aboriginal cultural experience stated that they preferred a tour guide that spoke the traveller’s own language (ATC 2003).

The findings of the present study indicated that most of the tourists were very satisfied to hear the actual sound of Anangu language. Some tourists explained that hearing the native language was like hearing the ‘real voice’ of the person, which enabled them to get a feeling for the ‘richness of the culture’. Tourists also commented that they understood that certain expressions in the native language cannot be translated into English. It was also noted that the experience would have not been the same if the guides were communicating in English. Therefore, the previous argument that the Aboriginal tour guide himself is an integral component and forms the foundation of an authentic experience is further confirmed by the findings on the use of native language. It may be argued that in evaluating the authenticity of the ‘Other’, tourists used a mixture of criteria, whereby native language was seen as a factor that enhanced the overall experience.
5.4.3.4 Offering Tangible Experience

Comments from several tourists indicated that the tangible and hands-on experience of Aboriginal tools and weapons was important to them. Because they were able to touch, feel and try Aboriginal items such as baskets and spears, it conferred an authentic feeling upon the experience. This was further increased by the tour guide demonstrating how weapons were used and food made, as tourists discussed:

“I think it is just to get the spears and the fact that you can touch, feel and hold them. Like we did with the women things, I think that’s important”. [TT6]

“It was an authentic tour. There were some Aboriginal people, I think that’s authentic. They were talking in their own language, which I didn’t expect, that was really good. And they also showed us, how they are making flour and something like this”. [AT15]

“And showing how they used the different seeds and berries and things like that. And the equipment that they used and the stone that was on the ground had obviously been used for lots of rubbing. It appeared that way. Yes, I would say it is authentic”. [AT17]

In terms of demonstrating traditional skills, one male tourist of Manyallaluk Tours noted that authenticity is present when Aboriginal people predominantly use traditional techniques when showing skills to tourists. Hence, in his opinion the value of authenticity would have been increased if the tour guides did not use any modern techniques:

“That was probably 80% authentic, the 20% is using modern cultures to enhancing their current Aboriginal techniques. The 80% is still there. The 80% in terms of the basket weaving. The needle was current white man technology than basic Aboriginal technique. If they used a kangaroo bone as their needle, that would have made it really authentic as such. But didn’t stop of appreciation of the technique they used to do the basket weaving. More convenient but works well”. [MT6]

One male tourist of Anangu Tours illustrated, by using an example of a previous Aboriginal cultural tour he participated in, how a tour experience lacked authenticity. According to the tourist, the tour guide was telling stories and giving tourists ready-prepared bush food to taste, which in his opinion lacked context. The tourist criticised that he was not shown how it was gathered and used. In-depth information was therefore missing and the food was prepared to suit Western tastes. Hence, this tourist defined authenticity in terms of experiencing first-hand how something is
made and used as opposed of being shown the end result, as evidenced by his remark:

“The bush tucker tour I did was at Margaret River, in the Perth area. It was done by an Indigenous Australian, and it was not authentic at all. A lot of the stuff was, this is how this place got to be, this name and he told stories that didn’t have the context. The food was prepared like you would find it in a grocery store, so it completely lacked authenticity. They were in jars, they didn’t show how it was gathered, how it was used, it was spread on bread and the mince would be emu and kangaroo, already smoked. So it was completely lacking context. That tour was basically we go canoeing and we have lunch and they tell you a little bit how the food was gathered. I was left with more questions than I had answer.” [AT9]

In general, visitors commented positively upon the hands-on activities offered to them at Manyallaluk and Anangu Tours. Tourists explained that they appreciated that they were allowed to carry the spears and basket as well as touch and try some of the traditional Aboriginal tools demonstrated by the tour guide. Some tourists stated that this experience not only gave them an understanding of how difficult it was to survive in the bush, but also provided them with a direct feeling and sense of Aboriginal culture. Indeed, the researcher observed that tourists were very keen to throw a spear and showed a strong interest in the demonstration of traditional Aboriginal glue making. During the glue making tourists were able to smell the melted glue and touch the end-product. This was supported by statements such as:

“It was better than just watching someone else doing it because you actually feel you are part of a culture for a minute or two.” [AT20]

“…you realise how hard it is to do these things and it does give you a respect immediately for the skills in their culture. They are not the same skills that our culture praises but they are very challenging. So I thought it was really good how they encourage, nearly even make you enter their ways and come understand the difficulty in their way of life and their way of doing things.” [AT7]

“…just to feel what it’s like, how long it takes and how long it took the women or the men to do something like a basket or whatever. It helps to feel…” [MT20]

The findings of Howard et al. (2001) showed that Aboriginal tour guides stressed the importance of employing hands-on learning rather than simply pointing out things to visitors. For example, tour guides passed around a leaf to visitors for them to crush and smell. This type of learning was emphasised since it created a more personal experience for the tourist. Similarly, an Anangu tour guide of this study pointed to
the significance that tourists were offered a hands-on experience. During one morning tour, the Aboriginal tour guide was telling tourists that normally Aboriginal tools and weapons can only be seen behind glass walls in a museum. He emphasised that on this tour tourists not only get the chance of seeing them but are also allowed to touch and feel them.

5.4.4 ‘Genuine’ Interaction

Previous research into the expectations of visitors to the Northern Territory identified ‘interaction’ as the primary aspect of any satisfactory Aboriginal experience. Visitors stated that they wanted to sit down and talk with Aboriginal people about their experiences, their belief systems and their daily lives. Particularly, the ability to ask questions of Aboriginal people was regarded as very important (AGB McNair 1996). Similarly, a study conducted by Hughes (1991) on tourist satisfaction of an Aboriginal cultural tour in North Queensland found that the opportunity to interact with local people was associated with an authentic, worthwhile experience leading to enhanced tourist satisfaction.

The findings of this research also show a strong linkage between perceived authenticity and the degree of interaction with Aboriginal people experienced. For the majority of tourists, authenticity was created by the opportunity to interact with an Aboriginal tour guide. Being able to ask questions and hearing stories directly from an Aboriginal person created a genuine and personal experience for most tourists. The interaction between visitors and tour guides was described as being authentic since the tour guide explained aspects of his/her culture, such as family structure, kinship rules and dreamtime stories, for example:

“It was genuine, I enjoyed it. It makes it genuine to just talking to the people and seeing where they live and being able to ask questions and stuff. I enjoyed his stories out in the bush it was nice.” [AT6]

“I mean it just seems a lot of tours that I have gone on, it is usually operated by white people and all the tour guides tend to be white. Very little Aboriginal input into the tours. Where at least here both tour guides are interested and talk to you and explain to you a little bit about their land and what they do. Sounds more interesting.” [TT2]
“I think it was authentic because we got the real guys with us. I had my face painted up, I was painted up in the dreaming and they did the dance of the dreaming. And we were explained about the skin type, skin name, the family. Yes I thought it was real. Seemed real to me. There wasn’t anything touristy.” [TT30]

Some tourists also commented upon the way the Aboriginal tour guide was interacting with the tourists, which made the experience authentic. By being funny and engaging, the tour guide was able to teach visitors about his/her culture:

“I felt he was funny, he was engaging, he shared things that he didn’t necessarily have to, he imparted the information in a way that I remember it for a long time.” [AT9]

Closely aligned with visitors’ perceptions, all non-Aboriginal employees viewed the opportunity for interaction with Aboriginal people as the most important part of the tour, which in turn was appointed to be the key determinant of providing tourists with an authentic experience. It was emphasised that genuine contact and interaction create authenticity since tourists are able to talk to Aboriginal people and ask whatever questions they have in a relaxed atmosphere. As such, there is no staged question-answer situation instead tourists are encouraged to seek in-depth conversation. Comments included:

“…With the guides there is a lot of time on our tour, to them actually just talk, ask questions directly, talk to them. So if a person wants a really good in-depth conversation about all sorts of minor things within the community, there is an opportunity to actually do that. A lot of tours miss that point where they have an Indigenous guide, but never actually give everyone the opportunity to come up and ask some questions.” [TE5]

“Having the Aboriginal guides on hand. Having them accessible to people to be able to talk about whatever comes naturally to what they want to talk about. That it is not a staged question and answer situation.” [TE6]

Furthermore, non-Aboriginal employees pointed out that the genuine interaction between tourists and Aboriginal people is based upon the fact that the Aboriginal people show a great desire to share their culture with visitors, which prevents the experience from being a staged and artificial one. For example, one employee explained that tourists’ perceptions of authenticity are largely dependent on the feelings tourists develop about the tour and in particular about the Aboriginal tour guide. The employee mentioned that the tour is not a contrived experience, and
tourists notice that Aboriginal people are keen and very motivated to impart the right information about their culture and land to the visitors. Most important, the tour guides themselves make the tour authentic through their sincerity, ‘down-to-earth nature’ as well as the fact that they demonstrate traditional practical skills. The employees stated:

“…It is not staged, it is not a routine. There is a routine there, but you wouldn’t notice half the time. So in that respect it is quite a genuine experience. As a result you realise it because they are doing it because they want to, not because of any other reason really.” [TE4]

“The only way people can assess that is by the feeling they get and I think that a comparison might be when you with Anangu Tours people very quickly realise that this is not a contrived experience. Simply by the down-to-earth nature of the guides and through the practical skills that they are demonstrating and showing them and through their sincerity ‘Why are they delivering this information?’ They very quickly realise that this is not a tourism product that has been contrived, particularly for visitors to the Rock. It is actually an expression what Aboriginal culture at the rock is about.” [AE1]

This genuine interaction experienced by visitors and the sincerity of Aboriginal tour guides highlighted by non-Aboriginal employees can be further explained by employing Taylor’s (2001:16) notion of ‘sincerity’ - “an interactive sharing of experience between participants within a given tourism encounter”. Taylor introduced the term ‘sincerity’ as an alternative to the notion of authenticity, which reflects a shift away from touristic values of ‘authentic objects’ towards cultural experiences of local values. According to Taylor (2001:9), ‘sincere’ cultural experiences facilitate the interaction between tourists and ‘actors’ since both are encouraged to ‘meet half way’. As such, the boundary between who is on display and the consumer is blurred since communication also encourages tourists to reveal themselves. Hence, cross-cultural encounters based on sincerity allow for the promotion of more localised contemporary identities as opposed to the portrayal of Indigenous people as a mythological pre-contact society by the objectificatory mode of overtly staged events of Indigenous culture (Taylor 2001).

Furthermore, by examining the presentation of Maori culture in New Zealand, Taylor (2001) pointed out that shows promising an ‘authentic’ and ‘traditional’ Maori cultural experience tend to rely on caricature and stereotype. Taking place in a hotel
environment, they often allow for little personal interaction between Maori performers and spectators. Accordingly, Taylor argued that the more structured the event and the shorter the visit, the less opportunity is given to tourists to experience ‘sincere’ contact with the Indigenous host communities. Similarly, tourists of this study emphasised the importance of personal interaction with Aboriginal people. Because visitors were not only able to listen to the tour guides’ explanations and stories but were also encouraged to ask questions and seek in-depth understanding, the cultural experience felt genuine and real to the tourists. As Taylor (2001:23) emphasised, the notion of sincerity stresses “the zone of contact among participating groups or individuals, rather than appearing as an internal quality of a thing, self, or Other”. Congruently, tourists of this study interpreted the genuineness of their experience in terms of the quality of the personal contact and interaction they have gained with the Aboriginal tour guides.

Related to Taylor’s (2001) notion of ‘sincerity’ that advocates the interactive sharing of cultural experiences, Olsen (2002) argued that the tourist role itself requires alteration in order to overcome the authentic versus inauthentic dichotomy. Whereas the traditional role situated the tourist as being present but not part of the contexts gazed upon, the aim now of many tourism products is to “incorporate the tourist in the context by providing new roles that are not associated with the in-authentic hallmark of the tourist” (Olsen 2002:169). The author pointed to the example of eco-tourism in Kenya, where Indigenous tour guides, only armed with traditional spears, lead tourists on their walks among dangerous animals on the savannah. Here, an authentic experience is created though the construction of a different tourism context whereby the tour guide is dressed in traditional attire and everyone involved is walking instead of using a car.

The above argument is further highlighted by Reid’s (2002:29) suggestion to change the focus of cultural tourism from an “inside out” to an “outside in” approach. According to Reid (2002), this has been achieved by many North American Aboriginal communities who present their cultural events not as a tourist exhibition but instead as a cultural celebration in its own right, which is primarily intended for Aboriginal people. Since outsiders are invited to participate secondarily and not as
the subject of the event, it prevents the celebration to turn into a contrived, inauthentic touristic spectacle.

It appears that the findings of this study support these propositions that authenticity is enabled by providing a relevant tourism context that facilitates the creation of authentic experiences. Genuine interaction was viewed by the majority of tourists and employees as a key element to having an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience. As the results indicate, this interaction is generated by the role of the tour guide, who creates an interactive learning experience by involving tourists, for example, in the story telling and the hands-on activities as well as the demonstration of traditional skills. The results show that tourists desire and value such experiences. As the comments of two tourists demonstrate:

“…and that it would be interactive, would be hands on. So there would be things that we would be doing, rather than just listening to what’s going on. Looking, touching, seeing and being involved. It would be that kind of experience.” [MT10]

“They are not a piece of art that you are going to look at. They are living. Interaction is very important.” [TT22]

Furthermore, Reid’s (2002) “outside in” approach becomes apparent in the example of the dancing and smoking ceremony at Tiwi Tours. Although tourists watch the examples of Tiwi dance demonstrated by the tour guides and Morning Tea Ladies, at the same time they become part of the smoking ceremony. As was described by Taylor (2001), by incorporating tourists into the smoking ceremony, the boundary between who is on display and the consumer becomes blurred. This was emphasised by a Tiwi Tours employee:

“The smoking ceremony specifically draws the tourists into a closer circle really with the Tiwi people. Through touch, through the whole meaning of the smoking ceremony. This sort of driving everyone together and then comes the songs and the dancing. And I think that brings the tourists that step closer to the Tiwi people, it’s not like a show, no one is on stage, just sort of doing it all together. And I think that has a really big impact on the tourists.” [TE1]
5.4.5 Summary: The Relationship between Perceptions of Authenticity and the Role of the Aboriginal Tour Guide

Within the main element of ‘Aboriginal Tour Guide’, several important aspects were identified, which served as determinants in the generation of perceptions of authenticity. Respondents linked authenticity to the background of the tour guide, including his qualities and personality traits, his role as a tour guide, and the resultant type of interaction that the guide made possible. The analysis of these aspects suggests that the role the tour guide played was a key component in the formation of perceptions of authenticity. In fact, the tour guide is commonly seen as playing a vital role in tourism by enhancing the quality of experience for visitors. In order to explain the relationship between perceptions of authenticity and the role of the Aboriginal tour guide, one needs to first examine its theoretical background such as where the tour guide’s role originates from and, in particular, what its functions involve.

Much of the research surrounding the role and tasks of a tour guide is based on Cohen’s (1985b) analytical work on the structure and dynamics of modern tour guiding. The author proposed a model for the different roles of a tour guide based on the two antecedents of the pathfinder and the mentor. By extending these two historical roles, Cohen identified the leadership and mediatory sphere with each of the spheres consisting of an outer-directed and an inner-directed component. As a result, there are four major functions inherent in the role of the tour guide: instrumental, social, interactionary and communicative. Accordingly, there are four types of tour guides who concentrate on one of each of these principal functions: Originals, Animators, Tour Leaders and Professionals.

Within the leadership sphere two types of tour guides can be found. The Original Guide performs primarily the outward-oriented component of the instrumental function by providing direction, access, security and safety for the group. The Animator on the other hand is responsible for the cohesion and morale of the touring party. He therefore performs the social function by preventing and managing conflict, providing integration and ensuring that the group has a high morale. As such the social function requires that the tour guide uses humour, is friendly, listens and
most importantly is observable of the inner-directed needs of the group. The mediatory sphere addresses the roles of the Tour Leader and the Professional Guide. The Tour Leader focuses on the interactional component of the mediatory sphere by acting as a ‘middleman’ between the group he is leading and the environment. As Cohen (1985b) pointed out, the Tour Leader both integrates the group into the visited site and insulates it from that setting. Additionally, the Tour Leader is responsible for the organisation of the tour, such as the provision of services and facilities.

Finally, the Professional Guide performs primarily the communicative function, which is commonly regarded as the key component of the tour guide’s role. This role is comparable to the original role of the mentor, which focused on spiritual and intellectual guidance. Within modern tour guiding, however, the emphasis lies on the inner-directed sphere and is characterised by four main elements: the selection of points of interest, the dissemination of correct and precise information, the interpretation of information, and fabrication - practices involving invention and deception (Cohen 1985b). Here the dissemination and, most importantly, the interpretation of information have been generally identified as the essence of the tour guide’s role. As providers of information Professional Guides can be described as teachers, educators and instructors. Yet, their task goes further than merely the transmission of correct information; interpretation is believed to play a vital role in providing a quality experience for visitors (Ap and Wong 2001; Cohen 1985b; Inskeep 1991; Moscardo 1998; Stewart, Hayward, Devlin and Kirby 1998).

Relating Cohen’s (1985b) model to the results of this study, one may argue that the Aboriginal tour guide has a multifaceted role that covers the four types of tour guides. This closely corresponds to the findings of Howard et al. (2001), who investigated the roles of Aboriginal tour guides at Mutawintji National Park in Western New South Wales. For instance, similarly to Howard et al. (2001), this study found that the Aboriginal tour guide fulfils the role of the Original Tour Guide by directing visitors safely during the bush walk. The guide also performs the social function of an Animator by using humour in order to make it a more enjoyable experience for everyone. However, the results indicate that respondents’ perceptions of authenticity were primarily derived from the communicative function that the Aboriginal tour guide performed as a Professional Guide. Particularly, the three
elements of selection, dissemination of correct information and its interpretation were associated with having an authentic experience.

From the tourists’ perspective, the Aboriginal tour guide is expected to impart correct and true information in a meaningful way. For visitors, the Aboriginal tour guide embodied a teacher and educator who was interpreting rather than simply reciting cultural information. This was achieved through the use of personal stories and by offering experiences to visitors involving tangible and hands-on activities. In fact, these explanations very much correspond to how the meaning of interpretation is defined and understood among tourism scholars. According to Tilden (1977), interpretation is an educational activity which seeks to disclose and develop meanings and relationships to people about the places they visit and the experiences they have. This is accomplished through “the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” (Tilden 1977:8).

Similarly, Moscardo (1998) argued that interpretation involves communication and education, and addresses the important element of visitor enjoyment. In many tourism settings interpretation is either a significant part of the experience or essentially creates the actual experience. As such, interpretation can contribute to the quality of visitors’ experiences and enhance visitor satisfaction (Moscardo 1998). In this respect, both Tilden (1977) and Moscardo (1998) stressed the importance of providing personal connections for visitors and practicing participation as principles for designing more effective interpretation. The results of this research indicate that for tourists interpretation based on these elements constitutes an important component of, if not generates, the authentic cultural tour experience. Visitors desire a more personalised experience, which the Aboriginal tour guide creates through encouraging tourists to ask questions, telling personal stories and using humour to engage tourists in conversation as well as incorporating visitor participation in the tour itinerary. One may therefore argue that effective interpreting facilitates the genuine interaction between tourists and hosts.

Non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal employees appeared for the most part to share the same perspectives as tourists on the role of the Aboriginal tour guide in regard to
authenticity. Similar to tourists, they also believed that the communicative role of the
tour guide is vital in providing an authentic experience to visitors. However,
applying Cohen’s (1985b) four principal elements of the communicative function, it
becomes apparent that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees appeared to
place a stronger emphasis on the selection as well as dissemination of correct
information when justifying their perspectives on authenticity. According to
employees, an authentic experience is provided since Aboriginal guides themselves
determine the contents of the tour such as the cultural information and activities they
want to share with tourists. Additionally, employees highlighted the correctness of
the information that is passed on to tourists, stating for example that Aboriginal tour
guides teach the ‘truth’ and impart the ‘true story’ and ‘right information’ to tourists.

This in turn points to the importance of the qualities and attributes that an Aboriginal
tour guide is expected to have. There is general consensus among respondents that in
order to be able to transfer ‘correct’ knowledge the tour guide needs to be a member
of the local Aboriginal cultural group, who has acquired his cultural knowledge
through his upbringing. The emphasis here therefore lies on experiential
qualifications that have been informally attained through ‘life’ experience, rather
than formal educational qualifications. Since this forms a prerequisite for an
authentic experience, one may argue that authenticity has been transferred to the
person him/herself. Or in other words, the recognition of the tour guide as authentic
is strongly linked to the authentic experience.

Overall, in order to offer authentic experiences to tourists the Aboriginal tour guide
is expected to act as a ‘culture broker’ between his own and the visitor’s culture. In a
cross-cultural tourism setting, a cultural gap usually exists between the visitor and
host (De Kadt 1979). The task of a culture broker is therefore to initiate the tourist
into the culture of the host country (Halloway1981). As such, he needs to be
knowledgeable of the host culture and also have some understanding of the culture of
the guest (De Kadt 1979; Nettekoven 1979). According to Cohen (1985a),
interpretation thereby constitutes the essence of the role of the culture broker.
However, Cohen also noted that interpretation can play a manipulative role within
tour guiding, particularly within the selection and dissemination of information.
Cohen pointed out that the information disseminated is seldom of an unbiased nature, often reflecting the agenda of the tourist establishment or of the relevant authorities.

These controlling and manipulative aspects of interpretation have been criticised by Reisinger and Steiner (2006a), who analysed and reconceptualised the interpretation function of a tour guide by employing Heidegger’s (1996) philosophy on the concept of interpretation to tour guiding. The authors argued that the majority of previous tourism studies that addressed interpretation from a rational perspective are inconsistent with Heidegger’s conceptualisation of interpretation. Reisinger and Steiner (2006a:485) suggested that research which views the interpretation role of the tour guide in terms of its information function, correctness, constructedness and its behaviour-shaping role assumes that tourists “are not capable of interpreting the alien worlds they visit or will have a less rich or incorrect experience if someone does not explain what they are experiencing”. According to the authors, such guides are most likely theoretical in a Heideggerian sense, thereby creating mediated experiences for tourists. As an alternative Reisinger and Steiner proposed Heidegger’s conceptualisation of interpretation, which facilitates and promotes authentic tourism where the toured sites and the actual experiences speak for themselves and tourists are encouraged to find their own personal explorations of their understandings (Reisinger and Steiner 2006a).

In contrast, Christie and Mason (2003) argued that it would be difficult to conceive of any tour guiding that claims to be value-free. According to the authors, values are inherent in the way guides interpret a site and in the way they relate to the local population. As such, the existence of entrenched values and assumptions among tour guides should be recognised rather than supporting the view that tour guides are “apolitical, unbiased and a-cultural” (2003:12). In this respect, Christie and Mason introduced the notion of ‘transformative tourism’ in regard to the role of the tour guide. The authors defined transformative tourism as “the practice of organised tourism that leads to a positive change in attitudes and values among those who participate in the tourist experience” (2003:9). Yet, this model emphasises the voluntary nature of change to be effective. Thus, it is left to the tourists themselves to act on their new insights and transform themselves. The role of the guide is merely to offer tourists the opportunity of seeing the world differently. One important criterion,
however, to judge the validity of the values is whether the people and site they visit benefit from the visit (Christie and Mason 2003).

The model of the ‘transformative’ tourist guide seems to be applicable to how Aboriginal guides view their roles as tour guides. Sharing their culture in order to enhance cross-cultural understanding was viewed as a means of promoting understanding and gaining respect for their people and their culture. Hence, Aboriginal tour guides sought to initiate a positive change in attitudes by providing tourists with insights into the way Aboriginal people have lived in the past and how they live now. The principal aim was to remove negative stereotypes and misconceptions of Aboriginal people and their culture. Essentially, one may argue that this change in attitudes will not only benefit the Aboriginal hosts of the tour but Aboriginal people and Australian society as a whole.

Yet, Reisinger and Steiner (2006a) would most likely describe the Aboriginal tour guide as being theoretical and creating mediated experiences for tourists. Although the application of Heidegger’s framework may be useful in a number of different tour guiding environments, one needs to be cautious not to overgeneralise and impose one’s philosophical views on the emic perspectives of tourists. Ultimately, the tourist is the only judge of his experience, and as such may perceive the interpretation function of the tour guide in a multifaceted way, for instance as capable of instilling authenticity to the experience even though recognised as an inauthentic means by others. Here, the voluntary change that the ‘transformative’ tour guide aims to initiate has to be emphasised. In fact, the findings suggest that the ambitions of Aboriginal tour guides to communicate a positive image to tourists in order to reduce stereotypes correspond to some of the expectations tourists had of the tours. Several tourists emphasised that they have seen the negative side of Aboriginal people and therefore hoped that the tour would show and educate them about a different, more positive, aspect of Aboriginal culture.

Additionally, the findings of this study are in direct contrast to the suggestions made by Reisinger and Steiner (2006a) that tour guides do not require extensive education and local knowledge in order to enrich tourism experiences and encourage authentic experiences. The results rather indicate the opposite; tourists’ perceptions of
authenticity are directly linked to the interpretation role of the Aboriginal tour guide. Visitors expect the tour guide to be knowledgeable and be able to impart cultural information in a meaningful way. This is essentially the purpose of the tour and having a knowledgeable Aboriginal tour guide, who is fulfilling his role as a ‘cultural educator’, seems in this tour context the only possible way to open tourists, who have limited knowledge of Aboriginal culture, to their encounters. One may use Reisinger and Steiner’s (2006a:495) words that the interpretation role of the Aboriginal tour guide is necessary in order to “encourage personal engagement with and reflection on the world being experienced”. Ultimately, as Christie and Mason (2003) argued, tourists expect more from a guide than just an introduction to a site and attention to their physical needs. Tourists desire to experience the site within its social and cultural context and “rely on the guide for an informed and subtle presentation of key issues relating to this” (2003:14).

5.5 The Search for ‘Real’ and ‘Genuine’ Aborigines

5.5.1 Visiting a ‘Real’ Aboriginal Working Community

Several tourists who participated in Tiwi Tours and Manyallaluk tours believed that the experience had to be authentic, since they were visiting a ‘real’ Aboriginal community. In addition, the fact that the community itself was running the tour seemed to add to the value of gaining an authentic experience. One visitor explained that visiting an Aboriginal community, which is a working community equates to being authentic. The tourist was interested in visiting a community that is active and working, which was evident for the tourist by seeing the community school and the Arts and Crafts centre. The tourist was also satisfied to see Aboriginal people instead of ‘white people’ being employed in the arts centre. Similarly, Pitcher (1999) suggested that the visibility of white people at Manyallaluk diminished the authenticity of the experience for some tourists. Comments included:

“…I mean it is an Aboriginal community, you can’t get really more authentic than that. If it was a white tour guide you tend to think more ‘Why?’ ‘What sort of community is this?’ If they are trying to bring people in and they are not even running the tours themselves. In that side of things it would be a little bit of a let down, but it wouldn’t really surprise me at the same time.” [MT2]
“And the fact that you can see that there is a school here and it is a working community. There is a school here, there is an arts centre here, which is a bit different to going into any shop anywhere in the Territory or WA and trying to buy a didgeridoo and there is a white person behind the counter selling it to you. So that authenticity was important, the fact that it was recommended for being like that was important and that it was educational.” [MT1]

In addition, two tourists in Manyallaluk explained that the fact that the tour was operated by Aboriginal people meant that money earned by tourism went back into the Aboriginal local community:

“Yes, and to know that this was something that they were doing and that it was genuinely Aboriginal. So often you are going into shops and it says ‘This is made by Aborigines’, but you don’t know how much is genuine or how much of the money that you pay actually goes back to them. So today was really good in that respect that it was made clear where the proceeds went.” [MT7]

“I was just, you know, looking for a genuine tour, where the money doesn’t only go to white employees where there are black people, Aboriginal people, who are given the money directly for their job. Because what I found out is, especially in the shops in Alice Springs and Adelaide for example, they sell Aboriginal arts and crafts and it’s always these elderly white women or the younger ones, it’s always white person’s staff and shopkeepers and shop assistants. So my reason is first of all, it’s hopefully a tour where the money goes directly to Indigenous Aboriginal people.” [MT20]

Hence, the tourists specifically selected this tour since they wanted to take part in a ‘genuine’ Aboriginal tour, which they interpreted as a company that is run by Aboriginal people and has Aboriginal people working for the tour. Such Aboriginal involvement needs to be clearly visible since tourists indicated that they did not trust arts shops in towns, which had non-Aboriginal employees selling Aboriginal-made products. They wanted to be assured that financial proceedings benefited directly Aboriginal people. It could be argued that the tourists were concerned and cautious about paying for an Aboriginal tour which possibly took advantage of Aboriginal people and their culture. This finding corresponds closely with research conducted by SATC (1998), which suggested that international tourists did not want to contribute to the exploitation of Aboriginal people through their own participation in Aboriginal tourism. A comment from an interview with a male tourist who participated in Anangu Tours encapsulates this concern for exploitation:
“...and how far the Aboriginal guide were people who were actually doing this willingly and had things that they really wanted to share. Or maybe they were doing it basically simply because of poverty and that somebody else totally outside is maybe exploiting them a bit. So I don’t know, I mean I had elements of unease because of that, I was reasonably happy with the way it was done.” [AT11]

It appears that the fact that tourists, in particular the ones participating in Tiwi Tours and to a lesser extent Manyallaluk Tours, were given the opportunity to see parts of the community was an important element of authenticity since it contributed to visitors experiencing the normal way of life of local residents. One tourist, who took part in Tiwi Tours, explained that not visiting the community would make a tour contrived since Aboriginal people would only ‘pretend’ to live their lifestyle in a designated tourist area. As the tourist explained:

“If they have a tour and not go into the community and not see the way they live, there is not much point. It gets back to my contrived thing again. They come out and just let you see what they think you might want to see, which is a pretend sort of lifestyle. And that would not suit me as a tourist. I don’t even like the word tourist.” [TT9]

In fact, a number of tourists in Manyallaluk were disappointed that they were not able to visit the community area. Several tourists explained that they expected to be part of their lives and experience everyday life in the community. The tourists differentiated between ‘actual’ Aboriginal life in the community and the tourist setting outside the community area. The stay at Manyallaluk was also compared to previous trips, such as Fiji and Sri Lanka, where tourists were able to live in an Indigenous village together with the locals. This is congruent with previous studies which have found that tourists often base their expectations on experiences with Indigenous people in Asia and the South Pacific regions (AGB McNair 1996; Pitcher 1999). Comments included:

“We thought we are coming here to a community, where we would be part of everyday community life...So we came here for that reason with being to several other Aboriginal cultural experiences, but thought it would be nice to live in a community and just see day-to-day happenings in a community. The camping book suggested that it was a very friendly community that was trying to build up tourism, where you could be part of the actual Aboriginal life rather than in a short spiel of tourist walkabout, that sort of thing... It would have been more authentic when we could have seen where they live and be part of their lives, rather than be isolated from that.” [MT17]
“But we have been to Fiji a couple of years ago and we stayed in villages there from the Fijian. A couple of them were very isolated villages and we actually lived in a house with a village person and we did village things we did with them...You were part of their lives...So we thought that’s what we were coming to, but it wasn’t, it was different.” [MT18]

“For instance in Sri Lanka I got some invitations in some of their houses and to see how they live a lifestyle in their homes.” [TT12]

“Perhaps not like at this place which has been put up for the tourists, set up for the tourists. But that would have meant getting a little bit closer to their homes.” [MT20]

These comments indicate that some tourists divided Manyallaluk into two areas, whereby one represents the back area where the real life of Aboriginal people takes place and the second the front area which is specifically arranged for tourism purposes. These views are comparable with MacCannell’s (1999) notion of the front-back dichotomy in tourist settings. According to MacCannell (1999:94), tourists want to get behind the fronts to experience authentic life as it is really lived by the locals so that they can “see behind the others’ mere performance, to perceive and accept the others for what they really are…” Accordingly, tourists felt that the ‘real’ Aboriginal life can only be found in the community area as opposed to the tourist area. Once again, this corresponds closely with Pitcher’s (1999) findings, which showed that many tourists were less satisfied with their experience since they held a spatially specific notion of authenticity, where ‘real life’ could be experienced beyond the tourist area in the community.

This finding appears to be contrary to the proposition made by Ryan and Huyton (2000), who suggested that visitor interest could be met by structured situations on neutral ground such as artificial constructs of Indigenous villages found of Maori-based tourism in New Zealand. According to the authors, such tourist settings would serve many purposes. First, information could be disseminated to tourists separate from a ‘community’ experience. As a result, the possible negative impacts such as intrusions upon the private lives of Aboriginal people would be diminished. Second, it would provide the opportunity for those Aboriginal people who want to, to interact with visitors in a tourist setting for economic gain. As such, Ryan and Huyton (2000:83) argued the commodification of Aboriginal culture can, in fact, “help to
maintain an authenticity for Aboriginal Australians by locating tourists at arm’s length from their communities”.

Whilst Ryan and Huyton’s suggestion may be applicable to a certain type of cultural tourist, the findings of this study indicate that tourists prefer to experience the ‘real’ life of Aboriginal people as opposed to artificially constructed display villages. In fact, only two tourists commented positively upon specially constructed villages for tourists. This is not surprising considering that the majority of tourists showed a strong interest in both the contemporary and traditional culture of Aboriginal people. As such, a ‘tourist village’ was considered contrived and artificial since it would be for the most part a reflection of traditional Aboriginal culture, which the majority of tourists did not associate with an authentic and genuine experience. Several remarks made by tourists illustrated their feelings towards tourist villages:

“Sometimes what they do is they put them into villages, entertainment villages. We went to a village in Cairns, it’s interesting, but I don’t know. I rather come here.” [TT5]

“I didn’t expect to not see them in westernised clothes and that kind of thing. This is what we are seeing, this is what today is all about…I wouldn’t have like to come to a tourists-made community…What I mean by that is not looking at what the reality in life today is…It’s things that are contrived that I have a problem with.” [TT10]

“How they live now in that sense, but obviously you can’t see how they lived 250 years ago, because it is not now, it is not them.” [TT7]

“I don’t expect anybody sort of reproduce a lifestyle from the past for my benefit.” [MT10]

Furthermore, one male tourist taking part in Tiwi Tours pointed to the difficulties of presenting traditional aspects of Aboriginal culture in a tourist village. In his opinion, information about traditional culture could be disseminated in a museum by using drawings and displays of old tools and other materials utilised by Aboriginal people. He explained:

“You can build a village for tourists. I think it is very hard to show their past and present so it doesn’t become too artificial…As far as I know they had a nomad culture, so a nomad culture didn’t have houses. So how do you want to show? I mean you can show some material that they used. You can’t expect to show old houses, old furniture. You can have a museum and for example with some drawings, some things that they used to do.” [TT26]
Although a large proportion of visitors showed an interest in having a ‘community’ experience, concurrently they were concerned about intruding on or disturbing the privacy of Aboriginal people. Participants also emphasised that whilst they wanted to visit the community, they would like to know that the Aboriginal people were content with this and would welcome them, for example:

“Being a traveller you always know that there are bits given to travellers and there are bits given to the people who actually live here. You know that you can’t intrude in their lives and just get all the real stuff. But of course we always seek what is as genuine as possible.” [TT27]

“Perhaps it would be good if one could really get into closer contact to a family and see a little bit how they live, their quarters, if that is not too indecent.” [MT13]

“...part of it is telling me about their way of life and part of it is showing me something about it. Not like in a zoo, with this is where we live and this is the clothes that we wear. Because I don’t want to have a close look, I didn’t do that in Africa either, because it’s a sort of ‘zooe’ factor and I don’t like that. It should be a question of respect really.” [MT20]

“I would have liked to go to the community. But a lot of communities don’t want people invading them and watching and looking, you know, specimens.” [AT6]

“It’s all right if they don’t mind. If it’s OK, I don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings.” [AT13]

“Yes, if that’s part of it, but I don’t want to intrude. I wouldn’t want to feel voyeuristic; I wouldn’t want to feel like I was intruding. Not to go into people’s homes, I wouldn’t like people to come to my home. I wouldn’t want to intrude in that way.” [TT6]

A number of tourists explained that they would feel uncomfortable visiting the community area since they viewed this as a disturbance to the privacy of Aboriginal people. Tourists compared that to having tourists visiting their own home, which they described as being intrusive and unacceptable:

“There is always such a line that you intrude too much into their privacy. I see that a little bit critically... Even to drive through there with the bus I think would be disturbing and not very good.” [MT14]

“But not to be in the village and try to see how they live, because that would be invasive. So I wouldn’t be prepared to do that.” [MT19]
“I don’t want to go and visit their homes, my goal is to visit their site. So I am less interested in that, I don’t want anyone to visit my home today. I wouldn’t mind to learning more about it, but that was nothing major.” [MT11]

“I think going to see people’s homes seems a little bit intrusive for me. Sort of outsiders coming and kind of gawping at people and invading their privacy. I don’t think I wanted to do that.” [AT11]

“I don’t think I would be interested, I don’t think that would be right. I don’t think I would like anyone walking around my house seeing how I live.” [AT10]

This finding is comparable with conclusions from previous studies, which suggested that because international visitors have a strong awareness of the adverse impact European colonisation has had upon Aboriginal people, they are concerned about offending Aboriginal traditions. As such, being ‘invited’ to participate by Aboriginal people was particularly important (SATC 1998). Furthermore, the general consensus among international visitors from Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland was that any encounter should preserve the privacy of Aboriginal people. Visitors were quite sensitive to the needs of local communities and felt a responsibility not to intrude (ATC 2003). Correspondingly, it was argued by Cohen (1995, 2002) that post-tourists are nowadays more aware of the negative impacts their visit can have upon natural environments and hosts cultures.

5.5.2 Experiencing Aboriginal People the Way They Are?

Closely related to the above statements of seeking to gain an experience of a common Aboriginal community, several tourists noted that a casual and informal tour atmosphere provides an authentic experience since it is a reflection of Aboriginal lifestyle and their culture. For example, one female tourist of Tiwi Tours emphasised that the tour left her with an authentic impression because it had a natural and informal feeling. The tourist also stated that she did not expect luxury and something spotless, which would have not been a representation of the real Tiwi Islands and its inhabitants and instead would have produced an ‘artificial’ and ‘plastic’ environment. Likewise, a male tourist of Manyallaluk tours explained that the relaxed and casual atmosphere made the tour authentic. In his opinion, added professionalism would have rather detracted from the authenticity. Thus, the tourist
wanted the tour to reflect the slower and more relaxed lifestyle of Aboriginal people. This is detailed by the two tourists who stated:

“You wanted it to be authentic. You don’t want it contrived and you don’t want it dressed up and artificial. Artificial would be too glossy. I am not looking for five star or anything. So I like this that it is natural and informal and it’s bush like, I think that’s authentic. I don’t want to come in to something that’s all plastic and spotless and not on the ground. I wanted it to be real.” [TT15]

“They did things at a much slower pace, more relaxed as well as you would have expected of the culture...If the tour would have been really professional that would have not enhanced, that would have detracted from the authenticity of an Aboriginal cultural tour if that would happened. Effectively you walk into their homeland here, are greeted casually, I found it quite relaxing, it wasn’t confronting in any way. I didn’t feel uncomfortable in any way in terms of their technique of presentation of doing things. They have a very relaxed lifestyle, that’s very good to see.” [MT6]

Correspondingly, another important component of authenticity was to get to know and experience Aboriginal people the way they normally are. Several tourists commented upon that an authentic experience would involve local people acting towards tourists in a normal way and not pretending to be something different in order to meet tourist demand. This was described as being ‘natural’ and ‘not exaggerated’. Five tourists explained that:

“That should imply that people behave towards me as they normally do and not try to be something else. Just be natural, as natural as they can be in their specific circumstances between these modern influences and their way to safeguard as many of their old traditions as possible... My expectation was to see Aboriginal people living when they are not too much dependant on white communities...” [TT12]

“To be as they live, to be as authentic as possible. I mean it is great that they earn money from doing their craft instead of putting up chairs on the beach. Just being themselves maybe. So that the community is for the citizens.” [TT27]

“It is not exaggerated. The way it is.” [TT28]

“The feeling that what you see is actually genuine and it is not pretended, not most of people are just putting on an act. Whether it is really quite genuine and I think it is.” [TT6]

“Yes that was really the attraction to see people as close to the way they are choosing to live rather than to be offering us something that they thought that we wanted to see.” [TT17]
Indeed, several tourists noted after the tour how genuine, warm and sincere they thought the Aboriginal people were:

“I found her openness really wonderful and also the Aborigines that we encountered at Djabugay, they were very sincere and very open and I thought very sharing, which I thought was really lovely and she was that way, it seemed to me.” [AT7]

“Her warmth came through, she was so pleased that everybody was there and that came through as very genuine to me. There is nothing commercial about it. Nothing commercial about the way she presented herself... I thought she was very warm and that came across.” [AT1]

“I thought she was very relaxed and just how I picture them being.” [AT22]

Some visitors had previous encounters with Aboriginal people such as in towns and cities where they have seen Aboriginal people drinking on the streets. The tourists did not associate these negative images with ‘authentic’ and ‘real’ Aboriginal people. For instance, one female tourist noted that she was interested in seeing an authentic community, which in her opinion constituted a dry Aboriginal community. The tourist explained that it felt genuine because Manyallaluk was a dry community and that this community did not appear to have alcohol problems such as other Aboriginal communities. However, the tourist remained doubtful by acknowledging that one should not forget that it is a tourist setting. Accordingly, another female tourist explained that she wanted to see ‘the real thing’ – not Aboriginal people who live in towns or cities and are alcoholics. For this tourist these are not the ‘real’ Aboriginal people who value their culture and traditions. As the two tourists discussed:

“I wanted to see an authentic community. What is the real Aboriginal thing? Even where my daughter was it was so different to this community here. I did feel that it was genuine because it seemed to me that the people didn’t drink. It said outside that it was dry and it seems to me that it really was dry. Lots of the people do have alcohol problems and these people appeared not to have them. So I felt there was more a chance to have an authentic experience in a place like that. But I also come from a tourist area in England and I know that people will just tell you anything for the tourist, sometimes just make it up as you go along.” [MT19]

“We want to go there to see the Aboriginal people, not the ones who live in town and who are alcoholics and just lie there and drink. You know the real thing. We have just been on Kakadu Safari our guide there told us she met a lot of people, how totally different they are than the people that we see on the streets in the cities...Just want to see how they are. Because they tried to make them civilised so quick and they
had to get used to something totally different, and that’s not them, their culture, the way they live. You don’t see it when you are walking on the street.” [MT5]

These comments match the experience of two non-Aboriginal employees, who explained that tourists visiting Tiwi Islands often mention that the only Aboriginal people they have encountered during their travel in Australia were drunk people in major towns and cities on the streets. According to one of the employees, tourists are therefore subconsciously looking for a more positive side to Aboriginal people:

“If they come up from Southern Australia or even overseas, they probably have been to Alice Springs and Darwin first. They say to me they have only seen drunk people on the streets, they are the Aboriginal people they have seen.” [TE9]

“If the tourists come from one of the city centres they are seeing the long grassers, so they are seeing Aborigines that maybe left their own community or have been segregated from their family for a variety of reasons, whether it is alcohol, abuse or violence or just not getting on well. They left their community and live in poor conditions in the city. And that’s what they have seen. So I think without even realising it themselves they are curious to know if that’s all there is or if there is more to what modern life is in an Aboriginal community...So even when they weren’t expecting it consciously I think subconsciously that’s what they are looking for.” [TE1]

In contrast to the comments made by the two employees, another non-Aboriginal employee pointed out that in his opinion most tourists would expect to see drunk Aboriginal people. Instead tourists are pleasantly surprised to experience a normal working community:

“And for a lot of them they actually get a quite surprise not to see hundreds and hundreds of drunken people lying around all the streets everywhere. Because that’s their perception that’s what they see when they go to the main cities. They see the long grass people and think all Indigenous people are like that. Where, in fact, they are very much a minority. Here this is a normal working community.” [TE5]

The difference between Aboriginal people living in a remote area and the ones living in the city and major towns was further explained by several tourists. They identified the former as the ‘real’ or ‘pure’ Aborigines, whereas the latter were described as ‘interbred’ Aboriginal people, without pride and culture:

“...I would define authenticity because the tour guide lives in the Aboriginal village and she really has got an Aboriginal lifestyle, she is not living in a big city driving in a car and wearing modern clothing. She is really, really, Aboriginal. It is different,
because you also have Aborigines in Sydney or Melbourne, but they grow up in the city and they have a lot of different stories. She knows a lot, about their history and stuff.” [AT8]

“I didn’t have great expectations other than to learn a little bit about the lifestyle. The older lifestyle, not the urban Aborigines but the outback Aborigines.” [MT4]

“…that we can talk with the real Aborigines. I grew up in a country town, with a lot of Aborigines but they were all interbred Aborigines, they were not all pure Aborigines. So they often have a chip on their shoulder. But pure Aborigines like this, they have their pride, they have their culture and are different people again. And it is just nice to see that.” [MT18]

Hence, according to tourist [AT8], Anangu people are living the ‘real’ Aboriginal lifestyle as opposed to other Aboriginal people who live in the city, drive a car and wear modern clothes and, most important, do not have much knowledge about their history and traditional culture. The tourists’ comments seem to indirectly imply that the latter are ‘fake’ Aboriginal people. Indeed, as Hinkson (2003) pointed out, a dominant discourse in Australia has promoted the view that ‘authentic’ Aboriginal culture is confined to the relatively undeveloped, under-populated and isolated north of the continent. This has translated into visitors’ beliefs that ‘real’ Aboriginal experiences can only be found in remote areas of Australia (Lane and Waitt 2001; Pitcher 1999; Tourism Queensland 2002).

These results indicate that whilst tourists want to experience Aboriginal people the way they ‘normally’ are, in reality visitors desire to see Aboriginal people the way they want them to be. As such, visitors hold preconceived notions and images in their mind as to who ‘real’ Aboriginal people are and what their ‘authentic’ lifestyle should involve. The different views tourists expressed can be summarised as follows. First, ‘real’ Aboriginal people lead a casual and relaxed ‘contemporary’ lifestyle in a remote place such as the outback whilst maintaining their traditional culture. This finding indicates a shift in the conceptualisation of the Other within the minds of some Western societies. Whereas in the past an essentialist notion was inherent in the conceptualisation of Indigenous people, which was based on a romanticised imagery of the timeless, unchanging, primitive and exotic Indigenous Other (MacCannell 1999), visitors today seem to envision Aboriginal people in a more constructivist light. By acknowledging the impacts of globalisation and modernisation on Aboriginal people, most tourists did not conceive authenticity in a primitive sense
but rather in a contemporary one. The search for the primitive Other as described by MacCannell (1999) has therefore evolved to the search of the contemporary ‘normal’ Other. However, visitors still hold preconceived notions of Aboriginal people, who are expected to remain the naturally, spiritually and to some extent ‘unspoilt’ Other.

Second, Aboriginal people live in a working community and are to some extent not reliant on white people. And third, ‘real’ Aboriginal people are not alcoholics like their ‘inauthentic’ urban counterparts. Hence, it could be argued that visitors seek negotiated experiences that match their mindset of Aboriginal people. Similarly, McIntosh (2004) argued that tourists seek only a partial selection of the reality of the Maori world in order to transform experiences of Maori culture into their own ‘romanticised’ version of the culture.

5.5.3 Desire to Experience Contemporary and Traditional Lifestyle

5.5.3.1 Interest in Aboriginal Culture

The majority of Aboriginal employees argued that an Aboriginal cultural tour should not only teach tourists about their traditional culture but also about their contemporary situation and lifestyle. In addition, Aboriginal employees recalled from their tour experiences that visitors appear to be interested in both, their traditional culture such as finding out how they survived in such a harsh environment, as well as their modern lifestyle. Comments included:

“A lot of them want from what I can gather, a lot of them want to know how countryman live and survive on the land. Also now.” [ME7]

“How we were hundreds of years ago. Showing them what we used to do back in the old days and also how we live today.” [TE3]

“The tourists like to eat bush tucker and learn a bit, learn about Aboriginal culture, they want to see why this food and this and this, like older days. But now we got everything but in old days it used to be pretty hard...They are learning both, old days we tell them stories and like now how we are living now and tell them stories about older days how we used to live.” [ME1]
“They want to know in the past and also how we live now, now days. Because we teach them and we tell them and they want to know what we do now.” [ME5]

“In between I think. I think they probably like the modern stuff and also the old days and when the mission started.” [TE7]

Congruent with the perceptions of Aboriginal employees, the majority of visitors sought an Aboriginal cultural tour experience that offered them an insight into the contemporary as well as traditional Aboriginal culture and lifestyle. For instance, tourists were very interested in learning how Aboriginal people used to live and survive in the bush. They were also expecting to find out how Aboriginal people live today, for example what problems they have:

“How they live now, have them tell us how they used to live, how the society used to work. What they used to do. It would be interesting to hear what kind of problems they have in their society. And how they are accepted now.” [MT5]

“I think a better understanding of Aboriginal culture and the way that they lived. And how they are living now, not just their culture and their past. What are their issues now?” [MT7]

“How they lived before the white man got here. How they are living now too. If they are living now the way they want to live.” [AT10]

“It should be twofold, one thing is to learn about the Aboriginal people, the cultural ways, but also where they are now and what they want to do about improving their situation… How can we as a community move forward?” [MT3]

5.5.3.2 What is Authentic Aboriginal Culture?

The before-mentioned remarks from both Aboriginal employees and visitors indicate that Aboriginal culture is defined in two ways. Since learning about Aboriginal culture is one, if not the central component and main selling point of any Aboriginal cultural tour, it was fundamental to this research to examine how tourists define authentic Aboriginal culture. In fact, the findings suggested that tourists’ perceptions of the authenticity of Aboriginal culture were directly linked to their expectations of the tour by forming the basis for their views as to what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience. The results indicated that the majority of visitors interpreted authentic Aboriginal culture as embodying the contemporary culture of Aboriginal people. Some tourists understood authentic Aboriginal culture in a
traditional way - a pristine way of life found in the past, prior to Western contact. As such, tourists were of the belief that the ‘pure’ traditional Aboriginal culture does not exist anymore. It was also explained by several tourists that due to the modern comfort demanded by tourists and the practicality of the tour, a cultural experience in a true traditional sense is not feasible. Only one male international visitor defined authentic Aboriginal culture as a primitive and ‘old traditional’ native culture, which he thought would still be alive and thriving. Accordingly, the tourist expected to see Tiwi people living to the most part in a primitive and simple way.

In general, employees viewed authentic Aboriginal culture as contemporary culture. For instance, one non-Aboriginal employee questioned the meaning of authenticity. The employee explained that he rather prefers to use the word genuine since authenticity is a very subjective term. In his opinion, authentic traditional Aboriginal culture does not exist anymore. Therefore, a tour selling a traditional Aboriginal experience does not offer an authentic experience since this is contrary to the fact that Aboriginal people live a contemporary lifestyle:

“Authentic is not a word that I would use. ‘Authentic’ is very, very much opened to interpretation and we had debates about this in other government areas, where they believe that only authentic tours should be given a certain stamp of approval. What constitutes authentic you could argue until the cows come home. Simply because when you are looking at traditional, let’s go back two hundred years and you are presenting that, that doesn’t happen anywhere…” [TE4]

Similarly, another male employee regarded an authentic cultural experience as being a true representation of the original traditional Aboriginal culture, which in his opinion is virtually unattainable these days. In his opinion, the real culture can only be experienced in remote areas, where tribal elders have taught and instructed younger generations. Whilst the employee noted that some of the traditional stories would be authentic, he also emphasised that non-Aboriginal people will never be able to comprehend the entire spirituality of Aboriginal culture since many dreamtime stories comprise sacred and secret elements. Hence, Manyallaluk offers an insight into Aboriginal communal living coupled with traditional stories and the experience of arts and crafts. According to the employee, Manyallaluk tour is therefore not a reflection of original Aboriginal culture or ‘the real thing’. He explained that:
“The experience is of Aboriginal communal living. We have stories about country, traditional stories about one thing or another, and some experience of art and artefacts. But as far as it has been a reflection of the original Aboriginal culture - No. Only a very small percentage of tourists would ever get anything that is the real thing that is left of it, and they would have to be introduced through people who had intimate relationships with tribal elders in lands, which are relatively remote, like around the top coast, Tiwi and the desert people and some of the Western people over here. The closer you get to towns and that, the further you are away from that, or any chance of that experience...Parts of it are, the traditional stories are authentic, but you have no white fellow being around a long time is going to get from Aboriginal people the whole story of the way they do the world. A lot of stories are sacred.” [ME2]

Related to the above interpretations of defining authentic Aboriginal culture as a reflection of traditional Aboriginal culture, one employee judged the degree of authenticity in terms of whether some of those traditional skills were still used in today’s day-to-day life. For example, information given on and activities offered to tourists such as basket weaving as well as the gathering and eating of bush foods were considered as authentic since those cultural skills and customs are still prevalent in today’s Aboriginal lifestyle. As the employee stated:

“Well the ladies still do weave the baskets, so that’s authentic enough. And they still do the hunting but they use the rifles now. I guess the Aboriginal people would still use all the skills that they show here, the fire lighting and the basket weaving and the kangaroo tails, that’s always a bonus. The steaks thrown on the BBQ are not so authentic. But mostly yes and the bush tucker, they still do eat bush tucker and gather it and use the medicine. Yes, authentic enough.” [ME3]

Corresponding with the findings of this study, Lane and Waitt (2001) similarly concluded that local tourism operators in the East Kimberley either viewed authentic Aboriginal culture to exist among contemporary Aboriginal people or as located in the past, prior to the corruption by contact with Europeans. According to Lane and Waitt (2001), the differing opinions tour operators held of authenticity informed the sorts of engagement that they were seeking with Aboriginal people for tourism enterprises. For example, some operators preferred to offer a contrived and staged presentation of Aboriginal culture, whereas others wanted to provide tourists with an experience of the more ordinary ‘back regions’ of Aboriginal culture. Likewise, tourists’ views of this study of authentic Aboriginal culture influenced their expectations and perceptions as to what constitutes an authentic cultural experience. For instance, tourists who understood authenticity in terms of contemporary culture
showed a strong interest in experiencing everyday Aboriginal lifestyle. Accordingly, non-Aboriginal employees were of the opinion that an Aboriginal cultural tour should offer an experience of contemporary Aboriginal culture and life.

Furthermore, a study into the roles of Aboriginal tour guides found that Aboriginal tour guides try to remove tourists’ preconceived notions that the visited site and Aboriginal society is a part of history and instead replace it with an understanding of its contemporary context. Consequently, it was suggested that by interpreting the contemporary nature of Aboriginality to tourists the Paakintji people are able to control the impacts of tourism on Mutawintji National Park (Howard et al. 2001).

Congruent with employees’ perceptions, visitors either viewed authentic Aboriginal culture in a traditional sense, not to be found in the present, or highlighted its contemporary nature and how Aboriginal people are living today. Tourists were aware that Aboriginal people would lead a modern lifestyle similar to other Western societies. Except for one visitor, all other tourists did not expect to find Aboriginal people living a traditional way of life. Comments included:

“… I imagine they have TV sets in their houses and everything else, of course.” [AT13]

“Of course they don’t live like they lived a hundred or two hundred years ago. I didn’t expect that, I can’t expect them naked and in full colour.” [TT12]

“I mean everybody evolves so I think that’s good. I don’t want to see them pretending that they are living in 2000 years ago. I wasn’t expecting them living a traditional lifestyle at all.” [TT2]

“…I know most people just live like everybody else today.” [AT5]

“How they live now in that sense, but obviously you can’t see how they lived 250 years ago, because it is not now, it is not them.” [TT7]

“I was aware that is it going to be a contemporary lifestyle. It is obviously based on history and that’s very strong within the culture. I didn’t expect to not see them in westernised clothes and that kind of thing. This is what we are seeing, this is what today is all about…” [TT10]

Only one visitor from Denmark expressed his disappointment at not finding a traditional Aboriginal community at Tiwi Islands:
“I expected something primitive, native people trying to perhaps be integrated, slowly integrating in Australian society. No cars, not much electricity. I thought it was a little bit more primitive than this...I thought they would live in some primitive houses, something like this but perhaps a little bit more primitive...That’s why we came here. Authentic means an old culture, not have changed too much.” [TT11]

Three tourists explained that real authenticity could only then be attained if tourists would be able to experience the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle themselves. This would include experiencing traditional activities such as hunting and collecting food, walking and camping in the bush for a couple of days. However, all three tourists recognised the limitations of this interpretation of authenticity since a tour would need to provide some comfort to visitors. Thus, according to the tourists, ‘real’ authenticity needs to be balanced with a certain level of comfort expected by tourists. The tourists stated:

“Worms and grubs and things like that would be really authentic, but I think it wouldn’t be realistic. Taking our clothes off and dancing, I think within the parameters of tourism organised it was very good, one of the best.” [AT16]

“Well, it wasn’t ‘authentic authentic’. If they want to make it really authentic then you know you have to get there, you have to walk there first of all, you wouldn’t be on a bus. You have to camp out there for a couple of days, you have to go kill yourself your own kangaroo with a spear. You have to collect plants to make fires and stuff like that. I think if they make it that authentic, people wouldn’t do it. Because people want to be comfortable they want their little tour bus and their breakfast in the morning and all that.” [AT20]

“I think it is OK to go authentic up to an extent but I think just because of the sake of tourists’ comfort it is always going to be balancing the authentic with the practical. I think most tourists wouldn’t be too happy just left wandering around without air-conditioning coaches to get from point to point. Some will think that’s OK, they understand. It’s also going to be the Westerner influence to make the tour comfortable as well.” [TT24]

Hence, tourists are not interested in experiencing ‘real’ authenticity if such an experience is going to jeopardise their comfort on their holiday. These tourists defined authenticity in a traditional way - Aboriginal culture as it was before the influence of modern Western commodities. The above comments indicate that some visitors believe that essentially tourists will never be able to gain an authentic Aboriginal experience since Western desires for modern comfort will always clash with the traditional way of living of native people. However, this point of view does not question whether there still exists ‘real’ authentic Aboriginal culture in a
traditional sense. It may be argued that if there is no authentic traditional Aboriginal culture then ‘authentic’ experiences without Western comfort may be in turn considered contrived and inauthentic in the first place.

Arguing from an extremist position such as Boorstin’s (1987), one may find Boorstin’s modern tourist reflected in the above comments. Seeking pre-fabricated travel experiences, taking part in packaged tours and demanding convenience and comfort are the parallels that can be drawn from both types of tourists. According to Boorstin (1987), the modern tourist is not travelling to experience the living culture. Rather, he seeks contrived experiences and consumes local culture as a commodity within the familiarity of Western comfort. However, in contrast to Boorstin’s tourist, who chooses to be isolated from the host environment, most of the tourists visiting Aboriginal cultural tours specifically seek interaction with Aboriginal people, scorn other contrived experiences and prefer the authentic product of the foreign culture - whether in a traditional or contemporary sense. Indeed, this is similar to Craik’s (1997) suggestion that tourists think that they want authenticity, however, most tourists look for some degree of negotiated experiences. Craik (1997) used the term tourist ‘bubble’ to describe a safe and controlled environment which tourists can selectively leave and return to after ‘sampling’ predictable types of experiences.

Taking it a step further, from a postmodern perspective, it may be argued that comfort-seeking tourists are not in search of authenticity but instead are looking for inauthenticity. As the tourists explained, there needs to be a certain level of comfort provided to tourists, which at the same time precludes real authenticity. These tourists therefore do not want to trade ‘real authentic’ experiences with comfort such as air-conditioned buses and Western food. This is comparable with Ritzer and Liska’s (1997) description of the post-tourist, who is not searching for authentic experiences, which are often difficult to find, are too uncomfortable and more expensive than simulated inauthentic experiences. Accordingly, Cohen (2002) noted that only a small number of tourists incur major expenses and put up with discomfort in order to experience ‘genuine’ primitives or pristine wilderness. Yet, such experiences, as Culler (1981) has shown in his semiotic analysis of authenticity, have already been marked as authentic and are therefore not authentic anymore in the
sense of the unspoiled and pristine. This paradox of authenticity was further explained by Smith and Duffy (2003:133), who noted that:

In so far as authenticity is defined in terms of the existence of alternative (non-modern) forms of life, or of untouched wilderness, then the very presence of the tourist makes such experiences problematic.

The majority of tourists, however, defined authentic Aboriginal culture as contemporary culture of Aboriginal people. As a result, these tourists viewed an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience as being able to gain an insight into the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people. Similar to employees, tourists explained that traditional Aboriginal culture, completely untouched by Western influences, does not exist these days and therefore experiencing authentic Aboriginal culture in this sense is not possible anymore. Furthermore, the impact Western societies had on traditional Aboriginal people was described in a negative way. For example:

“Authentic is the lifestyle they are living today. So what you see today I suppose is authentic. It depends on how, it’s subjective. Maybe some people expect a 100% a hunter-gatherer society, I don’t think they virtually nowadays exist anywhere. So I think what you see today is probably the authentic community of today.” [TT4]

“How they earn their living? How they occupy themselves? Contemporary lifestyle.” [TT2]

“Yes, there is going to be some authenticity but you never going to get it. More in the way that the people are today. Unless you go somewhere they haven’t met real white people before, you never going to have full authenticity because there is no such thing anymore. Because the white people polluted the lives of the Aboriginal people.” [TT20]

Tourists’ desire to experience and learn about authentic contemporary Aboriginal lifestyle is a finding supported by previous studies (ATC 2003; Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000; McIntosh 2004; Notzke 1999; Picher 1999; Ryan and Huyton 2000). For instance, McIntosh (2004) proposed that the majority of tourists expressed an interest in learning about the difference between traditional and contemporary Maori lifestyles. Most of the tourists also rated the importance of seeing how Maori people live in everyday life as very or quite important. Likewise, a study investigating trends in Indigenous tourism development in Canada’s western Arctic region found that 77% of tourists wanted to find out more about Aboriginal people’s everyday life (Notzke 1999:71). Thus, according to Notzke (1999), the
desire of tourists to learn about people’s daily lives from the Aboriginal people themselves seemed to constitute an important measure of the quality of an Aboriginal tourism experience. In addition, Ryan and Huyton (2000) reported that anecdotal evidence provided by tour operators working in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park indicates that much tourist questioning about Aboriginal lifestyles is not related to their historic culture but instead to their current modes of life, such as what their communities are like, their education etc.

Furthermore, this finding corresponds with research into tourists’ demand of and interest in Aboriginal tourism in Australia, which found a strong interest among visitors in the contemporary Aboriginal culture, lifestyle and current issues Aboriginal people are facing. Whilst correct interpretation of traditional Aboriginal culture was important to international visitors, it was also suggested that Aboriginal products should not be merely restricted to traditional aspects of Aboriginal culture (Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000). Similarly, research undertaken by the ATC (2003) showed that desired experiences by experienced visitors included the opportunity to find out how Aboriginal people are living today. In addition, approximately 90% of both international and domestic visitors to Australia who did not have an Aboriginal experience in 2005 indicated that for future trips they would be interested in learning how Aboriginal communities live (TRA 2006:1).

Closely related to tourists’ perceptions of authentic contemporary Aboriginal culture was the desire expressed by a number of visitors to visit an Aboriginal community. It corresponds with previous findings (McIntosh 2004; Pitcher 1999), whereby visitors preferred to experience Indigenous culture by visiting an Indigenous community or village in order to see “the good and the bad of Aboriginal living conditions today” (Pitcher 1999:248) (see also discussion under 5.5.1 Visiting a ‘Real’ Aboriginal Working Community, p. 189).

Among tourists who viewed authenticity in a contemporary way, time was identified as a key determinant for experiencing authentic Aboriginal culture. This corresponds to a previous study which found that the majority of mass ecotourists who were visiting southern Thailand believed that the short duration of their holiday essentially
precluded them from experiencing the ‘real’ Thailand. Thus, the length of time spent in Thailand was identified by this tourist group as the variable directly linked to gaining an authentic experience (Kontogeorgopoulos 2003).

Similarly, tourists of this study emphasised that the amount of time spent with Aboriginal people influences the possible degree of authenticity that tourists can experience. Visitors acknowledged that they are tourists and therefore cannot expect to be fully immersed in Aboriginal culture and lifestyle. Some tourists suggested that the longer the visit, the more authentic it would become. It was noted by some visitors that a one-day Aboriginal cultural tour is limited in time and can therefore only provide a ‘taste’ or insight into what contemporary Aboriginal life is about. This ‘taste’ is the amount of authenticity that tourists are able to experience in such a short period of time. Accordingly, it was suggested that staying with an Aboriginal family in their community for a longer period of time would increase the degree of authenticity. Several tourists noted that:

“Authentic would be maybe stay for a couple of days and stay with a family here. This is as authentic as it can be.” [TT23]

“My idea would be to come here and just sit down and chat to them. But then obviously they have their own life to go on with. It is only a one-day tour.” [TT30]

“It is giving us a taste of what it is all about. It is taking us into a culture that we know nothing about and giving us a taste of it. We can’t truly know what it is like to be a Tiwi Islander, but we can have some idea from what we were shown”. [TT19]

“I think that is what we can get as a tourist. We come up for one day it is OK.” [TT11]

“From what I feel, I would say no, you can hardly get authenticity as a tourist. You would have to live perhaps a little bit longer in such an Aboriginal community. I don’t think you can find that as a one-day tourist, or even in two or three days, I don’t think so. It is nice to see something like that, there are certainly a few conclusions you can draw, but authentic, I don’t think so.” [MT13]

“The only way you can get an authentic one would be to go and live with them in their base camp or whatever. But this is the best you can get when you are trying to have a peek at their life.” [AT3]

These comments are congruent with the view of an Aboriginal employee who explained that Aboriginal people are only able to provide tourists with a small insight
into their culture in such a short period of time available. Similarly, one non-Aboriginal employee of Tiwi Tours emphasised that the time is too short on a cultural tour to fully comprehend the way of life of Tiwi people:

“X is saying what we want to do to answer these questions for those people is to give them an insight into as broader range as we can. X is saying trying to cover the basics in such a short amount of time… X is saying that we realise that there are people who come here those tourists they want to ask a lot of questions because they want to learn so much in such a short amount of time…” [AE4]

“For someone on a day tour or two-day tour to develop a good understanding of what Tiwi life is like is just a sheer impossibility.” [TE4]

The above remarks indicate that whilst tourists seek meaningful experiences, they also understand the nature of the tourism industry and do not expect to be fully immersed in contemporary Aboriginal lifestyle in the short time a one-day tour offers. Correspondingly, Brown (1996) argued that the tour itself often exposes the attractions to be inauthentic since they are timetabled and specifically staged for external visitors. Likewise, Smith and Duffy (2003) pointed out that the tourist experience itself is highly structured, which is evident by the scheduling, routeing, and signposting of attractions. As a result, the tourism industry shapes and defines the authentic/inauthentic dichotomy. For instance, an independent traveller who chooses the pace and direction of his ‘more authentic’ local experience is still reliant to some extent on travel literature and tour guiding services (Smith and Duffy 2003).

Furthermore, while these tourists did not expect to be fully immersed in the current lifestyle of Aboriginal people, it appears that they were content with and even preferred the brief experience they gained on the tour. This is comparable to the suggestion made by McKercher and Du Cros (2002) that cultural tourism consumption experiences are predominantly based on convenience and ease of access. It is therefore doubtful, as McIntosh (2004) emphasised, whether tourists really want dedicated reality or rather prefer a negotiated experience of the host culture. In fact, this finding provides further support for the suggestion made by McIntosh (2004) that visitors’ preferences for brief rather than immersed experiences of Maori culture indicate tourists’ desires for gazing on Indigenous culture within a generalist and rather superficial nature of consumption. However, it also needs to be highlighted that these experiences were also sought within a context that was
perceived to be authentic, interactive and personally meaningful (McIntosh 2004). Accordingly, Ryan and Huyton (2000) proposed that tourists should not be regarded as ‘amateur anthropologists’ who are seeking a detailed understanding of Aboriginal peoples and their culture.

How tourists viewed authentic Aboriginal culture can be summarised and illustrated by using a diagram (see figure 5.2). The views of participants are demonstrated by using a continuum of how Aboriginal culture progressed through time as compared to its authenticity. Thus, the two opposite poles of the continuum represent the traditional culture of Aboriginal people in the past and their contemporary culture in the present. The colonisation of Australia is recognised as the start of a new period for Aboriginal people, which introduced significant change to Aboriginal cultures. With this change authentic Aboriginal culture can be divided into ‘traditional authenticity’ reflecting the past, and ‘contemporary authenticity’. It may be argued that contemporary authenticity is progressively evolving since the influence of Western society, whilst traditional authenticity is changing (some elements might be now perceived as emergent authenticity) if not parts of it fading away.

**Figure 5.2:** Tourists’ Perceptions of Authentic Aboriginal Culture

![Diagram showing the progression of Aboriginal culture through time](image-url)
5.5.3.3 What is Authentic Contemporary Aboriginal Culture?

With the majority of tourists interpreting authentic Aboriginal culture within its contemporary nature, it is important to clarify how tourists define the contemporary aspect of Aboriginal culture. A number of tourists explained that contemporary culture consists of both, the past traditions and customs as well as the new and modern way of life influenced by Western cultures. It was stressed that contemporary Aboriginal culture comprises an amalgamation of both the traditional and modern culture. As such, contemporary culture cannot be understood without referring to traditional culture and Aboriginal history. Comments included:

“I expect contemporary to be a mix of old and new and how the two are living together.” [TT2]

“I think they are integrating their own culture, integrating it in the Western culture quite well, because they are making a living, they need to do that, I think it’s good.” [TT4]

“In my opinion you can’t separate one thing from the other. To understand minority society it is important to see how they manage in the present, you need to ask how they adapt, not to assimilate.” [TT26]

“I mean you can’t understand the contemporary culture if you don’t have a little idea of what was in the past. And I think that the Tiwi people, even though Catholics came and the mission was here, they have understood to take the good parts from both. But I think that the Tiwi people have sort of put their own culture on top of what they were given. And then try to make the best out of that. It is a good sign with that the culture actually functions with the old and also what they have made out of it living here now.” [TT27]

Consequently, the majority of tourists expected to learn about traditional Aboriginal culture as well as their contemporary lifestyle. Tourists also showed a fascination and great interest in the process of Aboriginal culture evolving from traditional to modern. In particular, most tourists were interested in how Aboriginal people were able to integrate both cultures, the Western and traditional Aboriginal culture, into their current lifestyle and how they are coping with these changes. Several tourists stated:

“I am interested in the traditional but how it transcribed into their current living. I think a lot of them are trying to maintain their early culture, but I think they are having some difficulty. I am interested in how they move from their old traditional or how they move back from their current situation back into their old traditional...How
they are adapting their early culture to today’s life and community such as this.” [MT4]

“But there was one or two brief hints what was said about present situation and how things have changed. Yes, I would like to know more about that, because one likes to know about how things were fifty years ago or hundred years ago, or a thousand years ago, but in a sense it is more meaningful if one can put it in the context of what’s there today, what stayed the same and what has changed. It would be interesting to know for instance, not only how people’s living conditions and health and so on has changed but also how much living reality all the traditions and stories have. Whether they are still actually something, which parents tell their children or whether it is just something that it is told to tourists. Personally I would have liked to know more about their present situation, but without doing it in ways that could be rude and humiliating...Personally I would have liked a bit more information how things have changed. What we were told was a little bit brief and superficial and little bit more I would have welcomed.” [AT11]

“I like learning about the traditional, but it is nice to see the contemporary and to see how they have gone what we would have called stone age, how they were living in stone age through to working with Western civilisation I suppose, within three or four generations. Whereas we have done it over thousands of years. So it is nice to see how they live now as well, and how they work that and still work with traditions and using modern houses.” [TT30]

“I am interested in what their outcomes are for them now. But I am very interested in what their traditional life was... And then from a sociological perspective to see what is happening to them now. How they live now and I suppose what Western culture has brought, the good and the bad.” [TT15]

Tourists’ perceptions of authentic contemporary Aboriginal culture can be summarised by using a simple diagram (see figure 5.3). Contemporary Aboriginal culture is depicted as a circle which contains an inner core, representing traditional Aboriginal culture. This second enclosed circle is drawn with broken lines, which illustrates how traditional culture has been integrated together with modern Western culture into today’s contemporary culture. Consequently, traditional culture still influences contemporary Aboriginal way of life. Contemporary Aboriginal culture therefore comprises a mixture of traditional Aboriginal culture and aspects that were adopted from modern Western culture.
5.5.4 Concern for Keeping Traditional Culture Strong

Explaining what their views are on an authentic experience, several tourists expressed their concerns in regard to Aboriginal people keeping their traditional culture alive. A number of tourists wanted to see that the Aboriginal people were still maintaining their cultural traditions:

“...that sort of things were important to us, that at least someone is trying to keep the culture going a little bit.” [MT17]

“It concerns me as it concerns a lot of people is that some Aboriginal people are losing their culture. But something like this, what I have seen so far today, with the Tiwi Island people, they are holding on very tightly to their culture.” [TT19]

“I was hoping that their culture would be still strong and that there wasn’t too much influence.” [TT16]

“It’s nice to see how they live today, but it would be nice if, I suppose, that you can see that they are still maintaining their stories, theme dancing and some or all of their rituals and all of their language. He said that the children learn explicitly Tiwi for the first I think four years of schooling.” [TT4]

Similarly, another tourist wanted to witness in person that Aboriginal people were still holding on to these cultural ways of finding and preparing bush food. This was confirmed to the tourist when observing that Aboriginal children on the bush walk were picking up fruits and eating them. According to the tourist, this was very authentic:
“The kids were eating the food that was nice to see. The little kids picking up that food that it says they eat. And some of the other culture thing we have been into it, they say that they just go to the bush, pick up the food and eat it. And that’s what the children were doing, so that was really good. That was very authentic. You see it on the film and they say that they do it, but you know they are not going to get all their diet from the bush food that’s for sure.” [MT18]

One non-Aboriginal female employee of Tiwi Tours also noticed that in particular non-Aboriginal Australians were concerned about Aboriginal people keeping their traditional culture alive, which is noticeable in the way they ask questions during the tour. She stated that:

“I think they are concerned about that too. Just like the Tiwi I think a lot of non-Indigenous Australians recognise the problem that Indigenous communities have of keeping their cultures strong. And you can tell by the way some people ask questions, that they are concerned about that.” [TE1]

However, at the same time, tourists showed an understanding as to why Aboriginal people would abandon traditional aspects of their lives and instead adopt modern Western features. This was attributed to the necessity to adapt to contemporary Western lifestyle as well as to the ease of the modern as compared to the traditional Aboriginal way of life. The two tourists discussed this by stating:

“I was just interested talking to X before, saying that this will be the first time that they have school holidays and he won’t be able to take his son out to the bush because that’s what he normally does on the school holidays. But now he has got a job. So he can’t do that and that’s what is going to happen, isn’t it? People are going to move more away from that authentic lifestyle to survive. Because Indigenous people can’t survive really well in a white world if they don’t pick up contemporary things as well.” [TT20]

“But naturally for them too, the white men’s life is easier, to go to the shop and buy stuff rather than spend all day looking for your groceries, it is just common sense.” [MT17]

It may be suggested that the comments made by tourists, which highlight their concerns for Aboriginal traditional culture being kept alive and strong within Aboriginal contemporary society, reflect not only concern but also regret for a culture that has been severely impacted upon by white people in the past. As Bruner (1991:246) argued, tourists long for something that has been altered and destroyed by previous generations of Western people, which he called “tourist nostalgia”. Bruner
adopted this term from Rosaldo (1989), who introduced the notion of “imperialist nostalgia”, which he referred to as the regret and desire people express for all that has been destroyed through colonialism or industrialisation. A sense of this kind of regret was illustrated by two female tourists, whereby one described the loss of traditional skills as tragic and the other viewed the impact of white people upon Aboriginal people as having ‘polluted’ their lives. The tourists pointed out:

“I suppose it is more the traditional and I think it is tragic that their skills are being lost and their natural diet being lost…I think as I said it is tragic that the skills are being lost. Sundays they hunt and gather here. You know it used to be what they did all the time.” [TT15]

“…but unless you go somewhere they haven’t met real white people before, you never going to have full authenticity because there is no such thing anymore. Because the white people polluted the lives of the Aboriginal people.” [TT20]

5.6 Aboriginal Arts and Crafts

For several tourists who participated in Tiwi Tours, an authentic experience was associated with having the opportunity to see and/or purchase authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts. Two tourists from Tiwi Tours identified an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience as being able to buy original and authentic Tiwi artworks such as paintings made by local artists. Here, the emphasis lay on acquiring a painting that is from the Tiwi Islands – an original that is guaranteed to be authentic and is different to other mainland Aboriginal artefacts. The two tourists explained:

“Yes, because of the art and the things I am buying it has to be authentic or I won’t get it. Tiwi Islands are having completely different arts than pretty much any other Aboriginal culture. It has to be completely authentic for me. I did end up buying a piece of art here. It is authentic and it is from here and it was great and I had to get it because it was authentic. I wouldn’t have bought Tiwi art from anywhere else but from here because you just can’t guarantee it.” [TT30]

“Yes it was. Original paintings, because we have been told there are bogus paintings around and things like that. It was explained to us how to detect an original.” [TT13]

These findings coincide strongly with earlier studies on how tourists define craft authenticity (Littrell at al. 1993; Revilla and Dodd 2003). It was found that most tourists associate the authenticity of a craft with its uniqueness and originality
(Littrell et al. 1993) and its difficulty to obtain (Revilla and Dodd 2003). For some tourists the uniqueness of a craft item is reflected in the product being rare, different, unusual and not commonly available. This corresponds with the above comment, where the uniqueness of Tiwi art is emphasised because of its distinctiveness to any other mainland Aboriginal arts and crafts forms and designs.

Another female tourist who participated in Tiwi Tours mentioned several criteria that in her view determine the authenticity of a product:

“I was keen to see proper Aboriginal artwork rather than the mass-produced touristy stuff that you find in the shops around Darwin. I wanted to see authentic design and exactly how they do it. I wanted to know that they are using the ochre and not just the coloured paints for pretty pictures.” [TT18]

Thus, this tourist perceived a product as authentic if it conformed to four criteria. First, the tourist made a clear distinction between ‘proper’ Aboriginal artwork and ‘mass-produced touristy stuff’. This implies that a product in order to be authentic and ‘proper’ needs to be derived from a local small-scale production, which therefore seems to reduce the ‘touristy’ factor. As a result, artworks that can be found in a popular tourist destination such as Darwin are not considered as unique since they are perceived as ‘mass-produced’ items that were solely made for the tourist market. Here, the tourist differentiates herself from other ‘common tourists’ who only see touristy stuff in town, essentially the end product of mass production. This finding concurs with an earlier study (Littrell et al. 1993) on how tourists define craft authenticity. Similar to this research, the craft’s uniqueness and originality were found to be important factors in judging the authenticity of the product. Hence, the mode of production was related to the definition of uniqueness, where crafts that were “mass produced, made in a factory or assembly line, or made from a kit” (1993:205) were not considered as authentic. According to Asplet and Cooper (2000), such items are frequently regarded by tourists as artificial and plastic.

Second, the tourist stressed the importance of witnessing how the artwork is made. The tourist wanted to be present and experience in person how the artwork is made by a local artist. This corresponds with three themes identified by Littrell at al. (1993), which included the criteria of workmanship qualities, the characteristics of
the craftsperson and the shopping experience of the tourist. When defining the workmanship qualities, tourists identified the criterion of ‘handmade’ as fundamental to the authenticity of a craft product. In order to be judged authentic, the item had to be handmade by a local artist, which as Errington (1998) argued transfers the authenticity of the object to the authentic native person. Verification of authenticity was also generated by the shopping experience itself, such as being able to meet the artist and watch how the craft is produced. This finding also corresponds with a study undertaken by AGB McNair (1996), which suggested that visitors in the Northern Territory showed a high interest in watching how the art is made, which allowed them to interact with the artist and ask questions about the process. This is turn enhanced the authenticity of the object as well as its value.

Interestingly, this tourist did not emphasise that she intended to purchase an authentic Tiwi product. Contrary to other studies (Gordon 1986; Littrell 1990; Littrell et al. 1993; Littrell 1994), which suggested that tourists place an importance on the actual purchase of an authentic Indigenous handicraft product that serves as a tangible reminder of their holiday, the associated meaning of the handmade process itself created for some tourists an authentic cultural experience. Hence, the perception of authenticity is linked to being able to observe the artist and ask questions about the traditional techniques and methods used by local Aboriginal people.

Similarly, two other tourists mentioned how they enjoyed the interaction with the Aboriginal artist. One female tourist participating in Anangu Tours, who also took part in an Aboriginal dot painting workshop provided by the same tour company, emphasised the importance of watching how artists work on their paintings and how they explained the different symbolic meanings and their origins inherent in their artwork. For this tourist, such an encounter provided her with a learning experience, an interesting small insight into Aboriginal culture:

“And I had learnt a little bit from an Aboriginal artist in Melbourne, I have seen him working with some students, telling them the different symbolic meanings and then they did some paintings, and I thought that was really interesting. So I thought that would be interesting to sample a little bit of the Aboriginal culture…I really liked the introduction that we had we saw how to make the different symbols and how they were originally made in the sand.” [AT12]
“Just inside there a minute ago a gentleman invited us over to have a look at his artwork and he explained it all, that this was his totem and what it meant, how it came about, why he was painting the parts that he was painting, why he wasn’t.” [TT3]

Another tourist at Manyallaluk was disappointed that Aboriginal women did not use a kangaroo bone as their needle when demonstrating the basket weaving technique. The male tourist noted that the experience would have been more authentic if Aboriginal people predominantly used traditional techniques when showing skills to tourists. Whilst the tourist showed an understanding as to why Aboriginal people would use modern tools, in his opinion the degree of authenticity would have been increased if Manyallaluk tour guides did not use any modern equipment. Nevertheless, the tourist emphasised that he appreciated to observe the actual basket weaving technique. He explained that:

“That was probably 80% authentic; the 20% is using modern cultures to enhancing their current Aboriginal techniques. The 80% is still there. The 80% in terms of the basket weaving. The needle was current white man technology than basic Aboriginal technique. If they used a kangaroo bone as their needle, that would have made it really authentic as such. But didn’t stop of appreciation of the technique they used to do the basket weaving. More convenient but works well.” [MT6]

Third, the design itself needs to be ‘authentic’ or in other words contain the traditional Tiwi styles. This corresponds to the findings of Littrell et al. (1993) where tourists associated the aesthetics of past eras with the authenticity of the product. The style used had to be native to that region, relating to the culture and history of the local people. Finally, the fourth criterion described by the tourist is related to the use of traditional colours, such as ochre, which puts the final stamp of authenticity on the product. This comment parallels the results presented by Littrell et al. (1993), where tourists regarded the use of Indigenous materials, such as local clays or grasses, as contributing to the product’s authenticity.

Whilst only a small amount of data is provided to draw conclusions from, it may be argued that the comments discussed above can be situated within Cohen’s (1993a) liberal approach, to explain how tourists evaluated the authenticity of arts. The findings did not indicate that tourists were concerned that some Tiwi products, such as locally produced pottery, were innovative or of contemporary nature. Their focus
was rather on the manufacturing process, with an emphasis on the traditional skills of local Aboriginal artists.

5.7 Contrived Experience: Enjoyment Factor

5.7.1 Dance Performance

Three tourists taking part in Tiwi Tours used the term authenticity to describe their perceptions of the dance performance. Two of the tourists criticised the dance performance since in their opinion it did not offer enough authenticity. One tourist commented:

“Even if they put on a pretend one for the tourists, maybe a little bit more effort could have gone into it. Like the way they dressed. You know they put the face paint on, but the guide was still in his guide uniform, he was still dressed up in Western clothes. Even if it was a contrived ceremony, maybe it could have been a little bit more authentic - authentically contrived.” [TT8]

This comment shows that the tourist recognised the dance performance as being contrived and acted, but nevertheless demanded more authenticity being incorporated in the performance in order to make it ‘authentically contrived’. Whilst the tourist acknowledged that a dance performance is contrived in the first place, further use of traditional attire would have increased its authenticity. Accordingly, the face paint used by the performers indicated some authenticity to the tourist, however, more effort was required to achieve more authenticity. The fact that the Aboriginal performer was still dressed in his guide uniform, wearing Western clothes instead of traditional attire, did clearly not match the tourist’s expectations of an Aboriginal dance performance. Hence, the tourist evaluated the authenticity of the dance performance according to the visual presentation, in particular, the performers’ appearance as opposed to the content, style and skills used by the dancers. The second tourist addressed the same disappointment in regard to the clothing used by the Aboriginal tour guides. The female tourist stated:

“Probably would have been better still perhaps if they had been in more traditional clothes as opposed to wearing those normal shirts, skirts and tops like that. It would have been a little bit more authentic I suppose if they had been a little bit more natural but not too natural. I just watched a couple of other dances couple of years
ago. They were wearing Reebok shoes and watches and shorts and that. And to me it didn’t appear true, just watching them and seeing the modern gear on them as opposed to what is traditional. I have seen a couple of other Aboriginal dances where they were able to do it in their full artwork or paint and I think that’s a lot more authentic and people would appreciate more. Even though I was pleased with what they did this morning, but I mean it could have been better.” [TT29]

Concurrent to the previous account, this tourist would have also liked to see more traditional clothing as opposed to their normal Western attire. According to the tourist, an authentic and therefore true Aboriginal dance performance is linked to the performers being ‘a little bit more natural but not too natural’. Being natural in this sense is judged by the degree of modern versus traditional clothes worn. Conversely, being too natural might result in being too contrived and artificial. Furthermore, the comment indicates that the tourist seems to hold a preconceived notion as to what ‘traditional’ constitutes. This notion appears to primarily stem from prior observations of Indigenous dance performances, where dancers were performing in full body paint. Such performances offered more traditional authenticity and appeared more true to the tourist. In general, it seems that an increase in perceived authenticity seems to reflect an increase in appreciation as well as satisfaction by the viewer.

By contrast, when Aboriginal employees were questioned whether they perceived the dancing as authentic, it seemed that for the majority of Aboriginal employees the question of authenticity was something they had never considered since in their view their dances have not changed. Aboriginal employees emphasised the importance of the dance within their culture since it is part of their identity and their dreaming. As two Tiwi employees noted:

“The dancing is also important because that’s our identity and our dreaming.” [TE2]

“The traditional dance is part of our Tiwi culture, it has always been there, it never changes...We do a lot of dancing at ceremonies, Kalama ceremonies, or when a person dies as well, we do a traditional dance. It’s our part of the job to show the tourists what it is all about, the totem dance and tell them the background of the totem dance.” [TE7]

Explaining the background and origins of the totem dance as well as demonstrating to tourists what some of the dances look like seemed therefore more important to
Tiwi employees than the actual way the performers were dressed during the dance. For instance, in the museum the Tiwi tour guide explains by pointing to illustrations that the Tiwi dreaming dance comes from the father. For example, if the father is crocodile (yirrikipayi) then all his children inherit the same crocodile dance performed by their father.

The different perceptions held by tourists and Tiwi employees towards the dance ceremony correspond to Cohen’s (1988a) suggestion that members of the host community might perceive commoditisation and the impact of Westernisation differently than the external audience. Accordingly, Tiwi employees did not seem concerned about the Western clothes being part of the dance presentation, which using Cohen’s (1988a:382) terminology appears to reflect Tiwi people’s view on change as simply a ‘continuity between the old and the new situation’. This is further demonstrated by a comment made by a female Tiwi employee, who explained that whilst the performers use the face paint, uniforms are not considered a problem during the presentation. However, she also believed that performing in front of a larger audience would justify the change of clothes:

“With uniforms it is OK as long as they have the face paint up. When there is a big mob tourists yes they should go and change. And when they go they come back in the uniform. When there are only couple of tourists, we don’t mind if they are in uniform.” [TE8]

A non-Aboriginal employee explained that the dance performance for the tourists is in fact the same dancing as Tiwi people do at other private ceremonies in their lives outside tourism. According to this employee, the dancing is not intended to satisfy tourists’ demand and taste. It is rather a genuine and casual demonstration of what Tiwi dance looks and feels like:

“The way the ladies and the guys dance is how they dance for ceremonies today. And so what you see is what you would see at any ceremony, painted up the faces, armband etc. and the dances that they do at ceremonies. At the morning tea when the ladies finish the dancing they bless everybody and they make a smoking fire, using the leaves of the iron tree, which they use at ceremonies. And then they do a farewell dance and bless you, which is the catholic side of it. But this is what they do, it is not ‘Let’s do this, this looks more interesting than that’. This is it, this is what they do. You would see that at so many other ceremonies, funeral ceremonies etc. They dance for almost any occasion. But what you see is exactly what they do in their normal lives.” [TE4]
The comments made by two other non-Aboriginal employees further reinforce the above statement. One female employee viewed the dance performance as an important part of the tour, since the smoking ceremony, the singing and the dancing brings all tourists closer to the Tiwi people. In her opinion, the dancing ceremony is not a show and is not staged; it is rather an activity in which everyone is involved:

“Yes, because it is combined with the singing, because it is combined with the smoking ceremony. I think it’s very important because these are all special things that the Tiwi are showing to tourists. It’s not a show, each day it’s special. The tourists realise that they are drawn into it. I guess it’s not just the dancing because that all happens in conjunction with the smoking ceremony, the singing and the dancing. The smoking ceremony specifically draws the tourists in to a closer circle really with the Tiwi people, through touch, through the whole meaning of the smoking ceremony. This sort of driving everyone together and then comes the songs and the dancing. And I think that brings the tourists that step closer to the Tiwi people, it’s not like a show, no one is on stage, just sort of doing it all together. And I think that has a really big impact on the tourists.” [TE1]

In addition, the same employee commented that the dancing is authentic in a contemporary sense. Since she had personally experienced Tiwi funerals and weddings, she noted that the dancing is very similar. Whilst in the past the dancers wore less, these days Tiwi people prefer wearing more clothes. She stated that:

“The other times that I have been around dancing and singing and the dancing what the tourists are seeing has been at weddings here and at funerals here and it’s pretty much the same. I mean it’s always going to be different at a funeral, because there are a lot of emotions involved. But physically what the tourists are watching and what they are hearing, except for the fact that there are tourists sitting in the chairs and watching them, it’s very similar to what happens in reality here...But I think what they are doing with the dancing in my experience is very much an authentic thing in a cultural sense. Sixty years ago the men would be in marlgars and the women would be topless. Well, we don’t do that because the women prefer not to go topless here now and they don’t in town. So it is authentic in a contemporary sense.” [TE1]

Likewise, the second non-Aboriginal employee explained that Tiwi people would not want to show much of their bodies to a tourist audience. Wearing nargas and dancing in full body paint is considered a very private cultural side of Tiwi life, which they prefer not to share with tourists. Due to time constraints Tiwi people on the tour only paint their faces for tourists. As the employee commented:
“I mean it is actually quite difficult for them to expose that much of their body. One thing that has changed with their culture, how much they expose their bodies. Most of them would feel quite timid about having to put on a narga and dance in front of them, because that’s their very private cultural side of life. Where here for most of them to wear a uniform, they are proud of it and quite happy to stand up in front of the tourists and dance...Traditional would be just a narga or linen cloth, a full ceremony they would actually paint all their torso as well as their face. For sake of convenience here we only paint faces. And time, there is a time constraint on that. So they only paint their faces. It takes a couple of hours to do that. But even nargas, you got to realise that nargas were introduced after the mission came here. Prior to that they were naked. So their actual traditional dance is completely naked. No one is going to do that. It all goes in steps, I mean how far do you want to go?” [TE5]

Here, the employee questioned as to how far a dance performance has to go back in time to be considered truly traditional. According to the employee, nargas were introduced with the mission on Tiwi Islands, whereas prior to mission times and Western influences Tiwi original ‘traditional’ dances were performed without any clothes. However, these days Tiwi people do not dance completely undressed only using full body paint but rather prefer wearing loincloths. This argument is closely aligned with the constructivist perspective, which views culture as alive and emergent (Cohen 1988a; Graham 2001; Turner and Bruner 1986). Since cultures are continually inventing and reinventing themselves, it is difficult to assign an absolute point of origin to customs and traditions (Wang 1999). As advocates of the ‘invention of culture’ tradition (Hanson 1989; Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983; Wagner 1975) would argue, Tiwi culture itself underwent and still goes through a continuous process of cultural development, where traditions such as the dance performance do not necessarily represent a stable and static Tiwi cultural heritage.

Furthermore, in this context it may be argued that this can be viewed as an example of Cohen’s (1988a) notion of emergent authenticity. Tiwi people performing a dance only in full body painting would have been at one point of time, such as during early missionaries’ times, considered authentic. Over time the introduction of Western clothes to the Tiwi Islands meant that the use of loincloths gradually emerged, in both the Westerners’ and Tiwi people’s eyes, as a part of Tiwi culture and was therefore perceived as authentic. This has moved a step further, by Tiwi people wearing now normal modern clothing during dance performances for tourists. Whereas some tourists perceive this as less authentic since it does not reflect what they believe the ‘traditional’ Tiwi custom, other tourists as well as Tiwi and non-
Aboriginal employees recognise it as authentic in the sense that it is evidence of Tiwi people’s contemporary lifestyle. For instance, one male tourist from Tiwi Tours explained that if performers used traditional clothes it would feel as though they are only pretending to be traditional:

“*They were performing the traditional dances in Western clothes. On the one hand I felt like ‘Oh, this may be a little bit disturbing’. On the other hand when you go to other places and they are wearing their traditional clothes, sometimes I feel they are pretending to perform something traditional for the tourist. So here even though they are wearing their Western clothes, for me it’s OK. You have to also accept how they are living now.*” [TT26]

Similarly, another male tourist explained that he did not expect to be part of a real ceremony with dances. Nevertheless, this tourist performance provided him with an insight as to how it looks like today:

“I couldn’t expect a big dance performance here like these three-day dances. But it gave a little insight and a little idea of how it looks and may be done even nowadays. I didn’t expect more.” [TT12]

In contrast, one female tourist from Tiwi Tours emphasised that a presentation can be used to illustrate a traditional culture or lifestyle as it was at a ‘certain time’, which in turn makes it an ‘authentic re-presentation’ of culture. Providing an example from another Indigenous tourism experience, the tourist explained how she enjoyed watching an Indigenous greeting by members of a native village. This is detailed by the tourist, who explained:

“I would like it to but I understand it can’t always. For example, in one of the villages we have been, they greeted us in fifty canoes surrounded us and were screaming with spears and yelling but I know that’s not the way they live their lives. But it gave us an idea of what life to them was like at a certain given point, and so in that way I thought this is authentic. It’s not authentic as it’s not the way they live now, but I still like this kind of things and I liked the dancing that they did. Whether they do it all the time I don’t know, but I enjoyed seeing that.” [TT25]

Compared to the previous two tourists [TT8 and TT29], who seemed to interpret traditional Tiwi culture as static, containing customs that can be assigned to a fixed point of origin, this tourist viewed Tiwi culture in a fluid and flexible way, which becomes evident in her describing that it represented life at a ‘certain given point’. Moreover, the tourist stated that she is aware that such presentations are not authentic.
in terms of their local contemporary lifestyle, however, she enjoys watching them. Thus, this comment indicates that some visitors want to see an authentically contrived or staged cultural presentation since they regard it as an opportunity and occasion of entertainment and enjoyment.

This corresponds to the concept of the postmodern tourist who seeks enjoyment and playfully participates in the game of tourism (Cohen 2002; Feifer 1985; Rojek 1993; Urry 2002). Indeed, it may be argued that all three tourists who commented on the authenticity of the dance performance accept that the performance is contrived. However, whilst the third tourist [TT25] playfully engages in an ‘as if’ game, pretending that the experience is authentic, the other two tourists [TT8 and TT29] are dissatisfied about the lack of a more ‘authentically contrived’ experience. Brown (1996) described such tourists as hedonistic but who are also subject to the authentic/inauthentic dialectic. According to Brown (1996), tourists who engage in a quest for the authentic Self, by seeking out the ‘good time’, may gain authentic pleasures from the inauthenticity of a tourist attraction:

The sight of jeans and trainers protruding below the ‘traditional’ costume reinforces his view that he is participating in a game: life as carnival, life as circus – never mind that it’s an act, so long as it’s a good one; life as a wrestling match, which everyone knows is fixed and need not pretend is fair but can enjoy all the more as a spectacle. Here is another instance of the genuine fake in which, in this case, the tourist seeks out the inauthentic Other in the quest for the authentic Self.

Brown (1996:38)

Brown further points to the problematic of seeking the ‘forced good time’, which can become so inauthentic that it is rejected. This is exemplified in the comments of the first two tourists, where Brown (1996:38) would argue that “…the sight of the jeans leads the tourist to reject the attraction as too staged and to seek out another that is more authentic”.

-226-
5.8 Theoretical Perspectives of Authenticity Shared by Respondents

Chapter 3 identified two main theoretical differentiations of the authenticity concept associated with tourist experiences: object authenticity and existential authenticity. In particular, the discussion of object authenticity concentrated on its three perspectives, which included objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism. Furthermore, existential authenticity was examined by discussing two approaches to this concept. Firstly, Wang’s (1999) conceptualisation of existential authenticity was outlined including the author’s suggestion of its two different dimensions, consisting of intra-personal and inter-personal authenticity. Secondly, Steiner and Reisinger’s (2006) approach of employing Heidegger’s conceptual framework to existential authenticity was presented.

One of the research objectives of this study was to investigate whether any of these theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by tourists, tour operators and their employees. Whilst the discussion of this chapter has identified that some of the theoretical perspectives of object authenticity that were proposed by scholars are reflected in the perceptions of respondents, further comparisons and detailed examination are necessary to clarify this issue. The following section of the thesis aims to summarise and highlight relationships that were previously observed in this chapter that seem to exist in relation to how respondents, compared to scholars, construct the notion of authenticity. Concurrently, it is aimed to identify whether some theoretical perspectives are not shared by respondents and what the reason for this may be.

5.8.1 Object Authenticity

In general, the findings of this study indicate that the majority of tourists and employees employed a constructivist approach within their conceptualisation of the notion of authenticity. This seems particularly evident in respondents’ interpretations of what authentic Aboriginal culture constitutes. Most tourists and employees defined authentic Aboriginal culture as embodying the contemporary culture of Aboriginal people. Except for one tourist, all other tourists expected that Aboriginal
people would lead a modern lifestyle similar to other Western societies. Respondents therefore sought to gain an insight into the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people, which in their opinion would provide them with an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience.

Whilst some tourists and employees understood authentic Aboriginal culture in a traditional way prior to Western contact, they also acknowledged that such ‘pristine’ traditional Aboriginal culture does not exist anymore. As such, tourists were not interested in experiencing something staged and contrived where Aboriginal people pretend to live a traditional lifestyle for tourism purposes. In addition, authentic contemporary culture was believed to consist of the traditional customs as well as a new modern lifestyle influenced by Western cultures.

Thus, the results suggest that most of the respondents view culture as emergent and not static, which is the main argument of the constructivist theory. According to the constructivist perspective, traditions and customs undergo a continuous process of cultural development resulting in cultures being always alive by continually inventing and reinventing themselves (Bruner 1994; Hanson 1989; Turner and Bruner 1986). Similarly here, respondents recognised the contemporary aspect of Aboriginal culture and lifestyle, which has progressed through a process of cultural development resulting in a combination of traditional and modern Aboriginal culture. The majority of respondents therefore viewed Aboriginal culture as a living and dynamic culture, which they wanted to experience as such. This was exemplified by the desire some tourists expressed to visit the community area in order to experience everyday life in the community. Most tourists were also interested in learning how Aboriginal people were able to integrate both cultures and cope with the changes (positive or negative), which modernity has brought into their lives. Hence, tourists seemed to show a fascination in the process of Aboriginal culture evolving from traditional to contemporary.

Additionally, Cohen’s (1988a) notion of emergent authenticity was reflected in the comments of two tourists who pointed out that cultures are continuously changing, and consequently the meaning of what is authentic evolves and changes during the course of time. In this respect, the effects of globalisation on Indigenous cultures
were also emphasised by one of the tourists. Likewise, one employee from Tiwi Tours supported the originality of the dance performance by questioning how far a performance in terms of attire has to go back in time to be considered traditional and authentic. This corresponds to Bruner’s (1993) notion of original and copy, whereby each performance can be seen as an original since it is adapting to its new environment.

Whereas the constructivist view appears to be commonly shared among respondents, there is less indication that respondents shared an objectivist perspective towards the notion of authenticity. Neither Boorstin’s (1987) tourist, who seeks superficial and contrived experiences, nor the characteristics of MacCannells’s (1999) modern tourist, who embarks on the quest for authentic experiences of Otherness in other times and places, seems to be reflected among the tourists of this study. MacCannell (1999) who has viewed authenticity in a ‘primitive’ sense suggested that the modern man searches for the real lives of others due to the alienation he experiences from the modern society he lives in. However, none of the respondents of this study indicated that they felt detached from their own society or perceived their daily lives as inauthentic. Whilst some of the tourists in this study still sought to experience the real lives of Aboriginal people in the ‘back’ area, the nature of the quest for authenticity has changed. Hence, the search for authenticity is now characterised by experiencing the ‘contemporary Other’ as compared to the pristine and untouched Otherness.

Nevertheless, an objectivist point of view seemed to be inherent in the comments of several respondents, who explained that they were not able to judge whether they gained an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience since they did not have any knowledge of Aboriginal culture. These tourists were therefore looking for a reference point or an expert opinion to compare with the information provided on the tour. This corresponds to the objectivist perspective, which determines object authenticity against a fixed truth or knowable reality.

In regard to the postmodern perspective, only a small number of tourists appeared to hold attitudes similar to this view. In fact, a postmodernist approach among tourists was only observed in regard to two types of interpretations concerning the notion of
authenticity. The first involved tourists who conceived the experience of authentic Aboriginal culture in a traditional way, whilst recognising that this is not possible due to the comfort visitors demand on a tour. This corresponds to Ritzer and Liska’s (1997) characterisation of the post-tourist, who is willing to forgo an authentic experience for a comfortable, reasonably priced inauthentic experience.

The second interpretation of authenticity related to postmodernism was found among tourists who criticised the dance performance at Tiwi Tours. Several tourists believed that the performance could have been more ‘authentically contrived’ if the tour guides had used traditional attire instead of Western clothes. The comments of respondents indicated that some tourists were merely interested in the visual spectacle of the performance; they wanted to see a staged and contrived cultural presentation that portrays Aboriginal culture in a traditional sense. Whilst tourists acknowledged that the performance would be contrived and artificial, they saw it as an occasion to be entertained. Similar to the postmodern tourists, respondents wanted to playfully participate in an ‘as if’ game that provides them with enjoyment and satisfaction.

The limited number of tourists sharing a postmodern perspective may be explained by the nature of the cultural experience as well as the general motivation of the visitors. For instance, the theory of postmodernism stresses the processes of de-differentiation, whereby experiences of other cultures are now available in various contexts of everyday life (Lash and Urry 1994). Tourists, however, who want to experience ‘real’ Indigenous culture and people still need to travel to different destinations and take part in a cultural tour in order to have such an experience. This is the case since the essence of an Aboriginal cultural tour experience consists of learning about culture and often involves direct interaction with Aboriginal people. Therefore, one might argue that the motivation of tourists taking part in such tours is very different to the post-tourist whose motivation is reflected in the desire for visual spectacle, sensation and play, as well as excitement. Perhaps most importantly, the majority of respondents of this study disliked the idea of a contrived and artificial experience. In contrast, postmodern tourism is built on the commodification of tourist experiences, contrived attractions and imitations, where authenticity becomes irrelevant. Most of the respondents, however, were clearly concerned about
authenticity, which was identified as a central component of an Aboriginal cultural tour. A summary of the observed theoretical perspectives of object authenticity shared among respondents is provided in table 5.1.

5.8.2 Existential Authenticity

The findings of this study suggest that respondents generally referred to the authenticity of toured objects (object authenticity) when describing their perceptions of an authentic experience. According to Wang (1999), object authenticity is connected to the attributes of authenticity of a given site or object, whereby the recognition of the toured objects as authentic is linked to the authentic experience. Recent conceptualisations of the notion of authenticity suggested a second meaning of authenticity, which has moved to a completely subjectivised approach. Wang (1999) proposed existential authenticity to tourist experiences as an alternative to object authenticity. Existential authenticity is concerned with feelings of intra-personal and inter-personal authenticity. Here the special existential state of being is activated by the liminal process of tourist activities (Wang 1999).

The study results do not indicate that respondents were searching for their authentic selves, which Wang (1999:359) termed an “existential state of Being” triggered by certain tourist activities. For example, tourists did not describe their own feelings that were generated by the Aboriginal cultural tour experience. Respondents instead focused on the features of the tour, such as the Aboriginal tour guides and the community, as well as arts and crafts, which were connected to having an authentic experience. As such, there were also no indications for Wang’s intra-personal and inter-personal authenticity being experienced by tourists. Neither was Heidegger’s (1996) conceptual framework for existential authenticity, as suggested by Steiner and Reisinger (2006), found to be applicable to this type of tourism activity.
Table 5.1: Theoretical Perspectives of Object Authenticity Shared by Respondents

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<th>Theoretical Perspectives</th>
<th>Related Respondents’ Perspective</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructivism</strong></td>
<td>• Experience of contemporary Aboriginal culture and lifestyle</td>
<td>“How they live now in that sense, but obviously you can’t see how they lived 250 years ago, because it is not now, it is not them.” [TT7]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interest in everyday life in community area</td>
<td>“Authentic is the lifestyle they are living today...So I think what you see today is probably the authentic community of today.” [TT4]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aboriginal culture is a living and dynamic culture – not static</td>
<td>“Everything evolves and that’s the thing with globalisation.” [TT10]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultures are continuously changing</td>
<td>“…And what’s real is a good question because it has obviously changed over time...” [TT15]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impacts of globalisation on Indigenous cultures</td>
<td>“But even nargas, you got to realise that nargas were introduced after the mission came here. Prior to that they were naked...It all goes in steps, I mean how far do you want to go?” [TE5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How far does a performance has to go back in time to be considered traditional and authentic?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Process of evolving from traditional to contemporary, Integration of traditional and modern cultures?</td>
<td>“I am interested in the traditional, but how it transcribed into their current living...How they are adapting their early culture to today’s life and community such as this.” [MT4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Perspectives</td>
<td>Related Respondents’ Perspective</td>
<td>Supporting Quotes</td>
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| **Objectivism**          | Comparison of information to a reference point or an expert opinion | “...I don’t have any real references to check it. I haven’t done any research myself...” [AT18]  
“...And because of my lack of knowledge, would I know what authentic was anyway?...How can I be a judge of this.” [TT10]  
“I don’t really feel like that I have any means of judging how genuine it is...” [AT11] |
|                         | Aboriginal culture is viewed as primitive, pristine and frozen in time | “I thought they would live in some primitive houses, something like this but perhaps a little bit more primitive... Authentic means an old culture, not have changed too much.” [TT11] |
| **Postmodernism**        | Comfort for tourists precludes ‘real authenticity’ | “Well, it wasn’t ‘authentic authentic’. If they want to make it really authentic then...You have to camp out there for a couple of days, you have to go kill yourself your own kangaroo with a spear...I think if they make it that authentic, people wouldn’t do it. Because people want to be comfortable, they want their little tour bus and their breakfast in the morning and all that.” [AT20] |
|                         | Visual spectacle: interest in staged and contrived cultural presentations that portray Aboriginal cultures in a traditional sense | “...Even if it was a contrived ceremony, maybe it could have been a little bit more authentic – authentically contrived.” [TT8] |
|                         | ‘Authentically contrived’ performances provide opportunities for entertainment and enjoyment | “...It’s not authentic as it’s not the way they live now, but I still like this kind of things and I liked the dancing that they did. Whether they do it all the time I don’t know, but I enjoyed seeing that.” [TT25] |
Whilst there is no data specifically referring to existential authenticity one can nevertheless draw some conclusions from the findings. For instance, existential authenticity could have been experienced by tourists who hoped to encounter ‘the social Other’ - Aboriginal people who were keen to welcome them and share with them their culture and lifestyle. In that sense, social togetherness might be experienced by tourists and hosts alike resulting in the projection of feelings related to inter-personal authenticity. However, these are only assumptions that would require further substantiation in future research.

There could be several reasons as to why existential authenticity was not found to be experienced among respondents of this study. Similar to MacCannell, Wang (1999) argued that the authentic self emerges as an ideal in response to the existential conditions of modernity, whereby daily life is characterised as monotonous and rational. Once again, as previously mentioned, respondents did not indicate that they perceived their everyday lives as inauthentic or that they were seeking to break their daily routine through participating in a cultural tour.

5.9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present the findings and subsequently their discussion. This was achieved by incorporating the results with the literature in order to produce a basis of discussion. In particular, this chapter provided an overview of and comparison between both tourists’ and employees’ perceptions. The findings were discussed by using a thematic structure, which first outlined the tourists’ context and general perceptions of authenticity and then detailed the four main elements, which were identified to capture the salient factors contributing to the authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experience. The discussion of perceptions of authenticity therefore centred on important issues surrounding the role and background of the Aboriginal tour guide; the search by tourists for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aboriginal people; Aboriginal arts and crafts; and the contrived experience of the dance performance. This was followed by an examination as to whether the theoretical perspectives of authenticity proposed in the tourism literature were shared by tourists and employees.
The final chapter of this thesis will present the theoretical and practical implications for various stakeholder groups as an outcome of this research. It will also outline the contributions this study makes to the existing body of knowledge as well as provide suggestions for future research directions in this research area.
Chapter 6

Implications and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this thesis has been to address two main research questions: *What are the perceptions of authenticity of tourists as well as tour operators and their employees?* and *Are theoretical perspectives of the notion of authenticity shared by those stakeholders?* More specifically, the research objectives of this study were to:

1. identify tourists’ perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism;
2. identify the perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tour operators and their employees in regard to authenticity;
3. examine potential discrepancies and/or similarities between the perceptions of tour operators/employees and tourists about what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience;
4. investigate whether any of the different theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by tourists and tour operators/employees;
5. develop a conceptual framework to provide an overview of salient elements explaining the formation of perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

Chapter 5 presented the findings and discussion of this research. The perceptions of respondents as to what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience were grouped into four main elements, namely: *The Aboriginal tour guide; The search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aborigines; Aboriginal arts and crafts; and Contrived experience: Enjoyment factor.* Within each element several themes and important issues emerged that were discussed. In addition, Chapter 5 examined whether any of the theoretical perspectives of authenticity were shared by respondents.

The following part of the thesis highlights the key findings of this study before discussing their theoretical and practical implications for various stakeholder groups.
These include Aboriginal cultural tour operators, government organisations, Aboriginal tourism organisations and tourism researchers. The chapter will then set out the contributions this study makes to the existing body of knowledge and suggest future research opportunities.

6.2 Key Findings of the Study

The results of this research revealed that respondents hold multiple constructions of the notion of authenticity. In order to provide a sample that contained various visitor types and therefore reflected the diversity of tourist perspectives, the aim of the first stage of the sampling strategy was to choose three different Aboriginal tour companies. However, the results of this study did not expose any significant differences in perceptions within the three cultural tours. This is despite the fact that the tours chosen offered a variety of activities and were geographically dispersed across the Northern Territory, attracting different types of visitors. The similarities found across them indicate that perceptions of authenticity were not related to the type of tourist taking part in the tour. In other words, the findings did not reveal any correlation between tourists’ occupation, nationality or age and their perceptions of the meaning of authenticity. Although there were some perspectives of authenticity which were only applicable to one tour experience, for example the dance performance at Tiwi Tours, the themes associated with authenticity were similar across the whole sample of this study.

In general, most respondents associated an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience with a genuine experience which does not feel contrived, staged or ‘plastic’. There was general consensus among respondents that the three cultural tours succeeded in providing such a genuine experience. In contrast, a typical show experience of Indigenous cultures was perceived to be less genuine and consequently reflect less authenticity due its commercialised, touristy and staged characteristics.

It is argued that the context played an important role in how respondents constructed their notion of authenticity. As such, previous experiences, preconceived stereotypes and prior knowledge held by some respondents seemed to influence respondents’
perceptions of an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience. Hence, the findings revealed some linkages between respondents’ expectations which appeared to be based on these factors, and their subsequent perceptions of authenticity. Whilst it was not the aim of this study to investigate how visitors’ perceptions were formed, these findings nevertheless point to the importance of understanding visitors’ perceptions of authenticity within the context they emerge from.

Even though multiple views of the notion of authenticity existed, the study found that respondents’ perceptions can be grouped into four main elements which capture the salient factors contributing to the experience. The four elements were: The Aboriginal tour guide; The search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aborigines; Aboriginal arts and crafts; and Contrived experience: Enjoyment factor.

The first element consisted of the background and role of the Aboriginal tour guide, which was found to be a major factor influencing respondents’ perceptions on whether the tour was offering an authentic experience. Respondents expected to have a tour guide who is not only Aboriginal, but also a member of the particular community; a person who has grown up and has lived in that area for some time. This desired background of the Aboriginal tour guide formed the basis for further characteristics that contributed to the authenticity of the experience. For example, respondents stressed the importance of having a knowledgeable tour guide, who is able to interpret and convey cultural information in a meaningful way to tourists. Since knowledge is gained through the cultural upbringing of the person, the Aboriginal tour guide is expected to believe in and to enjoy what he is teaching. Thus, the authenticity of the experience is linked to the authenticity of the Aboriginal person. Only an ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tour guide who holds such specific traits is believed to provide tourists with an authentic experience. As a result, the desired characteristics of the Aboriginal tour guide reveal his uniqueness and clearly differentiate him from other, non-Aboriginal tour guides.

In this respect it was also important, according to some respondents, to receive information directly from a person who is a custodian of the land and stories. Respondents highlighted the significance of hearing stories from Aboriginal people who have passed on their culture and traditional stories for many years. Authenticity
was also interpreted by some respondents in terms of the ongoing cultural relationship Aboriginal people hold with their traditional land. Thus, receiving information directly from a person who is culturally attached to the land and its stories generates an important element of authenticity in the minds of some respondents.

Closely related to the previous issue is the interpretation of authenticity by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees, which revolved around the issue of authority and intellectual property. Here it was argued that authenticity is inherent in the fact that Aboriginal tour guides hold extensive knowledge about their culture that has been taught over generations. Hence, it was believed that the cultural information that Aboriginal people choose to pass on to visitors is accurate and genuine. In this respect, Aboriginal employees criticised the illegitimate use of Aboriginal intellectual property by ineligible persons commonly encountered in the tourism industry. Consequently, authenticity of an Aboriginal cultural tour is based on authorisation: whether the intellectual property presented on Aboriginal cultural tours is authenticated by the Aboriginal people/community and whether the tour guide is authorised to impart this information.

Furthermore, the role of the Aboriginal tour guide served as a determinant of the perceived authenticity of the tour experience. The findings suggested that visitors had clearly different expectations of the Aboriginal tour guide as compared to a non-Aboriginal tour guide. The Aboriginal tour guide’s role was seen as embodying both a teacher and a ‘cultural educator’, someone who was interpreting rather than simply reciting cultural information. As such, the findings suggested that tourists’ perceptions of authenticity were directly linked to the interpretative role of the Aboriginal tour guide. In this respect, tourists not only expected the tour guide to provide explanations about his culture and land, but also give examples from his own experience and tell personal stories. Thus, the role of the Aboriginal tour guide encompasses the interpretation of landscape and stories which are closely tied to his own personal background and life experience. This was further confirmed by respondents’ comments that the use of native language increased the authentic experience. Once again, this exemplifies the uniqueness of the Aboriginal tour guide,
who turns into the attraction himself and essentially becomes part of the authentic cultural experience.

Furthermore, the research findings indicated a strong linkage between perceived authenticity and the degree of interaction with Aboriginal people experienced. For the majority of respondents, authenticity was created by the opportunity to interact with an Aboriginal tour guide. The findings indicated that the interpreting function performed by the Aboriginal tour guide facilitated the genuine interaction between tourists and hosts. Visitors desired a more personalised experience, which the Aboriginal tour guide created through encouraging tourists to ask questions, telling personal stories and using humour to engage tourists in conversation, as well as by encouraging participation in the tour with hands-on activities. At the same time Aboriginal people were believed to show a great desire to share their culture with visitors, which prevented the experience from being a staged and artificial one.

In addition, the findings suggested that an authentic experience is developed for both visitors and hosts through the production of meaning derived from reciprocal sharing and learning as well as the resultant genuine relationship between both parties. This was particularly reflected in the views of Aboriginal employees as to how they interpreted their roles as tour guides. Aboriginal employees believed that sharing their culture with visitors was a central part of the tour as well as a means of promoting cross-cultural understanding and gaining respect for their people and their culture. Thus, Aboriginal employees expressed their ambition to communicate a positive image to tourists in order to reduce common stereotypes people may hold of their people. It was found that this desire paralleled to some extent visitors’ expectations of the tour; tourists hoped to see dry Aboriginal working communities who valued their traditional culture.

The second element is characterised by the tourists’ search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aboriginal people. Here, respondents equated authenticity with the opportunity to visit a ‘real’ Aboriginal working community and to be able to experience Aboriginal people in an everyday setting, the way they normally live and behave. Respondents were found to hold preconceived notions and images in their minds as to who ‘real’ Aboriginal people are and what their ‘authentic’ lifestyle should involve. That is,
‘authentic’ Aboriginal people were not associated with negative images of Aboriginal people, for instance drunk Aborigines seen in town and cities. It is therefore argued that visitors seek negotiated experiences that match their mindset of Aboriginal people.

The majority of respondents defined authentic Aboriginal culture as the contemporary culture of Aboriginal people, consisting of an amalgamation of both traditional and modern culture. Consequently, an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience was conceived in terms of gaining an insight into the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people. In that regard, time was identified as playing a key role in experiencing authentic Aboriginal culture. The amount of time spent with Aboriginal people was believed to influence the degree of authenticity that tourists are able to experience. Nonetheless, respondents did not expect to be fully immersed into Aboriginal culture and lifestyle and seemed content with, and even preferred, the brief experience they gained on the tour. It is therefore questioned whether tourists really seek dedicated reality or rather prefer a negotiated experience that is characterised by its generalist nature.

The third element that contributed to the experience of authenticity is associated with having the opportunity to see and/or purchase authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts. Respondents perceived a product as authentic if it conformed to specific criteria, such as reflecting uniqueness and originality and being handmade by a local artist. Verification of authenticity was also generated by the shopping experience itself, for example by meeting the artist and watching how the craft is produced.

Finally, the fourth element in the construction of authenticity was related to the dance performance (at Tiwi Tours), which some respondents recognised as a contrived experience that lacked ‘traditional’ authenticity. The performers’ appearance was criticised since respondents expected to see more traditional clothing, as opposed to normal Western attire. The findings indicated that some respondents were interested in an authentically contrived or staged cultural performance since this was regarded as an occasion for entertainment and enjoyment.
In regard to whether any of the different theoretical perspectives of authenticity were shared by tourists and tour operators/employees, the results revealed that the majority of respondents employed a constructivist approach within their conceptualisation of the notion of authenticity. Only a small number of tourists appeared to hold attitudes similar to the objectivist or postmodern perspectives. The findings of this study suggested that respondents generally referred to the authenticity of toured objects (object authenticity) when describing their perceptions of an authentic experience. As such, existential authenticity was not found to be experienced among respondents of this study, and there is no data indicating that respondents were searching for their authentic selves.

### 6.3 Implications of Research

Based on the findings of this study, several implications can be made for various stakeholder groups. The following section discusses the practical implications for Aboriginal cultural tour operators, government organisations and Aboriginal tourism organisations. Further, the theoretical implications for tourism researchers are presented including a discussion of a conceptual framework, which provides an overview of salient elements contributing to the formation of perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

**Aboriginal Cultural Tour Operators**

Underpinning the research results of this study are a number of issues that need to be considered by potential and existing tour operators who offer Aboriginal cultural experiences to tourists. Based on respondents’ constructions of authenticity and their associated importance, four areas pertinent to the operation of an Aboriginal cultural tour are identified: the tour setting; the contents of the tour; the recruitment and training of tour guides; and the type and level of interaction. These four main areas of suggestions are summarised and depicted in form of a diagram (see figure 6.1). This illustration highlights the interrelationship of the four implications, whereby each implication influences the subsequent one.
Firstly, the findings suggest that the tour setting impacts on visitors’ perceptions of whether the tour offers an authentic experience. Several factors related to the tour setting seemed to influence these perceptions: urban versus remote location, community environment, and staged versus informal setting. The research results indicate that some tourists believed that only Aboriginal people in remote areas are living the ‘real’ Aboriginal lifestyle. As such, the setting of the tour, for example whether urban or remote, could have an influence on perceptions of authenticity. Since there is a common view held that ‘authentic’ Aboriginal culture is confined to remote areas of Australia (Hinkson 2003; Lane and Waitt 2001; Parsons 2002; Pitcher 1999; Tourism Queensland 2002), in particular urban-located tour operators should clarify such misconceptions in their promotional materials. As Indigenous Tourism Australia (ITA) (2007:10) emphasises:

Therefore the traditional beliefs and customs that are important in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society are no less important for urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than they are for remote area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Furthermore, this study found that the opportunity to see the community area was perceived by many respondents as an important element of authenticity since it contributed to the experience of contemporary everyday Aboriginal lifestyle. In particular, visitors taking part in Tiwi Tours expressed their appreciation and satisfaction that they were able to see the actual community area. By contrast, some tourists at Manyallaluk were critical that they were not able to visit the housing area and associated the designated tourist area with a staged tourist setting. There are two
important implications that can be drawn from these findings. First, there appears to be a misconception among some tourists as to where the tour takes place and what exactly it involves. This information concerning tour itinerary should be made clear by tour operators to potential customers via promotional material and/or at the time of booking. Second, the desire of tourists to experience contemporary Aboriginal lifestyle by visiting Aboriginal communities needs to be treated with caution. Not all Aboriginal communities feel comfortable having tourists visit their communities and might view this as an intrusion upon their private lives. Potential tour operators therefore need to consult with the relevant Aboriginal community as to what options would be available.

It needs to be noted, however, that Tiwi Tours appear to have found a compromise in regard to the issue of community area, which seems to satisfy tourists and Tiwi people alike. Tourists are driven through the community area in a tour bus and the tour guides point to the community shop, the cemetery, school, the local club and the church whilst explaining cultural matters as well as social issues concerning the housing and alcohol regulations. The sites of interest incorporated in the tour itinerary such as the designated tourism area, the museum, the old church and both arts and crafts centres are also located within the Nguiu community. Even though tourists play only the role of spectators gazing on the everyday life of Tiwi people, they appeared content to be offered a small insight into what a contemporary Aboriginal community looks like. Particularly, such an insight satisfied the curiosity of tourists who have not seen an Aboriginal community before. At the same time, local Tiwi people did not seem disturbed by the presence of tourists, who did not intrude upon their privacy, by for example entering their private homes. This type of spatial arrangement also coincides with the perceptions of most tourists who were concerned not to offend Aboriginal people and felt a responsibility not to disturb their privacy.

Closely linked to the issue of community experience were visitor preferences for informal and unstructured tourism settings, as opposed to staged ones. The study found that tourists associated a casual and relaxed tour atmosphere as adding authenticity to the experience. This was achieved through the simple bush setting as well as the pace of the tour. In this respect, too much comfort and luxury solely
introduced for tourism purposes was perceived as offering a contrived experience, thereby detracting from its authenticity. Similarly, the majority of tourists were not interested in structured Aboriginal experiences such as the ones offered at artificial, constructed tourism villages but instead preferred a ‘real’ experience of Aboriginal culture and people. These results indicate that tour operators do not need to offer expensive facilities, entertainment and food to their visitors. Although the findings also suggested that tourists expected a certain level of comfort, such as air-conditioned buses, the combination of bush setting and simple comfort offered at the three tours proved to be effective and met tourists’ expectations of authentic experiences.

The second area of suggestion addresses the contents of the tour. One of the important outcomes of this study was that respondents linked an authentic cultural experience to experiencing and learning about contemporary Aboriginal culture and lifestyle. Respondents defined contemporary Aboriginal culture as consisting of both traditional and modern culture. The general view was that contemporary culture cannot be understood without referring to traditional culture and Aboriginal history. This suggests that tour operators should place an equal importance on traditional aspects as on modern issues concerning Aboriginal people. The contents of the tour should include information on traditional culture such as dreamtime stories, bush food, survival techniques, kinship system etc. Tourists are also interested in the development process of Aboriginal culture: how Aboriginal people are integrating Western culture together with their traditional cultures, and how they are coping with these changes. The tour contents should also cover information on contemporary issues, such as general information on social issues and problems Aboriginal communities are facing today, as well as what improvements have been achieved so far.

Thirdly, the findings of this study suggest that the background of the tour guide played a key role in the formation of respondents’ perceptions in regard to the authenticity of the tour experience. Authenticity was judged by the observer by evaluating the background characteristics of the tour guide. As such, respondents conceived the experience as authentic if the tour guide was of Aboriginal background; had grown up and lived in that area for some time; was a member of
that particular cultural group; and consequently, had gained in-depth knowledge of his culture. This was described by some respondents as receiving genuine information from the custodians of the land and their stories.

This points to the importance of ensuring that only local Aboriginal people are employed in the majority of tour guide roles. The study indicates that tourists are not interested in receiving ‘second-hand’ information about Aboriginal culture from non-Aboriginal people. Whilst non-Aboriginal tour guides can provide assistance by interpreting and explaining information to the visitors (as they effectively do at Tiwi Tours - see summary of research findings, appendix 4.1), the main emphasis should lie on the Aboriginal tour guide’s role. This has also been advocated by several Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, which have stressed the importance of local Aboriginal people acting as guides for their own cultural experiences (ATA 2003; ITA 2007).

In addition, the research found that respondents judged the authenticity of their experience in terms of the role and the performance of the Aboriginal tour guide and the resultant type of personal interaction they were able to experience. They expected to have a knowledgeable tour guide, who believes in his culture and is enthusiastic about passing his cultural knowledge on to visitors. The findings indicated that one of the key functions performed by the Aboriginal tour guide involved the effective interpretation of cultural information. Tourists appreciated that the Aboriginal tour guide did not merely recite a spiel but rather imparted information in a meaningful, engaging and sometimes funny way. The research also indicated that the quality of personal contact and interaction was important to visitors, particularly being able to talk to the tour guide and ask questions.

This alludes to the importance of effective recruitment and training of Aboriginal people for roles in the tourism industry that demand direct interaction with tourists. Tour operators should inform candidates about the responsibilities and roles of a tour guide’s position, together with the pressures such work entails. Even though the results of this study, together with previous research (Howard et al. 2001), indicate that the Aboriginal tour guide forms part of the actual tourist experience, not every Aboriginal person will feel comfortable to share his personal life with visitors.
Hence, in order to minimise the potential stress experienced by Aboriginal employees and avoid high turnover rates, emphasis should be placed on the selection of the most suitable applicants, who not only have appropriate knowledge and skills but also show high levels of confidence and willingness to interact with tourists. Further preparation and targeted training could help Aboriginal people to develop skills necessary to work as competent tour guides.

Yet, the topic of skill development for the role of Aboriginal tour guides imposes certain difficulties. Generally tour guide training tends to be competency-based, focusing on knowledge transmission and skill acquisition (Christie and Mason 2003). However, the role of the Aboriginal tour guide appears to be for the most part based on experiential qualifications, which have been informally attained through ‘life’ experience, rather than through formal educational qualifications. Within Aboriginal cultures, knowledge of the law and of the creation stories is acquired progressively as Aboriginal people proceed through life. The type and amount of knowledge an Aboriginal person holds is dependent on age, status, personal relationship with a site, and gender (ATSIC 1999). Given that the main emphasis lies on the interpretation function of the tour guides, some of the qualities required are of a less tangible nature. For example, the ability to communicate in a cross-cultural context demands high interpersonal skills. Training programs for Aboriginal people should therefore place a greater emphasis on skill development that complements the experiential skills and knowledge that Aboriginal people attain through their cultural upbringing. These could include workshops that address public speaking skills and general communications skills aimed at improving confidence levels.

Moreover, the recruitment of Aboriginal people as tour guides could prove to be difficult, as in the past Aboriginal people have shown a preference for indirect economic participation in the tourism industry (Altman 1988; Altman and Finlayson 1993; ATSIC 1992; Finlayson 1992). This was more recently confirmed by Parsons (2002), who argued that the majority of Aboriginal people living in remote areas are engaged in indirect tourism products. Nevertheless, the findings of this study also revealed that respondents conceived the experience as authentic because, for example, Anangu tour guides were presenting information in their native language to tourists. This is important to note, since the lack of proficiency in speaking English
has been commonly identified as one of the impediments in the direct participation of Aboriginal people in the tourism industry. Yet, some Aboriginal people who would generally be not suitable for such roles due to their poor or inadequate English skills may in fact feel confident when speaking to tourists in their native language. Having a person interpreting what the Aboriginal tour guide is saying would also solve communication problems that are particularly experienced by international tourists when interacting with Aboriginal people. Communication problems related to language barriers were one of the original findings of this study (see appendix 4.1) and have also been observed elsewhere (Pitcher 1999).

Finally, the type of Aboriginal people working in positions that require direct contact with tourists will essentially influence the nature of interaction between tourists and hosts. As previously mentioned, tourists showed a desire for personal contact and interaction with Aboriginal people, including the opportunity to ask questions and build conversation. In this respect, tourists appear to seek genuine interaction based on informal, unstructured and, above all, ‘sincere’ contact with Aboriginal people. If Parson’s (2002) typology of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences is adopted, a high level of intimacy between guest and host would be required to create such a genuine sharing experience. Although tour operators are not able to enforce sociability between visitors and Aboriginal people, they can nevertheless encourage interaction based on more personal contact through their tour itinerary. As illustrated in figure 6.1, the tour setting and the contents of the tour will determine the level and characteristics of the interaction. For instance, a cultural tour taking place in natural and non-commercial surroundings will most probably facilitate opportunities for casual and unstructured interaction. Other factors that may contribute to genuine interaction include a small group environment, informal as opposed to lecture-based learning and opportunities to meet the local Aboriginal artist, as well as hands-on activities.

To summarise, by addressing visitors’ demand for authentic experiences the marketing efforts of Aboriginal cultural tour operators should concentrate on the four subject matters discussed within the implications of this study. In order to avoid misunderstandings and provide tourists with a realistic idea as to what they can expect from the tour, the tour operators should clearly outline the setting of the tour,
for example indicating whether tourists are able to visit the actual community area and exactly what such a visit entails. Since the majority of tourists expected to learn about the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people, information regarding the contents of the tour should emphasise that visitors are able to gain an insight into contemporary Aboriginal culture, along with learning about its traditional aspects. Most importantly, Aboriginal involvement in the tour should be highlighted by addressing issues concerning the ownership of the tour, the employment of Aboriginal people, and how the financial proceeds are distributed. Promotional material should also stress that interpretation of Aboriginal culture is provided by local Aboriginal tour guides, and that the cultural information has been approved by the relevant traditional owners of the land.

**Government Organisations**
Government can play a pivotal role in the development of sustainable Aboriginal tourism ventures by preparing tourism policies and initiating and coordinating tourism planning as well as identifying Aboriginal tourism opportunities. The programs, plans and policies developed and coordinated by government agencies at the national, state and local levels significantly affect Aboriginal tourism businesses and Aboriginal organisations. Effective tourism marketing strategies, investment policies and education/training programs can assist Aboriginal people in developing viable and sustainable tourism ventures. In addition, government agencies act as a catalyst for tourism development by conducting tourism marketing programs and sponsoring research (Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge 1998).

Since the potential of the tourism industry has been recognised to provide employment and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal people, State and Territory Governments have shown a growing interest in Aboriginal tourism development. As was previously discussed in Chapter 2 (see 2.5.1 Authenticity within State/Territorial Aboriginal Tourism Strategies, p.49), most State and Territory Governments have launched Aboriginal strategies and principles that target the economic and sustainable development of Aboriginal tourism. In general, these strategies and principles aim to increase Aboriginal involvement in the tourism industry by addressing impediments to participation and identifying Aboriginal tourism opportunities, as well as assisting in the growth of quality Aboriginal tourism
experiences. Within these government initiatives, there is general consensus that the key to success of Aboriginal tourism lies in the appropriate balance between cultural integrity and meeting market demands.

Whilst the majority of strategies aim to facilitate the development of ‘authentic’ Aboriginal cultural experiences by advocating product authenticity and accreditation as well as the adoption of national guidelines for branding, it is questionable as to what constitutes such an authentic experience in the first place. Similarly, an action plan that addresses in its key objectives the promotion of authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences in marketing efforts should first clarify what exactly such promotion of ‘authentic’ experiences entails.

The findings of this study therefore assist government organisations in their initiatives of providing directions for the sustainable development of Aboriginal tourism ventures. The study provides an in-depth understanding as to how different stakeholders perceive authenticity within an Aboriginal cultural tour experience. As such, it not only sheds light on the nature of tourist demand but also highlights issues important for Aboriginal people employed in the tourism industry. Thus, this information can assist governments in developing strategies in which the term ‘authenticity’ is not merely utilised as an effective buzzword, but instead provides more detailed guidance as to what tourists expect from such an experience.

Accordingly, the research results can be used in marketing efforts that seek to promote authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences. The portrayal of Aboriginal cultures and peoples within advertising material plays an important role in the development of tourist expectations and their subsequent satisfaction levels. The findings of this research will in particular benefit the NTTC, which incorporates in their marketing activities an emphasis on the Aboriginal experiences available in the Northern Territory. Research showed that the Northern Territory is recognised as the place to experience Aboriginal culture. As a result, the NTTC focuses on strengthening Aboriginal culture as one of its key attributes within the branding of the Northern Territory for the domestic market. Accordingly, the overall marketing positioning of Northern Territory for the international market includes Aboriginal culture (NTTC 2002). Following the findings of this research, the use of
contemporary images of Aboriginal people and culture will be most effective to target tourists interested in Aboriginal cultures.

Moreover, the results can be used to guide the development of policies concerning issues such as the funding of research, as well as issues pertaining to education, training and skill development necessary to the viable operation of Aboriginal tourism businesses. Most importantly, the findings of this study provide government agencies with detailed knowledge in regard to industry development; how to build new or expand existing Aboriginal tourism ventures, which essentially meet or exceed customer expectations whilst at the same time addressing the cultural integrity of the product. Consequently, government organisations, such as ITA, can utilise the results of this study to provide important information and advice to industry and key stakeholders on the planning, starting and running of an Aboriginal cultural tour. Hence, the findings will facilitate government work with the private sector and local Aboriginal community groups aiming to provide quality visitor experiences.

**Aboriginal Tourism Organisations**

The research results will benefit Aboriginal tourism organisations which provide a supportive network and guidance through a variety of activities to Aboriginal people involved in the tourism industry. These include tourism organisations such as ATA, the Aboriginal Tourism Marketing Association (ATMA) and WAITOC. Simultaneously, the findings will assist local Aboriginal organisations and associations that are representing the interests of their people and therefore play an important role in regional tourism development. For example, the Jawoyn Association in Katherine, a representative body of the Jawoyn people, aims to create employment opportunities and attain greater economic independence for its people through the establishment of tourism enterprises.

ATA’s purpose and objectives cover a broad range of activities which include the implementation of an accreditation process, ongoing mentoring support, the development of tourism business skills, and the promotion of Aboriginal tourism (ATA 2007). Similarly, WAITOC is involved in accreditation, research, the marketing and promotion of Aboriginal products, and in branding to
establish authenticity of Aboriginal Tourism products (WAITOC 2007). ATMA’s emphasis lies in the marketing and promotion of Aboriginal tourism products. The organisation delivers cost-effective co-operative marketing programs, which are aimed to increase the awareness and accessibility of Aboriginal tourism products (ATMA 2007).

Since this study enhances understanding of how authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tours is perceived by a variety of stakeholders, it will support the activities of Aboriginal tourism organisations. The results first provide a better picture of what tourists expect of authentic Aboriginal cultural tours. As such, this information can be effectively used in the development of marketing programs which aim to promote authentic experiences to potential visitors. Accordingly, the results will influence decisions related to the branding of such experiences. Second, the findings assist organisations by providing practical information concerning the operation and management of tourism businesses. In particular, the results will help to determine training and skill development needs for Aboriginal tour guides, which should be specifically targeted to respond to customer needs. Finally, some of the elements identified in this study that contribute to the construction of perceptions of authenticity can be incorporated in existing accreditation programs. This will ensure that the accreditation schemes are a reflection of the interests and concerns of Aboriginal people and tourists alike.

In general, this study will help Aboriginal people to more effectively engage with tourism issues by understanding the demands tourists place upon them. It therefore assists Aboriginal people to explore ideas for potential tourism development in their areas. With this knowledge, Aboriginal people will be empowered to make appropriate decisions regarding planning and the sustainable operation of their tourism business, by taking into consideration both the protection of cultural integrity and tourists’ expectations concerning authentic experiences.

**Tourism Researchers**

Based on the findings of this study, a conceptual framework has been developed which can be adopted by future researchers who wish to investigate the topic of authenticity in similar Aboriginal tourism settings. This framework provides an
overview of the salient elements contributing to the formation of perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. An illustration of the conceptual framework is provided in figure 6.2.

The first step in the formation of perceptions involves the tourists’ context, which influences visitors’ expectations and motivations, and consequently affects perceptions and essentially tourists’ satisfaction levels of the cultural experience. In this respect, perceptions of authenticity need to be examined in conjunction with tourists’ previous experiences, the preconceived stereotypes and the prior knowledge they held of the particular culture and the Aboriginal peoples. This will determine whether a linkage exists between the context and the perceptions of authenticity, and how strong this relationship is.

What follows are two main elements identified in this study, which form the basis to the construction of perceptions of authenticity. These include the importance of the interrelationship between culture and Aboriginal land (country) as well as the Aboriginal people themselves and their lifestyle. Aboriginal people are spiritually connected to their land and therefore hold a strong relationship to their land. This relationship between people and their environment and the laws which set out the realm of Aboriginal experience was established in what is now generally called the ‘Dreaming’ or ‘Dreamtime’. Aboriginal spirituality is based on these creation stories, which describe the way the Ancestors left their marks on the land. The stories also provide the moral and ethical framework by which Aboriginal people live on the land and relate to one another, in other words, their ‘Law’. In addition, Aboriginal people derive their self-identity from the land since the Dreaming spirit connects a person with particular sites so that each person has an affinity with particular places on the land (ATSIC 1999; CLC 2007). It is important to note that particular stories are inherent in particular landscapes, which makes different Aboriginal groups custodians of different stories (ATSIC 1999).
A quotation from the Social Justice Commissioner summarises the Aboriginal meaning of land and its linkage to their culture: “Access to our culture entails access to the places of its source and practice” (cited in ATSIC 1999:44). Similarly, Parsons (2002) emphasises that the source of traditional meaning for Aboriginal cultural tourism products lies in the symbolic landscape, and ultimately in the land itself. As a result, Parsons (2002:15) warns that “without access to this source and the knowledge it allows to be transmitted, reproduction of the traditional forms of these meanings becomes difficult”.

Figure 6.2: Conceptual Framework - Salient Elements Contributing to the Formation of Authenticity Perceptions
Whilst the majority of tourists would not hold detailed knowledge about creation stories, the results of this study nevertheless indicate that tourists recognise this importance that traditional land signifies to Aboriginal people and culture. This is evident in some of the tourists’ views on authenticity, which stress the ongoing cultural relationship Aboriginal people have with their traditional land. As such, several tourists interpreted authenticity as receiving true information from the custodians of the land and stories. This is matched by the perceptions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees who emphasised the importance of intellectual property rights held by the traditional Aboriginal owners.

It may be argued that similar perceptions of authenticity were also reflected in the majority of tourists’ perspectives regarding the background of the Aboriginal tour guide. Although not directly referring to land, most tourists expected to have a local Aboriginal tour guide who was a member of the particular culture and had grown up learning the traditions, stories and skills of the area. The following is a brief discussion of the topic of culture, which is central to any Aboriginal cultural tourism experience. In this study, all of the respondents’ perceptions of authenticity were related to the issue of culture and covered important themes such as the sharing of culture and the contents and delivery of cultural knowledge as well as the first-hand experience of cultural traditions and skills. Thus, the element, land and culture, is fundamental to the examination of authenticity perceptions in similar Aboriginal tourism settings.

Concurrently, the formation of perceptions of authenticity lies in the interest of tourists in the Aboriginal people themselves who make up that particular culture, as well as in their lifestyle. Here, native people themselves become the authentic attraction, whereby their backgrounds and characteristics serve as determinants for authenticity. The results of this study highlight some of the expectations tourists had of the Aboriginal tour guide and Aboriginal people in general. Some of the desired characteristics concerning the Aboriginal tour guide included: having an Aboriginal background; being a member of the culture; being culturally knowledgeable; sharing his personal life with visitors; showing enthusiasm in sharing his culture with visitors; and believing in his culture. The emphasis here lay on personal interaction with the Aboriginal tour guide resulting in a genuine and sincere cultural experience.
What tourists expected of Aboriginal people in general included: having a cultural relationship to their traditional land; living in a dry working community; and maintaining their traditional culture. As was previously argued in this thesis, this can be related to the preconceived notions and images tourists bring with them to a cultural encounter with Aboriginal people. Similar to tourists who often seek reinforcement of their preconceived stereotypes, such as in the search for the ‘noble savage’, this study found that visitors seek negotiated experiences that match their mindset about Aboriginal people.

This is further reflected in the interest tourists show in the hosts’ lifestyle. Once again, tourists arrive with preconceived notions, which are used to assess whether Aboriginal people are living an authentic lifestyle. Since the majority of tourists were aware that Aboriginal people would lead a modern way of life, they expected to experience a lifestyle which has adapted to Western influences. At the same time, however, tourists hoped that Aboriginal people would still maintain their traditional culture and as a result embody the genuine, friendly and sociable Aboriginal people.

Finally, the study has found that from the combination of culture, land, people and lifestyle emerge a number of factors which contribute to the construction of authenticity and genuineness within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. These factors are associated with the interpretation of culture, performances and products. In essence the results indicate that perceptions of authenticity were created by Aboriginal people providing interpretation of their culture and lifestyle, producing products to be sold to tourists, and presenting a dance performance of their culture. As was previously argued, personal interaction with Aboriginal people is fundamental to any experience involving the interpretation of Aboriginal culture. Interpretation also incorporated an educational aspect, whereby authenticity was derived from the learning process and cross-cultural understanding that this interaction made possible.

The findings of this study only provided a small amount of information regarding the topics of products and performances. Nevertheless, the results indicate that the consumption of products and the viewing of performances play an important role within ‘authentic’ cultural experiences. It was found that for some tourists an
authentic experience was related to having the opportunity to see and/or purchase authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts. An Aboriginal dance performance represented, for several tourists, a means for entertainment and enjoyment of contrived traditional authenticity. Future studies could address these topics more comprehensively in Aboriginal tourism settings that have a stronger focus on Aboriginal arts and crafts as well as performance.

To summarise, several implications for tourism researchers arise from the findings of this study including the proposed conceptual framework. Tourism researchers will benefit from this study since this research contributes to the tourism literature on the concept of authenticity relating to Aboriginal cultural tourism. The study thus enhances general understanding of different stakeholders’ perceptions about authenticity in an Aboriginal cultural tourism setting. In particular, by presenting a conceptual framework that explains the formation of authenticity perceptions based on the study results, future researchers will be able to adopt this framework to similar Aboriginal tourism settings.

6.4 Contributions to the Body of Knowledge

The study investigated the perceptions of authenticity of tourists, tour operators and their employees at three different tour companies. This research has succeeded in filling the gaps identified in the tourism literature pertaining to the concept of authenticity in Aboriginal tourism settings. Therefore, the study has contributed to the body of knowledge concerning the construction of perceptions of authenticity in a number of areas.

The study generated theoretical knowledge by contributing to a more holistic understanding of the meaning of authenticity for different stakeholders within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. This achievement was made possible by employing the constructivist paradigm to explore and compare the different viewpoints held by respondents. This led to the discovery of multiple constructions of authenticity, which were synthesised into four main elements reflecting the emic views of different stakeholders. The findings extend previous work on authenticity in
other tourism settings, in particular research that has utilised quantitative methods to examine tourists’ perceptions of authenticity. As such, it adds new knowledge to tourism studies as to what authenticity constitutes in the minds of consumers and tour operators/employees. This information can be central to the planning and sustainable management of Aboriginal cultural businesses.

The study also contributes to the ongoing theoretical discussion surrounding the concept of authenticity. By identifying and comparing whether the theoretical perspectives of authenticity are shared by different stakeholders in the tourism industry, it substantiates some of the claims made in the tourism literature.

Furthermore, an important contribution to tourism studies is the development of a conceptual framework which provides an overview of the salient elements contributing to the formation of perceptions of authenticity. The framework was proposed as a result of the findings of this study, and aims to draw attention to a range of issues that need to be considered when investigating perceptions of authenticity in similar Indigenous tourism settings.

Finally, by adopting a qualitative research methodology grounded in the constructivist paradigm, the study contributes to the tourism studies methodological and theoretical literature. The use of the constructivist inquiry in an Aboriginal research setting, together with the additional ethical considerations that needed to be embedded in the research process, may be useful for future researchers undertaking studies within a similar context.

6.5 Future Research Directions

There are several suggestions arising from this study that are recommended for future research. First, the research context of this study was limited to participants from the Northern Territory, Australia. It would be valuable to extend the scope of this research to other states/territories in Australia. Additionally, further research on authenticity perceptions could be conducted within Indigenous tourism settings internationally. This would enable a comparison between domestic and other
international case studies, thereby facilitating theoretical development in this topic area. Comparison studies of this nature could determine whether and why stakeholders’ perceptions of authenticity vary or are generally consistent among different Indigenous cultural groups. This type of research could also identify best practice models within the Indigenous tourism industry.

Second, this research examined perceptions at three different Aboriginal cultural tours. Yet, across Australia there are a variety of cultural experiences available to tourists which focus on the interpretation of Aboriginal culture. This includes Aboriginal cultural centres, festivals, arts and crafts experiences, and dance/theatre performances. Furthermore, whilst similarities exist between tour activities of ‘typical’ Aboriginal cultural tours, there are also more specialised Aboriginal cultural tours, such as tours taking place in remote locations. An interesting extension would be to investigate whether the elements identified in this study are applicable to other Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. Important issues that emerged from this research that need further examination include:

- comparison of perceptions of authenticity between urban and remote Aboriginal cultural tourism;
- potential difficulties experienced by Aboriginal tour guides in providing authentic and genuine cultural experiences to visitors;
- investigation of existential authenticity within Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences;
- examination of how the marketing of authentic Aboriginal experiences contributes to the development of perceptions of authenticity;
- identification of different visitor types in relation to perceptions of authenticity.

Third, the proposed conceptual framework could be utilised to research perceptions of authenticity at other Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. The importance of the prescriptive elements suggested in the framework may vary depending on the area of investigation. As a result, some elements and factors could be identified as more central to the purpose of the relevant study. The framework will need to be
empirically tested for its applicability and reliability, in order to gain a more comparative analysis of results in different settings.

6.6 Conclusion

This thesis has succeeded in filling the gaps in the tourism literature pertaining to stakeholders’ perceptions of authenticity within Aboriginal tourism settings. This research has investigated the perceptions of tourists and employees at three different Aboriginal cultural tours in the Northern Territory. In order to elicit rich and detailed data on the construction of perceptions of authenticity, the research was grounded in the constructivist paradigm and has employed qualitative research methods including in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The inductive analysis of the results revealed that respondents hold multiple constructions of the notion of authenticity. In general, however, most respondents associated an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience with a genuine experience, which does not feel contrived, staged or ‘plastic’. The perceptions of respondents were grouped into four main elements, namely The Aboriginal tour guide; The search for ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aborigines; Aboriginal arts and crafts; and Contrived experiences: Enjoyment factor. Each element in turn encompassed several sub-topics which were found to capture the salient factors contributing to the authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience.

Across the three Aboriginal cultural tours, there was general consensus among respondents that the background and role of the Aboriginal tour guide was an important factor in creating an authentic experience. In particular, his function as an interpreter and educator of Aboriginal culture was seen as enhancing cross-cultural understanding and increasing the degree of genuine interaction between tourists and hosts.

Moreover, the tourists’ search for authenticity was characterised by the desire to meet ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ Aboriginal people. Here, respondents equated authenticity with the opportunity to visit a ‘real’ Aboriginal working community and to be able to experience Aboriginal people in an everyday environment. Tourists were found to
hold preconceived notions and images in their minds as to who ‘real’ Aboriginal people are and what their ‘authentic’ lifestyle should involve. The majority of respondents defined authentic Aboriginal culture as the contemporary culture of Aboriginal people, consisting of a combination of traditional and contemporary aspects. As a consequence, an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience was conceived in terms of gaining an insight into the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people.

This thesis has outlined the implications of the findings for various groups including Aboriginal cultural tour operators, government organisations, Aboriginal tourism organisations and tourism researchers. In particular, this chapter has proposed four main areas of suggestions, which will assist potential and existing Aboriginal cultural tour operators. These four subject areas are related to the tour setting, the contents of the tour, the recruitment and training of tour guides, and the type of level of interaction that the tour offers to visitors. The fact that the majority of visitors to the Northern Territory seem to gain their knowledge about Aboriginal culture from non-Aboriginal tour guides (AGB McNair 1996; Department of Industry Science and Resources 2000) and that tourists desire an authentic experience that is based on personal interaction with a knowledgeable, local Aboriginal tour guide, suggests that there are existing employment opportunities in tourism for Aboriginal people in regional and remote locations. This points to the importance of establishing effective training programs for Aboriginal people, which target the specific skills required for working in a cross-cultural context.

The topic of education and training programs should also be central to the aims of government organisations as well as Aboriginal tourism organisations, which play a pivotal role in the development of sustainable Aboriginal tourism ventures. This research assists those stakeholders in formulating Aboriginal tourism strategies, designing marketing programs and providing general directions for individuals involved in Aboriginal tourism. As was argued in this chapter, viable and sustainable Aboriginal tourism planning must ultimately meet the needs of both tourists and Aboriginal people.
Within the discussion of the theoretical implications for tourism researchers, a conceptual framework was proposed which identified the salient elements contributing to the formation of authenticity perceptions. These elements can be used by future researchers who wish to investigate perceptions of authenticity in similar Indigenous tourism settings. As such, this research has made several valuable contributions to the body of knowledge concerning the construction of perceptions of authenticity.

To conclude, perhaps the most interesting contribution this study makes relates to the finding of tourists associating authenticity with experiencing the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people. Whereas in the past tourists’ search for authenticity seemed to revolve around the exotic and primitive nature of Indigenous people, the findings of this research suggest that tourists’ interest in the Other has taken on different shapes. First, there appears to be a move from an essentialist perspective to a constructivist way of viewing the world. Second, the desire to merely gaze upon the Indigenous Other has evolved into a search of genuine interaction and cross-cultural understanding. Contrary to Silver’s (1993) suggestion that Indigenous peoples can only remain attractive and of interest to tourists as long as they continue to be undeveloped, contemporary Aboriginal people today have not lost their appeal and value to tourists. Quite the opposite seems to be the case; the contemporary aspect of Aboriginal society proves to be fundamental to the overall ‘authentic’ Aboriginal tourism experience.
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Perceptions of Authenticity: Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in the Northern Territory

by

Renata Hodgson

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1.1 PUBLISHED PAPER

APPENDIX 1.2 TIWI TOURS - COPY OF TOUR BROCHURE................................. 310

APPENDIX 1.3 MANYALLALUK ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOURS – COPY OF TOUR BROCHURE................................................................. 312

APPENDIX 1.4 ANANGU TOURS - COPIES OF TOUR BROCHURES (2006 AND 2007 BROCHURE) ................................................................. 317

APPENDIX 2.1 EXAMPLE OF TJAPUKAI’S WEBSITE PROMOTION.................. 323

APPENDIX 2.2 EXAMPLES OF WEBSITE PROMOTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES........................................ 329

APPENDIX 4.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS .................................... 339

APPENDIX 4.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE .................................. 506

APPENDIX 4.3 PERMIT TO ENTER AND REMAIN ON ABORIGINAL LAND (CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL) .......................................................... 507

APPENDIX 4.4 INFORMATION STATEMENTS (TOURISTS AND EMPLOYEES)........ 509

APPENDIX 4.5 INFORMED CONSENT FORM.................................................. 513
Appendix 1.1: Published Paper

Aboriginal cultural tourism in the Northern Territory: Sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community

Renata Hodgson, Tracey Firth & Rayka Presbury

Abstract

AN UNDERSTANDING OF RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS of tourism impacts is crucial to tourism planning and development. This is particularly important for Indigenous and Aboriginal cultural tourism because an increasing number of tourism products focus on the cultural elements of Indigenous lifestyles, traditions and customs. In order to be able to monitor tourism impacts and to ensure that tourism is contributing to rather than undermining traditional cultural values and practices, an understanding of the perceptions of Indigenous residents is essential to the success and sustainability of Indigenous tourism ventures.

This chapter describes a qualitative study that investigated local residents' perceptions of the sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community, an Australian Aboriginal community located near Katherine in the Northern Territory, Australia. The study involved a process of constant inquiry using qualitative data collection methods including semi-structured interviews with fourteen respondents as well as participant observation.

The perceived positive sociocultural impacts of tourism identified by this study were associated with the revitalisation of Manyallaluk culture, increased pride and cross-cultural understanding, improved quality of life and improved English language skills. The negative sociocultural impacts of tourism as perceived by Manyallaluk residents included the stress caused by the interaction of Aboriginal employees with tourists, pressures from government organisations to increase the scale of their operations, and some conflicts among married couples evoked by feelings of jealousy caused by the mixed gender working environment in tourism. The study found that the overall perception of tourism in the community was positive, which was also reflected in the respondents' plans for future tourism initiatives in Manyallaluk.
Introduction

Research into the sociocultural impacts of tourism on host communities has become increasingly important, since it has been recognised that the support of the host community is essential in the long term. In particular, an understanding of residents’ perceptions of the impacts of tourism is crucial when planning for sustainable tourism. This realisation has led to more attention being given to the perceived sociocultural impacts of tourism upon the hosts (Ap 1992; Ap & Crompton 1998; Brunt & Courtney 1999; Faulkner & Tisdell 1997; Lankford & Howard 1994; Malm & Pizam 1988; Pizam 1978).

Sociocultural impacts can be described as the “people impacts” of tourism (Glasson, Godfrey & Goeckler 1995, p14). Such impacts can be incurred by both the tourist and the host community, but are more commonly felt by the host community of the tourist destination. Whereas social impacts tend to have an immediate effect on the day-to-day quality of life of residents, cultural impacts are often among the long-term changes that result from tourism, such as changing the society’s norms, standards and values (Glasson et al 1995; Murphy 1985). Sharpley (1999) noted that it is difficult to identify impacts that are specifically social or cultural, since both impacts are strongly interrelated (Glasson et al 1995).

The positive impacts commonly identified include conservation of cultural heritage and traditional customs (Butler 1974; Crandall 1994; Inskeep 1991), sense of community pride (Crandall 1994; Glasson et al 1995; Inskeep 1991; Pearce 1989) cross-cultural understanding (Glasson et al 1995; Inskeep 1991; Kelly & Nancarrow 1998; Travis 1984; Weaver & Oppermann 2000), maintaining community stability and the broadening of horizons (Pearce 1989). Host communities might come to recognise the importance and the monetary value of their cultural heritage and traditions to tourists. Thus, tourism might evolve to be a major stimulus for preserving cultural heritage and traditions. Tourism can also promote cross-cultural exchange and understanding, since both tourists and hosts can learn more about each other’s cultures, which in turn may erode certain stereotypical perceptions (Weaver & Oppermann 2000).

However, most of the literature portrays the sociocultural impacts of tourism in a negative light suggesting that the negative effects in many cases outweigh the positive gains. Some of the negative sociocultural impacts cited in the tourism literature include disruption to daily life and traditional lifestyles (Archer & Cooper 1984; Brokensha & Goldberg 1992; Brunt & Courtney 1999) overcrowding and loss of amenities for residents (Archer & Cooper 1984; Bessemer 1991; Butler 1974; Inskeep 1991), and the growth of resentment and hostility towards tourists (Brokensha & Goldberg 1992; Crandall 1994, Pearce 1989). Furthermore, several authors linked various social problems to tourism including drugs, prostitution, crime, and alcoholism (Archer & Cooper 1984; Glasson et al 1995; Godfrey & Clarke 2000; Haralambopoulos & Pizam 1996; Inskeep 1991; Pearce 1992; Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge 1999).

Although sociocultural impacts from tourism are generally perceived to be negative, it has been pointed out that all societies and cultures are changing (Greenwood 1989; Sharpley 1999) and the effects from tourism can be difficult to distinguish from other forces of social change such as those associated with modernisation and globalisation (Crick 1989; Mathieson & Wall 1982). Therefore, in the case of many destinations tourism is often only one contributor to social change (Sharpley 1999).

The sociocultural impacts of tourism on Aboriginal communities

The sociocultural impact of tourism on Aboriginal communities remains a relatively unexplored area of tourism research (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003). This is despite the fact that an increasing number of
international as well as domestic tourists are seeking an Indigenous experience, with most tourists (57 per cent of international and 44 per cent of domestic tourists) to the Northern Territory incorporating some element of Aboriginal culture into their trip itinerary (Northern Territory Tourist Commission 2004, p24).

Limited research has addressed the impacts of tourism on Aboriginal communities in Australia. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, major contributions towards this topic have been made by Altman (1988, 1989, 1993; Altman & Finlayson 1993), who has predominately analysed the economic impacts of tourism on Aboriginal communities in Australia. However, studies focusing specifically on sociocultural impacts on Aboriginal communities have not been conducted. Several authors have examined tourism at Australian national parks (Brown 1997, Gillespie 1988, Mereer 1994) and more specifically Aboriginal involvement in national parks (Altman & Allen 1992; Birdhouse, De Lacy & Smith 1992; Cordeil 1993, Furze, De Lacy & Birdhouse 1996). A number of studies have been undertaken on the Djambiyuy people near Cairns and their involvement in the successful commercial Tiwaku Aboriginal Cultural park (Finlayson 1991a, 1991b, 1991c). Research of more recent nature regarding tourism impacts was conducted by Schuler (1999), whose study also focused on the Djambiyuy people. Table 9.1 provides a summary of which theorists/researchers have addressed or identified which impacts related to the sociocultural impacts of tourism in Aboriginal communities in Australia.

According to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSC) (1997), Aboriginal-owned tourism ventures are a growing segment of the Australian tourism industry with an increasing number of Aboriginal people and communities becoming involved in tourism. Therefore, in order to achieve the long-term sustainability of Aboriginal cultural tourism and Aboriginal involvement in the tourism industry, the sociocultural impacts of tourism on Aboriginal communities need to be addressed and monitored.
Altman (1992) suggested that cultural impacts could rarely be separated from economic, social, and environmental impacts. High tourist numbers at Aboriginal heritage sites affect the environment, which in turn results in cultural impacts. At Uluru, for example, tourists' trespassing onto sacred sites contravenes local Aboriginal religious beliefs. High tourist visitation may also influence the hunting and gathering activities, which in turn affect the community economically and culturally.

According to Burchett (1993) some Aboriginal people regard tourism as a means to establish economic self-sufficiency, revive cultural self-respect and establish recognition for their knowledge and expertise. However, Burchett perceives Indigenous tourism in a less optimistic light. He stated that:

> Despite all of these motives, rarely if ever is tourism seen in the light of the economic, cultural and social realities and hardships of an Indigenous participation in this industry. Wonder through the documented impacts of tourism upon Indigenous cultures and you find a litany of cheapened, misrepresented and generally trivialised cultures! Hartley can you find examples where tourism has induced positive social and economic change.

Burchett (1991, p.29)

Hawkins (1999) discussed social impacts on Aboriginal culture, in particular its artefacts and sacred sites. A major factor impacting on Aboriginal art is the commercialisation of artefacts into souvenirs. On the one hand, the craft industry generates a source of income for Aboriginal people, maintains cultural identity, teaches cultural knowledge and skills to other cultures. Arts and crafts allow for indirect way of involvement providing autonomy for Aboriginal people. Alternatively, Hawkins noted that exploitation through cheap labour might take place. Furthermore, a decline in the quality and a loss of cultural integrity through the sale of secret artefacts.
forms might occur. Tourism might also pose a threat to Aboriginal sacred sites such as rock paintings. Conversely, tourism can be the motivator for the preservation of these sites.

The invasion of privacy was another impact mentioned by several authors (Cordell 1992; Gillespie 1988; Pearse 1989; Ross 1991). Whilst invasion of privacy has been depicted as a common tourism impact experienced by many other communities and cultures (Peare 1989), the effects of invading the privacy of Aboriginal communities in particular can be exacerbated. This is due to the context of what privacy means for Aboriginal people. Pearse (1989) suggested that the concept of privacy among Aboriginal people can be broadly described as communal rather than individual. According to Ross (1991), Aboriginal people have different norms as to which activities and environments require privacy, and what is considered appropriate and effective to achieve this privacy, for example by using spatial mechanisms and nonverbal cues. In addition, Aboriginal people have very different notions to personal space as compared to western cultures.

At Uluru National Park, Aboriginal people complained about tourists staring, taking photos, and intruding into their living and hunting spaces. Tourists often regard Aboriginal communities as 'public' spaces, due to the openness of Aboriginal camps and Aboriginal preferences for outdoor activities. In addition, Aboriginal people felt offended and sometimes blamed for not reflecting the marketing image (Ross 1991).

Similarly, Furze et al. (1996) discussed some sociocultural impacts from tourism on Anangu people at the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. A major issue is the extent to which tourists have access within the park. Signs at sacred sites illustrate the importance of these sites to Aboriginal people and ask tourists not to enter specific areas. Nevertheless, tourists often ignore the signs and enter these areas. Anangu people do not have any control over visitor numbers, which in turn affects their activities on their land. The lease agreement between the government and the Anangu people created conflicts within the Mutitjula community regarding the distribution of responsibilities and the financial benefits resulting from the lease. As a result, this conflict threatens the traditional way of life within the community.

Furthermore, Gillespie (1988) described the invasion of privacy—loss of recreational, socialising and gathering places—as a social impact in Kakadu National Park. Visitor numbers have risen as a result of tourism, but at the same time the Aboriginal population has increased due to immigration. While desecration and theft were reported in the early 1970s, according to Gillespie cultural sites at Kakadu are now more secure than they have been in the last twenty years. Aboriginal people are also able to lead a relatively private life, as access to the communities throughout the park is limited.

Finlayson (1995), who examined Aboriginal employment at the Tjupkai Dance Theatre, found that employment at the theatre impacted positively on the self-esteem of Aboriginal people. Revitalisation of Djabugay language was achieved through a language revival program, which taught Djabugay to Kuranda Aboriginal youth at primary and high school. Both the theatre and the language program impacted in a positive way on Djabugay cultural identity. Similarly, Ross (1993) proposed that tourism has socially benefited the entire community. The revival of Djabugay language and the cultural practices of making artefacts such as spears and boomerangs has had a major positive influence on Djabugay people. Tourism encourages the teaching of cultural knowledge and skills to the younger generation. Furthermore, cross-cultural understanding between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal communities has increased.

A more recent study conducted by Dyer et al. (2003) discussed negative and positive impacts of tourism on the Djabugay Aboriginal community. Revival of Djabugay language and culture as well as improved cross-cultural understanding were identified as positive impacts of tourism. The theatre has provided many employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, which have impacted positively both economically.
and socially on the community. However, it should be noted that the employment opportunities were mostly in semi-skilled positions, with none in management positions. The study found that the Djabugay people perceived an inequality in their employment conditions. They were concerned about non-Djabugay people working and, in particular, performing Djabugay dances at the park (Dyer et al 2003).

Negative impacts of tourism, cited by the Djabugay people, included the commodification and loss of cultural authenticity of presentations. Djabugay employees and other Aboriginal groups believed that the portrayal of the Djabugay culture was inauthentic. The Djabugay culture was adapted for tourists' tastes and treated as a commodity. In order to meet tourist demand, Djabugay presentations were modified to a theatre format resulting in what some perceived as inauthentic presentations. This can be evidenced by the fact that the Djabugay people had not played the didgeridoo before tourism development, but it is now a common feature of their cultural presentations. Overall, the commercial viability of the theatre was seen as more important than the authentic representation of Djabugay culture (Dyer et al 2003).

Factors influencing the sociocultural impact of tourism on Aboriginal people

Pearce (1989) alluded to several key factors that influence the social impact of tourism on Aboriginal people. For example, the significance of kinship ties among Aboriginal peoples means that a higher importance is often placed on social relationships than on material goods. Hence, a barrier to participation in tourism might be the need to migrate away from home and thus experience reduced participation in kinship activities. This problem was referred to as an 'incompatibility' between Aboriginal values and the tourism industry. In addition, the tourist-host relationship is characterised by the short-term nature of the tourist visit. Aboriginal values, which emphasise long-term enduring relationships that involve reciprocity, again highlight the potential incompatibility of values (Pearce 1989, p8).

Furthermore, many Aboriginal people are unwilling or unable to interact directly and socially with tourists, since they perceive the interpersonal aspects of such involvement as both uncomfortable and confronting. Few Aboriginal people are prepared for the pressures created by tourists' demands for service, and many Aboriginal people regard direct and constant interaction with tourists as intrusive (Finlayson 1992). Evidence suggests that, at popular tourist destinations such as Kakadu and Uluru, Aboriginal people have generally revealed a preference for indirect economic participation in the industry (Altman 1980; Altman & Finlayson 1985, AFSC 1992).

The Manyallaluk community

The focus of this study was Manyallaluk (pronounced Mun-gal-alk), a small Aboriginal community with a population of approximately 150 people, located 100km south east of Katherine, in the Northern Territory, Australia. Manyallaluk is the name of a traditional site near the community and means 'Frog Dreaming'. In the 1980s, the Jawoyn Association initiated tourism in Manyallaluk. The Jawoyn Association is a representative organisation of the Jawoyn people, the traditional landowners, which aims to create employment opportunities through the establishment of business enterprises and thus attain greater economic independence for its people. In 1986, the Jawoyn Association established Jawaluk Pty Ltd to assist with the development of an Aboriginal-run cultural tourism venture in the area. Jawaluk Pty Ltd consists of the tourism business as well as the Arts and Crafts Centre. In 1993, the Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation was formed taking over the management role from the Jawoyn Association (Hallon 1990). The location of Manyallaluk is shown in Figure 9.1.
Today, Manyallaluk is well known for community-based cultural tourism and has won several tourism awards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism and for Cultural and Heritage Tourism. The Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation promotes and operates one-day cultural tours throughout the year and is owned and operated by the Manyallaluk community. The cultural tours offer a hands-on learning experience, where visitors can learn traditional Manyallaluk cultural practices such as painting, weaving, spear throwing and fire lighting.

Tourist contact with locals is mostly limited to what is experienced on the cultural tours. This is because the tourist area, which comprises camping facilities, the community shop and the Arts and Crafts Centre, is separated from the community housing area where local residents reside. Tourists are not permitted to enter the community area, which is in a location that is out of sight of the tourist area. This ensures that the privacy of Manyallaluk residents is protected from the tourist gaze.

The Manyallaluk community consists of two extended families, predominantly comprised of family groups with younger children. Most Manyallaluk residents are Mayali or Ngalkkon descendants from different language groups such as Jawoyn, Mayali, Dalabon and Rembarrnga. Formerly known as Eva Valley Station, several of the picturesque old station buildings have been preserved in Manyallaluk. Many of the residents living in Manyallaluk today were born when the cattle station was still operating (Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation 2005).

Before the establishment of tourism in Manyallaluk, Aboriginal people used to work at local sawmills, mustering cattle, mining and cutting wood (Murdock 2004). During periods of unemployment, the supply of natural resources allowed community members to gather bush tucker as well as to hunt for kangaroos, goannas, cattle, and buffalo (Pitcher 1992). Today several Manyallaluk residents work as tour guides and teach those traditional skills to tourists and the younger Aboriginal generation. Most of the tour guides are also artists, making didgeridoos, woven baskets, and paintings on canvas and stringy bark.

Twenty residents are directly employed in tourism and a varying number of approximately 20 to 30 Aboriginal people are indirectly involved in tourism by producing artefacts for the community-owned Arts and Crafts Centre. In 1994, Manyallaluk established its own Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), which has created employment opportunities for residents in horticultural jobs, mechanical, maintenance and building work. CDEP also employs residents as tour guides, and in the local store, café, and office. The community has a ‘no work, no pay’ policy, and the pay structure rewards commitment and seniority through the top-up of wages from tourism income (Hatton 1999; Pitcher 1999).
Culture, traditions and customs remain an important and significant part of Aboriginal peoples’ lives in Manyallaluk. Community members take part in traditional ceremonies and participate in cultural activities. Manyallaluk people follow Aboriginal cultural rules, such as the principles of reciprocity and sharing as well as kin relationship rules. The ‘classificatory’ system of kinship guides social interaction among Aboriginal people. According to these kinship rules, certain patterns of behaviour are deemed to be appropriate only between individuals with particular kin relationships. Traditional behaviour patterns include avoidance between classificatory son and mother-in-law, brothers-in-law and between post-pubertal brothers and sisters (Australian Law Reform Commission 1998; Bourke & Edwards 1998; Crawford 1989; Tonkin 1998).

Manyallaluk was chosen for this study because the community has been involved in tourism for many years and has won several tourism awards in the past. This made it a relevant site in which to explore whether residents perceive the sociocultural impacts of tourism as positive or negative and how tourism has impacted on their daily lives. Although Manyallaluk is well known for its successful community-based cultural tourism, the sociocultural impact that is an integral element of this type of tourism cannot be ignored and needs to be addressed in order to sustain the tourism business in the long-term. Since no previous studies have specifically addressed the sociocultural impacts on an Aboriginal community, this study aims to add to the existing literature on Aboriginal tourism.

Study aims

The aim of the study was to identify the sociocultural impacts of tourism and, more specifically, the perceptions of local residents of the sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community. The specific research objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the potential sociocultural impacts of tourism;
2. To identify local residents’ perceptions of the sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community.

Methodology

As no previous studies have been undertaken on the sociocultural impacts of tourism on this Aboriginal community, exploratory research was conducted to identify the key themes and issues within the community from which to develop a case study. The study was grounded in the ‘naturalistic’ paradigm more recently named the ‘constructivist’ paradigm (Appleton & King 1997; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Schwandt 1994), which involves studying humans in a natural setting.

Data collection methods

Qualitative semi-structured interviews

In accordance with the naturalistic approach, this study used qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation. The interviews were held over a period of eight days in July 2003, at Manyallaluk and the interviews were recorded on audiotapes. A semi-structured interview guide was used with predetermined broad topics and open-ended questions.

Interviews were conducted individually with fourteen respondents, of whom nine were male and five were female. Participant ages ranged from 23 to 76 years. Eleven participants were Aboriginal and three were non-Aboriginal. The ratio between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants in the sample reflected the overall population structure of the Manyallaluk community with the majority of residents being Aboriginal and only three residents being non-Aboriginal. Out of the fourteen respondents nine were employees of the Manyallaluk
Tourism Corporation, three respondents were indirectly employed in tourism and two respondents were not employed in tourism and had no contact with tourists. The nine employees of the corporation consisted of seven tour guides, one employee from the Arts and Crafts Centre and the transitional General Manager. Two respondents were community members, who were not directly employed in tourism but produced artefacts for the Arts and Crafts Centre. One participant worked in the garden, which was owned by the community and which produced some of the vegetables and fruit used for the cultural tours. Two respondents were not employed in tourism and had no contact with tourists.

Table 3.2: Summary of key findings: Socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive socio-cultural impacts</th>
<th>Negative socio-cultural impacts</th>
<th>Other socio-cultural impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* recognise the importance of cross-cultural understanding.*</td>
<td>* stress &amp; discomfort caused by Aboriginal tour guides and tourists interaction.*</td>
<td>* commercialisation of some artefacts.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* sense of pride.*</td>
<td>* lack of respect for Manyallaluk cultural norms by some tourists.*</td>
<td>* influence of the demonstration effect.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* improved English language skills.*</td>
<td>* some conflicts among married couples due to alcohol.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* preservation of cultural tradition.*</td>
<td>* conflicts related to the incompatibility of local kinship norms and employment in tourism.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* role of Aboriginal women has changed.*</td>
<td>* outside pressures to expand the scale of tourism operations beyond local capabilities.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* improved equality of life.*</td>
<td>* gap between tourist expectations (unrestricted access to protected areas) and tourism product offered.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sampling methods

Purposeful and snowball sampling were used as sampling techniques for the study. The first contact person was the Tourism Coordinator of the Corporation, who played an integral role in the sampling process. The Tourism Coordinator recommended and introduced the researcher to various respondents who in turn suggested other potential respondents. Respondents were chosen so as to represent different perspectives of tourism from those actively involved in the industry to those with little to no contact with tourists.

Whilst the sample size was not meant to be representative of the whole community population, the researcher aimed at selecting participants who reflected the diversity of the community. Manyallaluk has a population of approximately 150 people, including twenty residents who are directly employed in tourism and a varying number of twenty to thirty residents who are indirectly involved in tourism by producing artefacts for the community-owned Arts and Crafts Centre.

Participant observation

In order to experience the dynamics of tourism on the Manyallaluk community and to gain a better understanding of the social context, participant observation was used to observe community interactions with tourists. In particular, the aim was to observe tourist-host behaviours during the cultural tours, which included tourist reactions towards cultural presentations and host reactions towards tourists. Participant observation enabled the researcher to gain practical insights into issues such as authenticity, cultural exchange and issues related to the tourist-host relationship. These observations were then compared to participants’ responses to interview questions concerning these issues.
Limitations

As Atzman (1993) suggested, cultural impacts on Aboriginal communities could be seldom separated from economic, social and environmental impacts. However, full consideration of all impacts of tourism was beyond the scope of this study. Due to time and resource constraints, only the sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community were addressed. Nonetheless, whilst this study did not concentrate on the economic impacts of tourism, several sociocultural impacts were recorded that are closely linked to economic impacts, such as the creation of employment opportunities and improvements to the quality of life of Manyallaluk residents.

Furthermore, due to the qualitative nature of the research design, the results of this study are limited in scope, reflecting perceived impacts of the Manyallaluk community at the time the study was conducted. Given that only a limited number of interviews were conducted and the short time spent in the field, data cannot be extrapolated to the wider population. Thus, generalisations cannot be made about the impacts of tourism on other Aboriginal communities in Australia.

Findings

Positive sociocultural impacts of tourism

The results of the study revealed both positive as well as negative perceived sociocultural impacts of tourism by Manyallaluk residents. The main positive sociocultural impacts that were identified included the revitalisation of Manyallaluk culture, the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, improved English language skills, and the preservation of cultural traditions as well as the changed role of Aboriginal women in Manyallaluk society. Furthermore, tourism in Manyallaluk has also improved the quality of life of residents through the creation of direct and indirect employment opportunities.

The research found that community members felt very strongly about the positive impacts that tourism had on their culture. Tourism contributed to the revitalisation of their knowledge and skills, which is evident in the artefacts that residents produce and the knowledge that they pass on to younger generations. As most elders, who possessed the knowledge of the Manyallaluk culture have passed away, tourism now encourages younger community members to teach their knowledge to the younger generations. Hence, tourism promotes the transfer of knowledge and skills and ensures that these are kept ‘alive’ in the community. The younger generation is also encouraged to stay in Manyallaluk by taking up employment as tour guides. As one female Aboriginal tour guide stated:

To me, I think tourism means showing our culture to white people. Life came back again to us, being our culture back. Our children we teach them. Pass our knowledge from our old generation to the kids, so they don’t lose it — to give the life back. Tourism encourages to keep our culture alive.

For example, basket weaving and painting have become very popular among community members in Manyallaluk, because it offers them another income opportunity outside tourism wages and unemployment benefits. Older Aboriginal women now teach younger women about the materials that have to be collected to make baskets and show them traditional weaving techniques. During the cultural tours female tour guides demonstrate to tourists how to make baskets and several women in the community weave baskets at home, which are then sold to tourists at the local Art and Crafts Centre.

In addition, tourism has instilled a sense of pride in many of the local residents because of the opportunity to share their culture with visitors. Manyallaluk residents emphasised the importance of learning from and interacting with tourists. Community members showed a great pride in the fact that Manyallaluk had evolved from a small cattle station into an award winning tourist destination that
is known worldwide. Hence, tourism gives Manyallaluk residents a ‘sense of ownership of a product’, resulting in increased pride and self-confidence as well as a reaffirmation of their ethnic identity. The following statement made by a non-Aboriginal resident explains the pride and increased self-confidence of Manyallaluk residents from a different perspective:

If you think how white people treat Aboriginal people in town, it is pretty much isolation. And here it’s totally the opposite, people are adorning, respecting—asking questions, interested, fascinated. Aboriginal tour guides are getting incredible interest, positive feedback every day from people. They don’t get that from white people anywhere else that I know of—to be treated with respect, to be put in the role of a teacher and guide. Under what other conditions would they get this kind of respect from non-Aboriginal people?

One non-Aboriginal employee pointed to the positive contribution that tourism in Manyallaluk makes to reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. The participant viewed the fact that visitors come to Manyallaluk—visiting an Aboriginal community on Aboriginal-owned land—as a form of reconciliation that has been achieved for 11 years in Manyallaluk.

Manyallaluk residents referred to the advantages of tourism in Manyallaluk with regard to the enhancement of English language skills by Aboriginal people. The study found that, through the interaction with tourists, Aboriginal tour guides and Aboriginal children were improving their English language skills. Aboriginal tour guides developed confidence in interacting with tourists and at the same time improved their English language skills. In particular, female Aboriginal respondents believed that Aboriginal children ‘pick up’ English from interacting with tourists during the cultural tours. Since local Aboriginal children spend a considerable time in their school holidays within the tourist area they therefore interact and play with other children and learn English from visitors.

Conversely, the findings did not suggest a loss of Manyallaluk native language because tour guides learn their traditional language for the purpose of the cultural tours in order to be able to name trees and plants by their traditional names. Whilst one tour guide mentioned that Aboriginal people now mix English with their native language, it is questionable if this is directly related to tourism in Manyallaluk or to other sources of westernised influence such as television and radio.

Since the establishment of tourism in Manyallaluk the role of women has changed in the community. Before tourism, women were responsible for the household and for looking after their children. Now, with the growth in tourism, several women work as tour guides and/or produce artefacts for the Arts and Crafts Centre. Employment opportunities resulting from tourism for Aboriginal women provide some households in the community with a second income and, thus, the opportunity for a better lifestyle. Working in tourism has given Aboriginal women more confidence in interacting with non-Aboriginal people and has also improved their English language skills. One non-Aboriginal respondent believed that women have become much more prominent in the community with a stronger voice in decision making.

Although this study did not concentrate on the economic impacts of tourism, several socio-economic impacts became apparent. The results of this study indicated that, before tourism in Manyallaluk, community members were predominantly unemployed and women in particular had limited employment opportunities. With the introduction of tourism, approximately twenty tour guide positions have been created and most community members are producing artefacts for sale to tourists.

Thus, tourism has improved the quality of life of some residents who are now able to buy material things that they previously could not afford. Hence, tourism gives families the opportunity to have a double
income and/or to supplement their income with the sale of artefacts. Employment in tourism has also affected their day-to-day lifestyle, by keeping them busy and allowing employees to get involved in the decision making of the tourism business. As one female Aboriginal respondent emphasized:

Some people when it's pay day time they just go out, drink then and they leave their kids back home and they don't know what to do at home. But when they have a job, when tourism comes, they get jobs to do at home. Basket weaving and carrying on their work. It keeps them busy.

**Negative sociocultural impacts of tourism**

The study revealed several negative sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community, including the stress caused by tourist-host interaction, disrespectful behaviour by some tourists, some conflicts among married couples due to jealousy induced by the working environment in tourism, and pressures placed on the community enterprise by government organisations. Moreover, a gap was identified between tourists’ expectations and the reality of the Manyallaluk tourism product offered.

As a result of the tourist-host encounter some stress was experienced by a few tour guides when interacting with tourists who were asking too many questions. The findings showed that Aboriginal people who were directly employed in tourism were reporting some negative impacts on their lives related to the stress of dealing with tourists and the conflicts that can arise between tour guides as a result of high visitor numbers. Aboriginal tour guides reported that some tourists are too inquisitive. As one female Aboriginal respondent explained:

Many of them always ask some questions. There has to be a way of questioning our tour guides, so it doesn’t go beyond. Because there are some things that they don’t like to answer, especially women and both men, when it comes to our families.

Similarly, one male non-Aboriginal respondent stated:

Tourism makes an impact upon them, because they get questioned all the time. And if there is one thing that an Aboriginal cannot stand is being pounded. Some of them handle it very well when people ask them questions all the time. And sometimes the question get little bit over the fence. They have some very private things in their lives, even now, that they don’t want to share.

Thus, the constant questioning by some tourists, particularly if the questions are related to private or cultural issues that Aboriginal people do not want to share, causes feelings of stress among some tour guides. This stress, however, was not portrayed as a major source of conflict between tourists and hosts and was rather viewed as a normal by-product of working in tourism.

The interviews with community residents also suggested that some tourists do not respect the Manyallaluk culture. During the cultural tours, situations have emerged where some tourists make jokes about the host’s culture and do not show respect towards the Aboriginal tour guides. This in turn provokes conflict between tourists and the host, who might feel insulted by certain comments made by tourists. Another important aspect that was raised was related to the behaviour of female tourists playing the didgeridoo. In Manyallaluk culture, customary law prohibits women from playing the didgeridoo or throwing spears. However, during the visit to the Art and Craft Centre, some female tourists have tried to play the didgeridoo. One female Aboriginal resident commented:

Women are not allowed to play the didgeridoo. That’s another thing that really feels very offended when women tourists play the didgeridoo. Because it is only for men.

Manyallaluk residents also reported some conflicts caused by jealousy among married couples due to the fact that Aboriginal women and men now work together in tourism. This new working environment
evokes challenges and places new pressures on the daily interaction among community members. In particular, since kinship rules need to be followed while working on the cultural tours, situations may arise that provoke conflict among Aboriginal people as well as that between management and Aboriginal employees. According to the kinship rules, certain family members should avoid naming each other, speaking directly to each other, or being alone together. Whilst Manyallaluk residents are following these kinship rules, some conflicts among married couples have been reported. Husbands of women who are working on the tours have shown discomfort about their wives interacting with other male Aboriginal tour guides.

The findings also suggested that government tourism agencies, such as tourism commissions, were putting pressure on the Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation to meet industry demand by extending the operating times of the tours to seven days a week. This is despite the fact that Manyallaluk is currently unable to accommodate a greater number of tourists due to a lack of infrastructure and human resources. An increase in visitor numbers would also have adverse impacts on the Aboriginal tour guides through the increased stress caused by the interaction with more tourists. According to management, the Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk are not able to meet the demands of the tourist organisations and therefore these pressures seek the achievement of an unrealistic outcome. This is evident by the fact that Aboriginal tour guides were experiencing a higher level of stress when dealing with larger groups of tourists, however, all the Aboriginal participants wished to see even more tourists coming to Manyallaluk.

The results of this research also revealed a discrepancy between some tourist expectations and the tourism product supplied by the Manyallaluk community. Some tourists come to Manyallaluk with false expectations and misconceptions about Aboriginal communities that do not reflect the real identity of the community. These idealised images held by tourists contribute to the creation of a gap between expectations and reality. This gap is reflected in the behaviour of some tourists, who show their dissatisfaction by wanting to enter the community area where the residents live. Management and tour guides occasionally have to deal with tourists requesting to see the housing of Manyallaluk residents. They have to explain to them why they are not allowed to enter the area, emphasising that the residential area is not part of the cultural tour. One non-Aboriginal respondent within management stated:

Aboriginal people want their privacy, they don't want everyone coming and sticking their nose in their backyard. There is something about some of the Europeans, particularly Italians, Germans, and Swiss, who want to go to the community and speak with Aboriginal people. You can't do that unless you are invited...

Tourists are asking, 'Why can't we go down to the community?' It is like me coming and visiting a tourist product in Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane, but I want to come back to your house and look at your house. It is ridiculous... Once the tourism is over, that's a long day for these guys, eight hours. They want to be left alone. So they can sit down, do their craft, talk about family etc. It's been eight hours with visitors, they don't want any more of that.

Other sociocultural impacts of tourism

Other sociocultural impacts of tourism that were found by this research, which have changed to some degree the sociocultural fabric of the traditional Aboriginal community are related to the commercialisation of arts and crafts and the influence of the demonstration effect on Manyallaluk residents. However, viewing these impacts within their wider context it is arguable whether they can be simply classified into positive and/or negative sociocultural impacts and whether they are directly generated by the tourism activity.

Commercialisation has become evident in the sale of arts and crafts in Manyallaluk. The Arts and Crafts Centre, which is community-owned, offers a variety of paintings, baskets, didgeridoos and jewellery produced by local people for sale to tourists. The findings of this research...
suggested that the size and style of some of the artefacts has been adjusted to meet tourist demand and tastes. Traditionally, baskets were woven in various sizes, but particularly bigger baskets with handles were common in this area. Today, women focus on weaving smaller sized baskets without handles as they have found that big baskets with handles are difficult to pack and transport for overseas tourists and therefore the chances for selling them are limited.

Furthermore, one non-Aboriginal employee from the Arts and Crafts Centre explained that the other reason for the change of size and style in baskets is the comparison of effort relative to the returns women gain from producing bigger baskets. Large baskets are also higher priced and there is a limit to what tourists are willing to spend on a basket. Therefore, smaller baskets are more popular with tourists and sell immediately, whereas large baskets might take weeks to sell. Since a similar effort is put into making several small baskets rather than one large basket, the artist will make proportionately more money if they make small baskets instead.

A similar case applies to paintings. Some of the smaller paintings are produced for no other reason than ‘quick’ money. However, most of the artists are also producing larger paintings that have more meaning to them and take more time. These paintings are then sold together with a story that explains the picture. These might be stories about hunting, women collecting bush tucker or Dreamtime stories. Whilst the process of documenting these stories by the artists was described by respondents as ‘very good’ and ‘useful’, it was also mentioned by one non-Aboriginal respondent that these stories have been occasionally ‘stretched’ and ‘moulded’ to suit tourist expectations.

The results of these findings suggest that the demonstration effect of tourism has to some extent affected the behaviour and attitudes of some Manyallaluk Residents. The demonstration effect is a common sociocultural impact that has been widely discussed in the tourism literature. Pearce (1995) described this effect as the transformation of values through the bringing of different groups of people together. Inskeep (1993, p.373) defined the phenomenon as:

...the effect that involves residents observing and imitating the behavioural, dress, and life-style patterns of tourists, without understanding their cultural basis and sometimes not being able to financially afford to adopt the tourists’ life-style.

Corresponding to the above definitions, participants confirmed that similar effects of tourism have had an influence on Manyallaluk residents, and particularly on the Aboriginal tour guides. One non-Aboriginal respondent noted that Manyallaluk is becoming ‘too westernised’. The respondent described Aboriginal people as very good observers:

They look at the clothing that people wear, particularly shoes—they love shoes that Europeans are wearing. They look at watches—they all want watches... Tourism opens their mind to a wider world. And they want those things. How many times did they ask for digital cameras? So it does have an impact on people’s perceptions of what is modern and good technology.

Correspondingly, two tour guides stated that Aboriginal people copy tourists’ hairstyles, desire the same watches and try to dress like them.

One tour guide explained:

I can see their hairstyles, dye their hair blond. They look at tourists and want to be like that. They dress like them. They copy their styles, hairstyles, their watches, how they walk, how they talk.

However, it is difficult to distinguish the impacts of tourism in Manyallaluk from other sources of modernisation, such as the media. Most Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk own televisions, DVDs and radios and can therefore be influenced by many sources other than the tourists. Nevertheless, it appears that some direct impacts from tourism are obvious, since community members are directly pointing to and desiring items used or worn by visitors.
Discussion

Overall, the residents of Manyallaluk perceived the sociocultural impacts of tourism as generally positive. This finding is in contrast to much of the tourism literature which suggests that Aboriginal people do not like the concept of tourism through fear that contact with tourists might devalue Aboriginal culture and lead to further social breakdown in some communities. For example, Brennan (cited by Hall 2002, p256) from the Northern Land Council commented that the Gagadju people in the Kakadu region 'do not like the idea of being a bit like a zoo, feeling that they are on display for tourists to come and see what an Aboriginal person looks like in his environment, to see whether he still walks around with a spear'. Similarly, the New South Wales Tourism Commission (1990, p1v) suggested that Aboriginal people 'will lose the traditional concepts of relationships, privacy, space, sacred sites and the land all pull away from a major participation in the tourist industry'.

As suggested by Finlayson (1992), many Aboriginal people are unwilling or unable to interact directly with tourists and may regard this as intrusive and uncomfortable. Confirming Finlayson's (1992) observation, this study found that some Aboriginal people dislike long-term interaction with tourists. One non-Aboriginal resident who has worked as a tour guide with Aboriginal people for many years explained that the more time Aboriginal people spend with tourists, the more exhausting it becomes for them. During a five or six day tour, the tourist becomes familiar with the Aboriginal guide and therefore asks too many questions. Hence, Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk prefer one-day tours that only allow for short-term relationships. By contrast, Pearce (1989, p10) emphasised that Aboriginal people have difficulties in dealing with people in short terms—'never to be seen again roles', and rather prefer long-term enduring relationships that involve reciprocity.

In contrast to other studies (Altman 1988; Keil 1997) where Aboriginal people showed a preference for indirect economic participation in the tourism industry, many Manyallaluk residents chose a mixture of direct and indirect involvement in tourism. The cultural tours offered to tourists are an example of direct involvement in tourism and require direct social interaction with visitors. However, community members who are unwilling or unable to interact with tourists have the option of participating indirectly in tourism through the sale of artefacts.

One respondent explained that Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk who work as tour guides and interact with tourists are the more ‘ego-centric and outgoing’ people. Whereas the other people ‘when they see tourist coming are not even interested’. This finding supports Reynold's (1992) suggestion that communities overcome the problem of some Aboriginal people wanting to avoid social interaction with tourists by self-selection. Hence, Aboriginal volunteers with the appropriate personality traits seek employment in such ‘intercultural’ enterprises. This is apparent at Manyallaluk, where Aboriginal people with an outgoing personality choose to work as tour guides. Alternatively, Aboriginal people who feel uncomfortable interacting with tourists can produce artefacts and avoid contact with tourists.

This study found that community members felt very strongly about the positive impacts that tourism had on their culture. In contrast to other studies (Cohen 1996; Gillespie 1988; Hitchcock 1997; Ross 1991), respondents in Manyallaluk felt that their privacy was generally respected and their personal lives were not excessively interfered with or disrupted by tourists. Furthermore, tourism in Manyallaluk contributed to the revitalisation of their cultural knowledge and skills. This is evident in the artefacts that the community members produce and the knowledge that they pass on to younger generations for tourism purposes. These findings concur with other studies on Indigenous communities (Dyer et al 2003; Finlayson 1995; Hall 1996; Hitchcock...
According to Dyer et al (2003) the Djirrugay people enjoyed presenting their culture and perceived cross-cultural interaction with tourists to be beneficial. Similarly, Manyallahuk community members spoke of their sense of pride when sharing their culture with visitors and emphasised the importance of learning from and interacting with tourists. Hence, in the case of Manyallahuk as well as in the other studies, tourism encourages indigeneous people to maintain their skills and traditions and to preserve their culture.

In addition, tourism has instilled a sense of pride in many of the local residents because of the opportunity to share their culture with tourists. This response has been observed elsewhere (Dyer et al 2003; Hall 1998; Hitchcock 1997; Smith 1989). For instance, Ryan (1999) and Smith (1989) noted that indigenous people have thus experienced reaffirmation of their ethnic identity and an increased self-confidence. The results of this study indicate that Manyallahuk residents were experiencing an increase of their self-identity through communal achievements, as was found by Ryan (1999) in the case of Maori involvement in tourism. The author described the increased self-confidence and creation of self-identity through communal achievement as a psychological benefit resulting from tourism.

This study also found that, through the interaction with tourists, Aboriginal tour guides and Aboriginal children were improving their English language skills. However, the findings did not suggest a loss of Manyallahuk native language. Tour guides are obliged to learn their traditional language for the purpose of the cultural tour. Thus, the findings correspond with other studies (Murphy 1985; Sharpley 1999), which claimed that residents learn traditional languages through commercial and social necessity.

In relation to the perceived positive impacts on their culture, respondents felt that the traditional skills of producing baskets and paintings have been strengthened by tourism, but with some modifications of Aboriginal artefacts in relation to basket size and the diversification of jewellery. This finding is in accordance with an outcome of Deitch's (1990)' study on the impacts of tourism upon the arts and craft of the Indians of the American Southwest. According to Deitch (1989) tourism revived old traditions of Southwestern handicraft, albeit with considerable modification. Furthermore, tourism not only provided employment opportunities but also strengthened Indian identity and pride in heritage.

According to Cohen (1992, p12) 'tourist arts are, almost by definition, commercialised arts'. However, the commercialisation of artefacts is often perceived as negative—having damaging impacts on ethnic art. In fact, Cohen (1992) suggested that tribal and ethnic arts have been continually changing throughout history due to internal forces and external contacts. Inevitably, though, the influence of tourism may intensify and increase the speed of these change processes.

The results of this study revealed that some artists in Manyallahuk tend to adapt some of their artefacts to the tastes and preferences of the tourist market. The type of modifications found in the artefacts in Manyallahuk corresponds with the different trends of changes in tourist art as proposed by Cohen (1992, 1993). Some artefacts in Manyallahuk have been 'standardised', 'individualised' or 'miniatuirised'. Standardisation is evident in Manyallahuk by the production of smaller and cheaper products intended as souvenirs, such as little pictures produced for 'quick money'.

The opposite of standardisation is individualisation, which aims for differentiation in artefacts. In the case of Manyallahuk, it may be argued that the production of larger and more meaningful paintings that are accompanied by a story and background information about the artists, represent a form of individualisation. Finally, miniaturisation has been applied to traditional baskets in Manyallahuk to reduce the price of the product and adapt them as Cohen (1993, p5) pointed out to the 'constraints of the logistics of travelling'.
Although commercialisation is evident in Manyallaluk, the results indicate that the degree of commercialisation has not led to the degradation of cultural integrity as suggested in other studies (Blundell 1993; Cohen 1993). Contrary to these findings, this study found that tourism has indirectly helped to preserve the skills necessary to produce traditional artefacts, as has been observed elsewhere (Connelly-Kirch 1982; Deitch 1989; McKean 1989; Smith 1989).

Greenwood (1988) emphasised the 'commodification' of local culture through tourism. According to Greenwood (1989, p.178), the commodification of culture 'rob people of the very meanings by which they organise their lives'. Consequently, local culture that is treated as a tourist attraction is often destroyed and eventually becomes meaningless. In Greenwood's terms it may be argued that Manyallaluk culture is being commodified through its sale to tourists—and thus is becoming a commodity without meaning. However, contrary to the argument that 'the meaning is gone', Manyallaluk respondents described tourism as giving meaning back into their lives and strengthening their culture.

Similarly, Cohen (1988) argued that the meaning, for performers, does not have to be lost because the act is commercialised and they have been paid for performing. This corresponds to the feelings of Manyallaluk community members. As opposed to losing the meaning of their culture, respondents explained how 'life comes back again' to them through tourism. Accordingly, tourists visiting Manyallaluk could see the meaning in the cultural activities.

As corroborated by other studies, commodification in Manyallaluk has helped to preserve and strengthen cultural traditions and has facilitated the development of a local identity (Cohen 1988; Deitch 1989; Macdonald 1997; McKean 1998; Smith 1989). Thus, the results of this study indicate that commodification has not destroyed the meaning of the Manyallaluk cultural product. Consistent with Macdonald's (1997, p.175) argument, Manyallaluk cultural tours are 'a way of telling the people's story, and helping to make sure that it will be heard'.

Implications and recommendations

The implications of these findings regarding the sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community are numerous. The major influence on the positive perceptions held by residents interviewed in this study could be related to the spatial structure of Manyallaluk. It could be suggested that the clear division between the private community area and tourism area contributed to the creation of a positive attitude toward tourists because residents felt that their privacy was respected. As Australian Aboriginal people have a strong sense of place and intense attachment to their lands it is important that the development of tourism within their communities does not significantly change the character of these areas and that the privacy of Aboriginal people living and working within the communities is respected and maintained.

To ensure that this continues to be the case in reality, the division between the community and the tourism area needs to be further emphasised to tourists before they arrive in Manyallaluk. Education and interpretation are an important part of sustainable tourism and are central to successful Aboriginal cultural tourism. The contents of tour brochures should inform tourists in detail about the way of life, customs and traditions of the Manyallaluk community as well as what tourists can expect from the cultural tours. Tourists should be made aware of cultural differences, cultural norms and kinship rules in Manyallaluk, such as the fact that only men are allowed to use diggerdoos. The provision of this information can then be used to inform tourists of appropriate behaviours whilst staying in Manyallaluk. Promotional materials should emphasise the fact that Manyallaluk is a working community that lives in the twenty-first century so that tourists arrive with realistic expectations regarding the types of interaction to expect with Aboriginal residents.

The research found that some Aboriginal employees perceive the interaction with tourists as stressful. This alludes to the importance
of the selection of the most suitable employees for tour guide roles in order to minimise the negative sociocultural impacts of tourism. An emphasis should be placed on the appointment of tour guides, who have the confidence and willingness to interact with tourists. Further preparation and training could assist Aboriginal tour guides to develop skills necessary to work with tourists and respond to their inquiries. It has to be ensured that potential employees understand the pressures associated with working in the tourism industry.

In addition, Aboriginal communities that wish to be involved in tourism need to be informed about the practical realities of tourism. This includes industry/visitor expectations, the demands associated with working in a service industry, and the reality of the planned tourism product, which needs to be scheduled and include certain standards of service.

The positive perceptions of tourism within the Manyallaluk community are testimony to the importance of local residents maintaining autonomy and control over the tourism product and over the extent and pace that tourism develops within the community. Other Aboriginal communities who are or who intend to become involved in tourism could use tourism in Manyallaluk as an example of 'best practice', where tourism planning has been based on the goals and priorities of the local residents. This case study demonstrates that Aboriginal communities need to establish clear 'boundaries' between tourism and private community life and that the content of the tourism product needs to reflect the wishes of the community with regard to which Aboriginal cultural elements should be included and how they should be presented. In this way, the negative sociocultural impacts related to the exploitation of Aboriginal culture can be mitigated and the integrity of the traditions and lifestyles of Aboriginal people respected.

Conclusion

Host community perceptions of tourism impacts are an important means of measuring progress towards sustainability, since tourism will not grow without the support of host communities. Host community perceptions of tourism impacts are particularly important for cultural and Aboriginal tourism where minority groups are involved. Monitoring tourism impacts in these areas will ensure that tourism is contributing to, rather than undermining, traditional cultural values and practices.

This chapter has described and discussed the perceived sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community as well as their implications. The research found negative as well as positive sociocultural impacts resulting from tourism. The perceived sociocultural impacts were mostly positive and included the revitalisation of culture, increased pride and cross-cultural understanding, improved language skills and improved quality of life. Negative sociocultural impacts of tourism on the Manyallaluk community were associated with the stress caused by tourist-host interaction, disrespectful behaviour by some tourists, jealousy among community members, and growth pressures of government organisations. In addition, a gap was identified between tourist expectations and the reality of the Manyallaluk tourism product offered.

Despite these negative sociocultural impacts, the study found that tourism in general was perceived as positive, which was also reflected in the respondents' plans for future tourism development in Manyallaluk. All Aboriginal Manyallaluk participants wished to see further tourism development in Manyallaluk and an increase in visitor numbers.
Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Manyllaluk community residents and all employees of the Manyllaluk Aboriginal Corporation that were involved in this research without whom this study would not have been possible.

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**Note**

In this chapter the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to Australian indigenous peoples, encompassing many diverse and different groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989 and other Commonwealth legislation 'Aboriginal' is defined simply as: 'a person who is a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia'. The word 'indigenous' is these days increasingly used as a term that embraces both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders (AUSC 1990).
Appendix 1.2: Tiwi Tours – Copy of Tour Brochure

For your tours to Bathurst Island we provide:
- Return flights to Darwin
- Accommodated tour vehicle
- Morning tea and lunch on One Day Tour
- All meals & camping equipment or accommodation on Two Day Tours
- Iced water throughout the tours
- Competent Tiwi/NT resident guide
- Detailed and informative commentary

You Should Bring...
- Camera with plenty of film
- Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and insect repellent
- Swimsuit and towel
- Personal water bottle
- In a small, soft bag - no suitcases please.

CONDITIONS OF TRAVEL
Tiwi Tours reserves the right to alter the itinerary of its tours if necessary. Tours may be cancelled if tourist, weather or cultural conditions dictate. No refunds will be given under these conditions.

Any personal expenses incurred by a passenger as a result of any delay, curtailment or alteration of any tour, whether caused by flooding, mechanical defect or any cause are the responsibility of the passenger.

LIABILITY
Tiwi Tours cannot accept any responsibility for any injury, illness or the loss or damage to personal articles including luggage. We strongly recommend that travel insurance, including cancellation cover, be arranged by all passengers.

CANCELLATIONS
A cancellation fee of 50% applies if less than seven (7) days notice is given and a 100% cancellation fee applies for cancellations within 24 hours of travel.

VALIDITY OF PRICES
Fares quoted are in Australian Currency including GST and may be changed without notice. Fares are valid from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006.

CLOTHING
Clothes should be hard-wearing, light and comfortable. We suggest you also bring strong, comfortable shoes or sneakers, swimming costume and towel, a hat, personal water bottle, personal medical and toiletry requirements, insect repellent and sunscreen.

PRIVACY
While the community is accessible to Bathurst Island, please respect the privacy of individuals and families during your visit. All permits to visit will be arranged by Aussie Adventure Holidays. No alcohol is available on these tours and cannot be transported by, nor consumed anywhere near the tour area.

Tiwi Tours
PO Box 37515 
Werrinbelle NT 0821 Australia 
S2 M itchell Street 
Darwin  
1300 721 365

Email: res@aussieadventure.com.au
Web Site: www.aussieadventure.com.au
ABN: 22 103 585 904
You haven't seen the Territory until you've seen the Tiwi Islands

**One Day Tour**

Tour Departs Monday to Friday

After a scenic flight, you arrive at Bathurst Island. Here you are met by your Guide to be taken on a journey through the progressive community of Ngulu, visiting the museum and Early Mission Precinct with its unique Twi-style Catholic Church. Be taken through the arts and crafts centres and see the artists' work, with the opportunity to purchase original pieces at wholesale prices. A highlight of the day is spending time with the Tiwi Ladies and our guides enjoying billy tea and damper. Witness traditional totem dances and a smoking ceremony, and hear the meaning behind them. Later, if conditions permit, visit a local waterhole for a swim. Visit a Tiwi Burial Site and learn about some of the complex rituals associated with the Pukamani Poles (Burial Poles).

Tour operates March - November.

Price includes, tour, iced water, morning tea, lunch and Land Council entry permit.

**ONE DAY TIWI TOUR**

**ADULT:** $175 Land Content $150 Return Flight

Children 3-15yo $155 Land Content $120 Return Flight

The tours depart from Darwin Airport. Check in is 7.10am for 8.00am departure and arrive Bathurst Island at 8.30am. Arrival back at Darwin Airport is approximated 5.15pm.

**Two Day Tours**

Tour Departs Tuesday and Thursday

**HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE**

Spend two magical days on Bathurst Island & experience the history of the Tiwi People and share in their rich culture. Join the One Day tour as described opposite, then enjoy dinner in a remote location before spending the night on Bathurst Island. Spend some time exploring the remote areas and rugged coastline of Bathurst Island with your Tiwi guide to get an insight into how the Tiwi People interact with their island home. There will be many opportunities to see a diverse range of native wildlife, so don’t forget your camera! Learn about traditional uses of the native flora and fauna. Visit T深深utu Waterfall and cool off in the refreshing water before returning to Darwin. All meals and accommodation included.

Tours operate with a minimum of 4 passengers.

Price includes: touring for 2 days, all camping equipment or air conditioned accommodation, iced water, all meals and Land Council entry permit.

**PLEASE NOTE:** price does not include transfers to and from Darwin Airport.

**TWO DAY CAMPING SAFARI**

Tour Departs Tuesday and Thursday May to October

Camping by a breathtaking lake in a remote location in an established campground with toilets and showers.

**ADULT:** $445 Land Content $150 Return Flight

Children 3-15yo $345 Land Content $120 Return Flight

**TWO DAY ACCOMMODATED TOUR**

Tour Departs Tuesday and Thursday May to October

**ADULT:** $475 Land Content $150 Return Flight

Children 3-15yo $375 Land Content $120 Return Flight

**TWO DAY TIWI TOUR**

**Connecting Flights**

Depart Darwin to Tiwi Flights: 11.15am or 11.10am

Depart Tiwi to Darwin Flights: 2.45pm or 3.55pm

**AUSSEL TURBO**

1300 721 365

QUALITY SMALL GROUP TOURS
Appendix 1.3: Manyallaluk Aboriginal Cultural Tours – Copy of Tour Brochure
The Dreaming Place

Manyallaluk is an Aboriginal owned and operated tourism business which provides visitors with the opportunity to learn about our culture in a genuine family-type setting. It is home for 150 Aboriginal people of Mayali, Rembarrnga, Dalabon and Jawoyn language groups.

Our community is working hard to create an independent and sustainable lifestyle for our people.

The name Manyallaluk (Man-yalla-look) means Frog Dreaming and refers to a traditional site just to the east of the community.

Manyallaluk covers 3,000 sq km of land, much of it rugged and remote. It is bordered by Arnhem Land and Nitmiluk and Kakadu National Parks. The area is home to abundant Top End flora and fauna.

Formerly Eva Valley Station, Manyallaluk has preserved several of the picturesque old station buildings. Many of our people were born here when the station was still in operation. We have an intimate knowledge of our country, the local history and our culture. Visitors have the unique opportunity to share with us in our environment.

The Manyallaluk experience is interactive and hands-on. All of our tours are designed for you to become involved and have a go yourself. Try your hand at basket weaving, spear throwing or lighting fires with sticks in the traditional way. Most of all come and enjoy yourself!

You will remember your visit to Manyallaluk for a long time. It is a unique experience you are unlikely to get anywhere else so please.........

Come share our culture!
One Day Cultural Experience

Tour Code: MNY1
Departures: 01 April - 30 November
Mon-Fri, April to October
Mon, Wed, Fri, October to November

(Departure days in April are subject to weather conditions)
Departs Katherine accommodation 0800/0815 hours
Minimum of 2 passengers
Price: $143.00 adult, $78.50 child
Inclusions: Interaction with Aboriginal people, BBQ lunch, billy tea, damper, cold water, souvenir mug, transfers to and from Manyallaluk

The Manyallaluk One Day Cultural Experience begins from your Katherine accommodation between 0800/0815 hours. The drive to Manyallaluk takes approximately 90 minutes.

Upon arrival at Manyallaluk you will be greeted by your Aboriginal guides. After a refreshing cup of billy tea the morning is spent on an informative walk where you will be shown bush tucker and medicines that are in season at the time.

On your return, while waiting for lunch and the damper to cook, there is time for a swim in the watering fed swimming hole.

After a sumptuous BBQ lunch we begin the afternoon activities which include traditional bark painting, fire lighting, spear throwing and basket weaving. You are welcomed and encouraged to participate in all of these activities.

Before returning to Katherine you have the opportunity to visit our Art and Craft Centre which has artefacts from local artists available for purchase.

A digeridoo demonstration & the chance to have a go. You yourself conclude your visit to Manyallaluk. We return to Katherine, arriving at approximately 1730 hours.

One Day Self-Drive Cultural Experience

Tour Code: MNY1-S
Departures: 01 April - 30 November
Mon-Fri, April to October
Mon, Wed, Fri, October to November

(Departure days in April are subject to weather conditions)
Departs Manyallaluk tourism area at 0930 hours
Minimum of 2 passengers
Price: $110.00 adult, $66.50 child
Inclusions: Interaction with Aboriginal people, BBQ lunch, billy tea, damper, cold water, souvenir mug

The Manyallaluk One Day Self-Drive Cultural Experience allows you to drive out to Manyallaluk and spend the day with the local Aboriginal people, sharing our culture and giving you a hands on experience you’ll never forget.

The tour itinerary is the same as described in the One Day Cultural Experience, concluding at approximately 1600 hours.

Why not take this opportunity to bring some camping equipment and stay overnight in our tranquil surroundings before heading on to your next destination!

Camping Fees - Per night

Camping: $6.00 adult  $3.50 child
Power sites: $17.60 (2 people)
$6.00 extra adult  $3.50 extra child
Odyssey Tours & Safaris
in association with
Manyallaluk Aboriginal Tours presents the

Three Day Nipbamjen Wilderness Escape

Tour Code: 3NWE
Departures: May - November
Mon & Fri
Departs Katherine accommodation 0800 hours and Katherine Airport upon arrival of flight.
Minimum of 2 passengers
Price: $1,470.00 per person ex Darwin
       $995.00 per person ex Katherine

A special opportunity to visit these remote Aboriginal lands in a small intimate group. Spend 3 days with local Aboriginal guides and learn about their traditional lifestyles, hike in pristine wilderness, swim in natural waterholes and soak up the tranquil surrounds. Travel will be by 4WD. Your accommodation is a comfortable yet simple bush safari camp exclusive to this tour. This is an experience you will remember for a lifetime!

Day 1  Your Odyssey Safaris guide will meet you at your accommodation in Katherine (or Katherine Airport if you were on the flight from Darwin). We begin our journey to the Manyallaluk Aboriginal community. On arrival at Manyallaluk we will be met by our Aboriginal guides with whom we will spend part of the day, interacting and sharing in their traditional culture. After a cup of billy tea we take an informative bush walk to learn about the traditional uses and names for various native plants and animals. We have the opportunity to try our hand at basket weaving before a sumptuous BBQ lunch. Before leaving the community we have a go at spear throwing, then head deep into the bush to our safari camp at Nipbamjen. There will be opportunity for a refreshing swim before dinner. Tonight enjoy sitting around the campfire with your guides, learning about a culture that dates back beyond 60,000 years, before retiring to your safari hut amidst the tranquility of the outback.

Day 2  Nipbamjen is a very special place, away from the crowds, near the southwest border of the mysterious Arnhem Land. Your guides will teach you about the country, its history and its people. We spend much of our day exploring ancient and fascinating Aboriginal rock art and ceremonial sites, while your Aboriginal guide shares stories and mythology. Some sites we visit by 4WD, some on foot - depending on the time of year and your preferences. This afternoon take time out to relax beside the clear waters of the Nipbamjen waterfall, absorbing the spirit of the place. We return to the safari camp and enjoy a delicious candlelit dinner and dreamtime stories.

Day 3  Your choice for a leisurely start to the day or an early rise to listen to the dawn chorus of birds. Your guides will prepare you a hearty breakfast before heading out on some further explorations. Perhaps we’ll spot some wildlife along the way, maybe even water buffalo – a feral animal but still a noble and spectacular beast. The rugged countryside and the serene environment will etch lifetime memories for you. After lunch we start our journey back to Katherine arriving first at the Katherine Airport for return flights to Darwin, then on to Katherine accommodation.
Climate
Our operating months are April through November.
Optimal weather conditions are from May to early September with low humidity and cool nights.
Temperature range: 20°C - 35°C.
Before May and after September the weather can be very hot.
Temperature range: 32°C - 40°C.

What to bring
Wide brimmed hat
Sturdy and closed shoes for walking
Personal water bottle
Small day pack for personal items
Swimming costume & towel
T-shirt for swimming in
Insect repellent for mosquitoes
Camera & film

Manyallaluk - The Dreaming Place
ABN 77 009 650 433
PMB 134 Katherine NT 0852 Australia
Telephone: (08) 8975 4727
International Telephone: + 61 8 8975 4727
Fax: (08) 8975 4724
International Fax: + 61 8 8975 4724

Tour Bookings: 1800 644 727
Email: manyallaluk.tours@bigpond.com
www.manyallaluk.com
Art & Craft Centre: (08) 8975 4306
Email: manyallaluk.art.centre@bigpond.com

Tour Conditions
Manyallaluk - The Dreaming Place - We accept no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal articles, including luggage. Some tours are soft adventure tours into remote areas. Persons taking these tours should be in reasonable health and fitness and be carrying all required medication.

BAGGAGE - Please limit your luggage to one medium sized soft bag.

Manyallaluk - The Dreaming Place - reserves the right to change itineraries and vehicles as we see fit, subject to road and weather conditions and cannot accept the responsibility for withdrawal or subsequent change, details or services of independent operators.

BOOKING DETAILS - A deposit of 50% of the total tour cost is due within 7 days from the receipt of our confirmation. Final payment to be received no later than 14 days prior to departure.

CANCELLATION FEES
Cancellations made up to 14 days prior to departure: No fee.
Cancellations made between 14 and 7 day prior to departure: A fee equal to the deposit will be charged.
Cancellations made less than 7 days prior to departure: 100% fee.

Please respect our culture by understanding that tours may be subject to cancellation without prior notice due to our need to attend to private cultural matters. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Painting Manuel Pamkal | Photos Wildlife Photography | Border Mavis Jumbiri
Appendix 1.4: Anangu Tours – Copies of Tour Brochures
(2006 and 2007 Brochure)
Tour Uluru (Ayers Rock) with traditional Aboriginal Guides. Our small exclusive excursions take you away from the crowds.

Agangu Tours is owned by the traditional Aboriginal owners of Uluru (Ayers Rock). All tours are led by local Aboriginal (Agangu) guides, who accompany visitors to the most beautiful locations at Uluru (Ayers Rock). We offer very special insights into the real and living culture of Uluru and its people.

Agangu Guides are traditional Aboriginal people who have spent their entire lives living around Uluru, immersed in Agangu Culture. On our tours we combine a unique cultural experience with the opportunity to view sunrise and sunset at Uluru.

Tour options include hotel transfers from Ayers Rock Resort in our small coach, or if you have your own transport, from the Cultural Centre in the Park.

Agangu Tours is one of Australia's most awarded tour companies, winning the Legacy World Tourism Award for Heritage Tourism in 2004, inducted into the Australian Tourism Hall of Fame in 2003 after winning 3 consecutive awards, and winning its 8th Northern Territory Bridga Award for Tourism Excellence in 2004.

**MORNING TOURS**

**Aboriginal Uluru Tour**

This is one of the most famous tours of Uluru. On this small group tour you will enjoy sunrise, a restaurant breakfast overlooking Uluru and the Liru Walk with Aboriginal guides. On the famous Liru Walk you will retrace the path of the Liru Ancestors through the bushland near Uluru. Hear the tragic fate of Lungkata (Blue Tongue Lizard Man), who is still lying at the base of Uluru. See demonstrations of ancient bush skills such as making kites (Bush glue), making fire without matches and carving wooden tools with only a sharpened stone. Learn to hold and throw a spear.

**Price Adults $119  Child $79**

*Options: Continue on the Mala Walk or enjoy extra time in the Cultural Centre. Extra charges apply: See Multi Tour Passes.*

**Mala Walk Tour**

Don't want to get up early for sunrise, or you are booked on a Sunrise Camel Ride or Uluru Sunrise Breakfast and still want to visit the rock? This is the tour for you. This tour to Uluru includes a vehicle based tour of the rock and then an Aboriginal Guided Mala Walk. Learn the sensitive story of the Mala (Hare Wallaby) people who lived at Uluru, with their friend the tjigarli (marsupial mole). Along the Mala Walk visit the many painted caves of the Mala people, and learn how they lived and prepared for ceremonies at the base of Uluru. Visit sacred Kanyu Gorge, a quiet water hole at the base of a dramatic sandstone cliff.

**Adult $69  Child $46**

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**TOUR NAME**  | **PRICE**  | **DEPARTS FROM**
---|---|---
Aboriginal Uluru Tour | $119 79 ASK | Resort
Mala Walk Tour | $69 46 ASK | Resort
Liru Walk | $58 $29 $174 | Cultural Centre
Kurju Sunset Tour | $69 62 ASK | Resort
Dot Painting Workshop | $79 56 ASK | Resort
Dot Painting | $58 29 ASK | Cultural Centre
Kurju Walk | $56 29 $174 | Cultural Centre
Agangu Culture Pass | $189 127 ASK | Resort
Uluru Kata Tjuta Pass | $185 $119 ASK | Resort
Kurju & Morning Kata Tjuta Pass | $169 99 ASK | Resort
Aboriginal Uluru & Mala Tour | $160 106 ASK | Resort
Dot Painting & Kurju Sunset Tour | $143 99 ASK | Resort

**TOURS DO NOT INCLUDE NATIONAL PARK ENTRY TICKETS**
AFTERNOON TOURS

Kunyiya Sunset Tour

Aboriginal Guides host a fascinating walk into the base of Uluru, and an insight into the Uluru Cultural Centre. Tour includes free time in the Cultural Centre before meeting your Anangu guide who will provide an introduction to Aboriginal Law and Culture. With your Aboriginal Guide, visit caves at the base of Uluru where the ancestors left paintings in time worn ochres. See the beautiful Mutijulu Waterhole, whose life giving waters have been drunk by generations of Aboriginal people. Discover local bush foods, and hear tales of desert survival. After the tour you have time to watch the sunset over Uluru.

Adults $89  Child $42
Options: Combine this tour with the Dot Painting Workshop for an entire afternoon with Aboriginal guides and artists.
Charges apply, see Multi Tour Passes.

Dot Painting Workshop

Like to learn about Aboriginal art and culture from Aboriginal artists? Join Aboriginal artists at the Uluru Cultural Centre for a fun introduction to Aboriginal art and the chance to join the artists to try your own hand. Aboriginal Guides provide an introduction to their culture and how this is expressed in their art works. Join the artists to complete your own painting, which you can take home as a memento of your experience.

Adult $79  Child $56
Tour returns in time to join Sounds of Silence and other evening activities. Alternatively you may choose to book on the Kunyiya Sunset Tour, which departs after the Dot Painting workshop and returns to the resort after sunset. See Multi Tour Passes.

Multi Tour Passes

Choose from the multi tour passes listed below or combine any of our day tours and earn a 20% discount on your second tour - conditions apply.

Anangu Culture Pass

For the Ultimate Tour of Uluru combine the Aboriginal Uluru Tour & Kunyiya Sunset Tours, a complete Aboriginal Guided Uluru touring package at an economical rate. Includes Cultural Centre Breakfast. See Aboriginal Uluru Tour and Kunyiya Sunset Tour for tour descriptions. Options include doing the tours over one or two days, spending free time between tours walking around Uluru, at the Cultural Centre or transferring back to Ayers Rock Resort.

Adult $189  Child $127
See table for departure details

Kunyiya & Kata Tjuta Pass

Enjoy Uluru and Kata Tjuta at the quiet times. This 24 hour pass combines our Kunyiya Sunset Tour and the AAT Kings Morning Kata Tjuta Tour, ensuring you miss the main crowds and have the opportunity to walk the Valley of the Winds throughout the year.

Adults $169  Child $99
See table for departure details

Dot Painting and Kunyiya Sunset Tour

Combines the Kunyiya Sunset Tour and Dot Painting Workshop for a full afternoon experience with Aboriginal guides. Tour includes transfer to Cultural Centre for Dot Painting Workshop, then continues on the Aboriginal guided Kunyiya Walk, before watching the sunset over Uluru.

Adult $143  Child $99
See table for departure details

Aboriginal Uluru Tour and Mala Walk

Combines the Aboriginal Uluru Tour with the Mala Walk for a full morning Aboriginal experience. Tour includes transfers, sunrise, extensive rock tour, tour to Kata Tjuta with AAT Kings. See table for departure details

Uluru - Kata Tjuta Pass

Sunrise and Sunset, Uluru and Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) in 24 hours! Enjoy a morning with Aboriginal guides on the Aboriginal Uluru Tour and an afternoon tour to Kata Tjuta with AAT Kings.

Adult $185  Child $119
See table for departure details

DEPARTURE TIME | DURATION | WALK
--- | --- | ---
APR-SEP | MAR & OCT | NOV-FEB | LENGTH | LENGTH
One Hour Prior to Sunrise | 4.5 - 5 Hours | 2km easy
9am | 8am | 8am | 3 - 3.5 Hours | 1.5km easy
8.30am | 8am | 7.30am | 2 Hours | 2km easy
2.30pm | 2.30pm | 3.30pm | 4.5 - 5 Hours | 1.5km easy
1.30pm | 1.30pm | 2.30pm | 3 - 3.5 Hours | Nil
2pm | 2pm | 3pm | 2 Hours | Nil
3.30pm | 3.30pm | 4.30pm | 2 Hours | 1.5km easy
One Hour Prior to Sunrise | 2 Half Days
Check with Tour Desk | 2 Half Days
Check with Tour Desk | 2 Half Days
One Hour Prior to Sunrise | 5.5 - 6 Hours | 3.5km easy
1.30pm | 1.30pm | 2.30pm | 4.5 - 6 Hours | 1.5 km easy

Family Rates: Max. 2 Adults & 4 Children. Child rate applies to child 0-15. Winds tend free of any condition.

-319-
Tours from the Cultural Centre

If you have your own transport or are using the shuttle services you can join these tours at the Cultural Centre. All tours from the Cultural Centre are the same rate:
Adults $58  child $29  Family $174
(Family rate 2 adults, 4 children maximum)
All tours depart from the Cultural Centre Touch Wall & are approximately 2 hours duration.

Liru Walk
Join an Aboriginal guide at the Cultural Centre for the famous Liru Walk, which relates the story of the Liru Ancestor through the bushland to Uluru. Hear the tragic tale of Lurkarta (Blue Tongue Lizard Man), who still lies at the base of Uluru. See demonstrations of ancient bush skills such as making kit (bush glue), try making fire without matches andanvasing wooden tools with only a sharpened stone, and learn to hold and throw a spear.

Time
April-Sept 8.30am  Mar & Oct 8.00am  Nov-Feb 7.30am

Kunytja Walk
Aboriginal Guides host a fascinating walk into the base of Uluru and a visit to the Uluru Cultural Centre. Tour starts at the Cultural Centre where you met your Aboriginal guide for an introduction to Aboriginal Law, before visiting caves at the base of Uluru where ancestors left paintings of time-worn ochres. See the beautiful Mutitjulu Waterhole, discover local bush foods, and hear tales of desert survival. After the tour you have time to watch the sunset over Uluru.

Time
March-Oct 3.30pm  Nov-Feb 4.30pm

Dot Painting Workshop
Join Aboriginal artists at the Uluru Cultural Centre for a fun introduction to Aboriginal art and the chance to join the artists to try your own hand. Aboriginal Guides provide an introduction to their culture and how this is expressed in their art works. Join the artists to complete your own painting, which you can take home as a memento of your experience.

Time
March-Oct 2.00pm  Nov-Feb 3.00pm

Disclaimer
While tours go ahead in wet weather, tours may be altered to suit the weather conditions. Please also be aware that paintings and stories are sacred to our people and we ask that you respect and not take photographs. The tour is subject to operating conditions. We reserve the right to cancel any tour if all participants do not arrive on time. The tour is subject to a minimum of 4 people. Conditions are subject to change without notice.

Cancellations
Cancellations up to 14 days prior to tour will be accepted, subject to availability.

Bookings: (08) 8956 2123
Bookings can be made at the Anangu Tours desk within the Ayers Rock Resort Touring and Information Centre, at your hotel tour desk, or through your local travel agent. For more information about Anangu Tours visit our website at: www.anangutours.com.au
Fax: (08) 8956 3133  Email: reservations@anangutours.com.au

Anangu Tours Pty Ltd  ABN 89 069 952 122
Brochure valid to 31/03/2006
Tour Uluru (Ayers Rock) with traditional Aboriginal Guides. Our small exclusive groups take you away from the crowds.

Anangu Tours is owned by the traditional Aboriginal owners of Uluru (Ayers Rock). All tours are led by local Anangu (Aboriginal) guides, who accompany visitors to the most beautiful locations at Uluru (Ayers Rock). Whether you seek insight into the real and living culture of Uluru and its people.

Anangu Guides are traditional Aboriginal people who have spent their entire lives living around Uluru, immersed in Anangu culture. On our tours you combine a unique cultural experience with the opportunity to view Uluru and Wattutat at dusk.

Tour options include Hotel transfers from Alice Springs, Black Mountain and Tjoritja (Waterhole Tour) and 360° interpretation of Anangu Country in our small coaches, or if you have your own transport from the Cultural Centre in the Park.

Anangu Tours is one of Australia's oldest owned tour companies, winning the World Tourism Awards for best Aboriginal Tours in 2004 (selected into the Australian Tourist Hall of Fame in 2003 after winning the competitive awards), as well as winning the Northern Territory Pride of Place Award for Tourism Jewels in 2004.

Discover Uluru with Aboriginal Guides

Anangu Tours

You've made it to Uluru!
Now don't compromise, travel with the best.
Join our World Tourism Award Winning Tours
Sunrise & Sunset Tours • Small Groups • Hotel Transfers
Friendly Local Guides • Dot Painting Workshops • Tours from $58

Bookings: (08) 8950 3030

Please confirm bookings 24 hours prior to touring
Bookings can be made at the Anangu Tours desk within the Ayers Rock Resort Angove and Information Centre, at your hotel tour desk or through your local travel agent. For more information about Anangu Tours visit our website at

www.ananguwati.com.au

Fax: (08) 8950 3034 • Email: ananguwatiinfo@bigpond.com.au

Ayers Rock Resort P.O. Box 1400 • Yulara • P.O. Box 377 • Alice Springs • NT 0871

Brochure valid to 31/03/2007
MORNING TOURS

Aboriginal Uluru Tour
This is one of the most famous tours of Uluru. On this small group tour you will enjoy a guided red dirt breakfast over looking Uluru and the Liru Walk with Aboriginal guides. On the famous Liru Walk you will reflect the path of the Liru. Ancestors through the bushland near Uluru, near the base of Three Sisters - Blue Tongue Lizard Country, who is not only the base of Uluru but demonstrations of ancient bush skills such as making brolgas, making fire and carving wooden tools with only a sharpened stone, Learn how to hold and throw a spear. 

Departures: 8.00am - 8.30am, 9.30am - 10.00am, 11.30am - 12.00pm, 1.30pm - 2.00pm
Location: Uluru National Park
Duration: 5.5 hours - Walk Length: 2km near

Kuniya House Tour
An informative walking talk for Uluru and the Liru Clinic people. 

Departures: 8.30am, 9.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm
Duration: 3 hours - Walk Length: 1.5km near

Tours from the Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre
If you have your own transport or are taking a shuttle bus and you can join these tours at the Cultural Centre. All tours from the Cultural Centre are the same rate.

Adults $35 Child $25

Kuniya Land Walk
Join an Aboriginal guide at the Uluru Cultural Centre for a fascinating Liru Walk, which is part of the Liru Ancestors' Country formed by the Liru Ancestors through Uluru and the base of the Three Sisters. Demonstrations of ancient bush skills such as making a brolga, making fire and carving wooden tools with only a sharpened stone, Learn how to hold and throw a spear. 

Departures: 8.30am, 9.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm
Duration: 8.5 hours - Walk Length: 25km near

Liru Walk
Join an Aboriginal guide at the Uluru Cultural Centre for a fascinating Liru Walk, which is part of the Liru Ancestors' Country formed by the Liru Ancestors through Uluru and the base of the Three Sisters. Demonstrations of ancient bush skills such as making a brolga, making fire and carving wooden tools with only a sharpened stone, Learn how to hold and throw a spear. 

Departures: 8.30am, 9.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm
Duration: 7.5 hours - Walk Length: 25km near

Tours from the Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre

Afternoon Tours

Kuniya Sunset Tour
An afternoon walking tour at Uluru and the Liru Clinic people. 

Departures: 4.30pm, 5.30pm, 6.30pm, 7.30pm - Walk Length: 1.5km near

Dot Painting Workshop
Like to learn about Aboriginal art and culture? An Aboriginal artist at the Uluru Cultural Centre will offer a free introduction to Aboriginal art and the chance to join the artists in their own home. Aboriginal artists will provide an introduction to their culture and how this is expressed in their art works. Join the artists to create your own painting, which you can take home as a souvenir. 

Departures: 3.30pm, 4.30pm, 5.30pm - Walk Length: 1.5km near

Multi Tour Passes

Get the most from your tour with a Multi Tour Pass. Choose from the Multi Tour Pass below or combine any of our day tours and save a 30% discount on your second and subsequent tour conditions apply.

- Aboriginal Culture Pass
- Uluru & Kata Tjuta Pass
- Uluru Kata Tjuta & Kuniya Sunset Tour
- Uluru Uluru & Kata Tjuta & Kuniya Sunset Tour

Tours do not include national park entry tickets.
Appendix 2.1: Example of Tjapukai’s Website Promotion

See Australia's Culture Through Our Eyes

Frequently Asked Questions

How far is the complex from the city?
Tjapukai is 17 km from the Cairns city centre and is easily accessible by car or bus.

Do you have any animals?
Yes! We do have a few animals in the park; you can sit by the lake or stand on the bridge and feed the native freshwater turtles, wild ducks and huge eels (snake-like creature).

Do you do pick ups?
Yes! Our shuttle bus picks up from most hotels, motels, backpacker accommodation and caravan parks.

Do you sell didgeridoos?
Yes! Our fine art gallery and retail shop has a wide range of Didgeridoos and artifacts on sale.

Does the train depart from here?
No. Trains and planes do not depart from Tjapukai.

Can you buy tickets for Skyrail and train here?
Yes! You can purchase tickets for both attractions at Tjapukai.
How long does it take to get to Tjapukai from Port Douglas?
Approx 45 minutes to 1 hour (south) depending on how much lead you have in your foot.

How do I get there from the city?
Head north along Sheridan Street, which then converges into the Captain Cook Highway. Once you have passed through the 3rd roundabout you should be able to see a sign that will direct you to Tjapukai. Once you get to the fourth roundabout you take a left turn and you will see the entrance to Tjapukai.

What discounts do you have? Are YHA discounts accepted?
Yes! 10% discounts for YHA members and students (student identification must be shown).

Is it true that women are not allowed to play the didgeridoo or even touch it?
In the Tjapukai culture and beliefs the Didgeridoo is representative of a phallic symbol. It is believed that when a man makes a didgeridoo he places a curse on the Didgeridoo to indicate it is his. If another man plays it he will get sick, if a woman is to play she would get pregnant.

Is the business government owned or private?
Privately owned and is also majority owned by Aboriginal people.

What is the nature of the business?
Education and entertainment within Tourism.

What do you sell?
An experience that is educational and entertaining.

What is Tjapukai’s Mission and Vision?
Our Mission is to continue to be the world’s leading Aboriginal Cultural Park. Our Mission is to entertain and educate our visitor’s profitability.

Does the business have any benefits to indigenous culture?
Yes,
- Greater benefits for being a role model for Aboriginal enterprise throughout the country.
- Re-birth of the language.
- Provides direct employment and financial benefits to a great many Aboriginal families.
- Gaining skills in a sympathetic workplace that will encourage next generation Aboriginals gained full time employment.

How effective is the business to the point of meeting the needs of indigenous people?
It is a long continuing process that requires the effort and energy of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff at Tjapukai.

Do the staff have a knowledge of aboriginal culture?
Working at Tjapukai is a multi cultural experience where non-Indigenous have the opportunity to learn a great deal from the Indigenous and vice versa.

Do you try and educate the customers?
Everything at Tjapukai has been designed to raise awareness and educate the customer.

Do you train your employees?
We have on going training and there are many training opportunities available at Tjapukai to enhance skills and abilities such as teaching numeracy, literacy, budgeting, lecture training which gives confidence and ability to present their culture.

DJARRI NYURRA – Welcome to our place.

Tourism is a powerful force for change. It can shape opinions and break barriers. Tjapukai is more than just Australia’s most awarded cultural attraction. It is reconciliation in practice. There are so many things we want to tell you about us, but here are a few points that you might find of interest to pass onto your group.

It was not until the 1967 Referendum that the Aboriginal people were classified as Australian citizens and could vote, have
a bank account, make their own marriage arrangements, buy land, obtain a passport and were included in the Census. These people themselves are still trying to come to terms with the 21st century.

Customer Expectations

Aboriginal people make up less than 2% of Australia's population of 20,000,000. There were once more than 200 tribes and more than 750 dialects spoken, most of which are now lost. The unemployment rate for Aboriginal people is 17.5% (compared to 7.3% for non-Aboriginal Australians) and the life expectancy for Aboriginal people is 56 years for males and 62 years for females (compared to 76 years and 82 years respectively for non-Aboriginal Australians). These are the facts.

Much of the imagery presented about Aboriginals is romanticized and misleading customers to expect an experience that is far different to the actual reality. Stories of an Aboriginal person in today's society. Brochures present a stereotypical Aboriginal person standing on one leg holding a spear with the sun setting over Uluru behind him.

Visitors then expect to find this in Australia and are often let down and disappointed by what they do find. The Australian Aboriginal is unlikely to be seen in towns and villages in a top hat and body paint. The variety of Aboriginal experiences in Australia is still very limited. Customer service and tourism itself are very new concepts in a country that still has little Aboriginal representation in many fields. There are still no Aboriginal doctors and very, very few Aboriginal people in business. So, in fact, the greatest difficulty Aboriginal tourism in Australia faces today is getting customers to understand what to expect.

What is our visitor REALLY looking for? An encounter or experience that is natural, authentic, personally delivered, not 'commercialised' and one that represents the Aboriginal people as they were. They are also expecting all Aboriginal people to look like the one they saw in the brochure.

Then, they arrive at Tjapukai and have to re-evaluate and determine what the Tjapukai experience is worth on their own assessment scale.

The Myths

Myth #1: The Aboriginal people at Tjapukai are not real Aboriginals.

In Europe, the Greek people look nothing like the Swedish people, so why would the Aboriginal person from the Central Desert look like someone from the Rainforest of Kasada? The Central Desert is very hot and sun baked, an environment that means striking long distances in search for water. People would be black from the sun and long legged. Rainforest Aboriginals lived for many centuries under a dense enforest canopy with little exposure to sun and lots of water and therefore are smaller in stature and not as dark. Is one more Aboriginal than the other? Of course not, and visitors understand this once it is explained to them.

It is also important to realise that for generations Australia's Aboriginal people were subject to a policy that was designed to assimilate half and quarter caste children back into 'white' society by a government-backed breeding out program and this is another reason for lighter skinned Aboriginal people.

Myth #2: Tjapukai is not a natural experience.

Let's be honest - you're not going to wander into the bush in Australia and run into a tribe of people who just happen to be conducting a ceremony just for you! Tjapukai re-creates - authentically - what might happen if you could.

Myth #3: Tjapukai is too commercial.

The reality is that as soon as there are more than two people having an experience that occurs at the same time every day and uses paid presenters, it's commercial.

Anyway, why shouldn't the Aboriginal people profit by presenting their culture? There are so few things that can provide them with any sustainable income and which allow them to escape from the drip feed of government subsidy. Commerciality is not measured by the size of a building or the regularity of presentations - it is determined by the core of the operation and Tjapukai's core is pure.

On the surface, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park may appear commercial - just another tourist attraction - but scratch that surface and you will discover not only reconciliation in action, but also a people proud of their culture and enthusiastic to share this culture and their achievements with the world. As an insider, you become a part of sharing this process.

Myth #4: Tjapukai is not authentic.

There is nothing more authentic in Aboriginal tourism today than Tjapukai. Everything that visitors experience has been co-created, co-designed, co-operated and co-ordinated with the approval and input of elders and tribal members of the owners - the Tjapukai Aboriginal Corporation. Did you see those lovely turtle tiles in the bathroom? They're designed by a Tjapukai artist and produced locally in Karumba. The same also applies with the beautiful artworks at the Reception Restaurant and in the Mapa Space (which also features authentic, ancient Tjapukai tribal artefacts that were previously housed in the State museum). We make our own music and sell it in the Gallery. We write our own scripts from our own tribal legends. We make our
The Facts

The presentations in Tjapukai's theatres are faithful and true to the Tjapukai people's own story. The history of the Tjapukai people is shown in the History Theatre, and this film was factually researched for one year before the scripts were developed. The Creation Theatre shows the true Creation myth as told by the tribal elders. All of the art on site is typical of Tjapukai and Tjapukai alone. It is all painted by Tjapukai people - right down to those bathroom tiles!

- For many people, Tjapukai is their first job.
- Tjapukai is a privately owned business. No government money is used to operate the park.
- The park is an equity partnership between the Wirganda and Djabugay people (who have the majority holding) and various other shareholders.
- The Djabugay and Wirganda Tribal Aboriginal Councils own the park's 25 acres.
- The Tribal Councils and Elders of the community have overseen all content of the park to ensure its authenticity, and receive royalties as well as a share of the profits.
- In point of fact, Tjapukai is the only company authorized to portray the local Aboriginal cultural in this area.
- Tjapukai is the largest private employer of indigenous people in Australia. 85% of the 100 staff at Tjapukai are Aboriginal.
- Tjapukai began as a partnership between black and white Australians. Don and Judy Freeman, David and Cindy Hudson and 6 young Tjapukai men started it in 1987. It was organic and grew from the seed of theatre and music. They had lots of passion and little money. From a simple basement theatre show, Tjapukai grew into what it is today.
- The children and grandchildren of some of the original performers are now employed at Tjapukai. The dream of jobs for the next generation has become a reality.
- The Tjapukai language - along with many other Aboriginal dialects throughout Australia - was almost lost. Only a few elders could speak the language until this generation. Coinciding with the development of the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park was the documentation of the Tjapukai language that is now spoken in the Creation Theatre and, increasingly, among the performers.

Awards

We are very proud Tjapukai is the most awarded attraction in Australia, with more than 25 major awards including:

- 7 National Tourism Awards, 10 State Tourism Awards
- The ATEC Award as Australia's Top Attraction
- The PATA Gold Award as the Best Presentation of Culture in the Asia-Pacific region
- Voted Most Popular Venue by the Institute of Australian Tour Guides.
- 2005: Winner of Queensland Tourism Award for Best Significant Tourist Attraction, The Queensland Premier's Award for Reconciliation and The Gurrumul Award for Outstanding Contribution to Aboriginal Tourism.

World Tour Performances

The Tjapukai dancers have performed hundreds of times in over 30 counties all over the world. Tjapukai has performed twice for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and a number of times at Australia's premier tourism showcase, the Australian Tourism Exchange.

- 1989: First International Tour, France & New Zealand
- 1990: World tour with Australian Tourist Commission, Qantas and Ansett. 58 shows in 60 days on four continents.
- 1990: World Expo in Japan
- 1990: Tour of United States
• 1992: Tour of Korea, Japan, Singapore
• 1993: Performs at Kennedy Centre, Washington DC and Expo ’93 in Korea. Tours Austria, Canada and US.
• 1994: Commonwealth Games, Canada, with TV audience of 100 million and performs for the Queen.
• 1995: Tours Japan
• 1996: Performs at Eco-Challenge ’96 in Canada, tours Canada and US
• 1996: Enters Guinness Book of Records as Australia’s longest running show
• 1997: Tours New Zealand
• 1998: Tours Singapore and Guam
• 1999: Tours Japan and USA
• 2000: Tours Japan
• 2002: Performs at Tjapukai for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth
• 2003: Tours Taiwan
• 2004: Tour of Singapore. Winner of the ATEC Award for Australia’s Top Attraction.
• 2006: Performance at the opening ceremony and other shows during “G’day LA” - (Australia Week USA). Also toured Europe, Japan and Singapore.

Art And Design

• Gecko Courtyard Tiles: These tiles were all hand made in Kuranda. About 40 tiles were produced each day for 3 months to cover the courtyard and snack bar areas.
• Furniture: The vibrant tablecloths in the Boomerang Restaurant were screen-printed from eight original artworks specially commissioned by local Tjapukai artists.
• Murals: The huge entrance wall in the reception area of the park has a large wall painting based on cave paintings located in the Tjapukai tribal area. The rock art is the work of Lynette Snider, Sheila Stoy, William Bird and Neville Delf. Depicted kangaroos, yams and other symbols found in the original cave paintings.
• Aboriginal Art: Our retail gallery is dedicated to showcasing only Australian Aboriginal works. You can be sure that your group’s purchases directly benefit the wider Aboriginal Community. You could tell them this if you think it would interest them!

Plants And Trees

We have planted trees and shrubs in the park that would have been used by the Tjapukai people. Many plants have a green sign in front of them. On this sign you will find the botanical name, the Tjapukai name and how the Tjapukai people would have used that particular plant.
Appendix 2.2:  Examples of Website Promotions of Authentic Aboriginal Tourism Experiences


Gunya Titjikala is the “ultimate authentic Indigenous experience” - being a guest within a remote desert Aboriginal community, 120km south of Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia.

Itineraries are custom designed for our guests and intimate and exclusive experiences can vary from aboriginal art, culture, landscapes, dreamtime, ‘bush tucker’ or just sit down in the dirt with the locals and share cultures. The accommodation chosen is ideal for the desert and consists of 3 deluxe safari tents perched on polished timber flooring 2 metres above sandy red dunes overlooking the wonders of the Simpson Desert, complete with private en-suite.

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THE EXPERIENCE

Gunya Tjitjara is the "ultimate authentic Indigenous experience" - being a guest within a remote desert Aboriginal community, 120km south of Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia. Itineraries are custom designed for our guests and intimate and exclusive experiences can vary from aboriginal art, culture, landscapes, dreamtime, ‘bush tucker’ or just sit down in the dirt with the locals and share cultures.

The accommodation chosen is ideal for the desert and consists of 3 deluxe safari tents perched on polished timber flooring 2 metres above sandy red dunes overlooking the wonders of the Simpson Desert, complete with private en-suite which includes free standing bath and ‘eco’ friendly flush toilet. Your deluxe safari tent has been extended to include your own private decking with panoramic views enabling our guests to enjoy a majestic desert sunrise and sunset.

Included in your tariff are three delicious gourmet meals personally prepared by the Gunya Tjitjara’s resident ‘bush tucker’ chef where western style dishes are fused with the local ‘bush tucker’ which include witchetty grubs and wild fruits and berries.

Go ‘bush’ with the local Aboriginal ‘traditional owners’ on an exclusive day tour and learn the daily survival knowledge of the oldest living culture in the world. Visit amazing landscapes including the historic Chambers Pillar and on your return home collect your bush tucker that will compliment your gourmet evening meal.

You will only interact with local Aboriginals as the Joint Venture between Gunya Tourism and the Tjitjara Aboriginal Community only employ local indigenous labour, ensuring a truly authentic cultural experience, not to mention 50% of all profits go directly the Tjitjara Foundation which focuses on health, education, and school retention initiatives.

Gunya Tjitjara provides an exclusive and unique cultural tourism experience within an authentic Indigenous community.

Gunya Tjitjara enables our guests to learn the daily survival knowledge
and culture of traditional aboriginal people during the day, while at night guests can retreat to their private and luxurious safari tent where they can relax in their hot bath whilst gazing at a clear and unpolluted night sky.

"This travel product can only provide a greater sense of purpose and respect for Indigenous traditions and culture" Mark Provost, Managing Director, Gunya Tourism.

You do come back a different person....

GUNYA TILJIKALIA ATTRACTION MARKETS:

Corporate: meetings, incentives, events & product launches.
Independent travellers: Domestic and International, ideal family experience.
Special Interest groups

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JAHADI

JAHADI offers the very first Aboriginal tours in Tasmania

You will be humbled by the ancient Aboriginal culture at one of our Indigenous Experiences

GRAB THE CHANCE OF A LIFE TIME.
JOIN US ON A JAHADI TOUR

Spend the afternoon with us. Join in the mystery of an Indigenous Experience

Just call in and visit our gallery of fine Aboriginal Art Gallery “YTyamba”
Jahadi Indigenous Experiences

WHO ARE JAHADI?

JAHADI INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES offers a unique tour and wilderness adventure for those nature loving tourists. Those participating in the Jahadi Indigenous Experience are exposed to the Tasmanian wilderness and shown authentic Aboriginal history and culture. They experience first hand, the diversity of Tasmania’s people, scenery and wildlife.

Jahadi is a partnership between Hank and Carol Horton who descendents of Tasmanian Aboriginal People. Hank Horton, with his great knowledge and strong family link with Tasmanian wilderness and land formations, focuses on nature and Aboriginal culture. Carol Horton runs the “YyTaamba” Art Gallery and is a talented aboriginal artist and offers many beautiful paintings and crafts for sale in the art Gallery “YyTaamba”.

Visit the YyTaamba Art Gallery.

Hank and Carol work closely with the Tasmanian Indigenous community including:

- The Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders Council
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
  - Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
  - Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council
  - Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Association

JAHADI also provide the following services

Educational and Indigenous youth programs
Heritage & Culture protection

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WELCOME

Kakadu Animal Tracks Safaris offer exclusive, 7 hour safaris within Kakadu National Park that combines wildlife and aboriginal bush food (bush tucker) gathering, and many other interactive aspects of aboriginal culture with a real bush aboriginal guide, culminating in a traditional aboriginal campfire bush food cook-up at sunset. This tour is for open-minded people looking for a personalised and earthy experience. We show you the Kakadu you imagined.

You may have seen us recently on TV shows: Getaway, Postcards, SBS Food Lovers Guide to Australia and Australian Geographic Films.

Our safari has exclusive access to 170 km. sq. of wildlife rich wetlands and tropical savannah woodland within Kakadu National Park including exclusive access to a seasonal unbelievable bird gathering spectacle. Small groups (max. 12 persons). We provide a truly unique and authentic experience. We stand out from the rest by providing exclusive wildlife viewing access, in an open-sided 4wd safari vehicle and extensive personal teaching from our expert aboriginal guide with a focus on hands-on activities that utilise all of your senses.

KEY POINTS

WHERE - Departs Gagudju Lodge Cooinda (near Yellow Waters), Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory, Australia. (Click here for suggestions on how to get to Cooinda and the advantages of self-driving and buses from Darwin).

WHEN - 1pm daily (Dry Season May-October) and returns 8.15pm

-335-
PRICE - 7 hour safari $155 adult ($110 child 16 yrs & under)

HOW TO BOOK - Click here or on the Contact Us icon at the top

ITINERARY

At 1pm daily we depart Gagudju Lodge Coolnda, Kakadu National Park, in our open-sided specialised 4wd safari vehicle, with a maximum of 12 passengers. We drive a short distance to the Kakadu Buffalo Farm reserve, a wildlife rich area of 170 km. sq. that only this Kakadu tour is permitted to visit. Our bush aboriginal guide will then join us and from there we commence our adventure. Our aboriginal guide is searching for wildlife, bush foods of plants and animals, useful plants for making baskets, mats and shelter as we safari. We stop for many hands-on activities. Under the guidance of our bush-wise aboriginal guide we hunt and gather food, experience various bush medicines, and countless other authentic activities. It is possible to view many wildlife species on this safari with the highlight being an amazing wetland called Gindjila (Goose Camp) where from roughly July to September you may watch the largest bird gathering in the Top End at that time. At sunset, we make a camp fire at a remote location/wild viewing point and our aboriginal guide prepares bush foods using traditional aboriginal cooking methods. We also enjoy hot billy tea and fresh damper and relax to an amazing Kakadu sunset watching birds and animals on the move.

ABOUT ANIMAL TRACKS SAFARIS

Our day tours commenced in Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory, in 2000. The senior aboriginal land owner (now deceased) requested we commence tours to enable the Kakadu Buffalo Farm to continue to provide preferred bush meats (buffalo, magpie geese, wild pig, fish etc.) to the aboriginal people of Kakadu. We are a small, family business. The tour pays a large percentage of gross tour proceeds to fund the Kakadu Buffalo Farm which has continued to provide bush food to smiling faces. The land is Aboriginal owned and Kakadu Animal Tracks tours has been granted special entry permission and other privileges that are not offered on other Northern Territory tours.

We are a team of Kakadu locals (aboriginal and non aboriginal) aiming to provide Australia's best authentic 'hands-on' aboriginal tourism experience, combined with a unique wildlife safari.
We have a small group, interactive approach. We believe this is the most rewarding way to show you authentic Indigenous Australian culture and encourage understanding and respect.

QUALITY KAKADU DAY TOUR

Our traditional aboriginal tour guide was named Winner 2003 Northern Territory Tourist Awards as best Interpretive Guide NT and our Kakadu Animal Tracks Safaris has been a finalist in the Brogga Awards for the Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Category 2003, 2004 and 2005 and also for the Adventure Tourism Category 2005. You’re welcome to look at our Guest Comments page for other guests opinions about this tour in Kakadu.

top end
Uptuyu is an Australian indigenous designer tour, offering you the opportunity to have a true outback Kimberley experience with an authentic Aboriginal flavour.

To ensure you experience an adventure of a lifetime, UPTUYU can tailor a personalised luxury experience especially for you.

Whatever the experience, we can assist you to design your own personalised adventure. Whether you're after an extreme outback adventure, a relaxing luxurious indulgence or a fascinating insight into a remarkable frontier, Uptuyu can meet your needs.

Uptuyu offers tours to small groups of people in an intimate setting, providing a high quality experience. It also offers the option of tag-along tours and extended camping tours. As the name implies, your experience and chosen route of travel is Uptuyu!

All along the way you will be learning about bush medicines and bush tucker as well as exploring the fascinating geography and history of the area. If there is a special interest or area you would like to cover in the tour, this may also be accommodated. Your guide will give you options all along the way remember, it's Uptuyu!
Appendix 4.1: Summary of Research Findings
Table of Contents

1. TIWI TOURS: TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS .................................................. 344
   1.1 WHAT MOTIVATES TOURISTS TO PARTICIPATE IN TIWI TOURS? ........................................ 344
   1.2 MOTIVATION INFLUENCING TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS ...................................................... 345
      1.2.1 Personal Background ............................................................................................................ 345
      1.2.2 Previous Experience ............................................................................................................ 348
   1.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS ............................................................. 348
      1.3.1 Expectations Based on Tiwi Tours’ Brochure ...................................................................... 348
      1.3.2 Previous Indigenous Tourism Experiences ......................................................................... 351
   1.4 CONTEMPORARY VS. TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE ................................................................... 352
      1.4.1 Process of Evolving from Traditional to Contemporary ........................................................ 355
      1.4.2 Search for the ‘Primitives’ and ‘Natives’ ............................................................................ 357
      1.4.3 Concern about Maintaining Traditional Aboriginal Culture ............................................. 358
   1.5 AUTHENTICITY ....................................................................................................................... 359
      1.5.1 Amount of Time Spent vs. Degree of Authenticity ............................................................ 362
      1.5.2 Aboriginal Tour Guide ........................................................................................................ 363
         1.5.2.1 Aboriginal Land ............................................................................................................ 365
      1.5.3 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle .............................................................................. 365
         1.5.3.1 Traditional Authenticity not Possible ............................................................................ 365
         1.5.3.2 Staged Authenticity - Enjoyment Factor ...................................................................... 367
         1.5.3.3 Tiwi - The Way They Are vs. Artificial and Staged ....................................................... 368
      1.5.4 Aboriginal Arts and Crafts ............................................................................................... 370
   1.6 TOUR GUIDES ....................................................................................................................... 370
      1.6.1 Characteristics of Aboriginal Tour Guides ......................................................................... 371
      1.6.2 Communication .................................................................................................................. 373
      1.6.3 Role of Aboriginal Tour Guide .......................................................................................... 374
      1.6.4 Aboriginal vs. Non-Aboriginal Tour Guide ..................................................................... 376
   1.7 INTERACTION .......................................................................................................................... 378
      1.7.1 Friendliness and Openness ............................................................................................... 379
      1.7.2 Participation: Limiting Barriers to Interaction? ................................................................. 381
   1.8 DANCE PERFORMANCE ......................................................................................................... 384
   1.9 FOOD AND FACILITIES ....................................................................................................... 386
      1.9.1 Bush Food .......................................................................................................................... 388
   1.10 TOUR ATMOSPHERE ............................................................................................................ 390
      1.10.1 Informal and Casual Tour Environment ............................................................................ 391
      1.10.2 Commercialisation ........................................................................................................... 391
      1.10.3 Group Structure ............................................................................................................... 392
   1.11 COMMENTS AFTER THE TOUR ............................................................................................ 392
      1.11.1 Suggestions and Complaints ............................................................................................ 392
2. MANYALLALUK: TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS .......................... 394

2.1 CONTEMPORARY VS. TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE .................................................. 394

2.1.1 What are the Socio-Economic and Political Perspectives of Aboriginal People? .. 396

2.1.2 Visiting the Community Area .............................................................................. 398

2.1.3 Desire to See the ‘Other’ Side of Aboriginal People – ‘The Real Thing’ ............... 400

2.2 TOUR GUIDE ........................................................................................................ 402

2.2.1 Expectations of Tour Guide ................................................................................ 402

2.2.2 Perceptions of Aboriginal Tour Guide ................................................................. 405

2.2.3 Communication .................................................................................................. 406

2.2.4 Interaction .......................................................................................................... 408

2.2.5 Cultural Differences – What is Appropriate Behaviour? ................................... 411

2.2.6 Involvement of Aboriginal Women ...................................................................... 412

2.2.7 Information ........................................................................................................ 413

2.2.7.1 Information on Contemporary Lifestyle .......................................................... 414

2.2.7.2 Information on Bush Food and Survival Skills ................................................. 415

2.2.7.3 Information on History and Dreamtime Stories .............................................. 417

2.3 AUTHENTICITY ..................................................................................................... 418

2.4 HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES .................................................................................... 423

2.5 ORGANISATION OF TOUR ............................................................................... 426

2.6 BUSH FOOD ......................................................................................................... 428

3. ANANGU TOURS: TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS ............... 429

3.1 AUTHENTICITY ..................................................................................................... 429

3.1.1 How can we judge Authenticity? ....................................................................... 430

3.1.2 Perception of Genuine and Real ......................................................................... 432

3.1.3 Experiencing Aboriginal Lifestyle ...................................................................... 433

3.1.4 Background and Role of Aboriginal Tour Guide ................................................. 434

3.1.5 Describing and Demonstrating Life in the Past – Primitive Times ..................... 436

3.2 CONTEMPORARY VS. TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE .............................................. 438

3.2.1 Community Area ............................................................................................... 440

3.3 TOUR GUIDE ....................................................................................................... 442

3.3.1 Approachability of Aboriginal Tour Guides ......................................................... 447

3.3.2 Language .......................................................................................................... 450

3.3.3 Information ........................................................................................................ 452

3.3.3.1 Limiting Information ....................................................................................... 456

3.3.3.2 Information on Socio-Economic Issues ......................................................... 457

3.4 HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES .................................................................................... 459

3.5 COMPLAINTS ...................................................................................................... 461
4. ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE: TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS ................................. 462
4.1 SHARING CULTURE: ‘UNDERSTANDING US’ ...................................................... 464
4.2 AUTHENTICITY: SHARING OF GENUINE AND TRUE CULTURAL INFORMATION .................. 466
4.3 INFORMATION: UNDERSTANDING ABORIGINAL WAY OF LEARNING AND CUSTOMS ............ 467
4.4 CONTEMPORARY VS. TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE .............................................. 469
   4.4.1 Community Area ............................................................................................... 470

5. TIWI EMPLOYEES: TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS .............. 470
5.1 AUTHENTICITY ........................................................................................................ 472
5.2 CONTEMPORARY VS. TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE .................................................... 475
   5.2.1 ‘Whitewashing’ – Offering Tourists a Nice Experience ........................................ 478
5.3 TOUR GUIDE .......................................................................................................... 480
   5.3.1 Limiting Information ....................................................................................... 482
5.4 INTERACTION ............................................................................................................ 483
   5.4.1 Culturally Acceptable Behaviour ........................................................................ 485
   5.4.2 Privacy ................................................................................................................ 485
5.5 DANCE PERFORMANCE ......................................................................................... 487
5.6 BUSH FOOD ........................................................................................................... 488
5.7 FOOD AND FACILITIES ....................................................................................... 490

6. MANYALLALUK EMPLOYEES: TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS 490
6.1 AUTHENTICITY ....................................................................................................... 492
6.2 CONTEMPORARY VS. TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE ................................................ 493
   6.2.1 Community Area ............................................................................................... 495
6.3 ABORIGINAL TOUR GUIDE ..................................................................................... 496
6.4 INTERACTION ........................................................................................................... 497

7. ANANGU EMPLOYEES: TOURISTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS .......... 497
7.1 AUTHENTICITY ....................................................................................................... 499
7.2 CONTEMPORARY VS. TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE ................................................ 501
   7.2.1 Social Problems .............................................................................................. 501
7.3 TOUR GUIDE .......................................................................................................... 502
   7.3.1 Limiting Information ....................................................................................... 503
   7.3.2 Language ......................................................................................................... 504
7.4 BUSH FOOD .......................................................................................................... 505
List of Figures

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF TOURISTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES AN AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOUR EXPERIENCE (TIWI TOURS) ........................................ 360
FIGURE 2: SUMMARY OF TOURISTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES AN AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOUR EXPERIENCE (MANYALLALUK TOURS) ................. 425
FIGURE 3: SUMMARY OF TOURISTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES AN AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOUR EXPERIENCE (ANANGU TOURS) ......................... 431

List of Tables

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TOURISTS’ MOTIVATIONS ...................................................... 345
TABLE 2: EXAMPLES OF MOTIVATION AND EXPECTATION RELATED TO PERSONAL BACKGROUND .......................................................................................................................... 346
TABLE 3: EXAMPLES OF MOTIVATION AND EXPECTATION RELATED TO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE .................................................................................................................. 349
1. Tiwi Tours: Tourists’ Expectations and Perceptions

1.1 What Motivates Tourists to Participate in Tiwi Tours?

In order to engage tourists in conversation an introductory question was included in the semi-structured interviewed guide, which questioned visitors why they were taking part in Tiwi Tours. Instead of asking directly what their expectations were, conversation was first instigated by questioning tourists as to what motivated them to participate in this tour. This structure of interviewing proved to be effective since it introduced tourists to the topic and allowed for an easier transition into their thoughts on expectations.

It was anticipated that tourists would explain their reasons to why they chose this particular tour and what their interests were. Thus, several motivational factors became apparent and were identified by using content analysis. Whilst the topic motivation itself was not a research aim of this thesis, it was recognised that motivations can impact on and influence visitors’ expectations. The relationship between some visitors’ motivations and their expectations was therefore important to this study and had to be considered when explaining certain expectations tourists had of Aboriginal cultural tours.

Each tourist mentioned several reasons for taking part in Tiwi Tours. A list of all motivational factors identified as well as the number of responses for each factor given is provided in table 1. The table shows that most tourists were motivated to learn about Aboriginal culture, see how Aboriginal people live, and were interested in Aboriginal arts and crafts. This was followed by having a general interest in Aboriginal culture as well as participating in the tour because of recommendations and advertisements they saw, such as company’s tour brochure, Internet site etc. A number of tourists also explained that the reason they booked the tour was because of the unique and different culture Tiwi people possess as opposed to other mainland Aboriginal groups. In addition, the personal background of tourists seemed to act as a motivator, stimulating interest in and creating certain expectations of the tour.
Table 1: Summary of Tourists’ Motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivational Factors</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Interest in Aboriginal culture</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience Aboriginal culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn about Aboriginal culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To see how Aboriginal people are living/to see an Aboriginal community</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interest in Aboriginal arts and crafts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tour was recommended</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local Aboriginal tour guide</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To see dance performance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To see the island and its natural environment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interested in different cultures</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tiwi culture is different and unique</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal Background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Previous Experience</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advertisement (brochure, internet, newspaper etc.)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 Motivation Influencing Tourists’ Expectations

Whilst analysing tourists’ expectations and perceptions it became apparent that certain motivations were influencing and forming visitors’ expectations. The personal background of several tourists shaped their expectations in terms of their specific interest they held and the kind of information they sought to obtain from the cultural tour. In addition, their previous experience with Aboriginal people in Australia and/or other Indigenous communities had an effect on their expectations of this tour. Furthermore, it was found that visitors’ expectations were also influenced by the company’s tour brochure.

1.2.1 Personal Background

Several tourists were motivated to participate in the tour and interested to learn about Tiwi culture because of their personal backgrounds or circumstances. For example factors such as the tourists’ occupation, having a multicultural background, or knowing an Aboriginal person were reported as reasons as to why tourists wanted to experience Tiwi culture. Furthermore, some of their expectations appeared to be
directly linked to their personal backgrounds. The following table (table 2) illustrates the motivation (personal background) of two tourists and their subsequent expectations.

**Table 2:** Examples of Motivation and Expectation Related to Personal Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation (Personal Background)</th>
<th>Expectation related to Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Because I work in a culture of trio cultural area with Hispanic, Anglo and Native Americans and I worked there most of my life.”</td>
<td>“I am very interested in the relationship of Indigenous people there are so many parallels here... I think about it in terms of arts and crafts and Indigenous people, traditional ceremonies, their relationships. How people live, what their expectations are in terms of their children. How they have adapted to their environment...We have the same problem, Indigenous people live in two worlds.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have got a multicultural background, I was born in Africa and grew up in Portugal, and now I live in Switzerland. I have always been interested in minority cultures.”</td>
<td>“Because I am interested in different cultures, especially in minority cultures.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Because I am interested in different cultures, especially in minority cultures.”</td>
<td>“I was hoping that I can get an insight into old stories, old traditions, perhaps a little bit of the arts. I am interested in their dreamtime stories and their history. How important are women in that culture?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To understand minority society it is important to see how they manage in the present, you need to ask how they adapt, not to assimilate.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, the profession of tourists seemed to influence their personal interests they had in the tour and therefore also shaped their expectations. Interviews with five tourists, including two teachers, two nurses, and one psychologist, indicated how their occupational background stimulated their personal interests, expectations as well as perceptions of the tour. One teacher stated that:

“The only thing I am disappointed in is that the children are not in school, as a teacher I would have been interested in going to school...But I assume these children have computers here in the school?”

Another tourist explained that his wife has an interest in the Tiwi school system:
“My wife she enjoys to talk to the people, especially as she is a schoolteacher, so she is interested in the school system.”

Similarly, the tourist who worked as a psychologist commented that because of her occupation she is interested in social issues, in particular, in the change of traditional Aboriginal lifestyle to contemporary modern life today and how this transition has impacted on the Aboriginal people. She stated that:

“I suppose it is more the traditional and I think it is tragic that their skills are being lost and their natural diet being lost. So I am interested I suppose as a psychologist, with an interest in social things, I am interested in what their outcomes are for them now…I am very interested in the traditional skills and how they developed, and what they learnt. And then from a sociological perspective to see what is happening to them now.”

One tourist whose occupation was a nurse explained how the highlight of the day for her was the visit to the burial site. She explained that the discussion about funeral ceremonies and death interested her the most due to her professional background as a nurse:

“But I think one of the main things that I liked was the discussion about when people die maybe because of the job that I do.”

In summary, these statements indicate that whereas most people visit Aboriginal cultural tours for a broad range of reasons, a few visitors have very specific motives and expectations. In particular, visitors’ occupational background seems to be directly related to their personal interests and consequently what they expect to get out of the tour. This group seeks to develop and further their knowledge and due to their occupation, they have very specific interests in certain issues. This was further confirmed through the observation of tourists’ behaviour. For example, tourists who were teachers, nurses, doctors etc. were very inquisitive, asking numerous questions about the Aboriginal school and health system. Thus, it could be argued that this group of visitors participates in an Aboriginal cultural tour essentially for learning and educational development. It seems that for these visitors a cultural tour is comparable to a private research trip to extend occupational knowledge and draw comparisons to their own work.
1.2.2 Previous Experience

Previous experiences with Aboriginal people seemed to motivate some tourists to participate in the tour and shape their expectations of the tour. Five tourists explained that the reason as to why they chose this particular tour was due to their previous encounters with Aboriginal people, which were mostly in a negative way. These experiences motivated them to visit Tiwi islands in order to see a different side to Aboriginal people/culture and hopefully gain a positive experience.

For instance, one female tourist was telling about her experience she had working as a nurse in Darwin. Her motivation to visit the Tiwi islands originated from rather negative encounters with patients of Aboriginal background in the public health system. She was therefore anticipating experiencing a different side of Aboriginal society and culture, which would reassure her that the majority of Aboriginal people are ‘gentle, soft people’. She hoped not to find ‘misery’ when visiting the Tiwi Islands.

The following table (see table 3) illustrates the responses of five tourists, whose motivations to participate in the tour were linked to what they expected to see and/or experience on the tour.

1.3 Factors Influencing Tourists’ Expectations

1.3.1 Expectations Based on Tiwi Tours’ Brochure

Eight tourists stated that they took part in the tour because of advertisements they saw of Tiwi Islands, such as the organisation’s brochure and internet website. Twelve tourists mentioned the Tiwi tours brochure when describing their expectations and perceptions of the tour. These tourists specifically sought to experience certain aspects that were stated in the brochure, in particular, experiencing traditional Tiwi culture. As two tourists explained:

“I guess you open up a brochure and I guess the statement in there that stuck into my mind was, it suggested that Tiwi people had a fair good handle of their own history and that they made strong in device to maintain their culture.”
“I know the brochure it said, “Come to see a modern day, active community.” Although I suppose, yes I do wish to see some of the traditional lifestyle, which, people here do that in many ways anyway…Certainly nothing has been missed out what was described in the pamphlets. I enjoyed it.”

Table 3: Examples of Motivation and Expectation related to Previous Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation (Previous Experience)</th>
<th>Expectation related to Motivation</th>
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<tr>
<td>“In our workplace in the operating theatre we come across a lot of patients who are Aboriginal, who have suffered trauma from other Aboriginal people.”</td>
<td>“And it just reassures you that the Aboriginal people basically are gentle, soft people. And that the trauma that we see coming through the theatres is the minority, it is not the majority. To be there a long time, working in Darwin in the health care system, you need a reminder that that’s what they are really like.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“They are the main reasons why I wanted to come and have a look at the Islanders because the majority of Aboriginal people that I have seen around Darwin area where I live are completely out of their cultural context. I see a lot of them who are drinking, passed out on the side and I wanted to get a better perspective of their culture and what they are about.”</td>
<td>“I wanted to see the artwork. I wanted to see the environment and I was hoping that it hasn’t been ruined. I was hoping I wasn’t going to see a lot of litter lying around. I was hoping I wasn’t going to see misery.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have seen something about Aborigines before but mostly in very negative situation. I heard that here on Tiwi Island you can see Aboriginal people modern way of life but still sticking to their traditions and a relatively sound community.”</td>
<td>“But I wanted to see a different side of the Aboriginal culture.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I have gone to lots of major cities since I have been in Australia and the Aboriginal communities in the cities, particularly looking at Darwin and Katherine and various other places are not a representation of their culture as a whole.”</td>
<td>“My expectation was to see Aboriginal people living when they are not too much dependant on white communities in more or less sound surroundings like here on these islands.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There was a lot of confusion about contemporary Aboriginal life. That combination of reason made me want to come somewhere that wasn’t in the city and just see a community, an Indigenous community.”</td>
<td>“I think what was important for me was to be able to cancel out the images for the Aboriginal communities that have a drink problem actually. I think that’s what it was. I didn’t want to be taking that home with me. It is a very real problem and I have learnt a fair amount about the background of things, but it was more to know what was under the surface what people have built their lives on. And that has a very strong cultural background, which I didn’t have much knowledge of.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“So this was a chance to bring the children somewhere, where they have a positive experience of an Aboriginal community.”</td>
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</tbody>
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For two tourists, it was also important to interact with local Aboriginal people, such as asking questions and talking to them:

“Yes because we read in the book that we were able to talk to them, ask them questions. So that was important, not just looking around in a bus, to come out and talk and to speak to them.”

“From the brochure indicated there are a number of occasions during the day where those interactions will occur. We would get the experience of a local dance, there was a notion that there were several experiences for us to see people in their own culture and their own environment.”

The specific motive of four tourists was to experience the smoking and dancing ceremony:

“I thought it was good to actually see some of the smoking ceremony and the dancing ceremonies. I expected that, I read it in the brochure.”

“I read in the brochure that they would have a dance and it was part of the decision making about coming. The dancing and it talks about traditional things. So when you go through the brochure you would know that there are going to be traditional things and so I had the expectation there would be and it was part of me, a tourist, to come here today.”

One male tourist mentioned that because he did not read the brochure he did not have any preconceived notions of what to expect. Whilst he was not aware of the dance ceremony and Tiwi arts and crafts, he was pleasantly surprised:

“I was pleasantly surprised that probably means I didn’t really know what was involved. I didn’t know about the crafts and the dancing. I didn’t know anything about that until it happened, which was beyond my expectations I suppose. So I didn’t have any preconceived ideas except we would see a bit of culture and more than that I didn’t know.”

Hence, almost half of all tourists based some of their expectations on what they read in the brochure. Thus, a good proportion of visitors are attracted to specific aspects of the tour as communicated through the company’s marketing efforts. Nevertheless, the majority of visitors participated in the tour for general reasons such as learning about and experiencing Aboriginal culture. This visitor group did not have clear and specific expectations in terms of what exactly they would like to learn or experience about Tiwi culture.
1.3.2 Previous Indigenous Tourism Experiences

Six tourists were drawing comparisons to past experiences they had with other Aboriginal or Indigenous cultural tours. For instance, having previously experienced an interesting tour with enthusiastic Aboriginal tour guides, made some tourists expect this tour to be as interesting. In general, tourists hoped to experience similar activities and receive similar information as on their previous tours:

“Because I thought it would be interesting to learn about a new culture. In terms of comparing it to others and especially being from a country that has its own Aboriginal culture. Having been in New Zealand and having seen the Maoris and comparing them with the Aborigines here in Australia.”

“Only the experiences that I had in the Top End, we had some Aboriginal tour guides and I always found them, they are doing the job because they are interested in it, they like to present their culture and I guess I had that sort of expectation here.”

“Perhaps it would be good if one could really get into closer contact to a family and see a little bit how they live, their quarters, if that is not too indecent. Because that would be ideal. For instance in Sri Lanka I got some invitations in some of their houses and to see how they live a lifestyle in their homes.”

“Because I am comparing them as well. Because I have learnt about the Pitjantjatjara people at Uluru and I mingled with the Wongi ladies, which is just north of Alice Springs, but they live in Alice Springs now. They told me about their dreaming and showed me all their paintings. A lot of interaction, I like interaction.”

“I did go on a tour in Western Australia last year, but it was an Aboriginal guided tour. It was a young Aboriginal man and his father running it. And I thought it was really very good. We got so much information and it is not that I remembered it but I was so impressed by how perfectly adopted they were the Aboriginal groups to their environment, just to live as they did in such an environment. I thought it was really impressive. I knew that that was an interesting tour so I thought this would be as well.”

“I also expected to see some or perhaps even get to taste some bush food, because we did that about nine years ago in Alice Springs when we went out to a group that we saw in the desert somewhere... I suppose my expectations were based on what I saw at Alice Springs nine years ago. You do similar bit of things, a bit of bush tucker, a bit of singing and dancing, a little bit at looking at their art, so it’s pretty much what I expected.”
1.4 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

The majority of tourists expected to learn about traditional Tiwi culture as well as their contemporary lifestyle. Only four tourists were interested in the traditional Tiwi culture on its own. Most tourists were aware of the fact that Tiwi people would live a modern lifestyle using westernised clothes, electricity, cars, houses etc. For example:

“I wasn’t expecting them living a traditional lifestyle at all. I was expecting it to be fairly urban, in terms of cars, electricity. I wasn’t expecting people just living off the land…”

Only one female tourist from Canada was interested in a ‘display or mini village’ – a demonstration for tourists what Aboriginal traditional lifestyle was like before white settlement in Australia. This idea was instigated by a previous visit to a Maori community in New Zealand, which used traditional buildings and Maori people dressed in traditional attire for tourism purposes. The tourist described this by stating:

“If they had, not a village, but maybe something set up in terms what it used to be, maybe a display or a mini village. Sometimes people do that, and they will either have a house, the example I saw was an Aboriginal ‘Hangi’ in New Zealand and the Maoris they had a traditional … and as a part of it they had a building with the straw front setting, to show how they have lived. That’s how they were now living and how they had lived and they dressed traditionally and they wore their face painting. They explained what it meant, showed the dances, the weapons they have used and the food that they eat and that kind of thing.”

One male tourist, on the other hand, described Aboriginal culture as a ‘nomad culture’ without houses or furniture. In his opinion, traditional Aboriginal culture could be presented to tourists in a museum by using drawings, and displays of old tools and other materials utilised by Aboriginal people. He stated that:

“You can build a village for tourists. I think it is very hard to show their past and present so it doesn’t become too artificial…As far as I know they had a nomad culture, so a nomad culture didn’t have houses. So how do you want to show? I mean you can show some material that they used. You can’t expect to show old houses, old furniture. You can have a museum and for example with some drawings, some things that they used to do.”

It was important for some tourists to experience Tiwi people’s contemporary lifestyle by actually visiting their community and witnessing first hand how they live today.
For instance, seeing how they produce artefacts, what tools they are using was part of gaining this experience of Tiwi contemporary life. As two tourists explained:

“If they have a tour and not go into the community and not see the way they live, there is not much point. It gets back to my contrived thing again. They come out and just let you see what they think you might want to see, which is a pretend sort of lifestyle. And that would not suit me as a tourist. I don’t even like the word tourist.”

“And we saw them using electric tools, which a lot of tourists would buy something think ‘Oh that’s been cut out, scrapped with an old stone’. Well it’s not, it’s done with modern tools. I don’t mind. Because that’s what they do and that’s how it happens. But if an overseas tourist wants to see how they live, well that’s how they live. Setting it up just whatever satisfies the tourist, just doesn’t satisfy me.”

Thus, the majority of tourists showed little interest in experiencing a ‘tourist-made community’, where Tiwi people would be pretending to live a traditional lifestyle for the purpose of generating tourism revenue. As six tourists explained:

“Sometimes what they do is they put them into villages, entertainment villages. We went to a village in Cairns, it’s interesting, but I don’t know. I rather come here.”

“I mean everybody evolves so I think that’s good. I don’t want to see them pretending that they are living in 2000 years ago.”

“How they live now in that sense, but obviously you can’t see how they lived 250 years ago, because it is not now, it is not them.”

“Of course they don’t live like they lived a hundred or two hundred years ago. I didn’t expect that, I can’t expect them naked and in full colour.”

“I don’t expect anybody to come out and do a full traditional ceremony for me. I know we will see some dancing and that’s really great because the dances are still really important. I don’t expect anybody sort of reproduce a lifestyle from the past for my benefit.”

“I was aware that is it going to be a contemporary lifestyle. It is obviously based on history and that’s very strong within the culture. I didn’t expect to not see them in westernised clothes and that kind of thing. This is what we are seeing, this is what today is all about. And I can look at books to find out what the history is. I wouldn’t have like to come to a tourists-made community. What I mean by that is not looking at what the reality in life today is...It’s things that are contrived that I have a problem with.”

Similarly, a female Australian tourist explained how she wanted her children to participate in this tour so they would understand and experience themselves how Aboriginal people live a more or less contemporary lifestyle. The tour was therefore
intended to resolve her children’s confusions that were created by images portraying Aboriginal people in traditional attire. She stated:

“The children have been doing quite a lot of stuff on Indigenous studies at their preschool. And they were always saying to me, you know like ‘That’s how Aboriginal people live, they use spears, they do this, and they do that’. There was a lot of confusion about contemporary Aboriginal life...They continually say, because they get shown images, that are traditional Aboriginal culture. So there is this confusion that there are also Aboriginal people, who lead contemporary lives, have aspirations but have a different culture and use the same things as we do. They are not sort of like nomadic. So there is a lot of confusion. So this was a chance to bring the children somewhere, where they have a positive experience of an Aboriginal community.”

Hence, tourists were very keen to get to know and understand how Tiwi people are living their day-to-day lives. In particular, international visitors had a lot of questions regarding their contemporary lifestyle, such as about their diets, employment, education, health system etc. For example:

“In fact, I would like to see what they are buying in the shop. What are they buying these people? Do they live like normal, white Australians? How do they live now days?”

“How they earn their living? How they occupy themselves?”

“How people live, what their expectations are in terms of their children.”

“I like to know how they live, I like to know about their education, I like to know what they believe in.”

“What I want to know is, do they get the dole or are they working?”

Whereas most of the tourists expected to receive information and interact with local people, some tourists hoped to get a deeper insight into the Tiwi people’s contemporary lifestyles. Three tourists were interested in seeing how Tiwi people live in terms of being able to visit a family’s private home. All three tourists were international tourists, one was from Austria and the other two were from Denmark. One tourist was telling how he had the opportunity on a previous trip to Sri Lanka to visit a family in their home, which gave him the opportunity for closer contact with the family. Two of these tourists mentioned the privacy of Tiwi people; only if it is not ‘too indecent’ and if Tiwi people are willing to show them their houses, they
would welcome such an invitation. One tourist also emphasised that otherwise she
would not ask for it. The tourists stated:

“That’s the first time that I really have seen the houses they actually live in. I would
have liked to go inside a house and see how they live. Just to see it.”

“Perhaps it would be good if one could really get into closer contact to a family and
see a little bit how they live, their quarters, if that is not too indecent. Because that
would be ideal. For instance, in Sri Lanka I got some invitations in some of their
houses and to see how they live a lifestyle in their homes.”

“I think they are very open and if they want to show you, they really mean it and if
they don’t want to show that’s OK. But I won’t ask for it.”

1.4.1 Process of Evolving from Traditional to Contemporary

The majority of tourists were interested in learning about both, the contemporary and
traditional lifestyle. As one tourist pointed out, in order to be able to understand the
contemporary culture you need to learn about the traditional lifestyle:

“A little bit of both I think. I don’t have a great understanding or knowledge about
their culture from any perspective, whether it be the contemporary or times before.”

“It should be a mix, shouldn’t it? I mean you can’t understand the contemporary
culture if you don’t have a little idea of what was in the past.”

In particular, many tourists emphasised that it was very important for them to learn
and understand how Tiwi people have adapted to their environment and how things
have changed for them. Thus, tourists were not only interested in the traditional and
contemporary culture, as two separate facets, but also in the process and the
transition of how Tiwi culture has evolved into what it is today and how this has
affected Tiwi people. Tourists were therefore interested in finding out whether old
traditions and practices were still followed by Tiwi people and how the old and the
new coexist with each other. Several tourists explained:

“It was nice that we were driven around, virtually the whole island, and we were
able to see the housing, how they lived. And X again gave us answers to the most of
our questions about how they exist today. I think it is part of being there, and part of
the tour. Otherwise you are just getting the dreamtime, you are not seeing how they
have managed to integrate everything together. You are just getting their past, you
are not getting their present. And I think that is an integrate part of any tour actually. Find out how they are coping with it all now.”

“In my opinion you can’t separate one thing from the other. To understand minority society it is important to see how they manage in the present, you need to ask how they adapt, not to assimilate.”

“I expect contemporary to be a mix of old and new and how the two are living together.”

“How they have adapted to their environment, whether they are still doing the traditional celebrations, for example they were telling us about the Kalama ceremony that has changed, that they are still going out hunting for the turtles....”

“I like to know about their history, how things have changed for them. How they are living now, how they feel about their culture. Those are all the questions that I like to know.”

“Probably how they have evolved into the modern, the process of evolving into modern cultures I guess as opposed to the modern people themselves.”

“I would like to see how they manage to get along with the modern lifestyle, which comes from all sides. You can’t cut off your lines of communication to the outer world. So how they manage to get along with these modern influences, the modern lifestyle and at the same time manage or succeed in safeguarding their old traditions?”

“I like learning about the traditional, but it is nice to see the contemporary and to see how they have gone what we would have called stone age, how they were living in stone age through to working with Western civilisation I suppose, within three or four generations. Whereas we have done it over thousands of years. So it is nice to see how they live now as well, and how they work that and still work with traditions and using modern houses.”

“I am interested in what their outcomes are for them now. But I am very interested in what their traditional life was... And then from a sociological perspective to see what is happening to them now. How they live now and I suppose what Western culture has brought, the good and the bad.”

Tourists showed a fascination and great interest in this process of Tiwi culture evolving from traditional to modern, with Tiwi people ‘adapting as well as adopting’ certain believes and practices of westernised societies. This became in particular apparent during the old church visit, where the tour guides would talk about how some of Tiwi people’s spiritual believes and ancestor stories were combined with Christianity over time. Several tourists mentioned that:
“What I find interesting is that there seems to be a recognition that the Tiwi people can adapt and adopt different cultures as well into their own. I mean the example of the church stories and how they can actually align their dreaming stories back with Christianity. I mean everybody evolves so I think that’s good.”

“And I think a lot of their myths have parallels with Western cultural belief and myths and religions. I just think it is amazing.”

“It was very interesting to learn in the old church how they tried to get into terms their old traditions and convictions with Christianity. So that reminded me very much what I saw in Latin America about, the Indus also have their own style of being Christians and bring as much as possible of their traditions to their new Christian belief. It was very interesting here.”

“And the religious thing, because that always intrigued me, how they got on when the priests and everybody got over there that is always very interesting.”

1.4.2 Search for the ‘Primitives’ and ‘Natives’

Several tourists hoped to find Tiwi people to be living in a more primitive way. In particular, one tourist from Denmark was in the belief that Tiwi Islands would not have electricity and people would be living in primitive houses:

“I expected something primitive, native people trying to perhaps be integrated, slowly integrating in Australian society. No cars, not much electricity. I thought it was a little bit more primitive than this… I thought they would live in some primitive houses, something like this but perhaps a little bit more primitive.”

Two other tourists mentioned that they would prefer to see people in their ‘native world’, however, they were aware that Tiwi people would be more westernised and therefore they did not expect the Tiwi Islands to be very primitive. Thus, the expectations they had of visiting Tiwi Islands were different as compared to what their expectations would be of other places such as Papua New Guinea, which are renowned for being more primitive.

“We would like seeing people in their native world, but we don’t see that anymore, in their natural worlds. When we were in New Guinea we expected that. So it is a little bit discouraging, when you expect to see people who are in countries or areas where they supposed to be very primitive and live a simple lifestyle, and you can’t see that anymore, it’s very westernised. But we expected that of the Tiwi people here.”

“I would have probably thought they maybe still basically live out in the open a little bit. But obviously it changes. I suppose it would be like if you went to New Guinea
you would like to see them living in their traditional huts. But they don’t, you have to accept it…Sad for the changes of cultures, where things have been introduced. You would rather see them in their own clothing and things like that, their own traditional clothes, whether they wear nothing or what, doesn’t matter. That’s their culture, you would like to see them in their natural cultural ways.”

1.4.3 Concern about Maintaining Traditional Aboriginal Culture

Since most tourists wanted to experience and learn about traditional Tiwi culture, they hoped that the Tiwi people were still utilising their traditional skills, using traditional materials, and were generally living a ‘relatively traditional lifestyle’. Several tourists showed a concern for some Aboriginal people of not being able to retain and maintain their traditional culture, for example:

“It concerns me as it concerns a lot of people is that some Aboriginal people are losing their culture. But something like this, what I have seen so far today, with the Tiwi Island people, they are holding on very tidily to their culture.”

“Just to be able to see that they are using the materials and resources that they have been using for thousands of generations that they existed. To see their burial sides and they are still using their poles. To see that they are living a relatively traditional lifestyle but then a modern day society.”

“But I would still like to know that they are still retaining their dances, their songs, their stories.”

“I suppose it is more the traditional and I think it is tragic that their skills are being lost and their natural diet being lost…I think as I said it is tragic that the skills are being lost. Sundays they hunt and gather here. You know it used to be what they did all the time.”

“I was hoping that their culture would be still strong and that there wasn’t too much influence.”

“It’s nice to see how they live today, but it would be nice if, I suppose, that you can see that they still maintaining their stories, theme dancing and some or all of their rituals and all of their language. He said that the children learn explicitly Tiwi for the first I think four years of schooling.”

“I wanted to sort of see people speaking their own language and still live their traditions.”

Hence, it appeared that tourists were pleased to see evidence and hear personal accounts from Tiwi tour guides that Tiwi people were holding on to their culture and
traditions. For instance, tourists mentioned that it was good to hear that Tiwi people still hunt frequently, use burial poles, hold traditional ceremonies and that Tiwi children learn their traditional language, ancestor stories, singing and dancing.

### 1.5 Authenticity

The findings of this study in regard to authenticity perceptions were grouped into several themes that emerged during data analysis. Figure 1 illustrates a summary of the main themes in form of a diagram. The amount of time spent visiting an Aboriginal community was identified as a factor influencing the degree and extend of authenticity that could be experienced by tourists. The perceptions of tourists on authenticity were grouped into three main elements, including Aboriginal Tour Guides, Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle and Aboriginal Arts and Crafts. Closely linked to Aboriginal tour guides was the element Aboriginal land. Several sub elements were identified that were associated with Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle, which included Tiwi - The Way They Are vs. Artificial and Staged and Traditional Authenticity not Possible. The latter was further related to Staged Authenticity – Enjoyment Factor.

Out of the four female Australian tourists, who mentioned the word authenticity, one referred to it in the context of seeing authentic Aboriginal art and experiencing first-hand the process of how local Aboriginal people use traditional colours to make their arts. The tourist stated that:

“I was keen to see proper Aboriginal artwork rather than the mass-produced touristy stuff that you find in the shops around Darwin. I wanted to see authentic design and exactly how they do it. I wanted to know that they are using the ochre and not just the coloured paints for pretty pictures.”

Thus, according to this tourist, authenticity in terms of Aboriginal artwork entails three components. First, it’s clear distinction to ‘mass-produced touristy stuff’. This implies that a product in order to be authentic and ‘proper’ needs to be derived from a local small-scale production, which therefore seems to reduce the ‘touristy’ factor.
Figure 1: Summary of Tourists’ Perceptions of What Constitutes an Authentic Aboriginal Cultural Tour Experience (Tiwi Tours)

- Amount of Time Spent
- Aboriginal Tour Guides
  - Aboriginal Land
  - Traditional Authenticity not Possible
    - Staged Authenticity - Enjoyment Factor
- Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle
- Aboriginal Arts & Crafts
  - Tiwi - The Way They Are
    - vs.
    - Artificial and Staged
Second, the tourist or buyer himself/herself needs to be present, be shown and experience how the artwork is made by a local person. And lastly, the use of traditional colours puts the final stamp of authenticity on the product.

Two tourists used the term authenticity to describe their criticism towards the dance performance, which in their opinions was not an authentic enough presentation. One tourist commented:

“Even if they put on a pretend one for the tourists, maybe a little bit more effort could have gone into it. Like the way they dressed. You know they put the face paint on, but the guide was still in his guide uniform, he was still dressed up in Western clothes. Even if it was a contrived ceremony, maybe it could have been a little bit more authentic - authentically contrived.”

This comment shows that the tourist views the dance performance as being contrived and pretended, but nevertheless demands more authenticity being incorporated in the performance in order to make it ‘authentically contrived’. Whilst the tourist acknowledges that a dance performance is contrived in the first place, further use of traditional attire would have increased its authenticity. Accordingly, the face paint used by the performers indicated some authenticity to the tourist, however, more effort was required to achieve more authenticity. Hence, the tourist measures an authentic dance performance according to the visual presentation of the dance and, in particular, of its performers as opposed to the contents, style and skills used by the dancers. Similarly, the second tourist stated that:

“Probably would have been better still perhaps if they had been in more traditional clothes as opposed to wearing those normal shirts, skirts and tops like that. It would have been a little bit more authentic I suppose if they had been a little bit more natural but not too natural. I just watched a couple of other dances couple of years ago. They were wearing Reebok shoes and watches and shorts and that. And to me it didn’t appear true, just watching them and seeing the modern gear on them as opposed to what is traditional. I have seen a couple of other Aboriginal dances where they were able to do it in their full artwork or paint and I think that’s a lot more authentic and people would appreciate more. Even though I was pleased with what they did this morning, but I mean it could have been better.”

Concurrent to the previous account, this tourist would also like to see more traditional clothing as opposed to their normal Western attire. According to the tourist, an authentic and therefore true Aboriginal dance performance is linked to the
performers being ‘a little bit more natural but not too natural’. Being natural in this sense is judged by the degree of modern versus traditional outfit worn. Conversely, being too natural might result in being too contrived and artificial. An increase in authenticity seems to reflect an increase in appreciation as well as satisfaction by the viewer.

The fourth tourist, who mentioned authenticity, described her feelings of how this tour seems more authentic since she believes that true information is given to her by the Aboriginal tour guides. She explained that:

“I mean people say that when you are on other tours, they talk about what the local people do in terms of hunting and that. But you don’t really believe it. Whereas here I do believe it. Maybe because there is a little bit more authenticity... I believe because we have two Tiwi Island people here talking about what they do and they node when perhaps X would say something, as of saying ‘Yes that’s right, we do that’. So it seem like it is being confirmed by the local people. So authenticity would be when Aboriginal culture is being presented in a factual way. I mean I think what I am hearing that is probably correct what other people have been saying but it could be quite attractive to tourists to say ‘Yes all Aborigines go out and hunt and gather and eat turtles and that’. You are face to face with the person who says ‘Yes we do that, we go out and get some of these worms and you know last weekend..’, unless he is a very good liar you tend to believe him. That is authentic.”

The meaning of authenticity is described here as believing in and trusting the Aboriginal tour guides that true and factual information is given to the tourist. The perspective of this tourist is that factual information about Aboriginal culture is only then provided when local Aboriginal people are present to talk about their experiences or at least confirm the non-Aboriginal tour guide’s information. This confirmation can be as simple as a just a gesture of nodding or mentioning an activity of traditional Aboriginal life. Consequently, it appears that the feeling of information provided being authentic is instigated from careful observation of both visual cues and verbal indications made by the local tour guides.

1.5.1 Amount of Time Spent vs. Degree of Authenticity

Although most tourists sought to see an authentic contemporary Aboriginal community and were satisfied with their experience, several tourists recognised that
the time spent at the Aboriginal community influences the possible degree of authenticity that tourists can experience. The tourists suggested that the longer the visit, the more authentic it would become. They recognised that a one-day Aboriginal cultural tour is limited in time and can therefore only provide a ‘taste’ or insight into what contemporary Tiwi life is about. This ‘taste’ is the full authenticity that tourists are able to experience in such a short time period. Accordingly, it was suggested that staying with a Tiwi family for a couple of days would increase the aspect of authenticity. Three tourists stated the following:

“Authentic would be maybe stay for a couple of days and stay with a family here. This is as authentic as it can be.”

“It is giving us a taste of what it is all about. It is taking us into a culture that we know nothing about and giving us a taste of it. We can’t truly know what it is like to be a Tiwi Islander, but we can have some idea from what we were shown.”

“I think that is what we can get as a tourist. We come up for one day it is OK.”

One female tourist from Denmark argued that ‘getting the real stuff’ would mean to intrude upon the local people’s lives. The tourist explained that tourists are only presented certain parts of Aboriginal life that Aboriginal people are willing to share. Whilst tourists on holidays are always seeking as much genuineness as possible, there will be always the division between the experiences of visitors and local people. This prevents the tourists of finding the ‘real stuff’ or in other words exploring full authenticity.

“Being a traveller you always know that there are bits given to travellers and there are bits given to the people who actually live here. You know that you can’t intrude in their lives and just get all the real stuff. But of course we always seek what is as genuine as possible. And I think when you travel and travel more, you get better in finding out what the real stuff is. Isn’t it for everybody travelling that you want the real thing?”

1.5.2 Aboriginal Tour Guide

Similarly to the comments made by one tourist, which were discussed earlier in this section, another four tourists linked authenticity to the local Aboriginal tour guides.
Having an Aboriginal guide who is local and knows about his culture is an important element of gaining an authentic experience. One tourist stated:

“In the main I think it was, because of the guide. The guide made it authentic.”

Two tourists explained how it is important for them to see and feel that the local tour guide has grown up learning the traditional culture and therefore believes in what he is teaching to visitors. One female tourist gave an example of a previous experience she had with Maori people in New Zealand. In her opinion, authenticity meant that the tour guide is not just an actor being paid for what he is doing, but a person who believes in his culture and enjoys presenting it. The knowledge about his culture has been acquired through growing up with it, which involved a process of gradual learning and, rather than just using a ‘script’. This makes Indigenous tour guides unique and differentiates them from other non-Indigenous tour guides. The tourist noted that:

“But they were learning it at school, they were well versed in their culture. They explained everything, they did the dance, they explained it all what it meant. They explained about their school how they could get a degree in their language. For me that was real. That wasn’t somebody an actor who you pay to get on the stage to do it. It was somebody from the culture doing it, they are not an actor, it is something they have learnt. You know this person, they believe in it. They were so confident and comfortable with it. This wasn’t something that somebody has given them a script, this was something they knew and they believed in it, they felt.”

The second tourist gave a similar account of how and why the tour guide himself makes the experience to be authentic. It seems to be important that the tour guide’s desire and eagerness to share his knowledge of his culture with visitors is reflected in his motivation to work as opposed to only work for financial gain:

“These are people that are culturally, that’s their culture they have grown up with it and they have found they have a talent or flair or whatever it is and that’s coming from within them. It’s not something that they come to do to make money for it. I think what I found so far it’s not what they are doing. They are not out to make money, they are just out doing what they like doing. So from my point of view that it probably more important to me.”

Whilst believing in their culture is important, the Aboriginal tour guide also needs to interact with tourists and explain aspects of his culture, such as family structure, dreamtime stories and dancing. For example, two tourists stated:
“I mean it just seems a lot of tours that I have gone on, it is usually operated by white people and all the tour guides tend to be white. Very little Aboriginal input into the tours. Where at least here both tour guides are interested and talk to you and explain to you a little bit about their land and what they do. Sounds more interesting.”

“I think it was authentic because we got the real guys with us. I had my face painted up, I was painted up in the dreaming and they did the dance of the dreaming. And we were explained about the skin type, skin name, the family. Yes I thought it was real. Seemed real to me. There wasn’t anything touristy.”

1.5.2.1 Aboriginal Land

Closely related to the above statements that the local Aboriginal tour guides make the experience authentic, one female tourist argued that being allowed to visit Aboriginal people on their traditional land was authentic. The tourist viewed Aboriginal land as a significant element of Aboriginal life and culture. Whereas the lifestyle of the Tiwi people has changed over time, they are still able to live on their land. Thus, according to the tourist, as a tourist being given the opportunity to visit Tiwi people on their traditional is very authentic. She stated that:

“For me authenticity means getting as close as it can to being in your own space, because land is such an issue. So when you are on your own island, which has been here for generations and you can still have this land, that’s authentic for a start. And if you use the land to help you provide a better life for you and your people, that’s as authentic as you can get in this day and age. Because we came here to their island to see them that’s the best you can do, because there are thousands of Aborigines out there who can’t get you anywhere near their land anymore. So there is authenticity in that. So we have seen where they live now and where they have lived for generations. Even if they live differently now, this is still their land and for Aboriginal people land is the greatest thing to be authentic about.”

1.5.3 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

1.5.3.1 Traditional Authenticity not Possible

The majority of tourists interpreted an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour as an experience that offered them an insight into the contemporary lifestyle that Tiwi people are living today. These tourists were aware that Tiwi people would lead a modern lifestyle that has been influenced by Western culture. Except of one tourist all other tourists did not expect to find a traditional society, and therefore viewed
authenticity in terms of visiting a modern Aboriginal community of today. Two tourists commented that:

“How they earn their living? How they occupy themselves? Contemporary lifestyle. I wasn’t expecting them living a traditional lifestyle at all.”

“Authentic is the lifestyle they are living today. So what you see today I suppose is authentic. It depends on how, its subjective. Maybe some people expect a 100% a hunter-gatherer society, I don’t think they virtually nowadays exist anywhere. So I think what you see today is probably the authentic community of today. I think they are integrating their own culture, integrating it in the Western culture quite well, because they are making a living, they need to do that, I think it’s good.”

Only one male tourist from Denmark expressed his disappointment of not finding a traditional Aboriginal community:

“I expected something primitive, native people trying to perhaps be integrated, slowly integrating in Australian society. No cars, not much electricity. I thought it was a little bit more primitive than this...I thought they would live in some primitive houses, something like this but perhaps a little bit more primitive.”

Accordingly, when asked whether an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience is important to him, he stated:

“That’s why we came here. Authentic means an old culture not have changed too much.”

Whilst this tourist hoped to see ‘primitive and native people’, concurrently he expected some gradual Western influences. However, a community “a little bit more primitive than this” would have been more authentic in his opinion. As explained by the tourist, these perceptions were based on prior readings:

“Perhaps because my book is ten years old, I think that many things have happened in the ten years, it is changing.”

Thus, the term authenticity is either associated with contemporary or traditional and old Aboriginal society, depending on the background knowledge held by the visitor. The majority of tourists explained that a traditional Aboriginal society, completely untouched by Western influences, would not exist these days and therefore experiencing authentic Aboriginal culture in this sense is not possible anymore. One tourist stated:
“Yes, there is going to be some authenticity but you never going to get it. More in the way that the people are today. Unless you go somewhere they haven’t met real white people before, you never going to have full authenticity because there is no such thing anymore. Because the white people polluted the lives of the Aboriginal people.”

One male tourist explained that authenticity can be only achieved to a certain extend as authenticity has to be traded with considering tourists’ comfort as well as practical and operational issues of the tour. Westener influence will always impact on the degree of authenticity tourists are able to experience:

“I think it is OK to go authentic up to an extend but I think just because of the sake of tourists’ comfort it is always going to be balancing the authentic with the practical. I think most tourists wouldn’t be too happy just left wandering around without air-conditioning coaches to get from point to point. Some will think that’s OK, they understand. It’s also going to be the westerner influence to make the tour comfortable as well.”

Furthermore, with cultures continuously changing, the meaning and perceptions of what is authentic has evolved accordingly. This was mentioned by two tourists, who commented:

“I wanted it to be real. And what’s real is a good question because it has obviously changed over time, but still I think this is good.”

“Everything evolves and that’s the things with globalisation.”

1.5.3.2 Staged Authenticity - Enjoyment Factor

Similarly to the previous comment quoted in regards to wanting to see a more ‘authentically contrived’ dance performance, one female tourist from the USA also recognised the ‘staged authenticity’ of cultural presentations. Providing an example from another Indigenous tourism experience, the tourist emphasised that a contemporary presentation can be used to illustrate a traditional culture or lifestyle as it was at a ‘certain time’, which in turn makes it an authentic re-presentation of culture. Although it is not an authentic presentation of the local contemporary lifestyle, the tourist explained that it is an enjoying experience:

“I would like it to but I understand it can’t always. For example in one of the villages we have been, they greeted us in fifty canoes surrounded us and were screaming with spears and yelling but I know that’s not the way they live their lives. But it gave us an
idea of what life to them was like at a certain given point, and so in that way I thought this is authentic. It’s not authentic as it’s not the way they live now, but I still like this kind of things and I liked the dancing that they did. Whether they do it all the time I don’t know, but I enjoyed seeing that.”

Hence, these comments indicate that some visitors want to see an authentically contrived cultural presentation since they regard it as an opportunity and occasion of entertainment and enjoyment.

1.5.3.3  Tiwi - The Way They Are vs. Artificial and Staged

Another important component of authenticity was to get to know and experience Tiwi people the way they normally are. Several tourists commented upon that an authentic experience would involve local people acting towards tourists in a normal way and not pretending to be something else. This was described as being natural and not exaggerated. Five tourists explained that:

“That should imply that people behave towards me as they normally do and not try to be something else. Just be natural, as natural as they can be in their specific circumstances between these modern influences and their way to safeguard as many of their old traditions as possible.”

“To be as they live, to be as authentic as possible. I mean it is great that they earn money from doing their craft instead of putting up chairs on the beach. Just being themselves maybe. So that the community is for the citizens.”

“It is not exaggerated. The way it is.”

“The feeling that what you see is actually genuine and it is not pretended, not most of people are just putting on an act. Whether it is really quite genuine and I think it is.”

Similarly, another tourist explained that the real attraction are the people living their usual way of life instead of pretending to be something different in order to meet tourist demand and taste:

“Yes that was really the attraction to see people as close to the way they are choosing to live rather than to be offering us something that they thought that we wanted to see.”

Thus, it appears that the fact that tourists were given the opportunity to visit parts of the community was an important element, which contributed to visitors experiencing
the normal way of life of Tiwi residents. One tourist explained that not visiting the community would make a tour contrived:

“If they have a tour and not go into the community and not see the way they live, there is not much point. It gets back to my contrived thing again. They come out and just let you see what they think you might want to see, which is a pretend sort of lifestyle. And that would not suit me as a tourist. I don’t even like the word tourist.”

Closely related to the above statements of wanting to experience a common Aboriginal community, several tourists argued that the opposite of authenticity would be something ‘contrived’, ‘artificial’, ‘glossy’ and ‘plastic’. Again, one female tourist emphasised that the tour left her with an authentic impression since it had a natural and informal atmosphere. The tourist also stated that she did not expect luxury and something spotless, which would have not been a reflection of the real Tiwi Islands and its inhabitants. These tourists explained that:

“You wanted it to be authentic. You don’t want it contrived and you don’t want it dressed up and artificial. Artificial would be too glossy. I am not looking for 5 star or anything. So I like this that it is natural and informal and it’s bush like, I think that’s authentic. I don’t want to come in to something that’s all plastic and spotless and not on the ground. I wanted it to be real.”

“The feeling that what you see is actually genuine and it is not pretended, not most of people are just putting on an act. Whether it is really quite genuine and I think it is.”

“But it’s things that are contrived I suppose.”

“I sometimes think that Indigenous tourism is staged. I don’t like it when it’s staged. I think that a lot of people want to come and see a show. They don’t put on a show on this tour.”

Likewise, a male tourist commented upon a previous tour experience he had with Maori people in New Zealand. He questioned whether some tours are too artificial if only the good side is shown as opposed to pointing out to existing social problems the Indigenous community might have. He stated that:

“Yes the Maori in New Zealand. They were very open-minded, some of them are really open-minded. That’s the question then how much artificial is it? Because they only show the good side and the bad side, violence and alcohol, is not even mentioned.”
1.5.4 Aboriginal Arts and Crafts

In addition to the one tourist who mentioned authenticity, another two tourists viewed authenticity as in regard to seeing and buying authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts. These tourists identified an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience as being able to buy original and authentic Tiwi artworks such as paintings made by local artists. The emphasis here was on acquiring a painting that is from the Tiwi Islands – an original that guarantees to be authentic. The two tourists explained that:

“Yes because of the art and the things I am buying it has to be authentic or I won’t get it. Tiwi Islands are having completely different arts than pretty much any other Aboriginal culture. It has to be completely authentic for me. I did end up buying a piece of art here. It is authentic and it is form here and it was great and I had to get it because it was authentic. I wouldn’t have bought Tiwi art from anywhere else but from here because you just can’t guarantee it.”

“Yes it was. Original paintings, because we have been told there are bogus paintings around and things like that. It was explained to us how to detect an original.”

1.6 Tour Guides

Tourists were questioned whether they had certain expectations of the tour guides and what their perceptions were of the Tiwi tour guides. The findings revealed that there were certain characteristics tourists expected of an Aboriginal tour guide, such as being local, that the person has grown up with his culture and has experienced it, as well as enjoys presenting his culture to visitors. It was also found that the role of the Aboriginal tour guide was viewed as important, which included the conveyance of information, being receptive, knowledgeable and happy to answer any questions. Hence, it appears that the Aboriginal tour guide is expected to take on a role as a ‘cultural teacher’. Moreover, the results indicated that some tourists expected the involvement of a non-Aboriginal tour guide in an Aboriginal cultural tour. The interaction between both tour guides, non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal, was positively regarded. In general, tourists commented very favorably upon the personalities and performances of the tour guides.
1.6.1 Characteristics of Aboriginal Tour Guides

Tourists expected the tour guide to have certain characteristics. Most important, it was seen as important and more genuine to have a local Aboriginal tour guide, who would have extensive knowledge of his own culture as opposed to a non-Aboriginal tour guide:

“I mean it just seems a lot of tours that I have gone on, it is usually operated by white people and all the tour guides tend to be white. Very little Aboriginal input into the tours.”

“If you go on an Aboriginal tour you got to have an Aboriginal guide.”

“And I also like that we have guides who are from that host culture, it’s significant that we have a Tiwi guide.”

“Also, I had some expectations on the guides, that they would be able to tell us a lot about the island and I hoped that they would be Tiwi Islanders. So that you always had the information passed a little bit more genuine I feel, when it is the true people of the island, who inform you about it.”

“The other thing we were very specific about was learning the culture from an Aborigine and not from a white person. So when we were assured that it would be a local Aboriginal, who was going to teach Aboriginal culture, that was another thing, which prompted us to take that tour.”

It was also seen as important that the Aboriginal tour guide would be not only a local but also someone who has been taught his culture and has grown up with it:

“Somebody who knows, who has been taught the beliefs and the cultures himself. And to a certain extend lived them.”

“The guide is Tiwi and has been here all his life, his family, so he has talked about that.”

Similarly, another tourist emphasised that it is important that the tour guide has experienced it himself and does not just reiterate something he had to remember for the purpose of his job:

“And sometimes the tour guides know how to say they have read it but they have not experienced it. I have the impression here that things are very different from that. And they have greater knowledge that they are putting from, it’s not like they are going through pre-recorded kind of thing they meant to say.”
One tourist noticed during the tour that one Tiwi tour guide was in training and used a handbook to remember historic dates:

“And he is getting more so when he gets a little bit more experienced, he will put the book away and then it all just flows out... He has been asked to say that in certain orders but I noticed throughout the day he kept putting the book away in his mind. And he was freer.”

The above two quotes show that some tourists were interested to see the Aboriginal tour guide talk freely and not being restricted to a manual. Two tourists commented that they did not put much emphasis on historic dates but would have rather liked the tour guide talk from his own experience. This was described by one tourist as more authentic:

“I didn’t care about the dates and all that, and he became quite good, more authentic as he went on.”

Likewise, another tourist stated:

“Tell it from the heart. Tell it exactly the way it is...I expected him to be full of stories and he is... I think he was telling us back from his heart.”

In addition, tourists explained that they would like to have Aboriginal tour guides who are interested in what they are doing and who enjoy presenting their culture to tourists. Two tourists stated:

“Where at least both X and Y are interested and talk to you and explain to you a little bit about their land and what they do. Sounds more interesting.”

“The experiences that I had in the Top End, we had some Aboriginal tour guides and I always found them, they are doing the job because they are interested in it, they like to present their culture and I guess I had that sort of expectation here.”

Hence, the data indicated that tourists wanted to know that the Aboriginal tour guide takes his culture and background importantly and is able to present it in this way to the visitors:

“...and I think X is a man who likes the traditions very much and he is very serious about it and very convincing.”
Tourists were interested to hear and experience Tiwi culture first hand from the tour guide. Thus, the tour guide represents his culture and should be able to tell his own stories:

“You are face to face with the person who says ‘Yes we do that, we go out and get some of these worms and you know last weekend..’, unless he is a very good liar you tend to believe him.”

One tourist was surprised and at the same time impressed to watch a Tiwi tour guide greeting the spirits of the land, which felt ‘fair dinkum’ to the tourist. It appears that such an encounter, which highlighted first hand the cultural and spiritual practices of a local person, contributed to the overall tour experience of the visitor:

“When he took us to the cemetery he asked us to stay at the bus and he actually stood there and all this chanting came out of his mouth. And when I got off the bus he said, ‘I am just telling the spirit of the dead people, that I am bringing visitors’. And I know when I was watching him that he was quite fair dinkum about it. But that could be done for the tourists. Could be. He did at the church as well, before we went into the church. And I respected that.”

Furthermore, tourists commented positively upon certain personality traits of the Tiwi tour guide:

“But these two guys seem enthusiastic and pleasant.”

“X’s humour was terrific.”

1.6.2 Communication

Only three female tourists, one from Australia, one from England and the other one from Denmark, stated that they experienced difficulties understanding the Tiwi tour guides. However, whilst they could not recognise every word that was said, they could still understand overall what the tour was telling.

“That X would be telling me about the stories and their history. I am not picking up everything he says, because of the accent, but I do have a very good idea what he is talking about and that’s what I expected.”
The tourist from Denmark also pointed out that clear communication is an important factor for her when participating in a tour:

“I have to sharpen my ears evidently, because their language can be difficult to understand from time to time. That’s a great factor when you go somewhere, that the communication is so clear as possible. But they succeeded this far.”

One male tourist from Switzerland also recognised the communication problems Tiwi tour guides would have when working with tourists:

“What I found was that sometimes, and I think that’s a question of communication it is not always easy to them. But they are always trying their best and I appreciated it very much.”

### 1.6.3 Role of Aboriginal Tour Guide

The data indicated that the role and contribution of the local tour guide played a significant part in the visitors’ experiences of the tour. Tourists expected to have meaningful interaction with the tour guides in terms of being able to ask questions and receive a lot of information:

“I expect to have some interaction, I expect to have a good guide, learn some more - learn about Aboriginal culture, learn some more about the history, the people, the surroundings.”

“Just that they would be receptive and happy to answer any questions that we have.”

“I was hoping that there would be a good interaction between the tour guides and the Tiwi people and not a kind of a barrier there. I was conscious of going on the bus and just viewing things through a glass window and not necessarily experiencing things on a one to one basis.”

“So I guess with the Aboriginal tour guides you got a chance to actually ask for information about cultural stuff. That would be an expectation, that you are getting information about the culture direct.”

Tourists wanted the tour guide to be ‘happy’ to interact with tourists as well as ‘happy’ to answer any questions. The role of a local tour guide could be described as a ‘cultural’ teacher as many tourists expected the tour guide to be knowledgeable, informative, and receptive. Knowledgeable about both his culture as well as the
environment he is living in. Learning about culture, being taught, and receiving a lot of information were the main factors mentioned by tourists:

“So when we were assured that it would be a local Aboriginal, who was going to teach Aboriginal culture, that was another thing, which prompted us to take that tour.”

“But I expect the tour guide to be informative and talk a lot and he is. And we are a very small group as well, so I think it is easier for him. I am interested in what they have to tell us and the information what they know and to understand the culture.”

“I expected the tour guide to give us a lot of information.”

“I think it is a good thing to have a good tour guide because they got so much knowledge not just about the culture but about the environment and I think it is so impressive. I mean that’s what you do it for.”

In general, almost all tourists commented positively about the guides they had on their tours. Their perceptions were that the tour guides were happy to interact and answer questions, and that they explained everything, for example:

“The tour guides have been actually very happy to answer any questions, not that I asked very many. Yes, they are quite happy to answer any questions they can. They seem to be really happy to interact with us, probably I am not asking enough questions. They are very happy to tell us anything that we would like to know, that’s my impression I guess.”

“The tour guides were really fantastic. They could talk about everything, good explanations.”

“And again, you know when he was talking about their way of life, they are not even allowed to talk to their own sister, or first cousins. And he explained that quite well actually.”

Only two tourists were not satisfied with the performance of the tour guides since they thought that the Tiwi tour guides could have been more involved and talkative:

“I think it would be good if they were more involved I think, if they spoke more.”

“More than I got now. I mean the guides are fine. But it would be nice to find out more that they would tell us more about their lives.”

The last comment shows that some visitors anticipated that the local tour guide would tell them about their lives and personal backgrounds. This became also
evident during the cultural tours, when many tourists asked the tour guide personal questions, such as whether he is married, how many children he has, how old he is etc. The tour guide was happy to answer the questions and sometimes talked about his family, for example telling tourists how he takes his children out bush. Tourists seemed to be very pleased hearing such stories out of his life.

This seems to indicate that tourists expect to find more in an Indigenous tour guide than they would expect of another non-Indigenous tour guide. The museum provides tourists with a condensed insight into Tiwi culture and opens up questions and thoughts. Visitors then seek a deeper understanding of Tiwi culture and traditions and are therefore curious to find out how Tiwi people live their lives these days and to what extent they follow their customs and traditions. The Tiwi tour guide is thus the only direct contact person for visitors who belongs to this culture and who is easily approachable. The tour guide himself is therefore part of the cultural attraction – including his personal life.

### 1.6.4 Aboriginal vs. Non-Aboriginal Tour Guide

Whilst tourists expected to have a local Aboriginal tour guide, they were also pleased about the combination of both non-Tiwi and Tiwi tour guide used during the tours. One female tourist explained that because it is sometimes difficult to understand what the Tiwi tour guide is saying, she gains more out of the tour having another native English speaking tour guide:

“The Tiwi guide that we have today, sometimes it is actually difficult to understand him. I suppose I am gaining more from the other guide really. It is nice to have both of them and they do interact very well together, they complement each other actually very well… Yes, I think so and I can see how it really works actually having two tour guides. And I don’t think that’s just a gimmick. I really think that it does have value in the day.”

Similarly, another tourist stated:

“I have never had just Aboriginal guides. I have always had white guys. Again I think that’s why they do it because they know the questions, sometimes you can’t understand how they are pronouncing things as well.”
Tourists mentioned that the two tour guides complement each other covering different topics, which was expected from them, for example:

“X would talk about the environment, food and the weather. Whereas Y does the talking about the history and the cultural stories. It’s terrific.”

“I asked a lot of questions in the museum and they answered those in between the two of them. Between X and Y answered questions. That’s what I expected from them in those roles I guess. The people who take that on I think that’s what they do.”

Tourists in particular appreciated having two tour guides from different cultural backgrounds since they were able to obtain information from two different viewpoints. Tourists felt that Tiwi tour guides covered the Aboriginal perspective of history and European influence, whereas the non-Aboriginal tour guide explained everything from a ‘whitefella’s viewpoint. Two tourists stated:

“I think so. I think it was a good idea to have one white guide and one intelligent young local man. The way they act and play their roles, one in certain circumstances European or Australian guide the one who would give the explanations. In other situations it was the Aboriginal tour guide. I think it was just showing the two sides…”

“Mainly because obviously a white person, especially X’s age would have it known all out of a book, could do the same myself. That wouldn’t have interested me... And X explained that very well actually. And Y did too. He had his little bit to add to that, which I appreciated because that’s the whitefella giving whitefella thing of them going in and Y gave the Aboriginal feeling of whitefella coming in. That’s good, you got both, you got a nice balance there with that.”

In addition, one tourist explained that white people are involved in Aboriginal cultural tours because they know and understand the needs and demands of tourists better and are able to provide better explanations:

“It was good, because you got the Aboriginal people and you got the white people as well. And from what I learnt from other tours is the white people handle it because they know how to explain it to other white people and what they want to know. How we think and how we live, so we know the questions they are going to ask about how they live.”
1.7 Interaction

The majority of tourists expected some interaction and contact with the Tiwi people and Tiwi tour guides. Interaction was regarded as an important part of the cultural tour. For example:

“A lot of interaction, I like interaction.”

“They are not a piece of art that you are going to look at, they are living, interaction is very important.”

Several tourists anticipated contact with Tiwi people since the tour information outlined that tourists would have the opportunity for interaction. Tourists emphasised that they sought an experience that involved more than just being a spectator on the tour bus. Interaction was viewed as being able to ask questions and talk to both the Tiwi tour guides and the local people:

“Yes because we read in the book that we were able to talk to them, ask them questions. So that was important, not just looking around in a bus, to come out and talk and to speak to them.”

“I was told that to the extent that the tour is organised they will make that possible for us. But no I am not here to kind of go around and see people’s houses or anything, we are just here to see the artworks, go to the arts centers and talk to the people that make the art, which we have done and talk to the people who are like the tour organisers for us.”

“I was hoping that there would be a good interaction between the tour guides and the Tiwi people and not a kind of a barrier there. I was conscious of going on the bus and just viewing things through a glass window and not necessarily experiencing things on a one to one basis.”

“We were hoping we would see a dance and be able to talk to the people and which we have been able to do. Also, to the people themselves, the village people. We felt fine ask anyone any question.”

Five tourists did not expect much contact and interaction with Tiwi people. Four tourists explained that their expectations regarding interaction with Tiwi local people were based on previous encounters with mainland Aboriginal people, who were reserved and not easily approachable. They explained:

“I actually wasn’t anticipating all that much contact I think I was carrying sort of a pre-conception that the Tiwi Islands might be more like mainland Aboriginal
cultures with the tradition of contact is a lot more cautious you respect people’s faith and don’t confront them so much.”

“I hoped for that kind of interaction but I did not expect it at all. Because again a few of the other Aboriginal people that I have met they were very reserved.”

“Not a lot of interaction. What can you expect from people I mean. But just that they are friendly and prepared to receive us. That was the main thing. And they are.”

“I really didn’t expect a lot of interaction, I would be happy with just a little. If they answer some questions. I know they go through this all the time.”

“I know that different Aboriginal or Indigenous groups can be different. Some are friendlier than others. Obviously here they are bringing tourists in so they welcome tourists. Again from the trip I had before...the people there were I thought seemed quite hostile. That’s the only place that I really experienced that. And I also had a sense that Aboriginal people are reserved and quite shy and sometimes don’t want to be spoken to. So I am just careful and try to read the situation.”

Tourists also recognised that due to the limited time they had, they could not expect much interaction. Whilst wanting to have more interaction would have been desirable for some tourists, it was pointed out that a one-day tour could only provide a certain amount of interaction and contact between visitors and locals. The tourists stated that:

“They had here two Aboriginal guides, spoke quite a lot and gave us information. But then again the only way to answer all your questions, the only way you can do that is if you stay longer. If you are in and out in a day like that, you can’t expect to have a lot of contact with Aboriginal people.”

“The best thing would be to go to their villages and see how they live their lives on a day-to-day basis but if you only have limited amount of time, something like we did today, a day tour is fine.”

“Could have been more. But then I always think that. My idea would be to come here and just sit down and chat to them. But then obviously they have their own life to go on with. It is only a one-day tour.”

1.7.1 Friendliness and Openness

Several tourists mentioned the friendliness and openness of Tiwi people, which seemed to have contributed to the interaction with local people and overall satisfaction of visitors. It appears that most tourists did not anticipate that Tiwi
people would be easily approachable, friendly and make them feel welcomed. One tourist explained that she would like to feel that she is invited when visiting an Aboriginal community. She stated that:

“I would like to have the feeling that I am visiting and that I can visit. And that people are friendly and they will show us a bit of what they want to show us, what they can do here.”

Others were surprised since the friendliness and openness they experienced was beyond their expectations. Some tourists explained that other Aboriginal people they had contact with were the opposite – reticent, shy, and unapproachable. Tourists were also surprised and appreciative that Tiwi culture did not seem to contain much secret business. According to tourists this seemed to enable conversation and increase interaction. Thus, tourists left with the perception of having visited an open culture, where they felt at ease asking questions because of the friendliness of Tiwi people. For example:

“I am mostly surprised how opened the people are, how eager they are to bring us in and invite us to share in what they are making and what they are doing and how they are living. I know when we toured around Uluru, we weren’t given any information at all. We weren’t allowed to know, it was all secret business, no photos to be taken. And here we were told, you know ‘take photos if you want, speak to as many people as you want’. Just inside there a minute ago a gentleman invited us over to have a look at his artwork and he explained it all that this was his totem and what it meant, how it come about, why he was painting the parts that he was painting, why he wasn’t.”

“Very different to what I expected it would be. I thought what I really enjoyed was the way the ladies interacted. Because sometimes the Aboriginal people are too shy to do that. Just on the mainland anyway. They were very friendly…. I enjoyed the dancing and the fact that they sort of walked up a bit like coming shaking our hands, even letting us kiss them. That was really good.”

“The friendliness and openness, is all open here. In most Aboriginal cultures there are things you can know and things you are not allowed to know. In this culture it doesn’t seem to be a lot that you are not allowed to know. It seems that this is a very open culture. And I like that.”

“So I actually found that their openness and ability to almost participate and everyone will talk to you, you won’t get that in a lot of Aboriginal communities around the Alice in such a way. It has been extra...So what I found it that I got more than I expected to get on this tour. We always hope for it, but I suspect that I don’t expect it anymore. This is much freer.”
"I went on a tour before around the base at Uluru with an Aboriginal man and his grandson and he was talking his own language and his son interpreted, but I didn’t feel like they were approachable. You could ask them some questions, but I just didn’t feel that good about that. I just feel better about this."

"I can’t say if that’s Westerner influence or if the Tiwi are more natural like that. But they do seem in that regard, more like Westerners, who are more willing to say hello and make contact straight away.”

"What I was really impressed of is that they were so friendly to talk. You could ask them everything you wanted and you got a very good conversation. No hesitation, no distance. And our guide here was certainly interesting.”

"It has been actually quite good on this tour, because you have the opportunity with X and it has been a good opportunity to actually meet Tiwi people. They have been really open and seems that they want to, which is really good.”

"What I was really impressed of is that they were so friendly to talk. You could ask them everything you wanted and you got a very good conversation. No hesitation, no distance.”

1.7.2 Participation: Limiting Barriers to Interaction?

In contrast to Manyallaluk Aboriginal cultural tours and Anangu tours, Tiwi tours did not include a participative activity for tourists at the time the researcher was conducting her fieldwork. Whereas Manyallaluk and Anangu tours offered visitors a variety of hands-on experiences, such as spear throwing and fire lighting, as part of their tours, Tiwi tours did not incorporate such activities in its program. Tourists at Tiwi Tours acted more as viewers and listeners, and interaction was either instigated by visitors asking questions or tour guides and/or Tiwi people approaching the visitors.

However, whilst the feedback on hands-on activities from tourists at both Manyallaluk and Anangu tours was generally positive, the majority of tourists at Tiwi Tours did not mention hands-on activities as part of their expectations. Only one female tourist mentioned participation when commenting upon the dance ceremony, how clapping her hands to the singing and dancing made her feel included and enabled her own participation:
“It is OK to clap your hands whilst they are dancing because you can participate to a limited extent whilst you are here. I like that...So what I found was that my expectations were that we would go out and we look at things but we wouldn’t be so included and it wouldn’t be so open.”

During morning tea tourists are given the opportunity to interact with local Tiwi women (morning tea ladies). Usually, three or four ladies sit on one side on the ground underneath a pagoda displaying their artwork, such as baskets, painted shells, arm bands etc., while working on their basket weaving and painting. When the tour group arrives the tour guides first introduce the visitors to the ladies and then offer the visitors tea and damper. The researcher observed that on many occasions most tourists did not approach the Tiwi women, but sat on chairs in a circle or on the other side of the pagoda carefully observing the women and their artwork. The tour guides try to provide a linkage and prompt conversation between visitors and Tiwi ladies, by for example, pointing out “X has been with us for several years, her mother was a Morning Tea Lady…” As one tourist stated:

“X introduced us anyway as soon as we walked in, came up and said this is that, as soon as we walked in he took it and gave us that link.”

It was observed that several factors seemed to contribute to the interaction between tourists and Tiwi ladies. First, there was a difference of tourist behaviour when the Tiwi ladies approached tourists and instigated conversation. Second, smaller tour groups allowed for a more casual and personal atmosphere. Lastly, without hesitation, some tourists joined the ladies and talked to them, which in turn appeared to encourage other tourists to do the same. Overall, however, there appeared to be a barrier between visitors and Tiwi ladies, in particular, on occasions when the Tiwi ladies did not approach tourists first. This was also perceived by two female tourists, as one explained:

“I have talked to all of the ladies here. But I noted, quite a lot from the group haven’t at all, which I think is a shame. They are missing out a great deal really by not doing that. It is showing respect to the people really. They are here to welcome us and so we should partake in that and not just sit back and look really. And even when we were at the arts centre, fantastic set up there, but a lot of people didn’t talk to them at all.”
Likewise, another tourist felt uncomfortable with this situation. She described that the Tiwi ladies were sitting on the ground whereas the tourists were sitting on chairs. According to the tourist, this created a ‘physical separation’ between visitors and locals, which in turn led to a ‘mental separation’. In her opinion, this could be avoided by tourists joining the ladies by sitting with them on the ground as opposed to using chairs.

Whilst this physical barrier described by the tourist seemed to reduce interaction, the researcher also noticed that some tourists appeared to be unsure and not confident about how exactly to approach the Tiwi ladies. This might have been associated with previous experiences some tourists had with mainland Aboriginal people, who appeared distanced and not interested in having contact with visitors. One tourist talked about a previous experience she had with Aboriginal people in Western Australia, which made her careful and cautious in dealing with Aboriginal people:

“And the people there were I thought seemed quite hostile. That’s the only place that I really experienced that. And I also had a sense that Aboriginal people are reserved and quite shy and sometimes don’t want to be spoken to. So I am just careful and try to read the situation.”

Another explanation could be the fact that for some tourists this was their first visit to an Aboriginal community, a culture very different to their own one, and they therefore did not know what is considered as appropriate when approaching and talking to an Aboriginal person (this issue was further explored at Manyallaluk and Anangu tours). This was expressed by one tourist, who stated:

“I expected that there would be a lot we wouldn’t be allowed to do. And I was a little bit vary about coming to someone else’s country and doing a wrong thing in terms of cultural rules.”

Upon a suggestion from the researcher, the Tiwi Tours managers added a basket weaving activity for tourists during morning tea. According to the manager, the activity increased the general level of interaction between Tiwi ladies and tourists. The managers noticed that the activity instigated an increase in the amount of talking, laughter shared as well as physical closeness between visitors and Tiwi ladies. Though the level of response varied in intensity amongst different tourists, the interaction never appeared to result in a negative reaction from the tourists. In
general, the effort to increase the level of interaction was successful, and the results were positive not only for the tourists, but also for staff and management (A. Shorten, 2006, pers. comm., 9 February).

1.8 Dance Performance

More than half of all tourists expected to see some dancing and/or were aware that a dance performance would be offered. Two tourists booked the tour specifically for the purpose of seeing the dancing and smoking ceremony. The tourists stated:

“One of the important aspects for me was the ceremony. I was very interested in participating or being privileged of to watching the ceremonies. And that’s what attracted me to the tour was the ceremony. Because you very rarely get privileged of those sort of things. And they said they would perform a dancing ceremony. If I had any expectations it would be that.”

“I would have been disappointed if they didn't have the dancing I really wanted to see as much as what I could and the fact that they had the dancing and the face painting, and the arts and crafts.”

“That was something I looked for. I know it is touristy, done for tourists. But still it is worthwhile, because it is.”

Several tourists mentioned that they did not anticipate a ‘big’ or ‘traditional’ dance performance since they were aware of the limited time available on a one-day tour. Thus, some tourists were content in gaining only an insight into how a traditional Tiwi ceremony would look like, for example:

“I couldn’t expect a big dance performance here like these three-day dances. But it gave a little insight and a little idea of how it looks and may be done even now days. I didn’t expect more.”

“Dancing is good. Obviously there is only so much they can do in ten minutes.”

“I guess I expected a more traditional dance but you can’t really in the time given expect that really, can you?”

Similarly, two tourists mentioned that the dance performance was too short. The tourists would have liked to see some more singing and dancing:
“And we did see the singing and dancing. Maybe there could have been quite a bit more of singing and dancing, maybe another couple of more dances, or quite as long would have been interesting to see.”

“Could have been a little bit longer. But no, everybody involved seemed to be enjoying it, which was good. They seemed to enjoy demonstrating what they are doing.”

A number of tourists commented upon the Western clothes the tour guides and Tiwi Ladies were wearing when performing the dances. A few tourists regarded the Western attire as a good mixture between old and new since it demonstrated how Tiwi people were living today. Aboriginal people performing in their traditional clothing was therefore viewed as pretentious. Two tourists explained:

“They were performing the traditional dances in Western clothes. On the one hand I felt like ‘Oh, this may be a little bit disturbing’, on the other hand when you go to other places and they are wearing their traditional clothes, sometimes I feel they are pretending to perform something traditional for the tourist. So here even though they are wearing their Western clothes, for me it’s OK. You have to also accept how they are living now.”

“So they were still in Western clothes…It was good because last time we have seen a coroberee they were actually dressed up how they would be traditionally, or how they still would be if they were having a ceremony. You see them dancing but again it is connected of how they do it today. It is a nice mix definitely.”

Whereas some tourists were content with the dances being performed in Western clothes, six tourists would have liked to see them dressed in traditional clothing. Whilst two tourists commented that more traditional attire would have improved the performance, and according to one tourist made it more authentic, they were still satisfied with the overall presentation, for example:

“By saying yes it should have been more traditional clothing rather than work shirts and shorts. That would have been the icing on the cake for that. But it didn’t matter really. I wasn’t expecting a cultural dancing show. I quite liked the demonstration of the dancing. I have seen that anyway before.”

“We are excited about that. I would like to see them in the traditional dress.”

“I didn’t actually expect that they would be doing that. It was good to watch. Probably would have been better still perhaps if they had been in more traditional clothes as opposed to wearing those normal shirts, skirts and tops like that. It would have been a little bit more authentic I suppose if they had been a little bit more
natural but not too natural...Even though I was pleased with what they did this morning, but I mean it could have been better.”

Furthermore, two other tourists were dissatisfied with the dancing since they thought more effort could have been put into the dance presentation in order to make it more authentic. One female tourist would have liked to see the dancers pretending to perform a traditional ceremony, recognising that it would be a contrived ceremony. They stated that:

“Looking in on one, but looking on a true one. Even if they put on a pretend one for the tourists, maybe a little bit more effort could have gone into it. Like the way they dressed. You know they put the face paint on, but the guide was still in his guide uniform, he was still dressed up in Western clothes. Even if it was a contrived ceremony, maybe it could have been a little bit more authentic - authentically contrived.”

“The ceremony like said that was drew me to it and I was a little disappointed in that I have to say. I mean the smoking ceremony was great but I think I expected it to be more traditional and a little bit more effort put into it.”

One male tourist argued that all dance performances would be contrived and that tourists cannot expect to witness a real or ‘fairdinkum’ Aboriginal ceremony. According to the tourist, certain ceremonies are specifically performed for tourists, which in turn make them contrived. The tourist explained that:

“This is the contrived bit, if you think that you are going to go to a ceremony and watch a fair dinkum sit outside and look into a fair dinkum Aboriginal ceremony, you missed the point, you could never do that. The same when you go to Hawaii when the plane pulls in you get met by the girls, it’s all done for the tourists.”

1.9 Food and Facilities

Tourists were questioned whether they had certain expectations in terms of food and facilities provided on the tour. All tourists who commented upon food explained that they either did not think about it or that it was not important for them. For example:

“I haven’t thought much about lunch. I just know they are going to give us lunch. And I imagine it is going to be eatable and I am not fuzzy about food.”

“No nothing at all. No idea about food, no expectations.”
“I didn’t have any expectations, I didn’t think of food.”

“Nothing. Doesn’t matter. Didn’t worry me at all. That wasn’t the general idea.”

“No, take whatever goes.”

“The food was adequate, cold meat, salad, drinks. The food was not really important to us.”

“I need to eat but it is not a major part of it. Not for me.”

Tourists who thought about what kind of food the tour would be providing for lunch, commented that they expected something very basic, such as just sandwiches and a cold drink:

“I am expecting a sandwich. Tours like that it is usually produced beforehand or come out of the back of the bus or it will be in an esky and we will get a sandwich or two. So I don’t have any expectations that it will be anything more than that.”

“I am expecting a sandwich and a cold drink. It’s not very important.”

“It was not important to have a five star lunch.”

Several tourists anticipated tea and damper, since damper and billy tea seemed to reflect the outback atmosphere of Australia. Tourists appeared in general very satisfied eating fresh damper, which was served with butter and jam. Tourists explained:

“Tea and damper, I have not particularly thought about it, I thought we would have tea and didn’t think really what. But damper if anybody asked me, I probably would have thought maybe damper.”

“I didn’t expect any grand thing. That’s what the tour operators provide, in terms of just basic damper and billy tea. That fits in with most people’s image of Outback Australia. Nothing fancy but does the job. So that was fine by me.”

“The lunch was OK and I liked very much the damper and the billy tea that was great.”

The majority of tourists did not comment upon what kind of facilities they expected. Of those tourists who did mention facilities, most did not think about it prior to the tour and/or did not place much importance upon it. A few tourists mentioned that clean toilets would be essential for them. Furthermore, two other tourists did not
want to see anything ‘special’ or ‘pristine’, which was specifically build for tourists. Hence, tourists did not expect anything luxurious or five star offered to them. Several tourists stated:

“I think as long as I have a clean toilet I don’t care. But apart from that I don’t care, it doesn’t have to be five stars - as long as the bathroom is clean.”

“I was amazed by the toilets, they were better than I expected.”

“Facilities, I think it is great that they are not kind of pristine and just built for us kind of thing. I just think their facilities fit in with the surroundings really. It has been fine.”

“There was nothing to suggest there would be anything special. And that doesn’t bother me. It’s nice to see something more like everyday living.”

“Facilities are not very important.”

Only two tourists suggested one improvement to the facilities offered during the tour. They criticised the lack of changing amenities at the lunch area, where the opportunity exists for visitors for a swim in a natural water hole. One tourist commented:

“When you get to the swimming hole there is nowhere to change for people. If you had a lot of people, like a busload of people, they couldn’t all change on the bus. Just something there, doesn’t have to be extravagant. If you have been for a swim you don’t want to get back on the bus in that costume. And I am sure that the tour manager wouldn’t like wet seats either. Because until you get back to the base there is nowhere to change. Hooks would be important to have there.”

1.9.1 Bush Food

The majority of tourists did not expect to be given the opportunity of trying some bush food. Only four tourists anticipated tasting some bush tucker as part of the tour program. Whilst tasting bush food was not their main motivation of participating in the tour, it was nevertheless welcomed as an additional attraction. Three tourists explained:

“I also expected to see some or perhaps even get to taste some bush food, because we did that about nine years ago in Alice Springs when we went out to a group that we saw in the desert somewhere. I don’t know if we get to try any.”
“I was hoping to get to taste something local, something typical. It would be nice if I would eat something typical here, but it is not my main ambition. If I get beef, I get beef.”

“Even with the food and that, we were maybe hoping to taste a bit of berry. But we don’t because it is not a two-day tour. I was even interested in trying the termite worm. That’s part of learning the culture. We would have probably liked to have tasted things like that, but that’s the way it goes.”

Even though several tourists did not have any expectations of tasting bush food, they showed an interest in trying bush food if it had been offered to them, for example:

“I would be interested to eat some bush tucker, animals, plants, insects perhaps. Why not?”

“If it would be typical Tiwi type of food, it would be more interesting. I suppose sampling the food, the food is a lot different here, sampling those would have been interesting.”

“But that would have been of interest.”

Whilst some tourists showed an interest in tasting bush food, it was emphasised that the way the food is being prepared and cooked plays an important role. Two tourists explained that on their previous encounters with Aboriginal people and bush food, it had to be cooked a certain way before they would try it. One tourist described this as a ‘cultural protection’ that would allow for and encourage Westerners like him to sample bush tucker. Bush food was viewed as an optional component for those who would be willing to and brave enough to try it. Moreover several tourists noted that the tasting alone was not the main attraction but also to be able to see how the food was found and collected as well as how something was cooked the traditional way. Several tourists explained:

“I would be willing to give it a go. On my previous trip to Alice I did try some witchetty grubs. I wasn’t brave enough to have them the way you are supposed to, just have them in one go. But I waited till it was cooked and carved up. With that sort of cultural protection, I think I am OK with trying bush tucker. I don’t think bush tucker is absolutely essential, I think we are always going to be tourists - one going to be game enough to try it. I think it’s OK as an optional thing for those who are willing.”

“At Ayers Rock they cooked a Kangaroo in the open fire, but they didn’t offer us any of that. And it was quite chart on the outside, probably not the way I like it cooked
anyway. Anyway it was interesting to see how they cooked a kangaroo they caught right there in front of everyone.”

“Even if they don’t feed you witchetty grubs for lunch I think a lot of tourists and a lot of Australians would like to see how they can identify witchetty grubs.”

Some tourists detested the thought of and were afraid of tasting some bush food since their perception on what Aboriginal people would eat included animals such as snake. One female tourist from Denmark explained that:

“I was a little bit afraid because they eat so different from what we eat. And I don’t like any animals like snakes and so on.”

One female tourist from England regarded bush tucker as a ‘gimmick’ offered to tourists, which was not something she was interested in. Since bush tucker in her opinion is ‘put on display’, it could be therefore argued that it is being perceived as a staged element of an Aboriginal tour. She stated that:

“When I first hear that it kind of seems like a gimmick to me. But that’s just me. It’s not something that I need to try before I go home. I think it is one of those things that is just all put on display really.”

Two tourists from Australia stated that they had bush food before and were therefore not concerned about trying it again. One male tourist explained that he understands if bush food cannot be offered on tours since it would be very difficult of producing it for tourists’ consumption:

“Not for us, but I could see it for some other tourists. But not for us because we had it before and I understand how difficult it is to get. You can’t keep producing that sort of stuff. So I understand that.”

1.10 Tour Atmosphere

The analysis of the interviews indicated that several tourists enjoyed the tour atmosphere, in particular the informal and casual pace of the tour. It seems that this relaxed environment was created through the tour not appearing commercialised as well as the use of small tourist groups.
1.10.1 Informal and Casual Tour Environment

A few tourists commented positively upon the timing and the general atmosphere of the tour. The tour was described as ‘natural’, ‘informal’ and ‘easygoing’. Some tourists were concerned that they would have been rushed from one site to another. Several tourists explained:

“I suppose I was worried, you know like some tours they tell you are going to do this and I was not wanting to be rushed with things. That’s a problem with tours, you have to go to the next things, next things. Museum I could have been there longer but we had to move. So I suppose I was concerned that we were going to be just shipped on to different places.”

“So I like this that is it natural and informal and it’s bush like, I think that’s authentic.”

“I think it has been an easygoing trip. I knew that there was a clock behind it all, but I wasn’t the one following it, if you know what I mean. The timing was OK.”

1.10.2 Commercialisation

Some tourists explained that they enjoyed that the tour was not ‘touristy’ or ‘commercial’, which would have made it to a show. Whilst one female tourist viewed the purpose of any tour as being commercialised, she explained that there was no pressure put on tourists to purchase artefacts. The tourists commented:

“In fact I was expecting something possible a little bit more spectacular but which would have been inclined to be more touristy, more commercial, which is not exactly the case here. I was expecting more like a show. But then again this looked a little bit more natural maybe.”

“I think by definition it has to be commercialised because this is one way they can put cash back into the community. But it’s not overly, like they are not constantly pushing people to buy things. Not at all in fact I think there is no pressure to purchase anything, I would say not commercialised very much at all. People are just interested. You just come along and have a lovely day.”

Another female tourist explained commercialisation by comparing two different Indigenous tour experiences she had – a Hawaiian dance to a Maori dance performance. In her opinion the Hawaiian performance was too commercialised since a huge big stage and a large crowd made it to a big event and prevented
interaction with local artists. According to this tourist, the less commercialised an event or tour is, the more real it becomes. She explained:

“They had on the Hawaiian dance thing, and I think that’s what I envisioned and it was better because it was less commercial when I went to the Maori one, it was more real, whereas the Hawaiian one was very commercial. You know the huge big stage and they did the dancing and the Hula, showed everybody how to dance. The less commercial the better, yes definitely, the more real it is. Doesn’t have to be glitter and glamour. Just see how people live...When I say commercialised there, it became a big event, every night, the more people they could pack in the better. And it was that huge stage and you could not interact with people.”

1.10.3 Group Structure

Several tourists highlighted the importance of small groups as opposed to larger groups of people on other tours. Small group structures employed, such as on Tiwi tours, were described as being more personal and more relaxing, for example:

“There is a difference between being in a group of 50 or 100 people and in a small group like this one here.”

“With a small group like ours it was more personal. The personal side of it was excellent in such a small group. From that point of view it made a really good trip.”

“Also I like the idea of a small group, so I am enjoying this in this small group.”

“And I felt at ease in the sense that I haven’t felt that I was in the company of cows, you know just wondering around, like you would normally feel if you are in a great tourist group, just wondering after the guide one in a row... And they did what they had to do and we listened and we talked, and the more we talked the better it got. You can do that when you are in a small group.”

“There is a difference between being in a group of 50 or 100 people and in a small group like this one here.”

1.11 Comments After the Tour

1.11.1 Suggestions and Complaints

At the end of the tour tourists were questioned whether their expectations have been met and if they had any suggestions as to how this tour could be improved. All tourists pointed out that they were very satisfied with the tour and the majority of
tourists did not have any proposals for improvements. Several tourists commented that their expectations have been more than met. For example:

“It has been better than what I thought it would be.”

“Exceeded. I had the best time in my life.”

“Yes, more than met. This tour was better than I thought it would be.”

“But yes, expectations were more than met.”

A number of tourists made some suggestions what they would have liked to see improved or done differently. These included:

- **More information on women business:**
  
  “Perhaps something more about the women, more information on women business.”

- **Tasting bush tucker:**
  
  (see comments under Food and Facilities)

- **Dance Performance:**
  
  (see comments under dance performance)

- **Visiting more natural surroundings:**
  
  “If there had been a possibility of visiting the beach, I would have liked to do that. To see more natural surroundings.”

  “I am a nature fan, I would have liked perhaps to be a little bit more in the bush and to walk through the bush a little bit more than he did, but time was limited.”

- **Length of tour:**
  
  “They are finishing the tour a little early. We are leaving quarter past five it said in the brochure, but we are quite early now. So maybe if we could have done something else.”

  “The tour is too long, could have been packed into half a day, it would have been more than enough.”

- **Price of the tour:**
  
  “It was more than I would normally pay, if it wasn’t for the culture I wouldn’t have done it at all.”

  “I was just going to say about the price of the tour, maybe they would be able to reduce it, so more people could come. But then, one of the nice things about it is that not many people do come.”
• Facilities:
  “When you get to the swimming hole there is nowhere to change for people. If you had a lot of people like a busload of people they couldn’t all change on the bus. Just something there, doesn’t have to be extravagant.”

2. Manyallaluk: Tourists’ Expectations and Perceptions

2.1 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

The majority of tourists were interested in learning about both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture. Six tourists explained that they participated in the tour in order to find out more about the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk. The same amount of tourists stated that they wished to learn about the traditional Aboriginal culture.

Tourists explained that they wanted to learn about the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle, in particular, what Aboriginal life used to be like before the white man impacted upon their lives. This was described as having lived in the ‘natural state/condition’, and ‘living in the wild’. Thus, demonstrating survival skills in the bush was an important element of teaching traditional culture. Furthermore, one tourist identified the Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk as the ‘real Aborigines’ as opposed to ‘interbred Aborigines’. This tourist therefore expected to learn about traditional Aboriginal culture from ‘real Aborigines’. Similarly, another tourist made the distinction between ‘urban Aborigines’ and ‘outback Aborigines’. Examples included:

  “We were for two weeks in the Northern Territory and then we drove away we only saw some grass and trees and I don’t know where people can live here and can find their food and waterholes. I thought when I come back to Australia I make such an Aboriginal tour to learn about the culture of the Aborigines, what did they do in the outback? Find something to eat and something to drink, I would learn something about the Aborigines in the outback.”

  “More their traditional culture. The living today is I think part of traditional and part of the white Australian lifestyle. So I think it is more interesting to see how they lived before the white people came here...before the white people changed everything...You realise that the Aboriginal people have the same problems as other Indigenous people in the world where the white people came in. Therefore it would
be more interesting to hear about their situation before the white people came. Because you don’t hear much about that…It fascinated me to see how he sat on the grass and he knew exactly what he had to dig out in order to get this white version of a carrot.”

“Traditional, how they lived traditionally before we interfered with them.”

“I expect the tour more what they do in the bush. I didn’t expect any urban Aboriginal problems and I didn’t expect that to occur, I expect to see how they live in the wild.”

“The traditional, that we can talk with the real Aborigines…I grew up in a country town, with a lot of Aborigines but they were all interbred Aborigines, they were not all pure Aborigines.”

“I didn’t have great expectations other than to learn a little bit about the lifestyle. The older lifestyle, not the urban Aborigines but the outback Aborigines.”

“I guess I sort of always have been curious what they did in their natural state, in their natural condition. How they have lived and their art. How they just survived from nowhere.”

Alternatively, several tourists were particularly interested in the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk. Tourists emphasised that they wanted to see how they live and what their current situation is. Tourists highlighted that they anticipated experiencing the day-to-day life of Aboriginal people as opposed to just following a tourist program. Several tourists stated:

“With this tour, I just wanted to know how they live today.”

“We wanted to come in contact with Aborigines. To see how they live what they do…And how their situation now is, how they are living now…We had these expectations that we would also see the day-to-day life, not only a program for the tourists. But I don’t think they do that. Day-to-day life means that you get to see how they grow up their children; do they earn their living through regular work? What kind of work would that be?”

“We thought we are coming here to a community, where we would be part of everyday community life…So we came here for that reason with being to several other Aboriginal cultural experiences, but thought it would be nice to live in a community and just see day-to-day happenings in a community. The camping book suggested that it was a very friendly community that was trying to build up tourism, where you could be part of the actual Aboriginal life rather than in a short spill of tourist walkabout, that sort of thing.”

“ Probably their modern lifestyle…I was interested in seeing how tourism has affected the community.”
“And we wanted to see how they live...To see a bit how they handle their daily life, and what they are doing.”

Yet, the majority of tourists showed an interest in both the traditional and contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people. Most tourists were particularly interested in how Aboriginal people adapt their traditional culture into their lifestyle today, in terms of the question as to how two completely different cultures function with each other. Tourists explained:

“I think a better understanding of Aboriginal culture and the way that they lived. And how they are living now, not just their culture and their past. What are their issues now?”

“How they live, because you don’t get to see that otherwise when you travel without a tour. Mainly, how they live, houses and the whole community area. Yes, if possible a lot of information about their lives. How they live today and how they used to live in the past. But primarily how they live today.”

“Probably bit more how they handle their life these days a well. I read about the Aboriginal culture in the past as well. I am interested how they get on with their lives these days and how they manage to still live that simple life.”

“I am interested in the traditional but how it transcribed into their current living. I think a lot of them are trying to maintain their early culture, but I think they are having some difficulty. I am interested in how they move from their old traditional or how they move back from their current situation back into their old traditional...How they are adapting their early culture to today’s life and community such as this.”

“A bit of both actually. I didn’t expect to go into the community. Although just being around out here we had some of the community out here really. It has been quite interesting, unusual, I haven’t been in an Aboriginal community before and seeing them probably relaxed in their own enjoyment here has been good.”

“I am interested in both the traditional culture and how they live now. Yes, I would like to see their housing and the community...We hoped that we could see how they live. How they used the bush to survive.”

2.1.1 What are the Socio-Economic and Political Perspectives of Aboriginal People?

Within the interest of the modern lifestyle tourists showed a deeper and more specific desire to discuss the current socio-economic and political situation surrounding Aboriginal people. Tourists wanted to hear it directly from the Aboriginal people
how they feel about issues concerning all Aborigines such as reconciliation, social
problems and what their views are on white Australian society in general. Comments
included:

“Most importantly also how they live today. Maybe that will be discussed this
afternoon... That would be good if they could tell us how the Aboriginal people are
doing these days. You obviously heart at home, even though it is far away, that they
were treated very bad in the past. There are quite a few stories and the question is,
as to how far the government is willing to go with reconciliation and how much has
been done? You notice that there are big areas of land that were given back to
Aborigines, for example, Arnhem Land. Also, here is practically a community on
their own, without white people, so I kind of assume that something is happening in
that kind of direction.”

“Well, to experience how they live today and how they have adopted to the Western
way and to actually see how they live. I have some views I guess based living in
Perth and living in the city listening to the news and current affair, reading and the
TV programs that I have seen, What I expected to see whether my expectations,
whether this actually matches my expectations or not. And how different they are to
my expectations. So I have a preconceived idea of what I would expect to see here
and actually see whether that matches my expectations.”

“I think I can understand the alcoholism and how that can happen. I was more
interested in their diet and how that can affect them and what they are doing trying
to modify the Western diet as such that they don’t end up with the obesity.”

“...their way of trying to put up with white society in Australia right now, so it’s
about reconciliation. Is it possible or is it rather not? Do they think of segregation?
Sorry day and all these things. So how do they get along with the expectations of the
whites? What do they think of the people sitting on the grass in Katherine,
unemployed? Quite a few drunk. Is it possible to live two different lives, sort of? How
do they cooperate really?”

“I think if they could give us an overview of it that would be good. I do want to find
out more about it.”

Several tourists indicated that they do have an interest in social problems of
Aboriginal people, however, not necessarily as part of this particular tour. For some
tourists it felt intrusive asking that sort of questions. Thus, whilst they were
interested in that topic, they did not feel comfortable inquiring about it unless the
Aboriginal people would talk about it themselves. For example:

“I don’t think that’s what I wanted to get out of this tour. That would be something I
would be personally interested in. That’s not why I would bring the children out
here. I wouldn’t want to do a tour to find out that sort of things. I suppose that would
depend on how they felt about that sort of things. I mean I didn’t come here to find
out what their social problems were, but I would like to know, how they feel about how they fit into Australia and how they were treated. I wouldn’t ask those questions, I would feel intrusive to ask those questions.”

“I am interested in the social problems, but in this case I would say not necessarily. They are visible in different area. In particular, in some areas such as Alice Springs, it became obvious to me all these problems, the social problems. But this is a subject that I don’t necessarily expect of such a tour. But if someone mentions it or so, of course.”

One tourist regarded the discussion of the social problems Aboriginal people face as an essential component in trying to reduce racism views held against Aboriginal people within the non-Aboriginal society. According to this tourist, Aboriginal people should be educating visitors, which in turn might stimulate cross-cultural understanding and give Aboriginal people more control over their situation. The tourist explained:

“I am happy to listen to it, because the only way they are going to improve their situation is by taking control of it and educating us. Because if we then go back to Perth, go back to our jobs and there are stories about this and that Aboriginal, there are a lot of people in Perth that have racist views against Aborigines. They are uninformed and I have experienced that, spoken to Aboriginal people, ‘No, you are wrong this is actually the way it is, or this is what I have seen. It may be one community out of a hundred that is actually trying something or being successful in what they are doing, but there are people out there trying to change that’.”

2.1.2 Visiting the Community Area

With the majority of tourists wanting to learn about either both the traditional and/or the contemporary side of Aboriginal culture, there was a general interest from tourists in seeing the community area of Manyallaluk. Twelve tourists stated that they expected the tour offering a visit to the actual community. Seven tourists explained that they were not interested going into the community area.

Tourists gave several reasons as to why they did not want to visit the community area. Out of the seven tourists two were Australian residents who explained that they had visited or lived in other Aboriginal communities in the past and had therefore no desire to see Manyallaluk. Similarly, one tourist from Germany pointed out that
travelling as a tourist through Australia, they have seen several Aboriginal communities, which in his opinion looked all very much alike. These tourists stated:

“Just actually arriving here and just seeing vaguely what this area looks like, it just looks so much different to the community that I come from. I have been to enough communities that I don’t have a huge passion to walk around. Perhaps if I had not lived in one, I would have wanted to wander around. But that’s not important to me.”

“It didn’t worry me to see the community housing. I was actually very shocked when I first got in there, because I didn’t expect it to be so clean, lush and green and things. I was very shocked. I think that’s what put me in a really good high spirits when I got there because it didn’t shatter me to think it was like other communities. So it was good for that I couldn’t see the community. I didn’t want to see that.”

“That doesn’t really interest me. In the seven weeks of both vacations we had in Australia, when we were driving around, we have always seen these Aboriginal communities. And they all looked very similar. You could kind of see the problems the Aborigines have with the culture of the white people. But I didn’t expect these kind of things to be part of a one-day tour.”

Hence, these tourists did not want to see the community area since they associated Manyallaluk being similar to previous experiences they had with other Aboriginal communities. These comments indicate that tourists were seeking a positive experience as opposed to possibly witnessing a rather ‘off-putting’ visit to the community area.

Other tourists were not interested in seeing the community area since they were not sure whether the Aboriginal people would approve of it. In particular, tourists did not want to intrude on the privacy of the local people. Comments included:

“There is always such a line that you intrude too much into their privacy. I see that a little bit critically... Even to drive through there with the bus I think would be disturbing and not very good.”

“But I still wasn’t sure after today where they actually lived for example. Well, maybe not necessarily having seen their housing but sort of having talked about that a little bit more.”

“No, not really. That depends on how far the community wants to educate us.”

Similarly, several tourists, who wanted to see the community area, were concerned about intruding on or disturbing the privacy of Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk.
Tourists also emphasised that whilst they had an interest in visiting the community, they would like to know that the Aboriginal people were content with this and would welcome them:

“Yes, if that’s part of it, but I don’t want to intrude. I wouldn’t want to feel voyeueristic; I wouldn’t want to feel like I was intruding. Not to go into people’s homes, I wouldn’t like people to come to my home. I wouldn’t want to intrude in that way.”

“I don’t know if they want to. It would be interesting, they would have probably houses. What would be interesting if it is a family that lives here, how big it is, what sort of people are living here, how the community is sort of put together. If they show us, how they organise their work, how they manage get the community running these days as well.”

“Perhaps not like at this place which has been put up for the tourists, set up for the tourists. But that would have meant getting a little bit closer to their homes. Not having a look inside, because that’s their private sphere.”

Tourists who wanted to find out about the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people seemed interested in visiting the community so they could experience first hand the dynamics of their lives and how the community was organised. Two tourists explained that they expected to be part of their lives. They compared their stay at Manyallaluk to a previous trip to Fiji where they were able to actually live in a community. Comments included:

“But we have been to Fiji a couple of years ago and we stayed in villages there from the Fijian. A couple of them were very isolated villages and we actually lived in a house with a village person and we did village things we did with them. So we thought that’s what we were coming to, but it wasn’t, it was different… You were part of their life…So we ourselves are just in culture interested in seeing how they live what they do. How they react.”

“We are a bit surprised to have the community so far away from the actual tourist. We don’t actually see the community…Initially we expected to be very close to them at least. Maybe to have some contact and ask a few questions. But it’s made very obvious that you are out of bounce in those areas.”

2.1.3 Desire to See the ‘Other’ Side of Aboriginal People – ‘The Real Thing’

Several tourists hoped to see another side to Aboriginal people than what they have previously experienced. A common view among tourists of other Aboriginal people
was that they would be alcoholics, without any culture and, therefore, not the real Aborigines. Hence, tourists wished to see the other side of Aboriginal people – a dry community that is maintaining their culture, traditions, family values, pride etc. According to some tourists, such a community would match their expectations, as one tourists described it: ‘a community working the way we want to’. Comments included:

“I have seen a bit of it but I would love to see a community that is actually working the way we want to. If that makes sense. Communities that I have seen are all pretty much alcohol ridden and I am really hoping that this isn’t in your face like that. I do understand that very few are self-sufficient. I don’t even know if it is a dry community. That would be sensational…I much rather have a happy day. Working at BP I see it every night. That’s the last thing I want to go out there and see.”

“We want to go there to see the Aboriginal people, not the ones who live in town and who are alcoholics and just lie there and drink. You know the real thing. We have just been on Kakadu Safari our guide there she told us she met a lot of people, how totally different they are than the people that we see on the streets in the cities…Just want to see how they are. Because they tried to make them civilised so quick and they had to get used to something totally different, and that’s not them, their culture, the way they live. You don’t see it when you are walking on the street.”

“No, the traditional, that we can talk with the real Aborigines. I grew up in a country town, with a lot of Aborigines but they were all interbred Aborigines, they were not all pure Aborigines. So they often have a chip on their shoulder. But pure Aborigines like this, they have their pride, they have their culture and are different people again. And it is just nice to see that.”

“I was most interested in how they survive. That group that I am not really interested in is a group, that just all they want to do is drink, drink, drink. And they just go to a community centre and get a little bit more health and get clothes and get some food, or whatever and they come back and drink a bit more.”

Various comments of tourists seemed to indicate that their perceptions of the tour corresponded to their expectations. Tourists described the Aboriginal people at Manyallaluk as cultural with family values. Tourists were content to see that the community was trying to achieve positive change since it did not appear to have a drug abuse problem and was a working community:

“Because that’s why I really enjoyed it, because I have seen the other side to them. What they can actually be - very cultural people, not just pissed rats. What I got from going there like that, I thought that was fantastic, because you didn’t see that and that’s the last thing that I want to see. Although it was a bit like a show, it didn’t
worry me because that’s what I wanted - in my mind still believe that they can be like that still.”

“What was fantastic was the young guys they could do it, they could light the fires. They were there with their family, kids were running around with them that was good for me to see that they still have family values and things like that too.”

“I guess you hear a lot and you read a lot about the problems within the communities, alcohol, petrol sniffing those kind of things. And I know that talking to X, this has been going for 15 years, so this community seems like they are trying to do something and trying to stand that out. There is no alcohol coming in, people are trying to better the community and have the tourism come here to provide them income for the people here and provide some work for members of the community as well. That aspect has matched my expectations. So this is a community that seems to be reasonable well organised because they have a tour, they have a tourism industry set up here and they have been doing it for 15 years, so that is working, I guess that has met my expectations.”

2.2 Tour Guide

2.2.1 Expectations of Tour Guide

Tourists were questioned what their expectations were in terms of the role of the tour guide. Tourists had very clear thoughts on what they anticipated from the tour guide. Many tourists stated that they hoped to have an Aboriginal tour guide since a person from Aboriginal background would have greater knowledge of his own culture as well as the natural environment. Comments included:

“What I would find really interesting is if and I don’t know if they have them is an Aboriginal tour guide. I know what sort of natural knowledge they have of the land. I hope they are Aboriginal because they are pretty informative.”

“I just thought he would be one of the tribe. That’s what I expected. I thought he would be one of the tribe. And he would know how they survived. That he would us sort of show us and tell us.”

“To talk to them, to hear from them about their life. Not to hear it from a white guide, to hear it from an Aboriginal.”

“I do hope to have at least one black guide, female or male doesn’t matter to me, who may introduce his way of living…”

“If he is Aboriginal, that probably has more credibility than a white person, because they live it they know it, they are Aboriginal.”
Tourists explained that they were interested in how Aboriginal people used to survive in the bush. Hence, they expected to receive this kind of information from a person who has to some degree experienced it himself. Furthermore, as will be discussed under the topic of authenticity, tourists believed that the authenticity of the tour would be increased when the tour employed local Aboriginal people who grew up and lived in that area for some time.

The majority of tourists anticipated the tour guide to be informative and act as an educator. In particular, tourists wanted to have a tour guide who had a great depth of knowledge as well as personal experience of his culture and who would be therefore able to answer their questions. The tour guide being friendly, outgoing and having communication skills was also important to tourists, for example:

“To be pretty informative and to know and not seem like as they are just making up as they go along. Because I find that very frustrating of tour guides because you tend to get that a lot up here. Because most people sort of they just get thrown in a job because they need workers and they don’t have a clue what’s going on and you can sense that. You can see that they don’t know what they are talking about. So an experienced tour guide that would be sensational, that’s what I am hoping for. Because I think I do have a lot of questions about things.”

“I expected pretty much that, that they explain us, that they take us through the bush, that they explain us where they take their nutrition from…I thought that we would have the chance asking questions and I am happy that we were not a big group, so it makes it easy as well, sort of more personal.”

“That they know a lot about it and that they answer our questions.”

“Very good knowledge about their background and culture. And at least answer some of the basic questions. Could be interested at keeping the culture going.”

“I would like to ask some questions really and have conversation.”

“Informative, I hoped and probably friendly, probably outgoing you would think he would be. And able to sort of communicate with children as well as with adults.”

One tourist wanted to see more professionalism of the Aboriginal tour guides. He compared the Manyallaluk tour guides to another Aboriginal tour guide he had on a Katherine Gorge tour. The tourist valued the good communication skills the tour guide had in terms of speaking clearly and being confident as well as the knowledge he was able to offer to tourists. The tourist explained:
“Yesterday at the Katherine Gorge tour, there was Jamie a boat operator, Aboriginal, no problems, understand everything that he says. He had the dreamtime stories, had what it was the rainbow serpent in the pool, whatever, you could clearly understand him, he knew his stuff, very confident when speaking to people, professional, he is an Aboriginal…But just with that professionalism it would come through a lot more.”

However, some tourists expected more of the tour guide than him just being friendly, informative and being able to answer questions. Tourists were curious to find out about his life and family situation. This became also apparent during the cultural tours when tourists were questioning the tour guides about their personal backgrounds, such as whether they were married, had children etc. Some tourists were also anticipating to find out about their social problems – what Aboriginal people think about their problems, how they want to improve their situation and how they see themselves within the wider Australian society. Hence, the emphasis does not only lie on their traditional life but also how they manage their lives today and incorporate their culture into the modern way of life. Some comments included:

“…perhaps tell me something about his family, his relations, the way he lives, maybe something for what he strives, his clan, his dreaming, whatever. Something specific about his everyday life, including a few examples in the bush, maybe, I don’t know, some specific things about ceremonies, or whatever. Just some information and some examples.”

“That he would have lots of stories to tell and things to tell us about where they live and how they live.”

“I would benchmark him against other Aboriginal tour guides that we had. I don’t know his education and his background at all, but to educate us on the bush tucker and their culture and those kinds of things, to talk to us about that. And even sort of challenge us to some extent. I see his role as being our educator in these matters. It should be twofold, one thing is to learn about the Aboriginal people, the cultural ways, but also where they are now and what they want to do about improving their situation. He should be challenging us and saying ‘This is what it is like and this is where we are going. This is a vision that we have as a group for our people here and we want to improve that.”

“…It would be interesting to hear what kind of problems they have in their society. And how they are accepted now.”
2.2.2 Perceptions of Aboriginal Tour Guide

The perceptions of visitors of the Aboriginal tour guides can be grouped into two main groups. The first contains very positive feedback on the performance of the tour guides, whereas the second contains less satisfied comments. Several tourists stated that they had a fantastic time because the tour guide was friendly and explained everything to them, for example:

“**He really explained everything, it was fantastic.**”

“**The tour guides were brilliant. You had to concentrate but this wasn’t a problem. They were very good and they had their own style. They seem very calm and quiet today and that was I suppose the kind of attitude that they passed on.**”

“**I had a absolute fantastic time. First the tour guide was Aboriginal and he just knew everything. X, he is fantastic. He was so polite wanted to know how we are and how we are going, he just constantly seemed like he cared.**”

In particular, tourists were very satisfied, when they were able to ask a lot of questions and were given in turn detailed answers and explanations by the tour guide. Two tourists stated:

“**It was very interesting, he gave us a lot of answers, and even though when I asked him some other questions he answered everything. So he was very happy to tell me and answer my questions, tell me what is his culture like.**”

“I was asking him about marriage, about how they live, if everybody goes to school, is there a privilege between a girl and a boy, and how they do the marriages, if they sign a paper or of they just do their ceremonies. He gave me very, very good answers and he explained it all. He said you can ask anything you want, don’t worry about it, even about skin colours if you want to. Because sometimes you are not sure really how deep you can ask, because you don’t want to be rude. But he gave me the feeling that you can ask him anything and he is happy to answer it.”

Since the tour used a rotating roster for tour guides, the differences in personalities and skills possessed by tour guides were reflected in the contrasting perceptions and satisfactions levels of tourists. Thus, tourists showed a different reaction to some Aboriginal tour guides, who did not speak clearly and/or did not have an outgoing personality. However, whilst tourists identified a lack of communication skills, most tourists did not doubt that the tour guide had a strong knowledge of his culture. Comments included:
“They knew what they were talking about, sometimes they found it difficult to explain.”

“I am convinced that he knows a lot. He just has an unclear pronunciation and we also don’t understand much English. Therefore, I assume that we missed one or the other information. But as I was saying, regarding the knowledge, I am convinced that he knows quite a lot. Perhaps he could have explained more, maybe he also noticed that we didn’t understand much and therefore he was a little bit hesitant.”

“X, he explained everything pretty good. The other tour guide, with whom we did the bush walk, his personality was such that you had to concentrate. So you really realised that a lot depends on the person, how something like that is put across.”

“Yes, at the beginning it was unfamiliar but that’s because he is shy. He is a very quiet person.”

2.2.3 Communication

Several tourists noted that they hoped to have an Aboriginal tour guide, who they would be able to understand. One female tourist from the UK stated that she went on an Aboriginal tour before and she could not hear and understand the Aboriginal tour guide properly. She therefore hoped to have a better experience this time:

“I wondered about the tour guide, because the problem in the South was that we couldn’t hear what he said very well. He was quite shy and sometimes we couldn’t understand what he said. I hoped that that might be better up here.”

“But I’d like to get into contact with them, and I do hope that I can understand them. If it is a mixture of English and tribal languages, I will not get along. Perhaps they are bilingual or trilingual, they will probably be speaking a lot of tribal and other languages.”

Considering that tourists were participating in the tour in order to obtain information, to be educated about Aboriginal culture and be able to ask questions, the communication between tour guide and visitors seemed therefore to play an integral role to the tourist experience. Communication, however, appeared to be a problem for most of the tourists. Eleven tourists stated that they had some difficulties understanding their tour guide. The majority of the tourists who could not understand the tour guide were international tourists, of both English and non-English background though some English speaking Australian tourists experienced the same problems. Comments included:
“I could, but both my mother and her friend had trouble understanding him. Not all the time but they had some trouble understanding him. I could understand the Aboriginal tour guide, but I suppose my ears are more tuned to talking to Indigenous people.”

“You couldn’t possibly understand everything, but when you enquired about it, he explained it in a different way so that you could understand it.”

“The language, we could communicate but it wasn’t crystal clear and if you were a German tourist or a Dutch tourist or someone like that, you would have problems with it. You wouldn’t understand or be able to interpret, as much as being Australian and being English, we know the language and the slang and you can pick things up. If you would have someone, who could speak I guess, clearly.”

“Trouble at times, it didn’t worry me. I expected something like that. I could work it out, with a bit of imagination.”

“Sometimes it was a little bit hard to understand what they were saying, but having the young Aboriginal tour guide was great. He kind of interjected from time to time again and added a few things that made it clear. And also explained things to the children. Because I think we struggled a little bit if he hadn’t been there...The tour guide we had for the painting, I found it quite hard to understand, but otherwise, the other young guys who took us around the bush were great.”

“...because we all found out once we go deeper into it, there is a lack of words in X really, these special words, that’s my impression...”

One German tourist described the difficulties he had in understanding the tour guide. Whilst he acknowledged that due to his limited English skills, he could not expect to understand everything, he also suggested that it would have been easier if the tour guide spoke in clear English. In his opinion this is in particular important for people from non-English background. He stated:

“With the tour I did actually knew that most likely I wouldn’t understand some things, because of my English, which is not that good. But the tour guide was quite hard to understand. I had to guess a lot of things, where I understood just different fractions and I then assumed the rest. It would be probably easier, if the English was more clear, in particular for someone who doesn’t understand much English.”

Similarly, his German travel companion could not understand everything the tour guide was saying. However, due to his limited English skills, he did not want to make the tour guide responsible for this. He noted that they should have rather booked an Aboriginal tour with a German-speaking tour guide. He explained that:
“He probably gave the information that I was after, but because of my limited English I haven’t understood everything what would have interested me. Therefore you can’t necessary blame the tour guide for this. We both knew what we could expect when we do something like this in English…I have also read somewhere about a tour with a tour guide who speaks German. We should have probably done that, so it would have been easier to understand.”

As previously mentioned, even international tourists from English-speaking countries had difficulties understanding some of the tour guides. One female tourist from the UK described her experience as frustrating, since she missed out on information that she would have liked to hear and understand. She explained:

“The other man, the painter, who took us on the bush walk I found him quite difficult to understand. And I was a bit frustrated by that, because I thought he was telling me something interesting and I didn’t know what it was. And sometimes when the younger boy explained some things, that was really interesting. So it was the frustration that I missed something…He was talking about Aboriginal traditions, going up trees and waiting for the emu to come along. I heard that one but I missed some of those kind of things. He talked about some trees that you could use the stuff for something, but I didn’t know what it was because I couldn’t understand…I would like to hear what they are saying. It happened to me twice now that I can’t hear.”

2.2.4 Interaction

Several tourists noted that interaction with Aboriginal people is an important part of the tour. In particular, some tourists commented positively upon the introduction and welcome they received at the start of the tour:

“The other thing that I think has been very good is the introduction that Manuel gave us. Just the welcoming and the chatting and just getting to know people that was well done.”

“Interaction is very important. Initially, just a hello just a greeting and the interaction later on is very important.”

“To be up close and to interact with Aboriginal people and find out the sort of things that they do and how they live. I mean that’s just one way that they live, it’s not the way all Aboriginal people live. But I just thought that in our trip we might not just come across people and interact with them in the same way as doing this tour.”

Tourists observed that some Aboriginal people were not very talkative and that they needed to be approached in order to being able to ask questions and instigate general
conversation. Some tourists did not regard this in a negative way since they explained that this was part of their culture and the way Aboriginal people are. Comments included:

“It occurred to me this morning, as he was talking they don’t communicate very well, but it’s part of their culture and history, which is observing all the time and not talking. They are kind of like watching and looking. I find that quite interesting. The lady who was sitting on the floor, who was doing the stitching (basket weaving) she seemed to know what is going on all around her without saying anything. She would look this way and that way.”

“I can see that they are not people who talk a lot, so it’s quite hard to say change for the tourists.”

“It is a bit more easy going than what I expected it to be. I think they needed to be approached. Once we got on the walk it was OK, but we needed to approach them with questions. It didn’t worry me, I wanted to get in and talk to them.”

“But I found to go up and have a chat to them they are quite responsive to that. That was good. They would answer direct questions. They were approachable, they didn’t appear to me as they are putting on a semi kind of guards or anything.”

Whereas some tourists did not have a problem to approach the Aboriginal tour guides, a few tourists were displeased with the fact that interaction was only limited. One female tourist who came to Manyallaluk to camp overnight before joining the tour the next day, described her experience in trying to get in contact with Aboriginal people as very discouraging. She did not feel welcome since nobody was talking to them even when she approached them and tried to make conversation. She explained that:

“Even this morning there was a man and two ladies and the man was the only who really talked with me. The other ladies never talked to me at all. I felt like I should go away. I went and I sat with them. But it was just kind of like; well you know ‘What is she doing here?’ They just didn’t talk. If I asked questions they would say one word and then the man would say more. Just didn’t want to talk with me. Their English was fine when they talked, the English was fine, it wasn’t a problem. I think that if they want to attract people here, they have to talk to them more. We are Australians but overseas people like to experience this sort of thing, they need to talk more… they have to be a little bit more hospitable to them. I shouldn’t say they are not hospitable, but like I said, when we came here, we got here ten or eleven o’clock and no one spoke to us all day long. We just sat here like we were isolated until this morning when they were getting ready and we came down and talked to them. No one came near us.”
The same tourist was comparing her experience in Manyallaluk to a previous experience she had with Indigenous people when visiting Fiji and staying with a family in a local village. According to the tourist, the Fijian people were talkative and they included the tourists in their daily life:

“The best advertising is word of mouth. We enjoyed the experience but it’s not what we thought we are going to get…But the Fijian they listen and they ask you questions and they talk with you. Even the people in isolated villages do that... We did everything the village people did we were included with them. And they were proud of their village and they showed us. And we were part of it, we loved it. Loved the kids, played with the kids, it was lovely.”

Similarly, several tourists commented upon the lack of interaction during lunch. Whereas one tourist stated that it was not a problem that the Aboriginal tour guides were sitting separate to them during lunch, other tourists regarded lunch as an opportunity for more interaction and casual conversation with the tour guides. Hence, they felt isolated and excluded when they had to eat lunch on their own. For example:

“It didn’t bother me that the tour guides were not sitting with us when we had lunch. They were there with their families.”

“I would have liked them to join us for lunch. They let us eat and they went and did their own thing. A bit more that social interaction. That would give them the opportunity to educate us a little bit more and have that open discussion about the social issues facing Aborigines. I don’t know if this is necessarily appropriate for the Europeans, it might be to some extent. They might have seen some things about the problems of the Aborigines over here. But particularly for Australian people, a bit more of an awareness and opportunity like that.”

“When we had lunch I felt like they visit us and it’s us who visit them. I would have liked to sit on the grass with them and have lunch there. Once I went to people under the tree they started telling me all these interesting things. Why not have that during lunch, because all the other people they started talking about their tours and cooking stuff, just normal European stuff. I was bored, I wanted to know something, get to know something about Aboriginal people, Aborigines. I would have liked to from the very start, sit down with them on the grass and have lunch with them. It was a bit, a sort of estrangement for me. And I asked the younger guy ‘Why don’t we do that?’ And he said ‘Oh Well, it’s what our people don’t want’. I didn’t quite understand it, but I think he meant it the other way round. And then I asked them if I could join them and oh yes, yes and started to talk to us right away. So I thought that might be the right thing to do. They expect that once a group comes up here. Everybody was very cautious sort of.”
On several occasions the non-Aboriginal Tourism Coordinator used to join the tourists during lunch. The researcher observed that tourists were asking the Tourism Coordinator many questions about the Aboriginal people in Manyallaluk, their culture, their contemporary lifestyle as well as their social problems. One tourist explained how they sought answers and clarifications on certain issues from the Tourism Coordinator. He stated:

“Other questions that we had, X sat with us during lunchtime. We sort of had things that came up we started to think about, we actually asked her a bit about information and clarification on things.”

### 2.2.5 Cultural Differences – What is Appropriate Behaviour?

Several tourists noted that they did not feel comfortable asking questions and did not know how to approach the Aboriginal tour guides. Tourists recognised that the Aboriginal people seemed shy and withdrawn and therefore some tourists explained that they did not know what was considered as appropriate cultural behaviour. One tourist suggested that tourists should be informed on how to behave so they would be aware of whether some behaviour is accepted or regarded as intrusive or rude:

“I didn’t feel comfortable to actually ask these questions because they are very shy people and I didn’t want to be intrusive in that way.”

“I wasn’t quite sure sometimes what we were to do next, or whether it was OK for me to go up and talk to the women...Probably more information on how to behave. They need to be how they are but just knowing if it was OK or if it was intrusive for me to go over and say Hi.”

However, such reactions of uncertainty of tourists were again dependent on which tour guides they had on their tour. For instance, if a tour guide with an outgoing personality was leading the tour, tourists seemed to feel at ease to approach the tour guide and ask many questions. As one tourist described her experience:

“Because sometimes you are not sure really how deep you can ask, because you don’t want to be rude. But he gave me the feeling that you can ask him anything and he is happy to answer it.”
Thus, it appeared that some tourists did not obtain the information they desired due to cultural differences and the uncertainty of tourists on how to behave. Aboriginal tour guides with good communication skills and an outgoing personality encouraged conversation and therefore seemed to increase tourists’ satisfaction in terms of the information value obtained from the tour.

2.2.6 Involvement of Aboriginal Women

Several female tourists mentioned the involvement of Aboriginal women in the cultural tour. Some tourists were pleased to see Aboriginal women being involved in the tour, such as cooking damper and demonstrating the basket weaving:

“It was nice to have some women involved as well, because it seems quite often that you just see the men. When we went before it was just males, to see the women doing things, doing the basket session.”

Yet, two female tourists also stated that they wished to see the women being more involved, in particular in the bush walk. Furthermore, the tourists were interested in the female perspective of Aboriginal life, which they hoped would have been addressed by the female tour guides. They stated:

“I thought the ladies are going to come with us and find food as well. I didn’t think that a man is going to do the bush walk. But I mean he talked about the trees and the food and things. He was good, I liked what he said but somehow I thought the ladies are going to come and do something. The men are there I can talk to men as well, but I would like to know some of the ladies what they feel and think and stuff. What they sort of think about themselves.”

“I know this is impossible but in future I would love more women do to the bush walk too. I would have loved a couple, a man and women, a part of it. Not just two men. They were fine, they just represented older generation and younger generation. And I liked to observe them the way they got along...But I would have liked to have some more information given by the women of the tribe. Just to have a representative mix, that goes without saying normally. But as the tribe is organised in a different way it was just like two males of different ages, that’s OK.”
2.2.7 Information

Tourists explained that they anticipated information that was informative with a variety of topics covering Aboriginal culture and today’s lifestyle. Tourists mentioned that they wanted to learn about their history, dreamtime stories, art and bush food as well as how Aboriginal people used to survive in the bush. Comments included:

“I was hoping that it would be informative and entertaining as well, so it would be interesting that it would grab everybody’s interest.”

“A little bit about their history, about their dreamtime stories, about their contemporary art.”

“What would be of interest to me is whether they still do the walkabouts, whether that still exists.”

“I wanted to learn about the techniques the Aboriginal people had in the old times. What they lived of in the bush.”

Only a few tourists were satisfied with the quality and quantity of information given by the tour guides:

“It’s probably more informative than I thought it was going to be.”

“Heaps of information, an overload of information. He was saying what things were and then the Aboriginal terms and we were repeating it. I thought it was fantastic.”

“…He gave me very, very good answers and he explained it all...”

“It was very interesting, he gave us a lot of answers, and even though when I asked him some other questions he answered everything. So he was very happy to tell me and answer my questions, tell me what is his culture like.”

The majority of tourists explained after the tour that they expected to receive more information from the tour guides. The comments indicate that many tourists left the tour with having numerous questions unanswered as well as topics of interest not covered. Many tourists felt that the tour guides did not adequately address some of the questions they had. For example:

“It would be nice to know what they do to maintain their culture with the young kids now, so that would have been a good thing to know. Yes, there was opportunity to
ask questions but some of the questions I did ask like ‘Do your children do this?’ And yes, they did, but it wasn’t expanded upon.”

“We have also tried to talk with Manuel about the life here in the community. But much more than that what we have already known did not come across.”

“But I was expecting better explanations for most things, I think. Well, the basket weaving for instance, she didn’t explain why she was doing what she was doing. She didn’t explain it. So it was a matter to work out what she was doing at that time. Never really learnt how strip the pandanas leaves, I suppose that’s a secret that they keep for themselves.”

“I could have done with more information on topics such as history and ancestor creators. I think they can’t do anymore in one day, because all of them are really shy.”

2.2.7.1 Information on Contemporary Lifestyle

Tourists explained that there was a lack of information on the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people. Many tourists wished to find out about their everyday lives in Manyallaluk. International visitors, in particular, were very interested about their current situation, in terms of reconciliation and how Aboriginal people see themselves within Australian society as well as their thoughts on social problems in Aboriginal communities. Several tourists stated:

“But I still wasn’t sure after today where they actually lived for example. Well, maybe not necessarily having seen their housing but sort of having talked about that a little bit more…I think maybe if we had been encouraged to ask them perhaps a little bit more about their private lives, if that was what they wanted.”

“I expected to find out a little bit more about their current situation from the Aboriginal people. Unfortunately, that did not happen.”

“..., who may introduce his way of living, perhaps tell me something about his family, his relations, the way he lives, maybe something for what he strives, his clan, his dreaming, whatever. Something specific about his everyday life, including a few examples in the bush, maybe, I don’t know, some specific things about ceremonies, or whatever. Just some information and some examples.”

“…and their way of trying to put up with white society in Australia right now, so it’s about reconciliation. Is it possible or is it rather not? Do they think of segregation? Sorry day and all these things. So how do they get along with the expectations of the whites? What do they think of the people sitting on the grass in Katherine, unemployed, quite a few drunk? Is it possible to live two different lives, sort of? How
do they cooperate really? I met some of them who were really interested in cooperation.”

“It should be twofold, one thing is to learn about the Aboriginal people, the cultural ways, but also where they are now and what they want to do about improving their situation.”

2.2.7.2 Information on Bush Food and Survival Skills

Most tourists were disappointed with the information they were given on the bush walk. Tourists noticed that the tour guides did not know all the names of the plants and trees and that they had problems explaining some things to tourists. In general, tourists anticipated more information on survival techniques and the varieties of bush food. One tourist also noted that there was not any structure apparent in the bush walk since the tour guides were just going from one tree to the next tree. Comments included:

“A little bit more information how they survived in the bush. You always hear these dreamtime stories when they go on walkabouts and don’t have anything else with them then something to dig with, and sometimes not even that. He did demonstrate that once, when he dug out that carrot. I was expecting a little bit more like that. Simply, what is there in the bush that they used? He did show a little bit, but I kind of expected that there are more things like that.”

“When we did the bush walk with the guides, they knew most of the names, they didn’t know the names of some of the stuff. It wasn’t as much cultural aspects, like stories, about how things got their names relating to the Aboriginal part of things. They spoke about what it was, what it was used for in English names, sometimes they used the Aboriginal names for it. We had two maybe three stories how they related to legend and culture. I don’t think there was enough. A lot more of that stuff. I wanted to hear more of a narrative. They tell you this tree is ion wood, this is what it is used for, bla, bla, medicine, whatever. But it was not well structured. I would have expected to be a lot more informative and they tell us the story, as they are walking through the forest. Rather than this tree does that, and this tree does that. It wasn’t as structured as I would have expected it.”

“But the bush walking, that was good. We could ask questions. I feel that generally speaking we have been on a number of tours also at Uluru with some of the Indigenous guides, half of them don’t have much of the answers themselves. For what I wanted to know, it was plenty of information...Possibly a little bit more variety...”

“I think I expected little bit more information. They seem to be stumbling a bit on how to describe things. And I would have thought they would have known how to translate what their understanding is into tourist language. I could follow it a bit, because I know a little bit about native plants. But they seem to be struggling on the
names of the plants, that’s one thing I noticed. It is a very sort of laid-back walk, which was good in way, which is an impression of their lifestyle, how they accept life…But I thought I would have like a little bit more information, more specific. But that’s a cultural difference.”

“He actually talked a lot about bushes and trees and so on. I would have been interested more in things such as how they were hunting animals.”

“During the bush walk it just didn’t find the time or maybe they didn’t see the need to explain to us how much of the bush tucker they still find in the bush and how much do they buy in Katherine. It wasn’t really time for them to answer all these questions. But they tried hard; they always asked us ‘Any more questions?’ They were sort of full of humour that was good. But I think that, perhaps, they were just not aware that people really wanted to know these basic things. They tried to explain to us what a blackcurrant was and they didn’t know it wasn’t necessary because we have the same thing.”

The researcher used to join the different tour groups on their bush walk on a regular basis. The researcher’s observations during those occasions were confirmed by the above comments made by tourists. The researcher noticed that there was sometimes a lot of confusion and misunderstanding among tourists on the bush walks. Tourists would ask some questions and the Aboriginal tour guide would sometimes respond with simply ‘Yes, yes’, which did not appear to be the answer to the question. Some tourists were then even more confused and would ask the question again. This time the tour guide would think about the question and then give a longer explanation. Nevertheless, on occasions the tour guide would give an answer that was unrelated to the question or would simply ignore the question.

The researcher experienced tourists being confused on numerous occasions. For instance, on one bush walk the tour guide showed a green plum tree and mentioned that the fruits of this tree were similar to mangoes since they both had seeds. He explained that the only difference between them was that the green plum was smaller in size. However, the tour guide was not talking very clearly and tourists understood that this was in fact a mango tree growing small mangoes. Upon further inquiry by one tourist the tour guide explained that this was a green plum tree.

On another occasion, tourists were asking whether there were any snakes in that area. The tour guide answered with no, which some tourists seemed to doubt. The tour guide then continued explaining that the cane toads poison the snakes. The tourist
who was asking the initial question then again tried to confirm that there were not any snakes in that area. The tourist asked ‘So there are no snakes here?’ with the tour guide answering ‘Oh yes there are heaps of snakes around here.’

Most of the tour guides could not give specific answers to certain questions. For example, tourists often asked how old a tree was and how long it would take to grow that big. A common answer of a tour guide would be ‘Not really old’ or ‘It takes quite some time’. Similarly, tour guides could not specify the exact month when asked when fruits were growing.

The researcher noticed that tourists sometimes tried to interpret things between themselves when they did not understand the guide. Most of the time, one tourist with prior knowledge or who understood the guide explained it to his/her friends or the rest of the group. However, this led at times to false information being passed on to other visitors.

2.2.7.3 Information on History and Dreamtime Stories

Whilst the tour did not tell any dreamtime stories to visitors, tourists were very interested to hear about those stories. Tourists from Germany, in particular, were keen to learn and understand the meaning behind dreamtime stories. Some tourists explained that they read about some of the stories but they did not understand them. They therefore hoped to get an insight into dreamtime stories on this tour directly from Aboriginal people. Hence, most tourists commented upon the lack of dreamtime stories during the cultural tour. For example:

“I would like to have a mixture of these ancestor stories of creation time and the dreaming...”

“For me it is always hard to differentiate where the story telling starts and where it is still a real story. Has he only told us that for us, or does it still exist in their culture? I would have liked to find out particularly more about that.”

“Maybe they could tell us something by using pictures, I would have quite liked that. Then they could tell us about the colours and the thoughts that are behind the pictures, like the dreamtime stories.”
“...and some of the stories or something. Maybe sitting around in a group, maybe talking about this particular tribal or cultural people, things that are significant to them as well. Some of their stories and that kind of thing would have been a bit better.”

“Also maybe a couple of things about the spiritual things. You read quite a lot in terms of Aborigines. I would say, of course, in one day you probably cannot go very deep into it. With the whole dreamtime stories, you read a couple of sentences, but what it is or what it is about? I thought that you would get some insight into that here. Maybe also about the whole Aboriginal life, before the white people came. That was a complete different culture, built on different value and so on. I thought you would get a little bit of an insight into that.”

Similarly, tourists hoped to learn more about the history of the place and the history of the Aboriginal people living in Manyallaluk. Several tourists commented upon the lack of information in regards to the cattle station and mining history of Manyallaluk. Two tourists explained:

“I walked up to the mining and machinery, I wasn’t encouraged to do it, I just did it. Those kind of things would be an added value here. Maybe some signs on the walls as to what these old buildings were used. They are talking about the stuff of the old kitchen up there. Have a trail or something that people could walk through, have lunch and go walk the trail and find out about the homestead and the quarters and those kind of things. It just gives people another half an hour, an hour to do something bit more self guided, that kind of thing.”

“This whole area has got history from the cattle station days and their houses and mining and they would know all about this, so they can tell you all about. We had to ask even the white people, ‘What is this?’ and ‘What is this?’ It doesn’t tell you anything. Even in this whole day thing (the tour) there is not mention of doing a tour of this whole cattle station and the meaning of it. There is a little board over there that you can read, it is just mining. There are no stories here at all, what it was like as a cattle station.”

2.3 Authenticity

None of the tourists interviewed at Manyallaluk mentioned the term authenticity when discussing their expectations, however, several tourists explained that they were seeking a genuine experience. Towards the end of the interview, the researcher inquired whether having an authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experience was important for the tourist. The majority of tourists noted that authenticity was an important factor when participating in such a tour. The tourists also gave a clear
explanation of what authenticity meant to them. Two tourists questioned whether they would be able to judge whether the tour offered an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience:

“It is quasi westernised here, isn’t it? We have only seen 20, 50 people at the most out of the community. So I haven’t seen the full tribe. I am assuming what they presented is a true representation of what they do. Don’t know, but I am assuming that.”

“How can I be a judge of this?”

In general, tourists associated authenticity with being offered an experience that is ‘real’ and ‘genuine’. Several tourists stated that authenticity is dependent on whether the local people are involved in the tour. Thus, factors such as being of Aboriginal background, having grown up and having lived in that particular area for some time determined the perceptions of some tourists on the authenticity of the tour. Three tourists commented:

“This one seems to be vaguely recommended by quite a few people saying that it is real and that there are people living here and doing this. It appears to be that there it’s not people who perhaps grown up somewhere else and then come here and decided to do it. A lot of people have been here for a long time, grown up here, so it does seem to be genuine.”

“…I mean it is an Aboriginal community, you can’t get really more authentic than that. If it was a white tour guide you tend to think more ‘Why? ‘What sort of community is this?’ If they are trying to bring people in and they are not even running the tours themselves. In that side of things it would be a little bit of a let down, but it wouldn’t really surprise me at the same time.”

“That it is a genuine tour and you got the feeling that these were people from here…”

Hence, some tourists assumed that it had to be an authentic experience, since they were visiting a ‘real’ Aboriginal community. Similarly, one tourist explained that visiting an Aboriginal community, which is a working community equates to being authentic. The tourist was interested in seeing a community that is active and working, which was evident by seeing the community school and the arts and crafts centre. She stated that:

“And the fact that you can see that there is a school here and it is a working community. There is a school here, there is an arts centre here, which is a bit different to going into any shop anywhere in the Territory or Western Australia and
trying to buy a didgeridoo and there is a white person behind the counter selling it to you. So that authenticity was important, the fact that it was recommended for being like that was important and that it was educational.”

For three tourists the financial objective of the tour played a role in establishing whether it was authentic. Two tourists explained that the fact that the tour was genuinely Aboriginal meant that money earned by tourism went back into the Aboriginal local community. Yet, another tourist was pleased to see that the Aboriginal people were sharing their culture with tourists as opposed to just being focused on the financial gains:

“Yes, and to know that this was something that they were doing and that it was genuinely Aboriginal. So often you are going into shops and it says ‘This is made by Aborigines’, but you don’t know how much is genuine or how much of the money that you pay actually goes back to them. So today was really good in that respect that it was made clear where the proceeds went.”

“I was just, you know, looking for a genuine tour, where the money doesn’t only go to white employees where there are black people, Aboriginal people, who are given the money directly for their job. Because what I found out is, especially in the shops in Alice Springs and Adelaide for example, they sell Aboriginal arts and crafts and it’s always these elderly white women or the younger ones, it’s always white persons staff and shopkeepers and shop assistants. So my reason is first of all, it’s hopefully a tour where the money goes directly to Indigenous Aboriginal people.”

“…who were here sharing something of theirs with you rather than just trying to make some money.”

For some tourists authenticity was influenced by the amount of time visitors were able to spend with the Aboriginal people. According to one tourist, a one-day tour would be not able to provide you with a feeling of authenticity. In order to have an authentic experience visitors would have to live with an Aboriginal family in their community for a longer period. This in turn indicates that the tourists were interested to share the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people. Comments included:

“From what I feel, I would say no, you can hardly get authenticity as a tourist. You would have to live perhaps a little bit longer in such an Aboriginal community. I don’t think you can find that as a one-day tourist, or even in two or three days, I don’t think so. It is nice to see something like that, there are certainly a few conclusions you can draw, but authentic, I don’t think so.”

“It would have been more authentic when we could have seen where they live and be part of their lives, rather than be isolated from that.”
Several tourists would have liked to experience the ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ side of Aboriginal people. One female tourist explained that for her it felt genuine because Manyallaluk was a dry community and they did not appear to have alcohol problems such as other Aboriginal communities. She stated that:

“I wanted to see an authentic community. What is the real Aboriginal thing? Even where my daughter was it was so different to this community here. I did feel that it was genuine because it seemed to me that the people didn’t drink. It said outside that it was dry and it seems to me that it really was dry. Lots of the people do have alcohol problems and these people appeared not to have them. So I felt there was more a chance to have an authentic experience in a place like that. But I also come from a tourist area in England and I know that people will just tell you anything for the tourist, sometimes just make it up as you go along.”

Another tourist wanted to see that the Aboriginal people were maintaining their cultural traditions, whilst living a modern way of life:

“…that sort of things were important to us, that at least someone is trying to keep the culture going a little bit. But naturally for them too, the white men’s life is easier, to go to the shop and buy stuff rather than spend all day looking for your groceries, it is just common sense.”

One female tourist interpreted authenticity as learning what kind of bush food Aboriginal people used to eat and how it was prepared. Similarly, to the previous comment, the tourist wanted to see that they were still holding on to these cultural ways of finding and preparing bush food. This was confirmed to the tourist when witnessing Aboriginal children on the bush walk picking up fruits and eating them. Her comments included:

“I think in this day of age the authentic thing is to explain the food that their father used to eat. And how they used to go about it. That has to be authentic. It is not authentic today, because they don’t eat that food as a stable diet. They mix it with other things, obviously they kill and eat kangaroo and they like that. But I think when they talk about their fathers and what they used to do and how they used to live. Doing some bush things, but you know they are not doing all that stuff, you shouldn’t expect it of them. They should be able to enjoy some modern society as well.”

“The kids were eating the food that was nice to see. The little kids picking up that food that it says they eat. And some of the other culture thing we have been into it, they say that they just go to the bush, pick up the food and eat it. And that’s what the children were doing, so that was really good. That was very authentic. You see it on the film and they say that they do it, but you know they are not going to get all their diet from the bush food that’s for sure.”
“At Tennant Creek there was a part Aboriginal fellow...and he showed us the raw bananas and how you can eat them and how they chop them up and eat the fibres in the green ones, what they do with it. And he cooked two witchetty grubbs in the ashes and chopped them up finally to give everyone a piece each. Some people ate it, some didn’t. I ate it a little bit. He had a variety of food and he had it in a little woven basket that they make. And to me that must have been the most authentic thing yet, and he wasn’t even full Aboriginal, a quarter Aboriginal if that, you know. It was very good.”

A male tourist noted that authenticity is present when Aboriginal people use traditional techniques when demonstrating skills to tourists. Hence, in his opinion the value of authenticity would have been increased if the tour guides did not use any modern techniques:

“That was probably 80% authentic, the 20% is using modern cultures to enhancing their current Aboriginal techniques. The 80% is still there. The 80% in terms of the basket weaving. The needle was current white man technology than basic Aboriginal technique. If they used a kangaroo bone as their needle, that would have made it really authentic as such. But didn’t stop of appreciation of the technique they used to do the basket weaving. More convenient but works well.”

Furthermore, the same tourist explained that the relaxed and casual atmosphere made the tour authentic. In his opinion added professionalism would have rather detracted from the authenticity. Thus, the tourist wanted the tour to reflect the slower and more relaxed lifestyle of Aboriginal people. He explained:

“They did things at a much slower pace, more relaxed as well as you would have expected of the culture...If the tour would have been really professional that would have not enhanced, that would have detracted from the authenticity of an Aboriginal cultural tour if that would happened. Effectively you walk into their homeland here, are greeted casually, I found it quite relaxing, it wasn’t confronting in any way. I didn’t feel uncomfortable in any way in terms of their technique of presentation of doing things. They have a very relaxed lifestyle, that’s very good to see.”

Tourists anticipated learning how Aboriginal people used to live and survive in the bush. They were also expecting to find out how Aboriginal people live today, for example what problems they have. Comments included:

“How they live now, have them tell us how they used to live, how the society used to work. What they used to do. It would be interesting to hear what kind of problems they have in their society. And how they are accepted now.”
“...part of it is telling me about their way of life and part of it is showing me something about it. Not like in a zoo, with this is where we live and this is the clothes that we wear. Because I don’t want to have a close look, I didn’t do that in Africa either, because it’s a sort of ‘zooe’ factor and I don’t like that. It should be a question of respect really. It’s all right if they tell me and I have the feeling I can believe them, I can have the imagination what it would be like when they explain it precisely. That would be enough for me.”

The comments show that there are several different perspectives as to how tourists interpret what an authentic and genuine tour experience means to them. Some tourists associated authenticity and genuineness of a tour as having a local Aboriginal tour guide and visiting an Aboriginal working community. Other tourists viewed a genuine tour in terms of knowing that the Aboriginal community receives the financial proceeds from tourism. Then some tourists were hoping to find that the Aboriginal traditional culture would be still alive. Tourists were aware that Aboriginal people would be living a modern lifestyle, however, they were anticipating a mixture of modern and traditional. Several tourists were hoping to find a dry community, which still employs some of its traditional skills and techniques. A summary of visitors’ perceptions of what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience is provided in figure 2.

2.4 Hands - On Activities

Since the Manyallaluk tour brochure outlined that hands-on activities would be offered to visitors, tourists were aware of and expected such activities. Several tourists explained that they looked forward to being involved in activities rather than just listening and observing. Tourists explained that being able to try certain skills Aboriginal people used and still use in order to survive in the bush, would provide them with a feeling and sense of how difficult it was and how long it took. Thus, involvement in terms of feeling, touching and smelling seemed to enhance the experiences of visitors. Several tourists noted:

“…and that it would be interactive, would be hands-on so there would be things that we would be doing, rather than just listening to what’s going on looking, touching, seeing and being involved. It would be that kind of experience.”
“The spear throwing I am really looking forward to that. Just to see how they are throwing them and how they make them. I am not interested in the Aboriginal culture as such bit more in the activities.”

“I read about that, about the afternoon activities. I would like to do something, I mean, even if I am not good at that, I know the thing is to do it together just to feel, what it’s like how long it takes and how long it took the women or the men to do something like a basket or whatever. It helps to feel, people sitting on the ground and doing something with the hands. I’d love to do that, because it is a different approach not just via your brain and head but also with your hands, your eyes, perhaps sense or smell whatever.”

The perceptions of tourists after the tour was finished towards hand-on activities were mixed. Whereas some tourists enjoyed the activities and were actively involved in fire lighting, spear throwing, painting etc., other tourists regarded the activities as a ‘joke’ and unnecessary. Moreover, the hands-on activities were described as an entertainment for tourists. Those tourists who did not like the activities stated that they would have rather preferred more information from the tour guides as well as more conversation. Comments included:

“The activities were great. My hands are so sore from the fire we nearly lid it.”

“The hands-on activities were best, I reckon, just to look it wouldn’t be the same.”

“It was a good mix. Yes, the painting was good, the basket weaving was a demonstration. The spear throwing, and the swimming hole for the kids, that was good too.”

“The activities in the afternoon, I didn’t need that. You don’t need to try these things yourself. It would be better if they would show other things. These hands-on activities were not necessarily for us…Rather some more explanations to the things they were talking about this morning.”

“If tourists just do these things like throwing spears and trying to paint some things, trying to do weaving, it is just copying people. For me it just feels like a tourist thing. To me it’s more interesting to watch them to pick berries, to watch them prepare a proper bush tucker meal…More situations where we just could sit down and where the atmosphere was like ‘You may ask me now’. Not just you know another activity like throwing spears. I could have done without that because it is like a joke… I don’t want to be entertained - I want more information instead.”
Figure 2: Summary of Tourists’ Perceptions of What Constitutes an Authentic Aboriginal Cultural Tour Experience (Manyallaluk Tours)
2.5 Organisation of Tour

Many tourists commented positively upon the organisation of the tour, such as the timing and the pace of tour activities. Tourists, who had previous experience with Aboriginal communities, explained that they were surprised to find such an organised tour. Several tourists mentioned the relaxed atmosphere and the casual environment of the tour, which gave them a feeling of the lifestyle in Manyallaluk and according to one tourist even increased the authenticity of the tour, for example:

“I did not think it would be as good as it is. Just because I am used to a general degree of chaos, not chaos but vague disorganisation in communities. But we were greeted at the time, we vaguely thought we are going to be greeted. We got a cup of tea, we were welcomed here and it just runs as it said it was going to run, which doesn’t often happen.”

“I like it that it is quiet here, that you have time, that you get a feeling a little bit for the rhythm of life here.”

“It was all perfect. You come back lunch is pretty much ready. No it’s great. You have as well sort of time to talk to each other, so it’s not just tight organised. You have as well time to talk and meet the other people in the group as well.”

“No in the European way of professionalism. Like if they say quarter past one it will be quarter past one. It’s not what I expect. It’s not important to me. If I am introduced to bush tucker. Well that’s fine, if it’s one or five o’clock it doesn’t matter to me. Because it is part of the information and the feeling but it’s not important to me when that will be. I have no expectations as to schedule or planning rather than to information and conversation. This is my major aspect really.”

“Absolutely different, being an Aboriginal tour I wouldn’t have expected that would be the same kind of level as a Western tour in presentation as such. Because it is just different culture. Not as developed as Western cultures. But I found them quite hospitable, quite presentable. They did things at a much steer, slower pace, more relaxed as well as you would have expected of the culture. But they were courteous, they always allowed us to get the first bits of that meal rather than themselves. If the tour would have been really professional that would have not enhanced, that would have detracted from the authenticity of an Aboriginal cultural tour if that would happened. Effectively you walk into their homeland here, are greeted casually, I found it quite relaxing, it wasn’t confronting in any way.”

One female tourist explained that because of the look of the brochure she expected the tour being very organised. However, she did not regard the lack of professionalism as a major disadvantage. She stated that:
“Looking at their brochure, it is a fairly fancy brochure that I probably would have expected something fairly organised. But I don’t know if that’s necessarily realistic, especially sitting here looking thinking it’s probably not going to be that way. I haven’t done a tour like this so it’s probably not going to be quite the way. But you picture doing other tours, that’s not necessarily a bad thing, it doesn’t hurt for our white pristine expectations to be challenged a little bit.”

Whereas some tourists seemed to understand, even appreciate the cultural differences impacting upon the organisation of the tour, several tourists showed dissatisfaction towards the way the tour was running. Several tourists, who were self-drive tourists, complained that they felt stranded upon their arrival at Manyallaluk since they could not find any signs or information as to where the tour was taking place. Other tourists stated that due to the lack of structure and information they did not know what they were expected to do or what was going to happen next on the tour. One tourist criticised the tour of not being professional enough. The tourist did not differentiate between an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal run tour. According to this tourist, since both tours charge the visitor money, they should therefore both have a certain standard of professionalism. Comments included:

“The only thing is when you arrive here, you don’t know what to do. So maybe an improvement in that respect, some orientation…we first continued driving, we didn’t know if it was here or further down. We drove on to that place with the cars and then they sent us back.”

“Probably just in the beginning. Just sort of having a bit of a structure of the day, knowing what to expect… the hardest thing was sort of knowing what is going to happen next, what is going to happen and what we are suppose to do I felt a little bit unsure with.”

“We have been sitting here for an hour, 45 minutes. Just a little bit more organisation a little bit more structure to it. But if they are not in a hurry, we are not in a hurry. Being Westerner you might be more in a hurry. I don’t know what’s going to happen, no one has explained to me the first part of the day is going to be morning tea, we chill out, we talk and then we go for a walk and then we have lunch. There has been nothing communicated to us for the day apart what we have read in the brochure.”

“My expectations of any tour that is advertised in a tourist bureau is that it is professional. So when someone says he will pick us up at eight o’clock, I expect to be picked up at eight o’clock, quarter past. If it says to me drop of is at 5.30, I expected to be that, unless things changed during the day and I am informed about that. I expect of tours that I pay money for to be professional and at a certain standard. I didn’t know who was behind running this, it could have been white people or Aboriginal people, I don’t have any different expectations that it is an Aboriginal
tour as opposed to a white person run tour…If you were a tourist coming from overseas or even from within Australia, you would expect a lot more structure to it. Polish it more professional when you are paying $165 per person to come out here for the day.”

2.6 Bush Food

All tourists expected to taste some bush food since it was described in the tour brochure as being offered on the tour. Hence, tasting bush tucker whilst being explained certain plants on the bush walk was an important component of the tour. Similarly, having traditional Aboriginal bush food served for lunch, such as kangaroo tail, prompted some tourists to book this particular tour. Comments included:

“It was recommended in the Lonely Planet and the brochure specified what you get is a tour looking at bush food, bush tucker, bush medicine. ‘Visit another community and get a bush feed here’…Bush tucker was very important. If it maybe wasn’t included and another tour perhaps did include it, I would probably go with the other tour that included it.”

“I expected to taste things in the bush, which we did and that was fine, that was really interesting.”

“The food, the bush tucker, the kangaroo tail, I really want to taste that.”

“… if they are doing like a walk through the bush and saying what these things are, I would expect that sort of stuff to be on the table as well. To be able to eat or taste, or even on the walk even if you can taste it and eat it there that would be fine for me. Even if there wasn’t lunch included.”

“That’s what it said in the brochure, so I thought I try some. If we go walking in the bush and there are plants and eatable things I give that a try unless I can’t stomach the look of it, I give it a try.”

“I am expecting traditional Aboriginal food, I am not quite sure if we are going to get that or not. Some bush tucker, at least a try. The brochure said bush tucker.”

“If it’s too strange and too unfamiliar, perhaps I skip it but I am curious. At least I want to see what it is like, if I don’t taste it, if it doesn’t taste all right to me I just drop it.”

During the bush walk, the majority of tourists seemed very excited of being able to try ants, bush fruits etc. The perceptions of tourists of the bush walk seemed therefore very positive:
“It was important that we were able to eat things on the walk and also come back and someone else has cooked kangaroo tail or whatever. Kangaroo tail and damper.”

“With the bush tucker we were eating everything, I learned so much out there. I had some ants, I just loved it.”

“But what they spoke about was good, they gave us an example some taste of the different fruits, I guess that was my expectation.”

Nevertheless, two tourists explained that they expected more traditional Aboriginal food being served. They criticised the fact that the tour was offering too much westernised food such as salads and steaks. They stated that:

“For me it's not a real Aboriginal tour, it’s some part Aboriginal I think, it can be more I think for such tours. We are sitting here and we are eating oranges and an orange is not a traditional food I think. Some bush tucker, more things that they ate in Australia many thousand years ago. Not the things that come from the white people. I expected it more traditional.”

“Lunch was interesting to some degree, was already westernised. I did expect a less westernised version of lunch. I wasn’t sure what was going to happen. I guess the cooking of the kangaroo tail in the earth over was unusual but was more Aboriginal, that was probably something like that I expected. But the BBQ thing was very westernised, the salad and such was very westernised as well.”

3. Anangu Tours: Tourists’ Expectations and Perceptions

3.1 Authenticity

Tourists were questioned whether having an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour was important for them. The majority of tourists noted that gaining an authentic experience was an essential component of an Aboriginal cultural tour and that they perceived Anangu tour as being authentic. Yet, a few tourists noted that they were not able to judge whether the tour offered an authentic experience due to their lack of knowledge and information on Aboriginal culture. These tourists stated that they, therefore, had to believe and trust the Aboriginal tour guide, which in turn generated a feeling and impression of the tour appearing genuine and authentic to them.
In general, most tourists viewed the tour as genuine since it did not appear ‘plastic’ and ‘staged’ like a show. Some tourists explained that gaining a real authentic experience would involve living the Aboriginal lifestyle for a period of time. Similarly, others stated that experiencing the traditional lifestyle would make it ‘authentic, authentic’. However, these tourists noted that these expectations were not realistic in the context of contemporary tourism.

All responses were analysed and categorised, which produced one main factor that led to the perception of authenticity. The majority of tourists explained that the role and background of the Aboriginal tour guide made the tour authentic. Moreover, the tour guide describing and demonstrating how life was in the past highlighted even further the authenticity of the tour. A summary of visitors’ perceptions of what constitutes an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience is provided in figure 3.

### 3.1.1 How can we judge Authenticity?

Several tourists explained that they were not able to judge whether they gained an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience since they did not have any knowledge of Aboriginal culture. Whilst tourists acknowledged that authenticity is important, they were not able to determine with certainty if this tour offered an authentic experience. Thus, tourists commented that they relied on their impressions and their feelings towards it. They also had to trust the Aboriginal tour guides that they were representing and demonstrating their culture in an authentic way. Comments included:

“Yes, I don’t know how I could keep track of that. But I guess yes, that would be important. I would have to believe what I am told. I don’t have any real references to check it I haven’t done any research myself. I read a little bit at the cultural centre, so I will be looking for some of those highlights. But other than that I have to believe what I am told…felt that way to me.”

“I know it’s a touristy thing, I think it was fairly authentic. The things that they showed us were actually done a long time ago. And I am sure that’s the way it was done. Not knowing much about the culture, I just have to base it on an impression.”

-430-
Figure 3: Summary of Tourists’ Perceptions of what Constitutes an Authentic Aboriginal Cultural Tour Experience (Anangu Tours)

How can we judge authenticity?
- Lack of information and knowledge
- No references to check it

PERCEPTION OF AUTHENTICITY
- Belief and trust what you are told
- Feeling and impression of authenticity

Living their Lifestyle for a Period of Time
Experiencing the Traditional Lifestyle – Realistic?
- Comfort for tourists

Perception of Genuine & Real
- Not like a show
- Not plastic and staged

Background & Role of Aboriginal Tour Guide
- Interaction - being able to talk to and ask questions
- Wanting to share culture
- Tour guide acting normal – not putting on a show
- Knowledgeable tour guide who has lived his/her culture and traditions
- Custodians of land and stories

Describing & Demonstrating Life in the Past – Primitive Times
- Language
- Recalling memories
- Evidence of primitive times
- Use of tools and bush food
- Feeling and touching tools

-431-
“I don’t think that I had the information to judge whether it was authentic. Because I don’t really know anything about Aboriginal cultures, so I can’t say whether this was the true version of it or whatever. I think that both here and at Djabugay, that the people themselves seemed very genuine to me. I sort had a trust of what they were telling me. I would say that I don’t assume that I got the whole story. I felt that what I received was genuine on their part.”

One male tourist explained that he is cautious making any judgments on authenticity since he thinks that authenticity is dependent on many different factors, which influence the genuineness of the product. Those factors, which the tourist did not have knowledge about, were for instance, the relationship of the tour guide to the community and the influence of the tour company upon the nature of the product. He stated that:

“I don’t really feel like that I have any means of judging how genuine it is. I learnt some things that seemed to me convincing but I think I would need to know much more about how for instance how does she relate to the whole community she comes from, which one get a different story than if it was somebody else who was talking to us? How much is this being manipulated by whatever the company is, which provides the tour and maybe has a cure what consumer want, which may determine the nature of the product. So there is all sort of things that make one a bit cautious in making any judgments. I learnt a little, but how many conclusions one may draw from the little I have learnt I think I feel I am not in a position to say.”

3.1.2 Perception of Genuine and Real

In general, many tourists stated that they wanted to have a genuine experience, something that was ‘real’ and not ‘fabricated’. One female tourist mentioned how the Aboriginal tour guide was ‘normal’ and not putting on a show for tourists, since he was strongly emphasising the educational purpose of the tour. Several tourists had visited the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park near Kuranda/Cairns and compared their experience to this tour. They commented that Anangu Tours was a more genuine experience since it was not like a show. Two tourists explained:

“But I think it was well done especially because the guide wasn’t, he wasn’t kind of putting on a show. He seemed like he was really acting normal. I like the way, he said: ‘All right you can take pictures, but I want you to sit and learn first’. Because most tourists would be snapping pictures right and left and not really listening to what he had to say. By saying that we had to listen and learn first. He kind of showed us how important learning and education was to his culture. And how you show
respect for other people, how you show respect for elders and people who know more than you. And I thought that part was great.”

“Because in Kuranda it was still too showy, whereas this one was not like a show.”

“I expected it to be genuine to be real and hear the real stories. I don’t like pretence or fabrications.”

“It was more genuine than the one we went to Kuranda.”

Likewise, one male tourist gave an example of a Polynesian cultural performance he experienced whilst visiting Hawaii. His perception of what he regarded as having a certain degree of authenticity was dependent on whether something was staged and felt like a show. Interaction in terms of asking questions and talking with Aboriginal people was viewed as an important factor impacting upon the extent of authenticity perceived. The tourist explained:

“Because really what do you get out of it? You are just watching a performance. I mean you could go to a place like the Polynesian cultural centre in Hawaii, which to me is like a theme park, and it has some degree of authenticity, but it has got no interaction at all. You don’t get to ask them many questions or anything. I mean there is a place for it I wouldn’t mind doing it and I would probably do it near Cairns, when I go up there later, but I think there is a reason for having specific tours and I think that’s good. So I liked the focus of this one, that’s why I went on it.”

3.1.3 Experiencing Aboriginal Lifestyle

Whilst the majority of tourists interpreted authenticity as being linked to the Aboriginal tour guide and his/her demonstration of skills and tools, a few tourists saw authenticity in a different context. The view of one tourist was that authenticity would be only possible when tourists lived with the Aboriginal people in their community for some time:

“The only way you can get an authentic one would be to go and live with them in their base camp or whatever. But this is the best you can get when you are trying to have a peek at their life.”

Two tourists on the other hand explained that real authenticity could be only then attained if tourists would experience the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle themselves. This would include hunting for and collecting food, walking and camping in the bush
for a couple of days. However, both tourists recognised the limitations of this interpretation of authenticity since a tour would need to provide a certain level of comfort to visitors. The tourists stated:

“Worms and grubs and things like that would be really authentic, but I think it wouldn’t be realistic. Taking our clothes off and dancing. I think within the parameters of tourism organised it was very good, one of the best.”

“Well, it wasn’t ‘authentic authentic’. If they want to make it really authentic then you know you have to get there, you have to walk there first of all, you wouldn’t be on a bus. You have to camp out there for a couple of days, you have to go kill yourself your own kangaroo with a spear. You have to collect plants to make fires and stuff like that. I think if they make it that authentic people wouldn’t do it. Because people want to be comfortable they want their little tour bus and their breakfast in the morning and all that.”

3.1.4 Background and Role of Aboriginal Tour Guide

For the majority of tourists authenticity was given by the opportunity to interact with an Aboriginal tour guide. Being able to ask questions and hearing stories directly from an Aboriginal person created a genuine experience for most tourists. Tourists explained that they specifically sought information about dreamtime stories and interpretation of Uluru from an Aboriginal person as opposed to from a non-Aboriginal tour guide or bus driver. Comments included:

“It was genuine, I enjoyed it. It makes it genuine to just talking to the people and seeing where they live and being able to ask questions and stuff. I enjoyed his stories out in the bush it was nice.”

“I don’t think I would feel the same if it would be the bus driver or even the young women who did the translation.”

“Very often you take tours that are play-acting. Someone acting in a role and they are not really in that role. Obviously if you go to an 18th century restoration, there are no authentic people left from the 18th century. It is just impossible. None of the people such as George Washington or Benjamin Franklin are still around. And you know it is phoney. But you incline yourself into suspending that disbelief. And following into that period of time that you are looking at. This was authentic. This absolutely was authentic. Because you had the people there so the Aboriginal person makes it authentic.”

“As being told by someone who is Aboriginal, seeing him walking around…”
“I came on this specifically because it said hunting and gathering and that there would be an Aboriginal guide, would be some dreaming interpretation and that sort of thing.”

“I don’t like the stories to be made up, you know pretence. I want to hear what the Aborigines actually have to say. They have carried their stories for thousands of years, so I wanted to hear their stories.”

“I define authenticity as coming from the culture itself. A member of this culture, he wants to share his knowledge. I felt he was funny, he was engaging, he shared things that he didn’t necessarily have to, he imparted the information in a way that I remember it for a long time.”

One female tourist also emphasised the importance of having a knowledgeable Aboriginal tour guide, who is able to interpret and convey cultural information in a meaningful way to tourists. The tourist put that in contrast to a tour guide who ‘recites some canned spiel’ to visitors. She noted that:

“The tour guides on this particular tour were more interpreters than they were tour guides. In other words they really made an effort to interpret this culture to you. Of course you have to be knowledgeable in order to do that. But the tour guides, you did not have a sense of them reciting some canned spiel that they had memorised. That they really were knowledgeable and made the effort to interpret this culture to you.”

Moreover, a few tourists were more specific in regards to what background they expected the Aboriginal tour guide to have. One female tourist from the Netherlands wanted to have an Aboriginal tour guide who lives in the community and leads an Aboriginal lifestyle. She also differentiated between urban and remote Aboriginal people, depicting remote Aborigines as being ‘really, really Aboriginal’:

“I don’t know if there is a fake one, something like that if it is Aboriginal. I would define authenticity because the tour guide lives in the Aboriginal village and she really has got an Aboriginal lifestyle, she is not living in a big city driving in a car and wearing modern clothing. She is really, really, Aboriginal. It is different, because you also have Aborigines in Sydney or Melbourne, but they grow up in the city and they have a lot of different stories. She knows a lot, about their history and stuff.”

Similarly, another female tourist expected to receive information from Aboriginal people, who still practice their culture and traditions. She described those Aboriginal people as the ‘custodians of the stories’, who are also attached to their land, which makes them the ‘custodians of the land’. Thus, the tourist distinguished between
local Aboriginal people having a cultural and spiritual connection to their land and other Aboriginal people, who would have come from a different part of Australia. She explained:

“From the people, whose land it is. I guess I am aware that Europeans have come in and taken over in the last two hundred years. So I think Aboriginal people, who hold on to their culture, their knowledge and their beliefs, I would like to hear from them, they are the custodians of the stories. Authentic being from the people who are the custodians of the land, attached to it, rather than people that are working here.”

3.1.5 Describing and Demonstrating Life in the Past – Primitive Times

Several tourists viewed the tour as being authentic since the Aboriginal tour guide was describing how life was in the past - telling about ‘primitive times’. One tourist emphasised how a female Aboriginal tour guide was recalling her memories and how she had learnt her culture and stories directly from her grandmother. In addition, the fact that tourists were able to touch, feel and try Aboriginal tools and weapons allowed for a genuine experience for many tourists. This was further increased by the tour guide demonstrating how tools were used and food made. Comments included:

“I think it was actually. I mean she was like many of the native people, she was very genuine and she told us like life was… It was as authentic as it could be, she was describing life in the past, primitive times. I enjoyed that thing about the cave. I can’t believe that people were running around with no clothes on. They weren’t wearing anything else, so a really primitive way of living.”

“It was an authentic tour. There were some Aboriginal people, I think that’s authentic. They were talking in their own language, which I didn’t expect, that was really good. And they also showed us, how they are making flour and something like this.”

“I think it is just to get the spears and the fact that you can touch, feel and hold them. Like we did with the women things, I think that’s important.”

“Because she explained how for example with the rock paintings, describe what that was all about. And how her grandmother had explained to her the culture and making of the hair skirt and that sort of thing. She was recalling her memories, so for that, yes I thought that was authentic. And showing how they used the different seeds and berries and things like that. And the equipment that they used and the stone that was on the ground had obviously been used for lots of rubbing. It appeared that way. Yes, I would say it is authentic.”
“This is what the tool is, this is men’s this is women’s, he got pretty deep into it. For me that’s the nature of authenticity, as how are things used and provide some contact for the world they are getting it from, how do they use it, why certain things were done as they were.”

One male tourist illustrated, by using an example of a previous Aboriginal cultural tour he participated in, how a tour lacks authenticity. According to the tourist, the tour guide was telling stories and giving tourists ready prepared bush food to taste, which lacked context. Thus, context or in other words understanding was not established since the tourist was not shown how something was gathered and used. In-depth information was therefore lacking which led to the tourist’s perception that the tour was not authentic. He explained:

“The bush tucker tour I did was at Margaret River, in the Perth area. It was done by an Indigenous Australian, and it was not authentic at all. A lot of the stuff was, this is how this place got to be, this name and he told stories that didn’t have the context. The food was prepared like you would find it in a grocery store, so it completely lacked authenticity. They were in jars, they didn’t show how it was gathered, how it was used, it was spread on bread and the mince would be emu and kangaroo, already smoked. So it was completely lacking context. That tour was basically we go canoeing and we have lunch and they tell you a little bit how the food was gathered. I was left with more questions than I had answer.”

Several tourists noted that how the Aboriginal tour guide delivered and presented the information, by speaking his native language, made the tour authentic to them. The tour guide explaining things in his/her Aboriginal language, therefore, did not create that perception of the tour being staged and plastic, for example:

“I thought he would speak English, but I thought it was kind of cool that he spoke his native language, because he probably doesn’t speak English and it added a lot more authenticity. I think it was great. I mean it was that way it didn’t seem as staged, it didn’t seem as plastic as like pre-packaged for tourists. It seemed make things really authentic.”

“Yes, I liked it, I just thought it was authentic. I knew she could speak English, she could understand English, she would have had to. But the way they presented it, it was very good.”
3.2 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

Tourists were asked whether they were interested in the traditional or contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people. The majority of tourists were interested in learning about both – the traditional as well as the contemporary lifestyle. Only one male tourist distinctively emphasised that he is only interested in the traditional lifestyle. He stated that:

“Traditional for sure. Today I can probably observe myself, but I had to be taught how they lived before, so that would more what I am looking at of this tour.”

Two other tourists were not specifically interested in the contemporary lifestyle. One tourist stated that he is not Australian and, therefore, is more concerned about his own country and its Indigenous people. The other tourist did not expect this type of information:

“Not in this situation, which I think is far removed from, this is something that is 40,000-50,000 years of culture here, whereas things that are going on today are present and don’t impact on that at all thank goodness. The story continues out there but is a different story. I am but then I am not an Australian so I haven’t got this background to the problem here. I am more concerned about my own country where we have issues similar the same.”

“But I don’t think I was really expecting to learn anything significant about present day life, I was expecting perhaps to learn more about traditions, possibly a little bit worried that it would be at a rather trivial level and that one would not necessary be getting really far.”

A large proportion of tourists wanted to find out about a combination of traditional as well as contemporary Aboriginal lifestyle. Tourists seemed to be aware that Aboriginal people would be leading a modern lifestyle using TVs, fridges etc. Tourists were mostly interested in their day-to-day life. Comments included:

“And I wanted to learn how they live on a day-to-day basis…Both pretty much.”

“But meeting them I want to see how primitive people live, before running water and how they survived in such a harsh environment. I would imagine this is hard. I live in the driest state of the US and this brings memories to me where I live, so dry, tough live. And I want to see how they utilise the resources and stuff like that. How they did for centuries of time…Both, get a picture of both. I imagine they have TV sets in their houses and everything else, of course.”
“Yes, actually, I knew of the Aborigines and I knew that would be around this area. So I always was interested to hear how actually they have their living. I have also seen on time on TV, I have seen a report from the Aborigines when they were making bread, in the ground and seeing the sunset. So I find that a bit interesting...So they have been given a better life now I assume...That’s also one part of it, which is interesting.”

“That’s basically what I wanted to find out. About their life and how they used to live and just some background. Mostly the traditional. Little bit about how they live today, but I know most people just live like everybody else today.”

“How they lived before the white man got here. How they are living now too. If they are living now the way they want to live.”

“It’s not that I am disinterested and I wouldn’t mind knowing more about how they live today and particularly what the politics are, the relation with the government and the like. If it would be equal, I wouldn’t like to be just that, I am interested in their traditional ways.”

Within the interest to learn about the contemporary lifestyle of Aboriginal people, several tourists were in particular interested in the relationship between traditional and contemporary lifestyle. Tourists stated that they wished to learn more as to how things have changed for Aboriginal people and whether their modern lifestyle today still contains traditional aspects of living. Three tourists commented:

“How far are they still living according to their original customs?”

“One of the questions that I didn’t get to ask ‘How do they make peace with today’s society and their traditional ways?’”

“But there were one or two brief hints what was said about present situation and how things have changed. Yes, I would like to know more about that, because one likes to know about how things were fifty years ago or hundred years ago, or a thousand years ago, but in a sense it is more meaningful if one can put it in the context of what’s there today, what stayed the same and what has changed. It would be interesting to know for instance, not only how people’s living conditions and health and so on has changed but also how much living reality all the traditions and stories have. Whether they are still actually something, which parents tell their children or whether it is just something that it is told to tourists. Personally, I would have liked to know more about their present situation, but without doing it in ways that could be rude and humiliating...Personally, I would have liked a bit more information how things have changed. What we were told was a little bit brief and superficial and little bit more I would have welcomed.”

Though one female tourist, who had previously an Indigenous tourism experience with Native Americans, was interested in learning about their lifestyle today, she also
described how sad such an encounter could be. She explained that being on vacations this was not a pleasant experience. She stated that:

“My experience with Native American that just made me so sad. I mean it was a good experience to feel responsible for that and a continuing responsibility. I mean in the US we continue to screw over the Native American and the Bush administration is doing it now with oil rights and stuff like that. It’s a good experience and it made me really put in contact with how desperate in fact some of their situation is. But it is a real bummer in the middle of the vacation, it is not a pleasant experience. It is a morally good one, but it is hard, I found it very hard and very sad to see how the Native Americans live now. And even comparing in the visitor centre, there they have these absolute gorgeous photos of just taken fifty years ago and to see how even the people lived before, obese now, having all these health problems it is heart breaking. I suppose there is some value in having that experience in real life, but the sadness is not fun. I guess I wouldn’t mind learning more about their life today, but it is sad.”

One male tourist suggested that additional information could be distributed to tourists, describing their current situation. According to the tourist, written information could also provide visitors with the opportunity to help. He noted that:

“It might have been sort of nice if there was something you could take away at the end, which sort of give a little bit more information about here is our situation today and here are ways how you can help, if there is something that you valued in this cultural encounter and you want to do something to help. And give some more information about ways. And in that fashion, if there was something written down that you could take away, the Aboriginal people would have a chance to approve that but also to offer people an opportunity to think about it later if they wanted to do something to help.”

3.2.1 Community Area

Many tourists were interested in visiting the community area. Some tourists explained that being able to understand their day-to-day lives, they would like to see personally where and how Aboriginal people live. Thus, the interest of tourists, in obtaining information about both their contemporary as well as traditional lifestyle, seems to be further reflected in the tourists’ curiosity to witness how Aboriginal people live today. For instance, one tourist was keen to see what kind of modern appliances Aboriginal people prefer to use in their household. Tourists, therefore, hoped to observe first hand how things have changed and to what extent Aboriginal people are still attached to traditional practices. A look inside a community area or
even a private house would provide tourists an insight as to how far the modern has taken over the traditional lifestyle. Comments included:

“I would have liked to go to the community. But a lot of communities don’t want people invading them and watching and looking, you know, specimens.”

“It’s all right if they don’t mind. If it’s OK, I don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings.”

“I would have been interested in seeing the community they live in. I do understand why they don’t let people do it, but I don’t understand how they live once I can see it myself. I guess hear how it is second hand, but that would be nice, but I know they don’t do it. I would like to see for my own eyes. I would like more than just a drive through. I would like to get out and maybe in the centre of the community, I don’t know.”

“It would have been interesting when it’s not degrading. I don’t know but I have seen some TV report that they can’t be easily looked at, that’s degrading how they live, some of them. And poverty is always sad to look at. To see a happy tribal thing, that would be nice, to see a place where they live their day-to-day life and they were happy and they have not the poverty at least.”

“Ideally I would have liked to go - sure he doesn’t want tourists trampling through his house wherever he lives but I would like to see his house, his family, see what kind of modern things they have or don’t have. Do they cook over fire? Do they have a stove? What modern conveniences do they have and what modern conveniences do they think it is OK to have?”

“Yes, that would have been interesting, if you can do that. That would be interesting to see how they live.”

“Yes that would have been interesting for me. Only for me as an anthropologist, but yes that would have been interesting.”

The above statements illustrate that even though some tourists would like to see the community area, they emphasised that they do not want to be intrusive and that they respect the privacy of the Aboriginal people.

Conversely, several other tourists viewed visiting the community area as ‘invasive and not a right thing to do’. Some tourists compared that to having tourists visiting their own home, which they did not find acceptable. For example:

“But not to be in the village and try to see how they live, because that would be invasive. So I wouldn’t be prepared to do that.”
“I don’t want to go and visit their homes, my goal is to visit their site. So I am less interested in that, I don’t want anyone to visit my home today. I wouldn’t mind to learning more about it, but that was nothing major.”

“I think going to see people’s homes seems a little bit intrusive for me. Sort of outsiders coming and kind of gawping at people and invading their privacy. I don’t think I wanted to do that.”

“I don’t think I would be interested. I don’t think that would be right. I don’t think I would like anyone walking around my house seeing how I live.”

“Possibly, I think it would be a real eye opener. I think I might find it a bit threatening, because it is a really different sort of lifestyle to I guess the white Australians. I would feel really uncomfortable at going and just sticky beak at people, but maybe for international tourists they might be more interested in these issues, but I feel that I can get that information at any time. If it was to go to their community to do something like they offered it at the cultural centre that would be fine. If they sort of host, in some countries you can stay with the local people and you live there their lifestyle. So if you are doing that I think that would be interesting, but no just to go to have a look. I would feel really uncomfortable doing that.”

### 3.3 Tour Guide

The majority of tourists explained that the reason they booked Anangu Tours was because they wanted to receive information from an Aboriginal tour guide. Tourists emphasised that they wanted to learn about Uluru from an Aboriginal perspective as opposed to a ‘white person’s’ interpretation. Hence, tourists were keen to hear stories about Uluru, which were passed on from generation to generation, directly from an Aboriginal person. They also highlighted the importance of actually meeting and speaking to an Aboriginal person. Furthermore, the fact that the tour guide spoke in his/her native language was positively viewed upon since language was considered part of the tour guide’s culture. Comments included:

“I wanted to get the culture from an Aboriginal guide rather than just ‘what he said’...I just wanted to hear it in an informal way, experience it and hear it from them rather than interpreting someone else’s culture.”

“Because I felt that it was important to get some of the Indigenous as part of understanding going out there not just going out with white fellas, if you know what I mean.”

“I was looking forward to hearing the Aboriginal stories as opposed to the white people stories of it.”
“I chose this tour because I wanted to be shown Aboriginal land by an Aboriginal…”

“Because there was an Aboriginal guide, so they can tell you a lot about the different paintings and their history.”

“Because they have some native guides over there and I wanted to meet some Aboriginal people and hear from them their stories and not from an Australian guide, that’s why I booked the tour on Anangu tours.”

“Actually get to know Aborigines itself was the most important thing, and how they look at the rest of the life. To meet him, get to speak to him, plus listen to their language, that’s another important thing that I liked. Because I could hear the language rather than he talking in English.”

“I was expecting to have an Aboriginal person telling me about the culture and what we would see. So we were not just seeing a rock and think ‘what a nice, pretty rock’.”

“Before I came here I looked at lots of different brochures of different companies and I realised the way that the brochures were written that they wouldn’t have Aboriginal guides. So knowing that I wanted to come into contact with some Aboriginal people. Because I guess when you hear it from white people, when you hear it from anyone else it is filtered through their perceptions. I wanted to learn a little bit about the Aboriginal way...The tour guides that I have been through AAT, one in particular, who worked with the Aboriginal community, and he was really well informed. But that’s something that he has learnt from reading I guess, whereas with the Aboriginal people it is passed through their relationships. So I would expect to learn more specific information. I was going to say ‘accurate’, but I guess as it is passed verbally, from person to person, it has always to do with their perception, but maybe more authentic than the white tourists version.”

“Because I wanted to do tours with Indigenous people right from the start before I even book a tour. That’s what I wanted to do.”

“I guess I was interested in the Indigenous part of it rather than the story of a point of view of white fellas.”

A female tourist from the US explained that she wanted to dismiss the white persons’ stereotypes of Aboriginal people she had experienced in Australia. Thus, her aim was to meet Aboriginal people and get to know them through an organised tour:

“You hear a lot of when I first came to Australia, I heard a lot of people are prejudice against Aboriginal people and I just wanted to dispel some of that. I mean I wanted to get to know the Aboriginal people through the Aboriginal people eyes and not through other people’s stereotypes about them.”
One female tourist expected to see not only an Aboriginal tour guide but also an Aboriginal bus driver. The tourist was anticipating that the whole tour company would have been run by Aboriginal people:

“And I was kind of expecting an Aboriginal driver, I was surprised it wasn’t all run by Aborigines... I wondered why. I would have expected there would be Aboriginal people that can drive a bus. So I did kind of wondered ‘Why don’t they have an Aboriginal driver?’ But the driver was very friendly, very good and very knowledgeable.”

Tourists had certain expectations of the Aboriginal tour guide. For instance, the tour guide was anticipated to be professional, knowledgeable and receptive:

“No doubt that the tour guides here will be most professional, make sure that you are satisfied, that you get all the information that you want to get, hope for return clientele. Polite, most professional.”

“Just being knowledgeable about the culture.”

“That they would be open to questions. That they would want some interaction with the group that he or she was leading. Not just lecture or impart knowledge, but ‘What does the group want to know?’”

Moreover, the perceptions of tourists after finishing the tour appear to reflect the expectations tourists were likely to hold of the Aboriginal tour guide. Tourists commented positively upon the tour guide being knowledgeable, receptive and happy to answer any questions. For example:

“He was willing to answer questions and willing to tell us everything about, and he showed how to throw a spear and all this stuff.”

“I truly enjoyed it. I really did like actually having the Aboriginal guide give you a real flair for how the people lived and actually how they even looked like. She has a unique perspective on everything here.”

“I thought the guide was knowledgeable.”

“I thought he did a good job and was very knowledgeable, he was good.”

One tourist commented upon the warmth of the tour guide, which made her behaviour towards tourists genuine rather than commercial. Another tourist described the tour guide as being relaxed. Several tourists observed that the tour guide wanted
to share his culture with tourists and that he/she seemed to enjoy working as a tour guide. The tourists stated:

“Her warmth came through, she was so pleased that everybody was there and that came through as very genuine to me. There is nothing commercial about it. Nothing commercial about the way she presented herself. She was happy to tell us part of the story, we would never hear anything like the complete story...I loved the humour and the affection she appeared to have toward the other women who was translating and indeed with some of the people there she spoke directly to them in her language. I thought she was very warm and that came across.”

“I thought she was very relaxed and just how I picture them being.”

“I loved it because he seemed to enjoy telling the stories. He was laughing every couple of sentences. I am sure he has told the same stories fifteen thousand times and I think he didn’t seem bored of it at all. He was really into it.”

Similarly, one male tourist explained that he was satisfied with the tour since it appeared to him that the Aboriginal tour guides were involved in the tour because of their own decision and that they wanted to share their culture with tourists. He described his initial feelings as being ‘unease’ and worried about the reasons as to why Aboriginal people would be participating in tourism. He explained that:

“I suppose I sort of had slightly mixed feelings. I was a bit worried whether there is going to be an element of being patronising and how far the Aboriginal guide were people who were actually doing this willingly and had things that they really wanted to share. Or maybe they were doing it basically simply because of poverty and that somebody else totally outside is maybe exploiting them a bit. So I don’t know, I mean I had elements of unease because of that, I was reasonably happy with the way it was done.”

Two tourists were pleased that the tour guide did not appear to just have a spiel or agenda ready for tourists. Both tourists noted that the efforts of the tour guide went beyond just simple tour guiding:

“He went far beyond to what I get out of a lot of tours that I take. This is what we are looking at and then you just go on to the next thing, and they have an agenda. He didn’t seemingly have an agenda, which I thought, I mean, yes he did, there were things he wanted to do and places he wanted to show people, but I think it went beyond what I normally get out of a tour.”

“The tour guides on this particular tour were more interpreters than they were tour guides. In other words they really made an effort to interpret this culture to you. Of course you have to be knowledgeable in order to do that. But the tour guides, you did
not have a sense of them reciting some canned spill that they had memorised. That they really were knowledgeable and made the effort to interpret this culture to you.”

It appeared that several tourists anticipated more of the Aboriginal tour guide than they would have normally from a non-Aboriginal tour guide. This became apparent by tourists wanting to know about his/her personal background, such as how old the tour guide was, whether he/she had children, where he/she was born, etc. Comments included:

“We heard him speak English and he answered several questions because I asked him about his children, if they are in College and when they come back, he didn’t know, children are children.”

“I guess I would have liked to know more about his life personally, like ‘Where was I born, who my parents were, and what that means become a tour guide? How I live, how many children I have?’ Just asking about his wife, what he does for fun... I noticed that a woman was asking how old you are. It was interesting to see that he didn’t really know. It is not important, and he is right it is not.”

The researcher questioned this female tourist if she normally anticipates this kind of information from a non-Aboriginal tour guide. The tourist explained that non-Aboriginal tour guides have the same lifestyle as she does and are, therefore, not that interesting as Aboriginal people. Yet, whilst the tourist sought to receive personal information she noted that she could not ask such questions since they might be rude. She explained:

“Because they probably live exactly like I do. And so it is not that interesting. I don’t know, generally I wouldn’t have asked anyone how old they are, because he is older than I am. I wouldn’t want to ask a rude question like that.”

In fact, whilst participating in the tours, the researcher noticed that a few tourists asked the Aboriginal tour guide some personal questions. Other tourists who were interested but did not seem brave enough to ask questions themselves often joined the conversation. However, this only occurred when the tour guide appeared to be approachable and ‘easy going’ during the tour. The Aboriginal tour guide himself seemed to be happy to talk about his/her family, but often only gave limited information and avoided giving in-depth personal accounts about himself/herself.
3.3.1 Approachability of Aboriginal Tour Guides

Several tourists explained how they felt about approaching the Aboriginal tour guide to make casual conversation and ask questions. The dissimilar comments made by tourists confirmed the researcher’s observations of how tourists responded towards different Aboriginal tour guides. During the course of participating in a number of tours, the researcher observed the different tour guiding styles and personalities of several Aboriginal tour guides. Whilst some were very open and humorous dealing with tourists, others appeared very shy and distanced. The relationship between tourists and tour guide seemed therefore very relaxed when for instance a tour guide made jokes and actively encouraged tourists to ask questions. A tour led by a more shy tour guide, on the other hand, seemed to attract less questions from tourists and less interaction between tour group and tour guide. One tourist commented positively upon the efforts of a tour guide to ‘break the ice’ at the start of the tour:

“He made a statement earlier on that ‘I just don’t want to talk to a bunch of trees, feel free to be curious and ask questions’. So he kind of set the tone for that early.”

A number of tourists, who were led by outgoing tour guides, explained that they enjoyed their openness and the approachability of the Aboriginal person. They also stated that they felt at ease asking any questions. For example:

“I found her openness really wonderful and also the Aborigines that we encountered at Djabugay, they were very sincere and very open and I thought very sharing, which I thought was really lovely and she was that way, it seemed to me. I liked her sense of humour. She was very approachable because you didn’t feel like you are making fun of her or anything when you asked a stupid question.”

“I felt more comfortable with them today, than I did then last time, because they seem to be more comfortable with us. That’s the second time we met them.”

“Very approachable. I felt comfortable asking questions, I just didn’t want to interrupt too much. He was very knowledgeable, he was really good with the kids, too.”

However, several tourists had different experiences with other tour guides, who appeared less approachable. The tourists described the tour guides as shy and serious. As a result, the tourists did not feel comfortable in approaching the tour guide in order to ask questions. Thus, these characteristics of the Aboriginal tour guide as
well as how she/he approached the tour group reduced interaction and to some extent
the opportunity for tourists to seek specific information. Comments included:

“Yesterday the tour guide, she was, I don’t know if she was shy or part of the culture
isn’t to not look at people. Because in Western culture if you are talking to someone,
you look at them. At the end I said thank you to her and she smiled but she didn’t
look at me...So I would have liked to talk to her a little bit more yesterday, but I sort
of held off, because I thought she was quite shy.”

“I think for me she was, she appeared very serious, I didn’t want to ask her
something, because I don’t know, I don’t know how to describe it...I felt
uncomfortable to ask something because she appeared not very interested to tell us,
maybe at the end she was more interested to tell us the history of her people and so
on. At the beginning I thought it’s another job for her and she has to do it or
something. Somebody not really forced her to do it, she wasn’t really enthusiastic at
the beginning. At the end it was a bit different, she was more funny.”

One male tourist explained that being approachable and willing to answer questions
should be part of the job description of a tour guide. In his opinion, this applies
regardless of the cultural background of the tour guide:

“I think it is good for a tour guide somebody that is reasonably approachable, and
she had a humorous manner, which made her more sort of accessible and that was
good. I think part of being a guide is being willing to answer questions. So I think
somebody who is willing to have a try at answering people’s questions, not matter
how stupid they may seem to the guide, I think is a good thing. I think that’s probably
what I would expect from somebody who was taking on a job like that. I would still
no matter what your cultural background, if you are going to be a tour guide, part of
the job description is that you are somebody who is willing to answer questions.”

In contrast, a female tourist had a different point of view in regards to the role of an
Aboriginal tour guide. She stated that feeling uncomfortable as a tourist should not
be blamed on the accessibility and character of the tour guide. According to the
tourist, if the tour guide does not answer certain questions that means that he/she
does not want to share this part of his/her culture with the tourists. Hence, the tourist
preferred to experience Aboriginal people as they are, rather than them pretending to
be something else. She stated:

“I mean in some sense the tourists here pay for the opportunity for being here and
having this experience. Yes, it is nicer if you do feel comfortable, but my discomforts
are my own problem. I don’t think it’s up to them to act in a certain way, to somehow
be more accessible to us. And I guess I’ll ask questions no matter what. I would
assume that if they didn’t answer my question that that’s not something that they
want to or can share and that’s fine. I mean I always reserve the right not to answer questions, too. They are human beings and have the same right and dignity to decide what they are going to share about their culture and what not… I guess that they should be themselves and I think that it is wonderful that this particular group are very, but then again I don’t hold it against others if they are not. And part of being exposed to other cultures is to accepting them as they are, not forcing them to be like us to communicate with us.”

The researcher observed on numerous occasions that tourists approached the interpreter and asked him/her questions about Aboriginal culture. Sometimes, the interpreter would answer the questions himself/herself, whereas other interpreters either asked the Aboriginal tour guide and then translated it back to the tourist or informed the tourists that they are not members of Anangu culture and that any questions should be directed towards the Aboriginal tour guide. Quite often the interpreter would say: ‘Why don’t you ask X, he understands you. I am not from this culture’. Two tourists commented in regards to approaching the interpreter instead of the Aboriginal tour guide:

“I didn’t really know how to approach her, because you just pick up on the body language and it was different to white Australians in this example. And yes this made me a little bit reluctant. But perhaps I should have spoken to the translator and make her speak to the Aboriginal tour guide. Maybe that would have been a more comfortable way. Yes, I would speak through the guide and that probably would have been a more effective way to do it.”

“I thought it was kind of funny, they were asking the interpreter questions about the tour guide. When the tour guide, he didn’t speak English very well, but it looked like he understood. And they said ‘How old is he?’ Why didn’t they just ask him? And that’s exactly what the interpreter said, he said ‘Ask Him’.”

Since the Aboriginal tour guide used his native language during the tour, tourists seemed at times uncertain whether he/she would understand the question in English language. Sometimes the Aboriginal tour guide would answer directly in English, however, the tour guide was not always easy to understand. On other occasions the interpreter would translate, which in turn was time consuming and, therefore, seemed to discourage some tourists of asking more questions. Taking into consideration that some tourists did not feel comfortable approaching certain tour guides, some tourists seemed to prefer questioning the interpreter. This became also apparent when observing tourists on the tour bus. Frequently, tourists were asking the bus driver numerous questions about Anangu people and their culture.
3.3.2 Language

Only a few tourists stated that they anticipated the Aboriginal tour guide to speak his/her native language on the tour. Whilst most tourists expected the tour guide to speak English, the majority of tourists were very satisfied to hear him/her explain Aboriginal culture in the native language. Tourists stated that hearing the native language was like hearing the ‘real voice’ of the tour guide and enabled them to get a feeling for the ‘richness of the culture’. Tourists understood that certain expressions in the native language cannot be translated into English. Therefore, it would have been not the same experience, if the tour guide was communicating in English. Tourists stated:

“That was fine. I liked that a lot. That’s the first time that I come across that really. But you knew she could speak quite a bit of English. I thought that was great that you have the idea that is how they speak, this is their real voice. Because when you speak in another language that is not your real voice.”

“I assume that they would talk English, but actually I think it is probably a lot better when they speak their native tongues. I am a linguistic person myself, so I have a lot of interest in hearing other languages how they sound…It was interesting to hear her native language.”

“I was excited when I found out that we are going to have an Aboriginal person with us to tell us in her language of what we are looking at and then the translation...And that was important for me too. Because you can’t translate a native language. In New Zealand we have the same situation where Maori does not translate well into English in many occasions. Particularly in things that are spiritual. There was no direct translation this afternoon 100% all the time. And I knew that. I know that there are thing that are said that won’t translate into English.”

“When you hear it in English, you don’t get into the richness of the culture. He could have just held up something and said ‘this is a spear thrower’, give the kids a few throws, like he did and move on. But he stopped and he talked about how the ball was made, where the woomera came from, what the spear was, when they made the fire there. He threw a little bit of English in there to kind of help express, but also get across his point, but I think for us to be able to understand it. This tour could have lasted just an hour with English, but I am glad that it lasted three and half hours, I got a lot more out of it.”

“I thought it was great. I enjoyed this tour. I did another tour and to get an English speaking Aboriginal tour guide it just doesn’t come across the same to me.”

“I liked that. I liked hearing her language and it was very interesting for me to see the words of English she incorporated because it gives me some sense of what concepts exist in her language and I found that very interesting what she prefers to
say in English. She mentioned at the beginning that they don’t have words for thank you and I thought that was interesting and then I noticed that she would interject in English. So I very much liked that, I liked hearing the language. I suppose it is even watching her face. I mean you do express yourself differently in different languages and so I thought it was a greater access to her personality, hear to her speaking in her language and be able to watch her face as she speaks.”

“Actually get to know Aborigines itself was the most important thing, and how they look at the rest of the life. To meet him, get to speak to him, plus listen to their language, that’s another important thing that I liked. Because I could hear the language rather than he talking in English.”

“I expect them to speak their local language. I really liked that and I was looking at the others, the people from America and I thought that’s a really good way to promote the Aboriginal culture. Because they wouldn’t have a chance to hear this language.”

Two tourists explained that the fact that the tour guide was speaking in his native language added more authenticity to the tour experience:

“I just thought it was authentic. I knew she could speak English, she could understand English, she would have had to. But the way they presented it, it was very good.”

“I thought he would speak English, but I thought it was kind of cool that he spoke his native language, because he probably doesn’t speak English and it added a lot more authenticity. I think it was great. I mean it was that way it didn’t seem as staged, it didn’t seem as plastic as like pre-packaged for tourists. It seemed make things really authentic.”

Two tourists noted how they observed that there was a good relationship and balance between the tour guide and the interpreter. One tourist described this as a ‘worthwhile experience’ in itself to be able to witness the empathy between the two persons:

“The connection between the translator and the Aboriginal tour guide was just really something as well. I am very pleased, that was a wonderful part of the whole experience. I am pleased because I think what we got was a display of the spiritual part of presentation from the Aboriginal tour guide and a great empathy between her and the translator, who obviously knows a lot about the culture as well. But there was empathy the whole time, which was very warm and not forced in any way. That’s what made it a really worthwhile experience.”

“I am glad he did. I wasn’t sure which language they would be speaking, and when I realised we had an interpreter, I think the interpreter struck a good balance between
being too quick to answer and doing it quickly enough. They had a good balance there.”

Four tourists commented negatively on the tour being conducted in native language. The tourists thought that a lot of time was wasted in having to wait for the translation. In addition, the fact that at times the tour guide answered some direct questions from tourists in his native language, when not accompanied by the interpreter, was criticised. Comments included:

“It was a little bit slow. The interpreter was very good. It took a lot time to explain everything. Because we couldn’t understand what she was saying, it seemed to take a long time to get the message over.”

“He was good, of course I don’t know what he said. Depending solely on the interpreter. And I just had a feeling that the interpreter, he already knew what the guide wanted to say, so it was kind of - he overacted on his listening. I think he was too animated in his gestures and things, especially at first. He got better about it, but at first he was too animated in his listening gestures and how he would get into the face, maybe that’s Aboriginal culture, they listen with that kind of gestures.”

“I thought it was good to hear the language but sometimes if the translator wasn’t there and someone asked a question, I wonder to myself if the Aboriginal tour guide could have not answered that in English. I think they could have answered English in some things. Like the direct questions from the tourists.”

“I know that was suppose to make it a more interesting, but I sort of thought you know he could have started out in his native tongue and then switched to English. It seemed that a lot of time was spent with the translation. I would have preferred English.”

3.3.3 Information

The information given by the Aboriginal guide on the tours consisted of a mixture of Tjukurpa ancestor stories related to Uluru as well as information on traditional Aboriginal skills, tools and bush food. Whilst telling tourists the ancestor stories, which explained and illustrated the physical features of Uluru, the tour guide would point to certain caves, patterns and colours of the rock. However, the stories only provided a small insight into Anangu Tjukurpa since an interpretation as to what the stories meant to Anangu people and how important they were to their culture was not discussed. The researcher, therefore, felt that the stories sounded more like imaginary stories and did not reflect their deeper significance to Anangu people.
The comments made by tourists in regard to the information given on the tour represented a mixture of different attitudes dependent to some degree on the expectations tourists held of the tour as well as their motivations of participating. For some tourists the information was sufficient since they had little prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture and did not seek a deeper and specific understanding of certain components of Aboriginal culture. Other tourists specifically chose the tour to find out about collecting bush food, hunting and how tools were made and used. Those tourists commented positively upon the information supplied on these particular topics. Positive comments included:

“The information was more than adequate.”

“It was sufficient enough to make me think perhaps we will have a look some more of this. With the age group, with a very small group of my age and older and everyone in between, there would be a cross section with people who remain interested and follow up if they felt like it, as we will, or ‘isn’t that nice’ or ‘what a load of rubbish’.”

“I wanted to get some background information, I wanted to get intercultural ways of knowing sciences, particularly the technology that they use to hunt and gather. And when I read that, my expectations were that they would cover some of that technology and how it was made, what the process was…He told you where it was made, where they got the material from, how it was used, admitted that they do it more efficiently with the modern tools these days…No, I was very satisfied with it. I thought they were receptive of the questions, they met my expectations, where did they get the ball from. I have seen some of the things before but I didn’t understand the context. And they provided all the information and they let you handle it, and they sit around more than I would have thought for.”

However, a number of tourists explained that they anticipated receiving more information, including more explanations on the ancestor stories. One tourist noted that they only ‘explain the easy part of the culture’ and do not go deeper into other important cultural elements, for example:

“I think they tend to explain the easy part of the culture the items they use, the food, the plant. It would be interesting to know about their religion, their law, their culture really. I mean items and food are just a part of it. But that’s me and that’s my personal interest…but it’s clear that the agenda is on items and plants and food, which is what people would like to know. So they just follow the agenda. I don’t think they like to go out of it so much.”
“Personally, I would have liked a bit more information how things have changed. What we were told was a little bit brief and superficial and little bit more I would have welcomed.”

“I am interested in knowing about the plants and the animals of the area and what the people originally eat. I would have liked a little bit more. I am interested in fire building and that sort of thing too, but you can’t see everything.”

“I would have thought that she would have given us some more stories about their culture and maybe some more stories about their members of their tribe. We only heard very little, I think. Like we heard the stories about the snakes, I just thought we would hear more about that. Get more knowledge.”

“But I also expected some stories about the dreamtime, that was missing. I expected more of that, but it was OK.”

One male tourist explained that he would have rather preferred to receive more information on Aboriginal life and culture then spending time doing hands-on activities:

“I suppose I quite like things were there is a high intensity of information. That information is really been chucked at you, and I guess it’s a slow pace. You learn a little at a time, I think that’s part of the package, it is obviously their perception how most people like and their perception maybe correct. So I suppose just purely personally, I wouldn’t mind it if they told us twice as many or three times as many things. We didn’t spend so much time at things like spear throwing and balancing not what on your head and the rest of it. But this is fun, but purely personally I could have spent the time learning about aspects of Aboriginal life that there wasn’t time to tell us about.”

Thus, several tourists were left with unanswered questions at the end of the tour. Comments included:

“We saw the paintings on the ground and the shield but that’s after they had wire. What were they doing before? Did they have paintings in caves? Are there paintings in caves that we didn’t see? How far are they still living according to their original customs?…He mentioned a little bit about the diabetes because they didn’t eat the same food all the time. How far they have actually intermarried? I don’t have the impression they have intermarried a great deal, that would be quite interesting. And how far they mind the children being brought up to speak English? And what sort of jobs they do?”

“And you know where do they live in relation to the cultural centre? Is it a long way off? Are they well hidden?”

“I would have wanted to ask more in-depth questions but I knew the time really wasn’t appropriate for that.”
A number of tourists noted that they did not understand the stories the tour guide was telling. Several tourists were making assumptions as to what the stories meant to Anangu people. One tourist anticipated more explanations and a better introduction to the stories in terms of what they actually mean to Anangu people, for example:

“I assume that the first one was how to conduct yourself, the second story, I didn’t really get the point. I think he is just telling these stories to introduce you to the way to Aboriginal story telling with pictures and the way they go about it. The second one, I didn’t really get the point of the second one.”

“I didn’t quite pick up where we were heading, but I probably would have to digest a little bit. I think there was a wider meaning behind the stories than I managed to catch today. That would have been probably nice to be given the full explanation you know killing the snake with two chops instead of one and I am sure there are things to that story, which ever has to do with their education and survival at the end of the day... Maybe, it is back to understanding a little bit. Maybe if they have given us some better introduction of the meaning behind the stories then we would have maybe managed to pick it up better. But this is probably individual also.”

Moreover, one female tourist who had some knowledge of Aboriginal culture explained that she was disappointed that the stories were presented like fantasy and fairy tale stories. Whilst she understood the deeper meaning of these stories, she did not feel that other tourists appreciated and/or understood their significance:

“The Aboriginal women was definitely knowledgeable and the interpretation, it was very focused on the dreaming and sort of presented as a mythology type of thing, which I personally understood, but I felt that for the other people they might think it is just a fantasy type of thing. So I felt disappointed that the other people may not understand the significance of that... I found the explanations of the serpent and the wallaby, I found all of that is difficult for Western people to interpret and really understand the meaning of it and really appreciate it. It comes across as like a fantasy like a fairy tale and for that reason it loses its significance.”

In contrast, another female tourist explained that whilst it would have been nice to hear the Aboriginal interpretation of the stories, she was still content that there was a learning process involved and that the tour guide did not explain the deeper meaning of the stories. She stated that:

“Especially with the first story I liked how she wasn’t telling you what it meant. So it forced you to think what this might mean. Because when I was following her I was thinking that’s weird when you want to make some friends that you are stealing his emu meat and everything. And at the end I could see some sort of point but I liked being asked to think about that, to think along the story without having somebody’s
interpretation upfront. I think it would have been nice if afterwards she said a few words about what it means to them. Because in fact the morale that they may take from the story isn’t very likely to be the one I am drawing from it. So afterwards it would have been maybe nice to. But I was happy the way it was, because I liked the fact that in some sense it seemed to me that she was trusting you to think with them and to follow along and learn rather than having the kind of beat over the head with this is what it means.”

3.3.3.1 Limiting Information

On several occasions tourists were asking questions to topics of death, such as what ceremonies are involved, what they do with the bodies, whether Anangu people belief in life after death etc. During one tour, the researcher observed that the Aboriginal tour guide felt uncomfortable talking about these issues. After consulting with the interpreter, the interpreter replied that they are not able to talk about everything and that the tour is intended to only give a flavour of Anangu culture to tourists since they cannot cover everything. Another tourist approached the tourist, who was asking the question, and explained to him that in Aboriginal culture everything after death is taboo and cannot be mentioned or talked about. The tourist seemed to be worried, the researcher heard him saying: “I must have then asked an inappropriate question.” Conducting an interview after this tour, a tourist noted:

“Because partly the interpreter sort of let everybody know that that was getting beyond the scope of what the tour was meant to do anyway. It was meant to give everybody a think she called a ‘flavour’ of the experience. It wasn’t meant to go in depth into meanings behind things and it is such a complex thing that I don’t think the interpreter felt she could talk about it either.”

In fact, on several tours the researcher noticed that occasionally the Aboriginal tour guide ignored some questions and did not give any answers to the tourists. This was also observed by one tourist, who commented:

“I felt she was a lot shrewder than people gave her credit for. She was a lot more perceptive, she answered if she wanted to and when she didn’t, she ignored the question.”
3.3.3.2 Information on Socio-Economic Issues

The majority of tourists were interested in finding out about socio-economic issues Aboriginal people are facing. Only two tourists commented that they did not have an interest in social issues on this particular tour. One female tourist from Australia stated that she participated in the tour with her interests lying in other topics than social issues. The tourist explained that she was interested in the landscape stories because information on current social issues involving Aboriginal people can be accessed anywhere in Australia. Likewise, another female tourist commented that she was more interested in Aboriginal history, their traditional lifestyle etc. This tourist regarded social problems as private information, which she did not expect to hear from an Aboriginal tour guide. The tourists explained:

“I know a little bit about it. And being in the Northern Territory you read it in the newspapers and see it more on the TV. To be brutally honest, I am not really interested in that as a tourist. As an Australian I am, but I can access that information at any time. I haven’t come here to do specifically that. I came here to find out the sort of landscape stories. I am aware that it is complex, it is not going to be easily solved. And there are really differing opinions about the way to go about it. When you hear some of the Aboriginal leaders talking about dependence on welfare and alcoholism, I read this thing in the paper just the other day that alcoholism wasn’t a symptom of disadvantage, it actually causes the disadvantage. So the way you are going to go attacking it would be different, depending what you think. That’s an ongoing debate and information that you can access anywhere in Australia. No, I haven’t come specifically to find out about that.”

“I don’t think the guides would have wanted to tell their problems. I don’t expect them to tell their problems. I am more interested in history, their stories and how they lived off the land etc., because I know their problems, that’s kind of private. I don’t expect them to tell us about that.”

Another tourist did not view questions related to social issues as appropriate and was only interested to absorb what the Aboriginal people were prepared to share with tourists:

“I probably still would know that it wasn’t appropriate to dig too deep into social issues today and that sort of thing I think as a tourist I would and was just interested to absorb whatever they were prepared to give.”

Nonetheless, most tourists were interested and curious to find out about how social issues affect Aboriginal people and how they are dealing with those problems. However, many tourists stated that receiving information on such issues would be
only appropriate if the Aboriginal people were willing to tell them. Most tourists were concerned about not intruding upon the privacy of Aboriginal people. Some tourists also stated that whilst they would like to hear such information, they would not be asking such questions themselves. For example:

“I think that is a big issue so that would be nice if they included something like that in the tour.”

“It is interesting because I have also seen the movie, ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’, and I have heard a lot of these stories about children being taken away from their parents. I didn’t really think about asking questions about this at this tour, because they didn’t talk about this part of their history, maybe I can ask somebody later.”

“Of course, I would also like to hear about their social problems, but for me personally, maybe because I am an anthropologist, more interesting is the past, but current problems are also very interesting. I think I wouldn’t have asked her, because I would have felt uncomfortable. Because I wouldn’t have known, am I allowed to ask this? Is it a, let’s put in this way, secret problem? I wouldn’t have known how to handle it.”

“I would have been interested to know that but it all depends if they want to tell us or not. I don’t want to pry on their privacy. It is up to them they have to make the decision themselves. I don’t want to ask about that, it’s up for them to tell.”

Some tourists emphasised that they would prefer to hear information on current social issues directly from an Aboriginal person as opposed to a non-Aboriginal person. According to the tourists, this would ensure unbiased information since the views and concerns would be expressed by an Aboriginal person who is familiar with the problems. Comments included:

“I think whatever it is going to be it going to be something that Aboriginal people themselves are happy with. I suppose I am a bit unhappy about anything, which is people from outside sort of presenting their view to you. Even when it is well intentioned, but I always got this fear that it is often rather patronising. So whatever they are happy to tell us I would be pleased to know. But I wouldn’t really like somebody else doing it on their behalf without their kind of consent...I think the way a white person diagnosing what the problems are will be very different to what their own concerns are really in terms of what is important to their community.”

“I probably wouldn’t have been bold enough to ask him what social problems they have but I heard that there is a lot of alcoholism and stuff like that, economic problems and things. If any of them, even the Aboriginal guide, if he would have offered this information, look these are the problems of our society, or the bus driver, or anyone. If it would come from the Aboriginal guide I would think that would be better because it is unbiased and it is coming from the horse’s mouth, so to speak. It
is not from an outside observer. Because you hear these things, you hear they have alcoholism and lots of poverty and things like that, and a lot of other things that come from having that displaced. It would have been nice to hear it from him. But I wouldn’t have asked him, like ‘What sorts of problems do you have?’ ... Maybe people don’t come on vacations to learn about social problems. But personally I have heard a lot about these stories from people in Brisbane.”

In general, the researcher observed that tourists were more comfortable in approaching the bus driver to find out about social problems within Anangu community. Some bus drivers gave information to tourists on social issues, such as mentioning that it is a dry community, talking about petrol sniffing etc. This in turn often provoked questions from tourists, in particular after the tour was finished. Two tourists noted how they had a conversation with the bus driver:

“I did ask about their social problems, had an interview with the bus driver afterwards. And he told me about their alcoholism and their diabetes and how they seldom even live to the age seventy, which is also part of the Native American culture that we have.”

“We were talking with our bus driver about their alcohol abuse and that’s the same like with the Native Americans.”

3.4 Hands-On Activities

During one morning tour, the Aboriginal tour guide was telling tourists that normally Aboriginal tools can be only seen behind glass walls in a museum. He emphasised that on this tour the tourists get the chance to not only see them but also touch and feel them.

Several tourists commented positively upon the hands-on activities that were offered during the tour. They stated that they appreciated the fact that they could carry, touch and try some of the traditional Aboriginal tools demonstrated by the tour guide. This gave them not only an understanding of how difficult it was to survive but also a feeling and sense of Aboriginal culture. They stated that:

“It was good, I mean we need to see how they are doing it, but we weren’t really good in doing it, but it was great fun... But it was good to see how difficult it is.”
“It went beyond my expectations. A lot of places that do Native American culture in the US, which is Indigenous, don’t let you handle the material, don’t let you carry it around. And I have an appreciation for carrying this spear around for three hours or whatever it was, two hours. So yes, it went beyond what I would have expected.”

“It was better than just watching someone else doing it because you actually feel you are part of a culture for a minute or two.”

“I liked the activities, there was even more of it at this other cultural centre we visited in Queensland, Djabugay were they actually had tried us throw the boomerang and at first I thought that’s a little bit silly, but what was really good about it is, you realise how hard it is to do these things and it does give you a respect immediately for the skills that their culture had. They are not the same skills that our culture praises but they are very challenging. So I thought it was really good how they encourage, nearly even make you enter their ways and come to understand the difficulty in their way of life and their way of doing things.”

“I think it is wonderful. If you were dealing with a group of children you would very quickly have more hands on than you would just sitting and listening. You assume that you grow out of the need of doing that or grow out of the love of doing something that is hands-on like that just because you are an adult. No we are all children in heart. I could see some ready-made kinds of things but if you had time to do it, you would do it. For instance give us all a stick and have us to drop picture in the dirt. First we are going to draw the python, sure why not. Hands-on absolutely.”

One male tourist explained that he was worried that the hands-on activities would be treated as a joke. Although he would have personally preferred to just watch a demonstration without trying himself, he acknowledged the learning value of a hands-on activity. He stated that:

“I was a little bit worried about things like, again, throwing spears, whether there is going to be something silly about that. Again if it’s almost treating the whole thing as a bit as a joke, but I think it again you know we maybe learn about the skills required and how difficult it is. Maybe I am thinking how they would to do it. Obviously they kind of presented it in a fun way so to speak. Personally, I am quite happy just to learn things rather than to have lots of fun, but I can see if you to steer in your approach you are going to put a lot of people off. I am quite happy with TV programs that simply tell you things without lots of gimmick. But most people seem to want the gimmick I think perhaps one has to accept that as long as these are learning things as well. Personally, I would have been quite happy just to have watched somebody showing how it’s done without having a go myself.”
### 3.5 Complaints

Four tourists, who participated on the morning tour, expected to see some rock paintings and some more features of Uluru. They thought coming closer to Uluru and seeing some rock art would have been part of the tour. They stated that:

“I would have liked to see their arts, that was the rock art especially, but we didn’t see that. I would have liked to walk closer to the rock wall and see the rock wall, see some rock art I was disappointed about that.”

“I actually expected the tour to be more around the rock, like Ayers Rock. I thought we would be taken to see some, caves, because I thought I would see some art on the rock. That’s what I expected, so I was a little bit disappointed, that we were only going further out…I just thought it was a base walk with an Aboriginal guide, showing us some Aboriginal perspectives. So it was actually kind of disappointing.”

“I hoped for, the only thing that I wanted to see and it is on a different tour, I thought that we were going to get to see the rock paintings.”

“I kind of expected to see more of Uluru than I did. But reading the pamphlet, I guess walking around Uluru wasn’t part of it.”

Three tourists complained about the poor punctuality of the bus driver when picking up tourists for a morning tour:

“Only this thing this morning that he arrived late. He was late. Then we also wasted time picking them up. Then people didn’t have the money to pay their ticket. We arrived at the place a quarter past seven and we woke up at half past five, because we were the only ones at time…I think punctuality is important anyway. Doesn’t matter whether they are Aboriginal or not. Otherwise you end up like in Portugal or Greece.”

“The only thing that I am critical of is the driver has got arrive on time and has got to leave behind the people that are not there on time. We spent way too much time getting out there this morning. We were up at the crack of dawn. The sun was up by the time we got to watch the sunrise. That would be my only critique. You know once we got there, I have no complaints. But I have to say that that was really annoying this morning, that he was late and then he kept on circling around for this late people who didn’t have their tickets. By the time we got out there the day was half over and we could have slept two more hours.”

“We just came from Queensland, where everything was very well organised. They were prompt, they pick people up and you actually spend more time seeing things than wondering around hotels and looking for stray tourists. It was that part that I objected to and my point of comparison are the white people that we were with in Queensland, who were just much better organised.”
One female tourist criticised the lack of a female Aboriginal tour guide during a morning tour:

“I would have liked to be exposed to a women, I don’t know why a women wasn’t allowed to be a guide help to see us her point of view. But then I understood that a lot of it is so sacred that they don’t share their information.”

4. Aboriginal Perspective: Tourists’ Expectations

Aboriginal perspectives of what tourists expect of an Aboriginal cultural tour were relatively similar across the three tour companies. In general, Aboriginal employees stressed the importance of their respective culture to the tourists. Tourists commented how visitors are very inquisitive towards most elements of their culture and their history, such as their dreamtime stories, traditional skills, dancing, ceremonies etc. One Anangu employee explained that the tour provides tourists with a small insight into their culture since only the main points can be addressed within the short amount of time available. Overall, the responses indicate that Aboriginal people regard all aspects of their culture as equal important to teach to visitors. Comments included:

“X is saying that tourists ask a lot of the people like ‘How did you live out here’, ‘How did your grandparents survive out here?’, ‘What did you do to make fire?’, ‘What did you do for this?’ X is saying and they all want to know about the Tjukurpa, all the way around the rock. They want to know all the stories. X is saying what we want to do to answer these questions for those people is to give them an insight into as broader range as we can. X is saying trying to cover the basics in such a short amount of time.”

“The tourists want to know more about country, know about culture, clan obligation. Talk about arts take them to sites. Visit some painting sites, historical sites.”

“They should learn all sort of different stuff, like basket weaving, painting, fire lighting, all sorts. It’s all important.”

“Just have a look at different cultures, see the arts centres, have a look what sort of carving we do and designs. They are interested in art painting, pottery and cemetery poles, dancing and smoking ceremony. The dancing is also important because that’s our identity and our dreaming.”
“They do seem to enjoy themselves just to show them bush tucker like take them walk around and come back and have a lunch and start weaving. When they finish they can move on to painting, from painting they can move on to fire lighting and spear throwing.”

“I think the dream, the dream stories. The tourists are really interested in the creation stories of Tiwis. The dreamtime stories are really really good in any culture I think. I heard a few on TV about Central Australia. It is really good to know that it is this what these people do. The museum explaining the creation time is really good. The tourists can go back and tell anyone.”

Several employees noted that tourists particularly anticipate learning about how Aboriginal people survived in the bush and thus expect to receive information on bush foods and bush medicine. Two employees stated:

“They come first here to learn Aboriginal culture, because tourists think that Aboriginal culture is very important. There are many tourists and they ask lots of questions. They want to know how our people used to live and survive in the bush.”

“Actually it is really good to introduce tourists to our country, that they can see Tiwi Island, arts and craft and the culture and the history of Tiwi people. That’s what the tourists want… Most important is the arts and crafts, the history, the church, the culture of the Tiwi people and also how the Tiwi people survived, bush tucker and also the bush medicine. Ancestor stories are really important, about the history in the past.”

A number of Tiwi employees also emphasised the distinctiveness of Tiwi Islands. In their opinion, tourists are interested in Tiwi people and culture since they are different to the mainland Aboriginal cultures. For example, the fact that Tiwi art is famous for its uniqueness was highlighted by one employee. As a result, visitors are interested in experiencing Tiwi arts and crafts and most important in meeting the artists directly. Similarly, another employee emphasised that Tiwi people have their own culture with different dreamtime stories, dancing and ceremonies as compared to other mainland Aboriginal people. Comments included:

“It is good that tourists learn different culture because we are totally different to mainland. Traditional ceremony, different dancing and art. Our art is all over the world now and tourists are interested. They want to see directly where the painting comes from. They want to meet people who are painting, meeting the artist.”

“They want to learn about our culture, talking to them. People who come all parts of the world, very very long way and we greet them, welcome them and start talking them, telling them about our culture, the bush, bush medicine and how we treat our children. When we tell them they just sit and listen and the more we tell them the
more they listen. Like Kalama ceremony, dancing, singing... Maybe coming to our island, seeing what is going on. See different people. Sometimes people have never seen black people. Get to know the people... Something different you know. People have never heard of or have seen our culture like that. Our culture today is very important to our people.”

“About the history and the background, to tell them about Tiwi culture, how it first started and how it began. Some of the tourists are interested in our dreamtime stories, they find it very fascinating about the history and the old mission days. The traditional dance is part of our Tiwi culture, it has always been there, it never changes. We have always been a different culture to the mainland so we got our own dreamtime stories, the culture and the dancing. We do a lot of dancing at ceremonies, Kalama ceremonies, or when a person dies as well, we do a traditional dance. It’s our part of the job to show the tourists what it is all about, the totem dance and tell them the background of the totem dance.”

4.1 Sharing Culture: ‘Understanding Us’

A major element of Tourists’ expectations that was stressed by several Aboriginal tourists was the significance of sharing Aboriginal culture and experiencing Aboriginal local people. Hence, learning about the specific culture from the Aboriginal people whose culture it is, was seen as an important factor of the tour. Accordingly, Aboriginal employees explained that they enjoy sharing their culture with visitors who come from all over the world to be taught by Aboriginal people. For example, one Anangu employee noted that they appreciate the interaction with people from different cultures and that tourists also enjoy spending time with Anangu people. Four tourists explained:

“I think the whole tour is about coming face to face with a Tiwi person and the Tiwi people. Sharing the culture and experiencing Tiwi people.”

“X is saying, I think the best thing is the fact that we are trying to go along and to meet all these brand new people and share with them our life our history, our culture, our Tjukurpa. People enjoy listening and learning from us because it is ours. The interaction between any people from anywhere around the world is always a good thing. We love to meet those people and those people love to meet us as well. That Tjukurpa, we love to teach it and we love to share it with those people. And we think that’s the best thing that they would enjoy is spending time with us and sharing our culture with us.”

“It is good sharing our culture with non-Tiwis and Europeans, other people...I didn’t know if I could be a tour guide. But when they started asking me about, ‘What is this? What is that?’ with the artefacts and the stories, I just told them a story from
what my grandfather and my grandmother and my uncles and aunts shared the stories with me.”

“They come up with a lot of questions and it is good to share with them. And they share their culture as well where they come from. It is just culture, learning.”

In addition, the responses indicate that whilst Aboriginal employees believed that sharing their culture with visitors was an important part of the tour, it was at the same time viewed as a way of promoting understanding and the development of respect for their people and their culture. Aboriginal employees explained that they hoped that tourists wished to find out who they are and the way they do things. Some tourists mentioned that the visitors are then able to tell other people about them and their culture. As one Manyallaluk employee noted, tourists gain a first hand experience and therefore witness what Aboriginal people are doing. According to the tourist, these visitors in turn will tell other people that they have visited a ‘good place’. Comments included:

“I think to learn our culture and probably find out who we are as a people. It would be like when I went to someone else’s country I would wanted know a bit more about their culture. That could be an experience to be part of the Tiwi culture and knowing what they do. The smoking ceremony that’s something for us to share with others.”

“Most important is I think to see what we do here, like painting. Some people from all over the world are coming in and when they are here in Manyallaluk they can see what we are doing, they proof it. They can see us what we are doing and they are relaxing and they can proof what we are doing here. And when they are going back they can send more people coming saying Manyallaluk is like this. Good place and they show activity.”

“Learning about us, learning about the Tiwis. The experience would be to learn about the Tiwi culture. I think that’s the main one. Knowing about our culture and showing our artefacts. Our art doesn’t only just show art, it is a story. Something that they can take this story back and put it up on the wall and visitors will see it and ask ‘What is this about?’ And you can tell the story and it is an interesting story. You know, that you come from the Tiwis and people might find out a little bit more about us.”

“Just us as Tiwi people and the way we are. We are really friendly. We smile a lot we never stop smiling. I have never been to a community on the mainland and seen any local smile. You talk to any Tiwi people and they give you a smile when they talk to you. I think the main thing for us is people, understand the way we are. And respect the way we do things today.”
Some employees voiced a concern about finding enough Aboriginal people who are willing to work as tour guides and who want to teach their culture to visitors. The importance of passing on their culture and educating younger generations was stressed by employees since they aim to keep their culture strong and thus continue sharing their history with visitors. For example:

“I like to share my experience and especially my culture and the history of the Tiwi people. To give them a feedback and whenever they have a question, that’s part of tourism, to give them a good feedback and good answers. That doesn’t worry me, I really enjoy that. I like to see more Tiwi people get involved in tourism.”

“X is saying but you know because those old people, they are old pretty much and they can’t walk around and they can’t do these tours anymore. So they train me up and the rest of the people in the community you know there is always trying to get other workers all the time get them involved to come and work for Anangu tours and say to them ‘Come along, come and work for Anangu Tours and teach those tourists what our culture is all about’. Because our culture is so strong and we want to hold on to it and keep it very very strong. So we share certain level of knowledge with people.”

“I think it is really important to teach our kids and maybe to share it a little bit to the tourists so they know what was it like in the past.”

4.2 Authenticity: Sharing of Genuine and true Cultural Information

Aboriginal employees were questioned as to what their perspectives were on the authenticity of the tour and how they defined authenticity in terms of an Aboriginal cultural tour experience. One female Aboriginal employee from Anangu Tours viewed authenticity as sharing their culture with tourists and imparting cultural information that is true and real. She further emphasised the importance of having a member of Anangu culture teaching visitors the truth about their stories and their land. Accordingly, the employee noted that non-Aboriginal people, such as other tour guides, should not be telling ‘Tjukurpa’ stories to tourists since it is not their culture and as a result they do not know the full story and therefore pass on false information. She stated:

“X is saying yes, we teach those people all about our culture. A little bit of a comparison as to what the way things were done by our grandparents. We look at
traditional lifestyle, things that are done these days with the influences and the introduction of all these new things. X is saying that these stories are real, we don’t just make them up...X is saying that there is no false stories that are shared at all, we teach the truth about the stories and the truth about this place. And this is what our company is all about. It started up by those older people to teach people as much as we can in such a short amount of time but not from anybody who just walks in off the street. They can come here and they can listen to a story once and then they can tell all these people. But it’s not their place to tell all these people either because it is not their Tjukurpa. It is not their culture. X is saying you can come and learn from us and that’s when you learn the truth. I listen to all these tour guides in this area and a lot of them don’t know these stories but they tell those stories anyway and they are telling false Tjukurpa, they are telling false law. We make sure that law is straight. Because we keep that law strong in our heads and in our hearts...There is all these different Tjukurpa around the rock, there is so many people that come here and there is so many different tour guides around the area, but the only time when you get the true story is when you learn it from us, because those people they don’t know the full story.”

In addition, the same employee explained that Aboriginal people are very keen and interested in sharing their culture since they appreciate that visitors in turn enjoy learning directly from Aboriginal people. Thus, an authentic experience is developed through the meaning of sharing and the genuine nature of the relationship between visitors and tour guides:

“X is saying, I think the best thing is the fact that we are trying to go along and to meet all these brand new people and share with them our life, our history, our culture, our Tjukurpa. People enjoy listening and learning from us because it is ours. The interaction between any people from anywhere around the world is always a good thing. We love to meet those people and those people love to meet us as well. That Tjukurpa, we love to teach it and we love to share it with those people. And we think that’s the best thing that they would enjoy is spending time with us and sharing our culture with us.”

4.3 Information: Understanding Aboriginal Way of Learning and Customs

One female Aboriginal employee from Anangu Tours noted that Anangu tour guides only share a certain amount of information with the visitors. She explained that the way Aboriginal people learn and obtain information from each other is different to Western cultures. Whilst Aboriginal people understand that tourists seek as much information as possible in the short time available to them, Aboriginal culture
emphasises a slow pace of learning with a lesser amount of direct questioning. To be able to understand the full story the person needs to have extensive knowledge of the Aboriginal culture, such as some older members of the Anangu community have. She stated:

“People want to know a lot about how the rock was created and a lot of those stories associated with that, X is saying, we share a certain amount of that stories...X is saying that we understand that people want to ask questions when they are here because they are only here for a short amount of time...X is saying that you can’t just learn everything in a day. The whole way of learning is to spend time in a place and to slowly work your way up. So in our way of doing things we don’t go around asking questions all the time, it’s not the way that we do things. X is saying that we realise that there are people who come here those tourists they want to ask a lot of questions because they want to learn so much in such a short amount of time but we don’t teach that way either. We don’t answer those questions because that’s not the right way to learn...X is saying that you can’t understand this full story until you know the culture probably. X is saying that it’s those old man and old women. They hold that full story, they know everything about this place.”

Furthermore, the same employee explained that the reason as to why only a certain amount of knowledge can be shared with visitors is also determined by cultural norms, such as how knowledge is treated within certain groups of their society. Since rules exist indicating what knowledge certain people can acquire and who they can share it with, women, for example, are not allowed talking about some men’s business. Consequently, female Aboriginal guides can only teach visitors about female’s business and male guides demonstrate men’s business. In her opinion, female visitors should not be touching the spears and men should not be putting the women’s bowl onto their head. She commented that:

“X is saying when you come along with us and we teach people a lot as well, but there is only a certain amount that we can teach. There is men staff and women staff. I am not allowed to talk about men’s stuff and elders are not allowed about women’s stuff. So there is a certain level of knowledge that you are allowed to share with everybody...X is saying that yes there are certain things that men and certain things that women aren’t suppose to do. X is saying that when she and Y are taking the Liru walk in the morning, I sit down and I teach the ladies about the ladies things and I teach the men as well. But it is only for ladies that will be able to try putting that bowl on the top of their head and with Y he teaches the men how to throw a spear. But the ladies can watch but they shouldn’t be touching those spears. They are men’s object and men’s objects only. X is saying the only sort of exception with stuff that men and women both do together is the making of the glue. Both need the knowledge for that because it is used on both men’s and women’s tools. Men use it on their spears the women use it in their bowls to patch up cracks and patch up holes.”
In addition, the tourist explained that some tourists ask ‘silly’ and inappropriate questions, which evoke ‘sad’ feelings among Aboriginal tour guides. Therefore, Aboriginal people choose not to answer some questions and rather concentrate on other topics:

“We can get very very sad and we don’t like talk about that sort of thing. So a lot of the times we won’t, we just won’t answer the questions because it is something that we don’t like talk about...X is saying that people will ask a lot of questions because people are interested and people want to find out stuff. There is a lot of people that ask the wrong questions, silly questions, which X is saying that some people are asking questions that they shouldn’t be asking. And you know I just leave it. I just don’t answer that question. We just leave it behind and we just do what we want to talk about. We just leave those silly questions behind.”

4.4 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

The majority of Aboriginal employees believed that tourists are interested in both, their traditional way of life as well as their modern lifestyle. The employees noted that visitors are keen to find out how they used to survive in the bush but are also interested in how they live these days. Comments included:

“A lot of them want from what I can gather, a lot of them want to know how countryman live and survive on the land. Also now.”

“Both, I think.”

“How we were hundreds of years ago. Showing them what we used to do back in the old days and also how we live today.”

“The tourists like to eat bush tucker and learn a bit, learn about Aboriginal culture, they want to see why this food and this and this, like older days. But now we got everything but in old days it used to be pretty hard...They are learning both, old days we tell them stories and like now how we are living now and tell them stories about older days how we used to live.”

“They want to know in the past and also how we live now, nowadays. Because we teach them and we tell them and they want to know what we do now.”

“In between I think. I think they probably like the modern stuff and also the old days and when the mission started.”

“Mainly how we live today.”
In regards to social problems within Aboriginal communities, one male employee from Manyallaluk tours noted that it does not concern him answering questions related to these topics. He stated that:

“It does not worry me. I just tell them. I don’t have any problems telling them. They ask me I tell them I drink and that kind of thing.”

4.4.1 Community Area

Several employees addressed the issue of tourists wanting to visit their houses when participating in the tour. Employees from Manyallaluk tours clearly stated that the community area needs to remain separate to the tourists’ area. One Tiwi employee commented that tourists can look at their houses whilst driving through, but only from outside. The employees noted:

“Some tourists want to know how you live and they ask questions...When we take them on the walk up the hill that’s when we show them from there that’s where we live. If they want to see the community we can’t go around there. They might think we still live in humpies, they might think we still live in the bush.”

“Because we keep them away from the community. We only let them come here to do the tour in the tourist area. The problem is because the council made rules that tourists can’t go into the community. And also the way that cheeky dogs might bite or something, and that might be trouble see. They worry about the dogs. They made the rules, that’s the way it is. Can’t change that. We don’t want that. We have to keep that separate and private. That’s the way we started and the council and president made the rules. You can’t change it, we don't want to.”

“They can have a look when they are driving along. Look from outside.”

5. Tiwi Employees: Tourists’ Expectations and Perceptions

All non-Aboriginal Tiwi employees stated that they believed that tourists expect to learn about Aboriginal culture by visiting a working community and having contact with local Aboriginal people. One female employee described in detail what she thought tourists expectations are, which included an interest in learning about the
dreamtime stories, war history, bush food, artwork and dancing as well as Tiwi mission history. She stated that:

“They want to at the end of the day feel that they have learnt something about the culture here. I think they come here wanting to learn things like about dreaming. They don’t really understand what that means, so they want to understand it by talking to local people. I think they are also curious how a modern community works, but I don’t think they realise how curious they are about that till after they have been here...Some people, not so many but some, specifically that sort of male age group, 50 to 60, 70 age group, sometimes they are curious about the war history here, because they know the Tiwis were involved in that. So visiting the war memorial sparks a lot of interest. So I assume that is part of the expectations of some of the people from that age group. And bush tucker, people are keen to learn about that. So those, the artwork, the bush tucker, the dreamtime and the things connected with that, like the family dancing, and the singing the war history. I think their expectation is to learn about the cultural history in a general way, but I think all of those aspects are included in that. And the mission history, I mean a lot of people know a bit about missions and so and this is a good example a good place to come and learn about it.”

Furthermore, the same employee believed that tourists have a major interest in dreamtime stories as part of a cultural tour. Since tourists only have limited knowledge about dreamtime stories and often do not understand what they mean, they seek further information and they want to understand how Aboriginal people interpret their dreamings:

“They are very curious about things like the dreaming and learning how the Tiwi people interpret their own dreamings and how different this is from other Aboriginal communities. I think the whole thing dreamtime and song lines and all that, I think non-Indigenous people are very curious about that, because they know bits and pieces of it but they only know the tip of the iceberg and I think they are very curious about that specifically. Because we get a lot of questions about dreamings, just what exactly that is. So I think they are curious to know what’s that about.”

Similarly, three other employees explained that tourists anticipate meeting Aboriginal people in order to have a genuine cultural experience. They seek such an experience because some tourists would have never met an Aboriginal person and other tourists would have only seen drunk Aboriginal people in major towns and cities. Comments included:

“I think they expect to meet Aboriginal people and to experience some of their art and a little bit of their culture. I think the tourists appreciate the basket weaving. I think they like the bush tucker tour or the bush walking experience.”
“I think the main thing that attracts people is the genuine cultural experience, which is not available for many people. And I think that would be the biggest draw card. And people expect to come here and have direct contact with the Aboriginal people. And I think that is the biggest draw card of this particular tour and learning about the culture.”

“I think a lot of people just come over for the chance to meet an Aboriginal person. Some of them haven’t really met an Aboriginal person before in their life and that’s why the reason that they come over. Just to see an Aboriginal community, learn something about Aboriginal culture from Aboriginal people…If they come up from Southern Australia or even overseas, they probably have been to Alice Springs and Darwin first. They say to me they have only seen drunk people on the streets, they are the Aboriginal people they have seen. It is usually just the experience with the guide I suppose.”

Another employee noted that the most important thing for tourists is education since they have no or only limited knowledge of Aboriginal culture. Learning and experiencing something new that gives them knowledge in form of education is therefore important to tourists:

“The most important thing is education. Most people choose a trip like this because they actually have a limited knowledge of Indigenous culture of Indigenous people and they are interested in learning something new. So they are after experience, which gives them knowledge.”

One employee explained that whilst most tourists are interested in Aboriginal culture they do not know what exactly to expect of the tour. Learning more about Aboriginal culture and visiting a real Aboriginal community as opposed to an organised Aboriginal cultural show, was described as the main expectation tourists would have:

“So by large, through all the years that I have been connected with it, the tourists have lots of different ideas. Most tourists are interested but really have no idea what to expect…Basically, people go over there for two reasons, one is an interest in Aboriginal culture wanting to learn more. That is the one most common…By large, an interest in learning more about Aboriginal communities, rather than an organised show like the one in Cairns and things like that, where it is all packaged neatly and you actually don’t see what a real community is like.”

5.1 Authenticity

Employees were questioned whether they thought that the tour offered an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience to tourists. Four employees stated that they
regard the tour as being authentic. Their responses as to why the tour was authentic were similar to each other. All employees viewed the opportunity for interaction with Aboriginal people as an integral part of an authentic experience. According to the employees, the fact that the tour does not offer a staged or showy environment, that it is ‘just the way it is’ makes it genuine. Furthermore, the dancing is not structured and is performed the same way as at other private Tiwi ceremonies. Comments included:

“...It isn’t a show, you know like some places have some sort of orchestrated, on a staged shows that the Aborigines do. I don’t think that’s what people are after. I think they want to see it just the way that it is and that’s what they get here, I mean it’s not showy. Except let’s say when the guides and women are up dancing, there are plenty of opportunities of interaction and even going back to the dancing, like I said with the smoking ceremony I think the tourists are even drawn in with that. So it’s not like at any point the Tiwi or their culture is on stage here, it just is as it is and the tourists have the opportunity to get as interactive as they choose to.”

“Very much so. We have a content we put together for the tour. Like at morning teatime for instance where there is nearly an hour of time where they spend with the Tiwis. They pretty much do all that themselves. If the tourists want to talk to the Tiwi people, they are all there, the guides are there, the morning tea ladies are there. How the dance is done, what dances they do and so on is actually their choice. By doing that and not making it a choreographed very structured thing, it keeps it very much their culture. It is not a white person interfering and making something happen that looks very great. We are actually letting them putting on their culture as they would normally do for other functions around town or for a birthday party, wedding or funeral, whatever. It is in fact simple, they are actually doing it themselves...So that part of the cultural content, it is actually very genuine. With the guides there is a lot of time on our tour, to them actually just talk, ask questions directly, talk to them. So if a person wants a really good in-depth conversation about all sorts of minor things within the community, there is an opportunity to actually do that. A lot of tours miss that point where they have an Indigenous guide, but never actually give everyone the opportunity to come up and ask some questions.”

“Having the Aboriginal guides on hand. Having them accessible to people to be able to talk about whatever comes naturally to what they want to talk about. That it is not a staged question and answer situation.”

“I think the main thing that attracts people is the genuine cultural experience, which is not available for many people. And I think that would be the biggest draw card...I think again that comes back to the fact that there is actually Aboriginal people involved in the tour as opposed to they are going to Kakadu they get disappointed because there is no Aboriginal people that they get interaction with. Even though they are getting the genuine culture, but it is delivered by a white fellow. And I think the fact that they are genuine Aboriginal people, people that live on the island are the ones who are delivering the stories and the culture to them, that’s what gives them the authenticity.”
One male employee explained that he rather prefers to use the word genuine since authenticity is a very subjective term. In his opinion, authenticity in terms of traditional Aboriginal culture does not exist anymore. The tour rather offers a genuine experience since it is not packaged and idealistic. Tourist visit a real modern community as opposed to visiting a tourist made Indigenous community. Furthermore, the problems the community is experiencing are not hidden, they are openly discussed with the tourists. He stated that:

“Authentic is not a word that I would use. Authentic is very, very much opened to interpretation and we had debates about this in other government areas, where they believe that only authentic tours should be given a certain stamp of approval. What constitutes authentic you could argue until the cows come home. Simply because when you are looking at traditional, let’s go back two hundred years and you are presenting that, that doesn’t happen anywhere. I would prefer to use the term genuine tour. So in this case you see what you get. And this is how it is. It is not packaged, it is not sugar coated, it is not idealistic or anything. This is it basically. It is not like we produce nice displays and everything like that. It is actually a community that you go through that, and rubbish is a problem and you see the housing and we talk about the housing and the rubbish and everything else. But this is what it is. When you go away from there, you think yourself that you have seen the real Nguiu on Bathurst Island. You have not seen a nice little village build there with people walking around with grass skirts. You see the people as they are. The idea is to go away with an understanding of what they are experiencing, what their history is like, what their culture is like etc., etc. So you go home and little wiser and with a hell of a lot more questions. It is genuine.”

Moreover, the same employee noted that the dancing and the interaction with the morning tea ladies are an example of the genuine experiences tourists are gaining. The Tiwi people present the same dancing to tourists as they do on any other occasion. Likewise, the interaction with the ladies is not staged and programmed. The ladies only interact with tourists if they want to, there is no forced friendliness or politeness behind it. He explained that:

“The way the ladies and the guys dance is how they dance for ceremonies today. And so what you see is what you would see at any ceremony, painted up the faces, armband etc. and the dances that they do at ceremonies. At the morning tea when the ladies finish the dancing they bless everybody and they make a smoking fire, using the leaves of the iron tree, which they use at ceremonies. And then they do a farewell dance and bless you, which is the catholic side of it. But this is what they do, it is not ‘Let’s do this, this looks more interesting than that’. This is it, this is what they do. You would see that at so many other ceremonies, funeral ceremonies etc. They dance for almost any occasion. But what you see is exactly what they do in their normal lives.”
“The difference is with the ladies there, their interaction with you, they control that. It is very obvious quite quickly that that’s the case. So if they are friendly and opened and the lady asks you to sit down with her, it is the genuine thing. It’s not that they do this for all the tourists, there has been a small bond between them and she has invited you to do that. Basically the ladies do it as well as they want to and that’s part of it. As a tourist you will realise that this is the case quite often. It is not staged, it is not a routine. There is a routine there, but you wouldn’t notice half the time. So in that respect it is quite a genuine experience. As a result you realise it because they are doing it because they want to, not because of any other reason really.”

In contrast to the previous responses, one employee considered the tour as being staged since a tour is specifically designed for the tourist and therefore is a staged experience in itself. He stated that:

“It is all staged for the tourists that are there.”

5.2 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

All employees stated that both the learning about the contemporary lifestyle as well as the traditional Tiwi culture are important elements that the tour tries to convey to tourists. One employee stated that the marketing emphasis lies on Tiwi people living in a modern community. According to this employee, traditional Aboriginal communities do not exist any longer. Thus, the tour tries to highlight how traditional culture affects modern life. For example:

“We are trying to give them a clear idea that it is a modern Aboriginal community, so they don’t expect to see wild Aborigines running around half naked with spears. We still get some people who do…We just market it as a modern Aboriginal community. No traditional Aboriginal community, because there is no such thing as a traditional Aboriginal community. The idea of the tourist, when the people come over they have preconceived ideas, that is just human nature. And our job is to show them, what life is like today, how the traditional culture affects modern life, the interaction between modern life and traditional culture… So the idea is that everything you are seeing is explained so you understand.”

“And I guess how they live especially in a modern community like this, it is very different from other Aboriginal communities, so just the everyday living style and their history. How they mix up traditional with modern.”

Another employee explained how the contemporary lifestyle is shown to tourists. Visitors are driven through the community and buildings and places are pointed out
to them and explanations are provided. This in turn instigates curiosity and questions from some tourists who might seek a deeper understanding of how modern life works together with Tiwi traditional culture. Similarly, an employee explained how tourists, after seeing the community, start asking questions. The employees stated:

“They drive through the community itself, where things are pointed out to them and then explained by the Tiwi guide, things like the school, the day care, the shop. For example when they drive by the shop, the guide explains what sort of stuff you can buy. When we drive by the footy club they get to hear about the restricted alcohol, licensing and things like that. So these are all aspects school, grocery store, club, these are all part of modern day contemporary Nguiu. So they get a sense for it. And it does open up for questions too. You know when they see something through town, the grocery store gets a lot of questions. So it’s pointed out to them in town and most of the time during morning tea and later during the day, they get a little bit more curious and may ask ‘How much do you hunt for bush tucker?…What part of their diet is that?’”

“People are interested in both. I mean when you are driving around town, when people see the town, that’s when they are start asking questions about contemporary Aboriginal culture.”

One employee believed that tourists subconsciously hope for and anticipate an Aboriginal community that is a vibrant and forward moving community:

“So I think without even realising it themselves they are curious to know if that’s all there is or if there is more to what modern life is in an Aboriginal community. Maybe by the end of the day, they learn about that, even though it wasn’t the top of the list of their expectations. A lot of the responses that we get at the end of the day, we figure that, where people say that they had no idea that this is what it is like or that it was so different to what they see at home and that it is refreshing to see a community where there is energy and creativity and controlled alcohol consumption, a vibrant kind of place, which has got positive energy to it. So I think that kind of comes as a surprise to them at the end. So even when they weren’t expecting it consciously, I think subconsciously that’s what they are looking for.”

The same employee explained that tourists seem also concerned about Aboriginal people holding on to their traditional culture. In addition, the employee highlighted the importance of showing tourists the positive and negative sides of the contemporary lifestyle of Tiwi people. Hence, the employee hoped that the tour demonstrates tourists a different side to what the general public perceives Aboriginal people to be like. The employee explained:
“So by seeing what they are doing in the community, it can kind of open up questions a bit. There are questions about what it is like today living in Nguiu, not back in the mission days or prior to the mission days, what is like now. I think they are concerned about that too. Just like the Tiwi I think a lot of non-Indigenous Australian recognise the problem that Indigenous communities have of keeping their cultures strong. And you can tell by the way some people ask questions, that they are concerned about that. So I think that it is important that they get to see a community that is not without its challenges but it’s what I would think in my experience to be successful. Again not without its problems but it’s successful in its own, you know it’s moving forward. And I think it’s important to a lot of people, probably more for Australians tourists as opposed to people we are getting from overseas, that they see that it is a vibrant community...Again it’s not a fairy land, that’s for sure. Nowhere is perfect, but that it feels more positive than other places. And I think a lot of times when they leave at the end of the day, they feel good about that. And maybe then the next time when they see someone humbugging down main street Darwin, they might think about that a little bit differently, and maybe understand a little bit more, that’s that person, but I also know there is 1800 people in Nguiu that live a different life than that. And I am happy for that.”

Correspondingly, another male employee explained that in his opinion most tourists would expect to see drunk Aboriginal people. Instead tourists are pleasantly surprised to experience a normal working community:

“I think almost an unspoken highlight for a lot of people who come here, who have never actually been in a normal Indigenous community before, is actually to see a normal Indigenous town and how it works and the fact that it is basically not that different to any other town in Australia. There are cultural differences here, but all the other stuff is actually in place. And for a lot of them they actually get a quite surprise not to see hundreds and hundreds of drunken people lying around on the streets everywhere. Because that’s their perception that’s what they see when they go to the main cities. They see the long grass people and think all Indigenous people are like that. Where in fact they are very much a minority. Here this is a normal working community. Occasionally people express that, but it is a hidden, one that people don’t seem to voice very often unless you actually question them about their personal experiences through life. Did they think it is going to be like this here?”

Whilst the community area is shown to tourists, it has been pointed out that the tour does not permit tourists enter those public places due to privacy issues. One employee noted:

“The tour here is a cultural tour, is about the Tiwi people. And this is where the Tiwi people are at now. So we spend a fair bit of time in the town. There are lots of things that we don’t let tourists do, we don’t let anyone walk into a house, we don’t let them walk in a classroom. We do get requests for some things, which would be extremely intrusive into their lives. Even the general store and the social club here, both out of bounds, if we had to duck into the general store and buy something for someone, then
that only one person goes and everyone else has to stay on the bus. It is a very public place, where a lot of people sit around, chat and meet. And they actually don’t want a bunch of tourists coming up and sticking cameras in their face and taking photos. And it is also a place where a lot of arguments are settled, also being a public meeting place.”

Thus, the emphasis of the tour clearly lies on both the contemporary as well as traditional aspects of Tiwi lifestyle. It was further stressed that the tour tries to illustrate to tourists how rapidly modern life has to some degree taken over traditional Tiwi customs and traditions. For this reason, the tour tries to make tourists understand how traditional life still impacts on modern life and how the Tiwi people have coped with and still deal with these issues. Comments included:

“On Tiwi Tours, basically the theme that we have there, is that on the day tour or even on the two day tour, it is totally unrealistic to expect people to get a good grasp what Aboriginal life is like. Having lived there for years, it changes all the time. For someone on a day tour or two-day tour to develop a good understanding of what Tiwi life is like is just a sheer impossibility. So what we do is, the idea there is to, when people can associate with what you are talking about, they develop an understanding, it’s not so alien to them. So what we look at, we look at modern life and how the traditional life affects that. And what you look as perfectly normal on the island day-to-day life, but when you add the traditional culture to it, it really turns it on its head completely. So the interaction between the old and the new. Also how rapidly it has happened. We got Mary Margaret, who is an old lady now and she was literally born in Stone Age. It was 1984 when she first moved into a house. So the changes that Mary Margaret has experienced have in our culture taken hundreds of years, thousands of years, and she has gone from a stone age, hunter gatherer society lifestyle as a child to aspect of modern life in her own lifetime. So how do you cope with that? There are people alive today, who have seen running water, electricity, money and everything else in modern life come onto the islands and their lifestyle. That’s pretty phenomenal change.”

“Two things are important. One is the history, the timeline of how quickly things occur and a comparison to their own cultures. Dealing with things like rubbish, housing, alcohol, substance abuse. It is important to put it all in perspective, so that they understand. You don’t have to agree, but when you understand, that’s all the Tiwis want really. Understand how they are dealing with problems and issues that have been in our society for millennia and they are dealing with them for decades. Do we know better or worse in a lot of cases?”

5.2.1 ‘Whitewashing’ – Offering Tourists a Nice Experience

It was noted by one male employee that tourists want to have a nice experience when they are on holidays. According to the employee, Tiwi tours, therefore, provides
mostly positive information on the traditional aspects of Tiwi culture. The employee explained that tourists do not want to be disturbed during their holidays with negative information of the host culture. Although the tour guides do not talk about this kind of information, they will still answer enquiries from tourists to these topics. He stated:

“I mean most people are on holidays when they come here. What they want is a nice experience, so we provide a very positive view of their culture. We do cover things like the burial ceremonies and so on, Pukumani, but stay on the fairly positive light. We are trying to keep any negative stuff to a minimum. Negative from traditional cultural stuff. Because people really don’t want to be upset. They are actually coming here for the day to have a nice experience. If we started telling them about ‘promised marriages normally that the wife has to go live with the husband at 12 years old’ that would be unacceptable. It is not accepted now in the community and they pretty well stopped it, but it still does happen occasionally. Information like that, it’s not that we don’t tell them if someone directly asked us we will discuss it, but we wouldn’t include that in our normal information. We provide a nice day of what any visitor would see if they came and visited any culture anywhere. You don’t get to see the darker side of a culture when you come on holidays. So it is a little bit whitewashed.”

Similarly, the same employee noted that information on the contemporary lifestyle of Tiwi people is presented in a more positive way. The same information could be given in a negative way:

“We could quite easily slant a lot of our conversations, so present the same information in a very negative view. Things like focusing on the rubbish aspect and the fact that Tiwis just don’t care about picking up rubbish, but we never actually say that during the day. We explain to people the fact that they only had plastic here for the last twenty years. Prior to that all their rubbish was considered just normal stuff to have around. Like when you see a shell mitten, that’s fantastic. You see all the old shells, all the stuff there. When you see a pile of plastic, well then that’s just dirty garbage.”

Nevertheless, the employee emphasised that they are not changing the facts for tourists. Tiwi people would like tourists to have a good experience of the Tiwi Islands and enjoy themselves during the tour. Presenting Tiwi culture and their lifestyle in a negative way would not help the Tiwi community. Whilst the tour guides encourage questions, some topics are considered inappropriate, whether in Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal society. Tourists are given for instance information about the alcohol and unemployment problems within the community and their questions are answered. However, more controversial issues such as incest problems
within Aboriginal communities are deliberately not discussed on the tour. He explained:

“I don’t glorify. That is changing the facts. What we do is trying keeping it positive, as in people don’t want a negative experience. We can quite easily turn it into a very hard negative day and give people some really hard negative facts about how people live here and stuff. That wouldn’t help the Tiwi people at all, they wouldn’t like that. They want people to come over here and enjoy themselves, they understand that they are on holidays. I guess whitewashing is probably the term that more suits what we do. We give all the positives. And as I said before if someone is really interested and it is appropriate we will talk about some of the negative stuff here. And we encourage questions. Whereas, there are some subjects that we treat very, very carefully, incest is one of them, because there is an incest problem within most Aboriginal communities. But even for white people to ask those questions is very taboo. They come over here to talk about their culture, not talk about social problems. So we do try stay away from the very hard social problems here. Alcohol comes up quiet common in questioning, like we tell people it is controlled alcohol here. So but if someone says ‘Are there alcoholics here?’ and we say ‘Yes, there is lots of them.’ We don’t say no there is no alcohol. We say yes there are a lot of problems here, yes there is high youth unemployment. Employment is another big one that we quite common get asked about. Employment rates are only 50% in the community here. But we wouldn’t go out of our way sitting down and trying to explain all that to people. Because that’s a social problem not a cultural problem. We are trying to stick to culture.”

5.3 Tour Guide

Employees commented upon the role of the tour guide and the difficulties they are faced with. One employee noted that an Aboriginal tour guide should have the ability to share his/her culture with tourists. However, according to the employee Tiwi tour guides at times do not answer the questions that have been asked. He stated that:

“I suppose just the ability to be open about and share their culture. I suppose that’s what makes them a good guide. Like a lot of the time they won’t necessarily answer the questions that the person has asked.”

Similarly, another employee described the role of an Aboriginal tour guide as talking to tourists and answering questions:

“With the guides there is a lot of time on our tour, to them actually just talk, ask questions directly, talk to them. So if a person wants a really good in depth conversation about all sorts of minor things within the community, there is an opportunity to actually do that. A lot of tours miss that point where they have an
Indigenous guide, but never actually give everyone the opportunity to come up and ask some questions.”

One employee emphasised the importance of having a Tiwi guide doing most of the talking during the tour. Though, the employee also acknowledged the role of a non-Aboriginal tour guide, who acts as an interpreter and clarifies things to tourists if needed. The employee stated:

“I think and I know this from guiding myself here, when I am up and front doing the spiel, sometimes I am hearing myself talking thinking ‘They don’t want to be here and some white talking about this, they want to hear it straight from the horse’s mouth’. I feel that the guides should really be doing most of the speaking…I would love it and we had it last year when we had a guide who could really do all the spiels and he was fantastic. And I think that’s great. There are times though where just differences in the way the Tiwi pronounce, their accent, I know it’s important to have a non-Tiwi guide be there as well. Even if the Tiwi guide is great and can do all the spiels himself, a lot of times you need to be there to interpret some things. Or a Tiwi guide would say something that you see the tourists are not quite getting so you can interact as well and sort of make things clear to them. That’s an important role.”

The same employee explained that there would be always a non-Tiwi person to support the Aboriginal tour guide since Tiwi people are not able to drive the bus:

“I would be happy if they do the whole thing. As long as there is always somebody there to help out. And there always would be anyway because there has to be a driver and in our instance here we don’t have any Tiwi Tour people capable doing the driving, they don’t have the licensing so that will always be the case.”

In regards to helping the Tiwi tour guide and clarifying some issues, one male employee described how he adds extra information as well as prompts the Tiwi tour guide. He noted that:

“I am trying not to interrupt them, that’s a bad one. Quite often what I do is add. Wait till he is finished and we use a lot of eye contact when we are talking and we usually stand facing each other up to three or four meters apart. Quite often each side of a display or something. And rather than interrupting I let him go right through the end and then maybe add a little bit, which seems like adding extra information. Occasionally when he gets a figure radically wrong or something, I help him by prompting the right figure. Sometimes he will take that prompt and use it, sometimes he doesn’t. That’s fine. Always trying to work from a point of helping them to get better rather than putting them down by interrupting them.”
The same employee explained that a Tiwi tour guide, who has worked for a longer period for Tiwi tours, is likely more able to encourage tourists to ask questions and instigate conversation. The visitors in turn feel more content when their personal questions are answered. Thus, the approachability of the tour guide is dependent on his/her skills and experience that were trained and developed during his/her employment. He stated:

“And the approachability of that guide for questions varies quite a bit from guide to guide. If you have a really good guide who can encourage people to ask lots of questions, they will feel a lot more fulfilled at the end of the day, if they were able to ask their personal questions and get a good answer to it. They feel a lot more fulfilled than if you just give them a whole lot of spiels and send them all away and they still got all those questions in their head. So the older guides that have been here longer can do that better. So that’s unfortunately the way it is.”

Another employee noted that if someone has a shy personality, most likely he will not be suitable as a tour guide:

“And that is a job where if it is in you to be a guide, you will be a guide, if it’s not, you won’t. If you are shy or anything like that, then the tour guide is not the job.”

Another employee explained that the difficulty with employing an Aboriginal tour is that most Tiwi people change jobs frequently. Hence, the managers have to always train new Tiwi guides, which subsequently impacts on the quality of the tours:

“So by the time you get someone really well trained, they become very used to the job, then they want to go and do something else. And a lot of people here only do a couple of years in each job around town... That’s a very hard part for us, because we always have people in training. So there is always an edge to the tours there is a problem there. So one of the thing that would be fantastic, is if we could develop ways to make it more challenging for our guides, keep them working over longer periods and therefore have a higher skill level within our Indigenous workers. Their skill level improves and it takes at least a full year.”

5.3.1 Limiting Information

One employee explained that Tiwi tour guides only give a limited amount of information to tourists since their culture contains some secret as well as sacred elements:
“They are very open with a lot about their culture, they are very generous, but there is always going to be a point I think in any Indigenous communities that they are not going to bare all to the non-Indigenous people. There are certain secret and sacred things to them that they are not going to be really open about. And that’s fine. It’s not secrecy I don’t know how to describe it There will be a point where they will talk about something so much but not beyond it, for whatever reason, it’s a cultural thing.”

5.4 Interaction

All employees identified the interaction with Tiwi people as the major expectation tourists have when deciding to participate in Tiwi tours. One employee pointed to the morning tea with the Tiwi ladies, which often has been mentioned by tourists as being the highlight of the day. The employee believed that tourists are most interested in just sitting down with Tiwi people having a casual chat. According to the employee, tourists anticipate to ask their own personal questions so they can satisfy their own specific interests on Aboriginal culture. The employee also stated that questions from tourists are very much welcomed since it instigates thoughts and discussion. The employee explained:

“Definitely just being able to talk to Aboriginal people. And in our case specifically the morning tea. That’s quite well known, it’s specifically pointed out in all our brochures, on our website on the phone, if you have to call Aussie Adventure and go on hold they always bring up morning tea, that the Tea Ladies have received a Brolga award in 2003, so they are very well known. So a lot of people before they come to Tiwi Tours have maybe heard about that. And they know it’s the chance just to sit really when they want and talk to some Tiwi, that’s nothing constructed like the rest of the tour where there are spiels of content when we try to get the information across with the Tiwi and non-Tiwi guide. It’s different from that in that they can just sit down and chat and ask the questions they want to ask. Seen how very popular the morning tea session is with a lot of the guests, it has been the highlight of the day, I think that tells me what they expect or what they hope for is to be able just to really directly to act with their own questions their own interest with the Tiwi people…And a lot of times people do ask their own questions. Which are totally unique and its great when you see that happen, it makes everybody think, makes us think, makes the staff think it makes other tourists think.”

Similarly, two other employees emphasised that tourists desire genuine contact and interaction with Aboriginal people as opposed to receiving information from a non-Aboriginal person. As a result, the tour is designed to provide tourists with this kind
of contact whilst at the same time keeping technical information in form of spiels to a reasonable level. The employees stated:

“What they want is genuine contact. From our brochures and from documentaries and stuff they have seen, they have this expectation of being able to talk to and relate to the people that they have come to see. Not necessarily sit down and listen to a white guy explain it all to them. We can run a tour where that happens, but that wouldn’t fulfil their needs. So they actually would quite happily have a lot less content a lot less technical information as long as they actually get to talk to people. And that’s one of the things that we are trying keep our tour very much aimed at that level. So we keep our technical content at a reasonable level, but lots of Tiwi contact and that’s what they are expecting and what we are trying to supply.”

“I think what most of them are looking for is that interaction with Aboriginal people. To be able actually to spend time with them and get the story from the Aboriginal people directly instead of just the white fellow passing the story on.”

However, whilst the tour offers tourists the opportunity to interact with Tiwi people, the amount of contact is determined by the Tiwi people themselves. One employee stated that the Tiwi people decide for themselves how much contact with the tourists they want to have. If they do not want to talk to tourists, they do not have to. The employee gave an example by pointing to the morning tea ladies, who choose whether they want to interact with tourists. As a result tourist-host interaction is not staged but rather appears genuine and real. He stated that:

“But it is up to them, the Tiwis, how much contact they have. There are certain places we go and if you don’t want to talk to the tourists you just wander off and disappear for a while. The contact we do have is very much on their terms but also very much because they want to. They want to have a good time with the tourists, they really enjoy the tourists. They want to have fun.”

“So you will be with the guides all day and have morning tea with the ladies. And to be quite honest, the ladies if they want to talk to you, they talk to you, if they don’t they won’t. It is as simple as that. But they are quite open and friendly and chat where you are from and that sort of stuff…The difference is with the ladies there, their interaction with you, they control that. It is very obvious quite quickly that that’s the case. So if they are friendly and opened and the lady asks you to sit down with her, it is the genuine thing. It’s not that they do this for all the tourists, there has been a small bond between them and she has invited you to do that. Basically the ladies do it as well as they want to and that’s part of it. As a tourist you will realise that this is the case quite often. It is not staged, it is not a routine…By in large the people feel that the Tiwi are so friendly and open and that it is obviously by choice.”
5.4.1 Culturally Acceptable Behaviour

One female employee noted that some tourists choose not to interact with the Tiwi people. The employee explained that in her opinion tourists at times appear shy or simply might not know what is considered as culturally acceptable behaviour. The non-Tiwi tour guides, therefore, try to act as an intermediary between Tiwi people and tourists to make the visitors comfortable joining a conversation:

“And the tourists have the opportunity to get as interactive as they choose to, not all tourists do and I think there is reason for that, I think a lot of times they are feeling a little bit shy, they are afraid of getting in anybody’s face or they don’t know what’s culturally acceptable, they don’t know what’s considered polite and not polite and I think sometimes that holds them back a bit. We are trying to step in and bridge things a bit like beginning the conservation with the group with the Tiwi, so they feel comfortable just asking their own questions and things like that. But I think sometimes the tourists hold themselves back a little bit and it’s really only through ignorance and I don’t mean that in a downward way. I mean that’s why they are here, they want to learn.”

5.4.2 Privacy

Two employees explained that occasionally tourists inquire whether they can visit a private home, the school or even join a card game. This was described as inappropriate since the privacy of Aboriginal people needs to be respected. The employees were pointing out that these people certainly would not like to be visited in their homes by other tourists. The employees explained that some tourists needed to be reminded that the community is a real working community which is not a show or staged environment where tourists can drop in and have a look around. They stated:

“We had twice ask for things that we don’t do, so obviously there are some who would like to going to a card game, going into a house, going into the school... Because I think people do sometimes forget - you sort of have to pull them back and remind them, ‘Well how would you feel if a bunch of tourists went into your child’s school and started taking photos?’”. They have to be reminded sometimes that this isn’t a show, that it is a working community and that those are private homes and this is a private school, this is not all show. I would like to think that most of the tourists would know what’s inappropriate. Just like they wouldn’t want tourists knocking on their door if they lived in a tourist’s town on the south coast wanted to see in their house to see like a local lives. I think most people would be that sensitive and I am sure that those who aren’t it just that they are curious and maybe don’t
realise that it isn’t appropriate. Some of the things aren’t appropriate like going into someone’s house.”

“Some people would love to have a lot more interaction. They have somewhat unrealistic expectations in that respect because they think that they can go along and visit people in their homes and stuff like that. And they don’t apply what they imagine to their own situation, if they had a bunch of tourists turn up to their front door step who wanted to come in and have look at how they live, they would be offended if not completely shocked. But when the favour returns, they seem to think that that’s all right.”

One employee commented that respecting the privacy of Tiwi people is a crucial part of managing a successful and sustainable tourism business within the community. Thus, Tiwi people themselves inform the company where they do not want tourists to interfere in their private lives. He explained:

“We have to be always sensitive to that sort of thing not to interfere too much within the Tiwi life and that’s one of the guidelines as managing the business here. We do actually have to listen to what the people want. And it’s the people telling us that they don’t want us in the social club, they don’t want us in the general store, don’t really want us to go into the Take Away Food Shop. We got to have a lot of respect for their privacy. I mean this is a very successful business within the community here and the reason for that is, is that we listen to what people do and don’t want. We still show the culture. They still see an awful lot, but there is some parts of it that are actually out of bounds for tourists.”

The same employee gave an example of Aboriginal privacy where the tour had to change its usual route through the community since a dispute between two Tiwi families was taking place. The Tiwi people did not want the tourists witness this argument, which took place in a public location. Since Tiwi lifestyle and culture is occurring more outdoors and in public places as compared to Western cultures, the tour company has to also take this type of privacy in consideration. The employee stated:

“A good example of that would be, if there was and it happened once last year, where there was just a big dispute between two families. And it got very public and they gathered in one of the parks in town. The ladies let us know what was going on and we actually didn’t drive near that during the day. We kept well away from it. It lasted about four hours. There is lots of yelling and so on. And there was a hundred people there, all very upset, yelling and screaming. They don’t want that portrayed to the general public. That’s just a personal dispute between two families...Culturally the difference is, in our culture that would have happened indoors. With Tiwi culture that happens outdoors and in public. It is still a private
dispute. It just happens to be happening in a public place. That doesn’t mean we have to have the right to have access to it. So we just keep away from it.”

5.5 Dance Performance

Two employees viewed the dance performance as an important part of the tour. One female employee explained that the smoking ceremony, the singing and the dancing brings all tourists closer to the Tiwi people. In her opinion, the dancing ceremony is not a show and is not staged:

“Yes, because it is combined with the singing, because it is combined with the smoking ceremony. I think it’s very important because these are all special things that the Tiwi are showing to tourists. It’s not a show, each day its special. The tourists realise that they are drawn into it. I guess it’s not just the dancing because that all happens in conjunction with the smoking ceremony, the singing and the dancing. The smoking ceremony specifically draws the tourists into a closer circle really with the Tiwi people, through touch, through the whole meaning of the smoking ceremony. This sort of driving everyone together and then comes the songs and the dancing. And I think that brings the tourists that step closer to the Tiwi people, it’s not like a show, no one is on stage, just sort of doing it all together. And I think that has a really big impact on the tourists.”

In addition, the same employee commented that the dancing is authentic in a contemporary sense. Since she had personally experienced Tiwi funerals and weddings, she noted that the dancing performed for tourists is very similar. Whilst in the past the dancers were dressed less, these days Tiwi people prefer wearing more clothes. She stated that:

“The other times that I have been around dancing and singing and the dancing what the tourists are seeing has been at weddings here and at funerals here and its pretty much the same. I mean it’s always going to be different at a funeral, because there are a lot of emotions involved. But physically what the tourists are watching and what they are hearing, except for the fact that there are tourists sitting in the chairs and watching them, it’s very similar to what happens in reality here...But I think what they are doing with the dancing in my experience is very much an authentic thing in a cultural sense. Sixty years ago the men would be in marl gas and the women would be topless. Well, we don’t do that because the women prefer not to go topless here now and they don’t in town. So it is authentic in a contemporary sense.”

Likewise, another employee explained that Tiwi people do not want to show much of their body. Wearing nargas and dancing in full body paint is considered a very
private cultural side of Tiwi life, which Tiwi people do not want to share with tourists. Due to time constraints, the dance performers only paint their faces for tourists. The employee also questioned as to how far a dance performance has to go back in time to be considered truly traditional. Whilst nargars were introduced after the mission came, Tiwi original ‘traditional’ dances were completely without any clothes. However, this is not practiced anymore. The employee commented:

“I mean it is actually quite difficult for them to expose that much of their body. One thing that has changed with their culture, how much they expose their bodies. Most of them would feel quite timid about having to put on a narga and dance in front of them, because that’s their very private cultural side of life. Where here for most of them to wear a uniform, they are proud of it and quite happy to stand up in front of the tourists and dance...Traditional would be just a narga or linen cloth, a full ceremony they would actually paint all their torse as well as their face. For sake of convenience here we only paint faces. And time, there is a time constraint on that. So they only paint their faces. It takes a couple of hours to do that. But even nargars, you got to realise that nargars were introduced after the mission came here. Prior to that they were naked. So their actual traditional dance is completely naked. No one is going to do that. It all goes in steps, I mean how far do you want to go?!”

5.6 Bush Food

In regards to bush food, employees believed that receiving information about bush food is for the majority of tourists more important than actually tasting it. According to two employees, most tourists would be very interested in finding out about bush tucker and seeing how it is prepared. However, tasting bush food would be considered inappropriate and unpleasant for a lot of people. The employees explained:

“Information is important to most of them. Actually eating for a lot of them is not appropriate. They may actually just taste a couple of little things, but to actually sit down and have a meal of bush tucker, for most of them, especially traditional bush tucker, they would find it probably very unpleasant. Having a goanna lying there and turtle eggs and stuff like that, most people would be incredibly distraught suddenly realising they are eating endangered animals. This is something that needs to be approached very carefully.”

“For some tourists yes, they are really interested, other tourists, they want to know about it, they don’t want to taste it. If you went to give them real bush tucker they wouldn’t touch it, because of what it is, it goes too much against the grain. They want to know about it, most definitely, but not necessarily taste it...Even prepared in a Western way, I think a lot of tourists would still have problems with it. From
experience when we have involved the bush tucker on the second day, yes they definitely want to know about it, but when you go and cook the turtle eggs for them, there is only some of the people would be interested in trying, other, no they don’t want to eat them. You could do things like a BBQ snake, goanna. Some of them would be interested but not all of them. It is just too much against the food habit that people have. They definitely want to know about it and actually see it being done, they would be interested but not necessarily try them. Some of the fruits and stuff are different, they give that a go.”

Employees emphasised that the tour is only able to offer bush food on the two-day tour and that it is not possible on the one-day tour. One employee highlighted the difficulties of growing or collecting a large amount of bush food for tourism activities. In addition, health regulations prohibit certain foods to be used for commercial purposes. Comments included:

“Unfortunately, it’s part of our two-day thing. It’s not part of our one-day tour and doing the food prep myself I know the limitations and I just know its not really going to happen. So we try to teach them about bush tucker with the bush tucker walk, we tell them about the store and that people still hunt dugong and kill turtles. And we try to teach them what happens with the Tiwis eating the food, but we don’t offer it on the one-day tour. On occasions we get comments either verbally or on the questionnaire about, not a lot, but you know that if one’s person writes it more than one person is thinking it, that’s for sure. So we try to think about different ideas to deal with it, but I think that just in terms of Tiwi tours one-day tour if that’s an expectation and I assume on the comments that it is, I don’t think it is going to happen. It’s a part of the two-day thing and in fact it’s part of the selling point of the two-day tour. And then it can work because of the number of people on the two-day tour and they are collecting it themselves with the guide. I am afraid that that expectation for the one-day tour, we will have to disappoint them.”

“Fruits here, unfortunately, there is only two months of the year when most of the fruit comes. So the rest of the year fruit is very very limited. Things like yams and stuff, bush tucker and harvesting, you have to be very careful about harvesting because traditionally they would only use very small amounts of that over very large areas. So when we start collecting that in a commercial sense, then we got to really watch what’s going on, because we can actually disrupt the whole growth pattern of all those plants. None of these crops are commercially produced on the island, so there are all sorts of issues. And then of course there is the health side of it as well. We have to be very careful about regulations and requirements and so on. We do have a duty of care to make sure all food that anyone eats is actually in a safe state for them to eat. So bush tucker is not necessarily under that category a lot of the times.”
5.7 Food and Facilities

One female employee commented upon the food and facilities that are offered to tourists on the tour. According to the employee, her expectations of food and facilities would be higher than the actual expectations of the tourists since visitors generally seem to be very relaxed on the tours. In her opinion, tourists do not participate in the tour because of the food offered to them and are, therefore, not anticipating luxury meals and facilities. She explained that:

“My experience is in working in places where its high level accommodation, so it’s in my head that expectations should be high as far as cleanliness, the toilets, the food, the bus and all of that I think maybe my thoughts on their expectations are higher than what their expectations are sometimes. Because people generally tend to be very relaxed when they come here…I think theirs aren’t as high as mine are. And that’s just from a different work experience. I don’t think they are coming here for the food. They are coming here to talk to Tiwis and find out what they eat for bush tucker. They are curious to know what’s sold at the store. I think they are more curious about that than whether or not their picnic lunch is going to be this or the other. I don’t think that’s really high. I think any of us expect things to be clean and working well, they pay a decent amount of money to be here but I don’t think they are expecting to fly over on a Concorde and I don’t think they are expecting really a flash lunch.”

6. Manyallaluk Employees: Tourists’ Expectations and Perceptions

Employees were questioned as to what they thought tourists expect from an Aboriginal cultural tour. One employee explained that the main intention of tourists is to learn about and understand Aboriginal culture. Part of this process involves learning about Aboriginal culture and history as well as understanding their way of life. According to the employee, every tourist would have different expectations, which would be also dependent on what the tour company’s advertising strategy involves. The employee stated:

“Different tourists have different expectations of what an Aboriginal cultural tour is going to provide. But I guess at the end of the day, everybody is looking for an insight into their culture. And that’s fundamentally why you would undertake any cultural tour in any country as a visitor. You are looking to understand their culture.
and the way they live a bit more. So I think that’s probably the guts of any tour that is sold as a cultural tour...I guess the general perception, that they would be learning something about their living and their culture and their history and their heritage. And I think depending on what parts your advertisements are on, what parts they expect they are going to learn about. But even in terms of what you advertise, they still come with all the questions that they ask. They are all looking to find out something different and that comes down in the questions that they ask. And obviously we can’t cater for everyone individual.”

Likewise, it was noted by one employee that visitors are interested in Aboriginal culture, arts and crafts as well as historical sites:

“The tourists want to know more about country, know about culture, clan obligation. Talk about arts, take them to sites. Visit some painting sites, historical sites.”

Another employee emphasised that visitors mainly seek interaction with Aboriginal people and want to understand the differences between both cultures. In particular, tourists have certain preconceived notions about Aborigines, which initiates some visitors to search for the ‘good’ side of Aboriginal people. Moreover, an interest in art and traditional Aboriginal skills such as basket weaving prompts tourists to participate in those kinds of experiences:

“They want to be able to have an Indigenous experience and that means interacting with Indigenous people in an attempt to understand what they are about, because they are much different to Western culture. They want to satisfy themselves that everything about Aboriginal Australia is not bad. They have a lot of pre-conceptions, particularly domestic tourists, Australian tourists...They are also interested in the art, an expression of the culture. In ancient ways in doing things, like basket weaving and that, which you know there are not too many white fellows that sort of do that thing anymore, because we don’t have the need to.”

Similarly, a female employee explained that visitors have a desire to talk to and experience Aboriginal lifestyle. In her opinion, tourists would be satisfied with just having the opportunity for contact and interaction with Aboriginal people and, therefore, hands on activities that involve traditional skills are regarded as an additional benefit. She explained:

“Get to talk to Aboriginal people, to see their way of life. A lot would like to see the housing, the community, but it’s out of bounce. And just to get closer and actually speak to the people. Everything else is a bonus how to light a fire, and how to do the basket weaving. But I think it’s mostly just to meet the people and to see how they live.”
6.1 Authenticity

Several employees had different perceptions as to what an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience is and whether Manyallaluk offered an authentic experience to their visitors. One female employee argued that the Manyallaluk tour does not offer a ‘plastic’ or ‘artificial’ experience to visitors. Instead the Aboriginal tour guides demonstrate and involve tourists in traditional activities, which have not been changed or adjusted to suit tourists’ tastes. The employee described this as being natural; the tour guides determine the contents and the way they want to present their culture on the tour. They basically just do what they have always been doing and what they have been taught over generations as opposed to reciting information from paper. The employee stated:

“I mean there is nothing plastic about it, they haven’t got artificial humpies put up around the place, they are not using lights, are not using rap music to do a Corobere. It is authentic because it is the people doing what they do. There is nothing about it that is not natural...Because there has nothing been changed. The guys at Manyallaluk have been given a structure in which to do the activities so that there is a structure to it. They haven’t been told how to do the activity, how to do the basket weaving. They do it the way they have always done it. The same with the painting. They didn’t sit down and had a class how to do it. They do it. They do it every day. The same with the bush tucker walk. Obviously there has to be a structure to the walk but what they are talking on that walk is what they know. It’s not something that they need to roll out a piece of paper and read off the piece of paper...They have been taught this is the way to do what you do. And it’s not our role to tell them how they do those things. It’s their area of expertise.”

Similarly, one employee viewed authenticity in terms of whether traditional skills were still used today in the community. Thus, Western components included in the tour such as serving steaks were seen as less authentic:

“Well the ladies still do weave the baskets, so that’s authentic enough. And they still do the hunting but they use the rifles now. I guess the Aboriginal people would still use all the skills that they show here, the fire lighting and the basket weaving and the kangaroo tails, that’s always a bonus. The steaks thrown on the BBQ are not so authentic. But mostly yes and the bush tucker, they still do eat bush tucker and gather it and use the medicine. Yes, authentic enough.”

Another male employee regarded an authentic cultural experience as being a true representation of the original traditional Aboriginal culture. In his opinion, the real culture can only be experienced in remote areas, where tribal elders have taught and
instructed younger generations. Whilst the employee noted that some of the traditional stories would be authentic, he also emphasised that non-Aboriginal people will be never able to comprehend the entire Aboriginal spirituality since many stories are sacred and secret parts of their culture. He explained that:

“The experience is of Aboriginal communal living. We have stories about country, traditional stories about one thing or another, and some experience of art and artefacts. But as far as it has been a reflection of the original Aboriginal culture - No. Only a very small percentage of tourists would ever get anything that is the real thing that is left of it, and they would have to be introduced through people who had intimate relationships with tribal elders in lands, which are relatively remote, like around the top coast, Tiwi and the desert people and some of the Western people over here. The closer you get to towns and that, the further you are away from that, or any chance of that experience…Parts of it are, the traditional stories are authentic, but you have no white fellow being around a long time is going to get from Aboriginal people the whole story of the way they do the world. A lot of stories are sacred.”

6.2 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

Except for one employee, all employees believed that visitors were interested in learning about and experiencing both the traditional and contemporary aspects of Aboriginal lifestyle, for example:

“A lot of them want, from what I can gather, a lot of them want to know how countryman live and survive on the land. Also now.”

One female employee explained that gaining any cultural experience would involve learning about traditional and modern elements of the particular culture. However, according to the employee, domestic visitors are more interested in the contemporary Aboriginal life since they are more aware of the issues involving Aboriginal people in Australia. She stated that:

“I think people are just curious about any culture that is different, whether they are looking at the contemporary or the traditional. And I guess that it depends on whether you are a history buff or just somebody who is curious about how these people live. I think probably the Australian travellers are far more interested in the contemporary, although they are interested in the traditional as well. But they read a lot about Indigenous communities in the paper and there is an interest in actually seeing and meeting Aboriginal people and seeing how they do live.”
Another employee pointed out that visitors are interested in how Aboriginal people are adapting to Western culture and how their culture has survived. Thus, learning about the transition and the challenges involved in being confronted with Western culture is important to tourists:

“A lot of people are very much into actually the culture itself and how it has survived, a stone age culture. And how they are adapting to white fellow culture, because I mean it’s not a long time in history since the white fellow took over and the Aboriginal people became nothing.”

Corresponding to the second statement, the same employee explained that domestic and international visitors want to find out what the truth is – whether the portrayal of Aboriginal people and their problems in the news are a true illustration. He explained:

“Again that’s that thing, domestic people from down south and to some extend when it hits international news every now and again about the problems that the two societies have in Australia, people have an interest to see what it is really like. What I was saying before a lot of people come up here with preconceived notions and all the bad stories... The people who come here as tourists who want to know what the truth is. So they think we are going to have a look at these people and have a talk to them on the tours. And they go away with a different idea. Mind you if they came back three hours later to Manyallaluk they get the other side of it, especially on a Friday... I have been aware for a long time that a lot of the Europeans, Germans and Austrians and some of the British people, who come here who are a major representative group of the European continent are really interested in the whole picture, what is going on, not just the culture, what is happening now and why because they hear and see on the TV on programs. I guess it’s like the Amazon Indians we are going to have a look and talk to them and find out what is really going on. Because a lot of educated white fellows are very sceptical of anything that goes on TV or anything that goes through the media about someone else’s country now, because we have learnt that the media tells us a lot of stories and only uses one perspective.”

Furthermore, the same employee suggested that organising a ‘study tour’ of the contemporary lifestyle in Aboriginal communities could be taking into consideration in future:

“What we should do is run some tours and show people the communities. Aboriginal people still live very differently from white fellows and they want to. Again a broad generalisation, because they are clinging to the old culture and they are clinging to the false culture which is the bit in between. I don’t know whether you run a tour, but we know that you should get into something like a study tour if you like, where we explain to and show tourists who are interested in that side of thing and it might only
be a small group, but that would be a good education process, how this and why this and different levels in Aboriginal development.”

Contrary to the other employees, one female employee believed that tourists are only interested in learning about the traditional elements of Aboriginal culture. The employee explained that contemporary lifestyle means drunkenness and tourists would not be interested in that:

“Traditional. Because contemporary is just, the vision of it is the drunkenness, no one wants to see that sort of thing. It’s sort up in limbo really, there is half way between the white and the black. I am sure they want to see the traditional way.”

6.2.1 Community Area

It was highlighted by the employees that whilst many tourists have a desire to see the community area in Manyallaluk, the requests are inappropriate since Aboriginal people have a right to their privacy. Comparisons were made to tours looking at private homes of Hollywood stars and having tourists in your own backyard. Furthermore, it was emphasised that the decision of separating the community area from the tourist area was made by the Aboriginal community itself. Comments included:

“And we get a lot of requests of people who want to go and live in the communities, which you know that’s not really appropriate. These are people’s homes and their families. I think there are still a lot of mysteries surrounding Aboriginal people.”

“The community doesn’t want that. In the past they have said no and that’s why they always had the community so far away from the tourism area. Because that’s their home, it’s not their work place. It’s a bit like the stars in Hollywood that get chuffed with the tours that come by and tourists hanging out the bus checking out their houses. Same thing. If the community agrees to it, but in the past they have said no this is our home. That’s where we work out there and this is our home down here and we don’t want people coming in. Because I think once people think it’s OK just driving in, you are running the risk of people just coming in as well.”

“It is simply a matter of ‘I don’t want tourists racing through my backyard and looking through my house’, it’s no more than that...In communities, you know that’s just etiquette, I don’t want to turn up with a group of Aborigines in your country and wanting to go and have a look at everyone’s house, you know, ‘What are the white fellows doing?’”
“We want to make that private, just like anybody else. I mean, we have been talking to countryman and their reaction is, ‘Why do they want to come and see how we live? We don’t want to see how they live in their place when we visit their country.’ We can’t change that because that’s their private…It would be up to the community. If people explain to them what tourists want to see, just drive through, this is how we live, this is a modern house, that’s fine if they give their consent.”

### 6.3 Aboriginal Tour Guide

Employees were questioned as to what they thought the role of the tour guide should be within an Aboriginal cultural tour. One female employee explained that the role of an Indigenous tour guide is not different than to any other tour guide. Since the Indigenous tour guide works in a business environment, the guide needs to perform usual tasks as required from any other tour guides, such as imparting information, preparing food, guiding tourists etc. According to the employee, the only difference is the knowledge that the tour guides bring into the work setting, which is their own knowledge. She stated:

“The same role as any tour guide in a business to be honest otherwise it is not a genuine business. This is a hard thing. It is a cultural tour, but it is also operating in a European business structure. I mean they need to do all the things that need to happen in terms of any tour like people have to be fed and the food has to be cooked. And it’s also their role to present to the tourists and to give tourists information on what goes on out there. It is their role to take the walk and explain the plants to the visitors, their role to explain the weaving, the spear throwing and fire lighting to the tourists. The same as it would be with any other tour guide. But their knowledge about it is their own and it’s their knowledge that they are passing on, but they still have the same responsibilities. They still have an OHS responsibility in terms of the tours, especially with the walking that they comply with. So they do have the same role as any other tour guide. They are not there just being paid for their expertise, they are paid as tour guides. They are tour guides in any sense of the word.”

Another employee explained that the role of the tour guide involves communicating with tourists, such as answering questions and passing on information. The tour guide also needs to demonstrate traditional skills as well as point out and explain things to tourists:

“The role would be to answer any question that the people have, giving out information. Showing them what they are doing - which they are. They are showing them how to do this, how to do that, what trees for cooking, that sort of thing.”
6.4 Interaction

One female employee explained that the tour offers an opportunity for tourists to interact with Aboriginal people since they are able to ask questions. However, the employee noticed that there seem to be some hesitations on behalf of the tourists in approaching Aboriginal people. She explained that this behaviour could be the result of fear and being scared of offending Aborigines. She also described Aboriginal people as very shy and hesitant:

“They have an opportunity to ask the people themselves that, but then again there is a lot of hesitation between the blacks and the whites to talk to each other. I notice a lot asking about marriage that sort of thing and family values. A little bit scared, whether it’s fear of them, or fear of offending them, or something. It is just the fear of the unknown I think mostly…The black people are still very shy, maybe because of the way we have treated them for so long, that they are sort of hesitant to talk to us. The whites it is just like the unknown, the Aboriginal people are sort of an entity of their own, especially out here, not so much in the city. But out here, they are sort of like different from us.”

The same employee pointed out that the interaction between Aboriginal tour guides and visitors at Manyallaluk could be further improved by the tour guides approaching the tourists and talking to them more. According to the employee, the tour guides are more inclined to wait for the tourists to first approach them. She noted that:

“I think they are doing it well, in terms of interacting with the people. They could go further in more talking to the people, less sitting around in their little groups and talking amongst themselves. But then I guess they wait for the white people to approach them. Because when white people do ask them, they do answer the question if they can.”

7. Anangu Employees: Tourists’ Expectations and Perceptions

Employees were questioned as to what they thought tourists expect when participating in Anangu Tours. The employees emphasised that visitors are keen to meet Aboriginal people and learn about their culture. One employee also commented
that provision of a relaxing and unthreatening environment facilitates the process of sharing cultural knowledge and interacting with each other. Another employee explained that tourists mainly seek ‘true’ information and, therefore, view the tour as an educational experience. Comments included:

“I think when it comes to Indigenous cultural touring products they just want to meet traditional people in a setting that is comfortable and relaxing and unthreatening. One that basically both parties feel at ease and they feel they can share some part of that culture. I think that sort of setting is something that’s designed and created by Aboriginal people where they are feeling very comfortable and they are imparting knowledge in a way that’s consumable by visitors in an easy and comfortable environment.”

“I would hope that they think that they are coming along and they are going to an ancient place they are going to learn about the people who live there, how those people live there. The different things that go aside with the land, why and how they survived for thousands and thousands of years in such a harsh climate.”

“Generally, I would say, information really. A bit of an insight into how their culture works within Uluru. Trying to get a better understanding how they believe their culture works, how it works and how they express themselves in that area, educational sort of sense. I think part of coming on our tours, they get actually access to that sort of true information rather than a product that has been bundled together and then given out to the people. These guys are actually getting a sense of the culture by listening to a part of it. It is only a small part but because they hear it directly and it is a true thing that they walk away feeling that they satisfied their needs, which is learning more about Indigenous culture.”

Employees noted that a major part of visitors’ expectations are physical things of the tour that involve hands-on experiences. According to the employees, hands-on activities add to the learning experience. It was explained by one employee that using physical things is an easy way to teach visitors as opposed to learning from traditional stories. However, another employee argued that most tourists only enjoy the ‘visual excitement’ rather than the in-depth cultural side of the hands-on experiences. The employees stated:

“I think anything that gets people involved and doing stuff, people always enjoy that hands-on. You can sit in a lecture room for hours and learn about these things in a museum, but there is no better way to learn than actually do.”

“I think people are really interested in physical things you can do, as in lifestyle, hunting, and survival things and that sort of things and probably interested in a slightly lesser degree interested in learning the traditional stories. Traditional stories can create a communication problem simply because Indigenous people come at
their intellectual property in a different way. Initially people have to understand how information are given, and once they get their head around Tjukurpa, law and cultures is given to you then they start switch on to the stories. The easiest thing for people to give, digest and really enjoy themselves, are the physical things like learning how to throw a spear, learning how to use a tool, doing hands-on things, which are a part of culture.”

“I think unfortunately most people see the exciting side of it, more than the actual in-depth cultural side. The spear throwing and the hands-on the weaponry and the arts side of it, with art side I mean the bowls and things like that. They see that as a visual excitement rather than probably going there with the consequent wanting to understand how the culture works. It comes down to a lot of marketing. And that is how a lot of people overseas are shown Aboriginal culture by the well-known things like the spear throwing, the weapons and things like that. But more so less understanding the people as a whole. So that more glorified area that people get sucked into, which is good marketing, a lot of interest is there.”

7.1 Authenticity

All employees believed that Anangu tour provided an authentic Aboriginal cultural tour experience to their visitors. One employee explained that tourists’ perceptions of authenticity are largely dependent on the feelings tourists develop of the tour and specifically of the Aboriginal tour guide. The employee emphasised that the tour is not a contrived experience and tourists notice that Aboriginal people are keen to impart the right information about their culture and land to the visitors. According to the employee, the tour guides themselves make the tours authentic through their sincerity, ‘down to earth nature’ as well as the fact that they demonstrate traditional practical skills. The employee stated:

“The only way people can assess that is by the feeling they get and I think that a comparison might be when you with Anangu Tours people very quickly realise that this is not a contrived experience. Simply by the down to earth nature of the guides and through the practical skills that they are demonstrating and showing them and through their sincerity ‘Why are they delivering this information?’ They very quickly realise that this is not a tourism product that has been contrived, particularly for visitors to the rock. It is actually an expression what Aboriginal culture at the rock is about. The guides are very very motivated to show people to get the right information about this part of the world. That’s part of their cultural obligation is all visitors who come to your country understand your country. And that comes out very loud and clear to people who come on the tours. So I think that it’s not something that you can lay your finger with one simple mechanism to assess it this has integrity or not, but I think it’s just a general feeling people pick up from the individuals they go out with.”
Likewise, two other employees viewed authenticity in terms of the role the Aboriginal tour guide plays in the tour delivery. According to one employee, the tour guide’s knowledge about his culture, which has been passed on for thousands of years, makes the tour authentic. Correspondingly, the other employee explained that the opportunity for contact and interaction with an Aboriginal person who is culturally attached to the area provides an authentic experience. Thus, hearing stories directly from that person is an important element of authenticity. The employees commented:

“Absolutely. You can’t get much better knowledge then straight form the horse’s mouth. These are the people who have lived here for 22,000 years and you can’t get better knowledge than that. It is their culture.”

“We are probably one of five companies in Australia that actually offer genuine authentic Indigenous touring. A lot of companies will market it as they do it, but generally what they do is they attach one, like us for example, attach Angangu tours to their company and then promote themselves as an Indigenous touring company. Because they got another company they do tours through which being us. From my point of view a true Indigenous experience is actually meeting and talking and spending time with that traditional person of direct relationship to that area. Just having that opportunity basically to go and spend time with those people, rather than hear about those people, or hear about their stories or hear about this person said to me this and that, coming from a white person. It has to come directly from that person when you want to feel to get an authentic sort of experience. Because second-hand stories are never authentic. It doesn’t matter who trained you or what book you read it from, whatever, it’s still a second-hand story and will always get changed in some way in shape or form. So speaking to somebody directly, having a story told you directly from that person I think is the key of authenticity really.”

The above employee also distinguished between companies that only attach an Aboriginal touring company to their program and an actual Aboriginal company, which provides an authentic experience. Thus, being associated with an Aboriginal company does not automatically guarantee for an authentic tour experience.
7.2 Contemporary vs. Traditional Lifestyle

7.2.1 Social Problems

One employee believed that tourists are very interested in learning about the traditional aspects of Aboriginal culture and that they only show curiosity rather than an interest in the contemporary or social side of Aboriginal life:

“I think they have a base interest in traditional culture, like they are really interested in learning about that, but I also feel that they are also looking for what they perceive an Aboriginal person or Indigenous person to be. I don’t necessarily think that they want information on it, they possibly, because once again it is always in the media, possibly see it first hand, but not that they want to see drinkers and people beating up their wives or things like that, it is more about because they hear it all the time, when they come to Australia that’s what they expect walk down the street and seeing happening on the sidewalk. I think there is more of a curiosity than an interest in the social side.”

Two employees explained that the contents of Anangu Tours focuses mainly on the traditional aspect of Aboriginal culture since Aboriginal people prefer to talk about their traditional culture. The employees commented that visitors are seeking an enjoyable tour experience. Accordingly, Aboriginal people want to provide tourists with a positive experience:

“The tours essentially have a very traditional focus about traditional culture how it has been for thousands and thousands of years. They do touch on such things as the food people consume today and the differences that it has created. And a number of different things like that. The Aborigines tend to focus on the positive rather than the negative. One of the things of the tour is that people are supposed to enjoy themselves and share the good sides of where they are, so the guides don’t like to get bogged down on and focus on some of the negative aspects that people carry around with them.”

“I think some people would like to trying to overcome some of the things that they have build up in their mind as problems for Indigenous people, but Indigenous people much more mind focusing on the cultural element that they see is important. And social issues are on the periphery of those, rather than central issue. Again that’s that difference in sharing intellectual property in the way Indigenous people come to the tours with a very strong motivation and obligation to give people the correct knowledge about the country they are going to visit. Give them what required to have a happy time. Tourists come with an outsider’s perception and sometimes they want to resolve those questions and sometimes guides are able to fill that, social issues in the community about health and healing and substance abuse. Largely the focus is on traditional culture.”
“People can talk about social problems and all that sort of thing, but from what I found, things like that just bring up a lot of negative energy, that’s not what we are about.”

“I think there is always 10% of visitors want to get the negative aspects, justify for themselves why this Aboriginal person is not how they read about in the newspapers and they need to talk about it. The guides come across as very positive people. But the majority of people just want to share that positive experience and the guides are there to deliver it.”

One male employee noted how tourists approach him with questions regarding contemporary lifestyle and social problems of Aboriginal people. He explained that he does not feel comfortable answering questions which involve the stereotyping of Aboriginal people. In his opinion, if visitors do not feel comfortable asking the Aboriginal person these kinds of questions, then this is an indication that those questions should not be asked in the first place. However, the employee also noted that language barriers could be the reasons for such tourists’ behaviour. He stated:

“I probably get ask more those questions more so than the guides. When it comes to asking how they live, if they live in a house or live outside, all those sort of things I don’t mind answering that sort of things but when it comes down to people talking about their social structure and why things are going in their perception of Aboriginal people whether they will be Anangu from here or whether they will be Aboriginal people from different parts of Australia, people put them into one category - stereotyping. It’s a tough thing to get rid of and there is heaps. And unfortunately I don’t like to answer that sort of questions. As far as I am concerned it is not anyone’s business. Everybody has their problems…Because they are too shame to actually ask Anangu. That’s what it comes down to. They don’t want to ask an Aboriginal person about their own social structure, their own social problems. They want to hear it from someone who is coming from the outside. I tell a lot of people, ask. A lot of the time people won’t ask the questions that they want to ask, because they don’t feel right doing it. If they don’t feel right asking questions to a person who is about, so this could only be a question that should not be asked at all…I suppose that has got a lot to do with the language barrier as well. I am not there to teach the people about the culture, that’s not what I do. I just help out to get the concept across of what Anangu are trying to say, because I know as much as Bob next door.”

7.3 Tour Guide

In regard to the role of the tour guide, the employees explained that the product and its contents has been chosen and designed by the Anangu people. Each tour guide makes a decision on each tour what intellectual property he/she wants to share with
the tourists depending on the skills and knowledge of that person. Whilst the tour guides are being trained in presenting the information such as how to speak in public as well as the time management of the tour, management does not interfere in what contents the Aboriginal guides want to deliver:

“So with Anangu tours, the Indigenous tour guides have planned all the products. So they have designed the core cultural touring element and they make decisions on all the intellectual property that is used to market the product. And they, on each day, make a decision as to what intellectual property, what activities they want to deliver depending on the skills of the person on the day.”

“When I first started public speaking at school I was very shy and it’s the same for Anangu. They do training with us as new guides, not to learn what they need to say but to getting an understanding as to how they need to speak to people, how they need to address people probably. Things that need to be done in a certain time frame. As far as their personalities go, that’s entirely who they are.”

“But doing it so people can understand and appreciate it, is where we come in. We don’t change the content but maybe the presentation of it.”

7.3.1 Limiting Information

Several employees explained that the kind of information visitors are able to obtain from the Aboriginal tour guide is dependent on his/her age and consequently the level of knowledge acquired with this age. One employee stated that the Aboriginal tour guides decide themselves how much information they want to share with tourists. Aboriginal people attain more knowledge about their culture the older they become. Thus, tourists will have a more knowledgeable tour guide who is of older age as compared to someone younger. Another employee also explained that some stories are sacred and/or secret and cannot be told to tourists. Comments included:

“We just know a little bit of language, a little bit of what they want to share with us. So when it comes to giving the guys guidelines what to say and what not to say, it’s up to them what they want to share, or what they are allowed to share at the same time. There are so many different levels to the story and you won’t know the full story unless you spend your entire life here. That’s the only time you learn the full story. A lot of our guides are anywhere between 20 and 70 years. With the ones who are 70 you might get that little bit more than the ones who are 25, because they might not have that extra bit of knowledge yet, so they don’t know, so they can’t share it.”

“Because the way the culture is certain people can only do certain tours, that’s just the cultural side of it. Some of the stories are referred to as baby stories, which is
still traditional cultural story, but it’s what they tell to their kids, which is for a bit of fun or teach them a lesson, as a training, or growing up. But it’s not necessarily a sacred story, or one of high importance. It is something that they use, like our parents used to tell us not to make us wander pass the backyard or something like that. You know a story, which is everybody knows about but it is actually not in the whole scheme of the cultural aspects as important. So certain stories that get told to people they will know as a grown up. Obviously anybody can talk about that sort of story. When it gets to the very important side of it then you have to be very careful about who is telling what stories. Because it is outside their sort of authority, then obviously they can get into trouble. Everybody knows that there are like boundaries where they should or shouldn’t go, but like every culture. Generally people know what they can and can’t talk about.”

According to one employee, Aboriginal tour guides intentionally do not answer questions asked by tourists that are perceived as inappropriate or sensitive. They remain silent to certain questions, which in turn could be interpreted by the tourist as being offensive and rude. However, the employee also stated that giving tourists ‘proper genuine cultural information’ should limit the amount of inappropriate questions. The employee commented:

“A tourist went into their personal habits, like all of us, they might talk about their life in general and things like that. But when it comes down to digging dirt, you don’t get that sort of questions - it’s a little bit forward. Some tourists do but they generally get the no answer… The same about other questions, in regards to the men’s business and things like that if they ask inappropriate questions then there will be no answer…If you don’t allow that sort of things to creep in, and when people are feeling that they are getting that information that they are striving for as well- ‘We are getting proper genuine cultural information’, then they are less inclined to ask questions. Aboriginal people are very special in this area, they are very good with dealing with it - they just shut up. The person might take it offensive as if to say ‘You haven’t answered my question’. But part of the tradition is if it is sensitive to talk about they just don’t talk about it.”

7.3.2 Language

It was noted by several employees that the fact that the tour guides speak in their traditional language has a positive impact upon the overall tour experience for the visitors. According to the employees, having an Aboriginal tour guide talking in English would not be the same as using the traditional language. It was also emphasised by one employee that witnessing the companionship between Aboriginal guide and interpreter is an important part of the tour experience. Comments included:
“And for the majority of people it is quite an exciting thing to hear ancient knowledge and actually experience someone speaking very passionately to them in their own traditional language and hearing English in the other ear...With Anangu tours it’s one of those things we are trying to do is being very ethical about interpretation.”

“They speak in their local language and then we interpret it, because it also has that impact as well. If they are standing and talking English it takes the edge of a little bit.”

“I think it is a great thing as well to see the companionship between people like myself and X and Y with Anangu, to be able to turn around and learn an ancient language. People see that friendship between guide and interpreter as well and being an interpreter it’s not just doing it for a job, it’s a profession, we love what we are doing. Anangu love to teach, we love to learn, we love to help out.”

7.4 Bush Food

In regards to bush food, one employee explained that whilst bush food is an important part of Aboriginal culture, it is not necessarily an essential component of an Aboriginal cultural tour. Aboriginal tour guides at Anangu Tours teach visitors about their culture and land, which involves a combination of how information is passed on, such as by telling ancestor stories, demonstrating bush foods and pointing to the natural landscape. Hence, according to the employee, bush food is seen as a component of Aboriginal culture rather than a separate entity. The employee commented:

“No, it’s not an important element of every tour. I mean bush tucker is only one aspect of Indigenous culture. It is an important element of Indigenous culture and the way the people at the rock present their tours is following a particular philosophy, Tjukurpai, following their ancestors. In many cases that will cross over some things with food. And on the way as you are travelling from place to place visiting different sites on the walk you will pass interesting examples of bush foods. But in the majority of our tours, that’s about the depths of bush foods investigation. And on the Kunja walk, which is specific living at the base of the rock Mutjatulji water hole, we have a small display of bush foods that they sit down and discuss with people, because that’s relevant to that philosophy. I think ‘you must have a bush food thing’ is very much a European concept of what about Aboriginal tours supposed to be about. It’s not something that Indigenous people see as a segment, its just visiting country understanding what plants they have, what uses they have that sort of thing.”
Appendix 4.2: Semi-structured Interview Guide

1. TOURISTS
   • Why are you taking part in this Aboriginal cultural tour?
   • What are/were your expectations in terms of this tour?
     - activities sought
     - cultural interaction – tour guide/Aboriginal people
     - information sought
     - opportunity for learning/increasing knowledge
     - food and facilities
   • What are your perceptions of an authentic and genuine Aboriginal cultural tourism experience? How do you define authenticity?
   • What aspects of Aboriginal life are you interested in?
   • How were your expectations of this tour different to what you experienced?
   • What was the highlight of your tour experience?
   • What suggestions do you have to improve this tour?
   • Have you experienced any other Aboriginal cultural tourism products in Australia?
   • Have you experienced any other indigenous cultural tourism products in other countries?

2. TOUR COMPANY’S EMPLOYEES
   • What do you think tourists expect from this tour?
   • What do you think tourists find important when choosing to go on this tour?
     Why?
   • What aspects of Aboriginal life should tourists learn about?
   • Do you believe that this tour offers an authentic and genuine Aboriginal cultural tourism experience to tourists? If yes, why?
     - What are your perceptions of an authentic and genuine Aboriginal cultural tourism experience?
     - How do you define authenticity?
   • What do you think is the highlight of this tour for tourists?
   • What suggestions do you have to improve this tour?
Appendix 4.3: Permit to Enter and Remain on Aboriginal Land (Central Land Council)

Central Land Council

33 Stuart Highway
Alice Springs
Northern Territory

P.O. Box 3321
Alice Springs
N.T. 0871

Permits Section: Telephone (inter.) 61 08 8951 6320
Facsimile 61 08 8953 4345
CLC web site: http://www.clc.org.au

PERMIT TO ENTER AND REMAIN ON ABORIGINAL LAND

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA  COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

The person(s) whose name(s) are set out below are authorised to enter onto Aboriginal Land According to the details printed thereon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF ABORIGINAL LAND TRUST(S)</th>
<th>Uluru Kata-Tjuta Aboriginal Land Trust</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC AREA(S) OF ENTRY</td>
<td>Mutitjulu community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATES OF ENTRY (inclusive)</td>
<td>FROM 20.06.05 TO 30.07.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE OF ENTRY</td>
<td>RESEARCH AND/OR STUDY- PhD research study at Anangu Tours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORT DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>Travelling on the Anangu Tours tour buses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGISTRATION STATE/TERRITORY</td>
<td>7 Mallow Place CABRAMATTA NSW 2166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS OF PERMIT HOLDER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have read the conditions as printed on the reverse and the special conditions (if any)
And I agree to abide by such conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME(S) OF PERMITTEE(S)</th>
<th>SIGNATURE(S) OF PERMITTEE(S)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SZYNKLARZ, Renata</td>
<td>R Sayklarz</td>
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</table>

Issued by the Central Land Council at Alice Springs on 23 February 2005

Signature of Authorised person  

Permits Office

ISSUED WITHOUT ALTERATION OR ERASURE

PERMIT NUMBER: UK0026

-507-
GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR PERMITS

1. This Permit does not authorise the entry of a person to a dwelling or a living area of a camp occupied by or belonging to an Aboriginal without the consent of the owner or occupants.

2. This Permit is subject to the special conditions (if any) set out below.

3. This Permit may be revoked at any time in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Act.

4. Issue of this permit does not imply that notice of intention to visit the Aboriginal land specified has been served upon the Traditional owners concerned. The permittee(s) is responsible to ensure that Aboriginal communities are informed of their intention to visit as appropriate.

5. This Permit is valid only to enable the permittee(s) to perform the duties associated with the stated purpose of the visit.

6. This Permit must be carried at all times while the holder(s) are on Aboriginal land and produced for inspection on demand.

7. Before taking liquor onto any Aboriginal land the permittee(s) should ascertain what rules govern the entry of liquor to that land and the sale and consumption of liquor on that land.

8. Each permittee enters Aboriginal land at his or her own risk and neither the Landowners or occupiers shall be responsible for any injury loss or damage no matter how such injury loss or damage arises and from whatever fault or default it arises.

9. This permit is void if any condition is breached by any permittee(s)

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. All permittees must report to the Community council upon arrival.
Appendix 4.4: Information Statements -
(Tourists and Employees)

INFORMATION STATEMENT

TITLE: An importance-performance analysis of Aboriginal cultural tours: An investigation into the perceptions and expectations of what constitutes an Aboriginal cultural tourism experience

INVESTIGATOR: Renata Szynklarz, PhD Candidate in the School of Management, University of Western Sydney

Dear Participant,

My name is Renata Szynklarz and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Western Sydney. This research project is being conducted to meet requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (Tourism Management) under the supervision of Dr Deborah Blackman, Dr Tracey Firth and Mrs Rayka Presbury of the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney.

This is an invitation to take part in this research study. The aim of my research is to identify and investigate potential differences in the perceptions of Aboriginal cultural tours between providers and visitors. In particular, I am trying to identify the expectations and perceptions of tourists visiting Aboriginal cultural tours as well as providers’ perceptions regarding what tourists want from an Aboriginal cultural tour experience. This research will provide Aboriginal tour operators with a deeper understanding of what tourists expect from their business, which in turn will enable them to match those expectations with their tourism product and/or change their marketing strategies.

I would be grateful if you would agree to take part in this study by answering some questions regarding your perceptions and expectations of this Aboriginal cultural tour in an interview of approximately 1-2 hour’s duration. The interview will be taped for analysis purposes only. Following transcription, the interview transcript will be returned to you for cross checking, allowing you to verify the accuracy of the transcription.
Your participation is entirely voluntary and your anonymity is ensured by your name or other identifying information not appearing on any raw data or in any written reports. The data will be kept in secure storage at the University of Western Sydney for a period of five years after the study has been completed, after which time it will be destroyed. Please note that you are free to withdraw from the research at any time throughout the study with no penalty or questions asked.

I would be grateful if you would agree to take part in this study by signing the attached consent statement. Signing and returning this statement will be regarded as consent to use the information for research purposes. Should you have any questions, or require clarification of any aspect regarding your involvement in the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone 0403315653 or email r.szynklarz@uws.edu.au. Alternatively, you may contact my principal supervisor Deborah Blackman on (02) 4620 3534 or via email d.blackman@uws.edu.au.

Thank you and regards,

Renata Szynklarz

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
INFORMATION STATEMENT

TITLE: An importance-performance analysis of Aboriginal cultural
tours: An investigation into the perceptions and expectations
of what constitutes an Aboriginal cultural tourism experience

INVESTIGATOR: Renata Szynklarz, PhD Candidate in the School of
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experience. This research will provide Aboriginal tour operators with a deeper
understanding of what tourists expect from their business, which in turn will enable
them to match those expectations with their tourism product and/or change their
marketing strategies.

I would be grateful if you would agree to take part in this study by answering some
questions regarding your perceptions as to what tourists find important when
choosing to go on an Aboriginal cultural tour. The interview should take
approximately 1-2 hour’s and will be taped for analysis purposes only. Following
transcription, the interview transcript will be returned to you for cross checking,
allowing you to verify the accuracy of the transcription.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your anonymity is ensured by your name
or other identifying information not appearing on any raw data or in any written
reports. The data will be kept in secure storage at the University of Western Sydney
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Thank you and regards,

Renata Szynklarz

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 4.5: Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

TITLE: An importance-performance analysis of Aboriginal cultural tours: An investigation into the perceptions and expectations of what constitutes an Aboriginal cultural tourism experience

INVESTIGATOR: Renata Szynklarz, PhD Candidate in the School of Management, University of Western Sydney

By signing this consent form you are agreeing to participate in this study. Signing and returning this form will be regarded as consent to use the information for research purposes.

Semi-Structured Interview Consent Form

I (the participant) have had an opportunity to review the Information Statement, and understand that my participation is voluntary and that I agree to participate in the semi-structured interviews, knowing I can withdraw at any time. I understand that the focus group will be taped for analysis purposes only. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant’s name:

.......................................................... (print)

Participant’s signature:

.......................................................... Date: .................

Investigator’s name: Renata Szynklarz

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.