



Visitor cultural protocols for Aboriginal cultural tourism



Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge and honour the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory and recognise the continuation of culture, connection to lands, water and country. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

About this guide

As an Aboriginal tourism business, it is important to help visitors respect our communities and Country so they have an enjoyable experience. This guide will explain what visitor protocols are, why they are needed and how they help to protect culture, Country and keep visitors safe. By using this guide, you will learn how to build the right protocols for visitors to your Country.

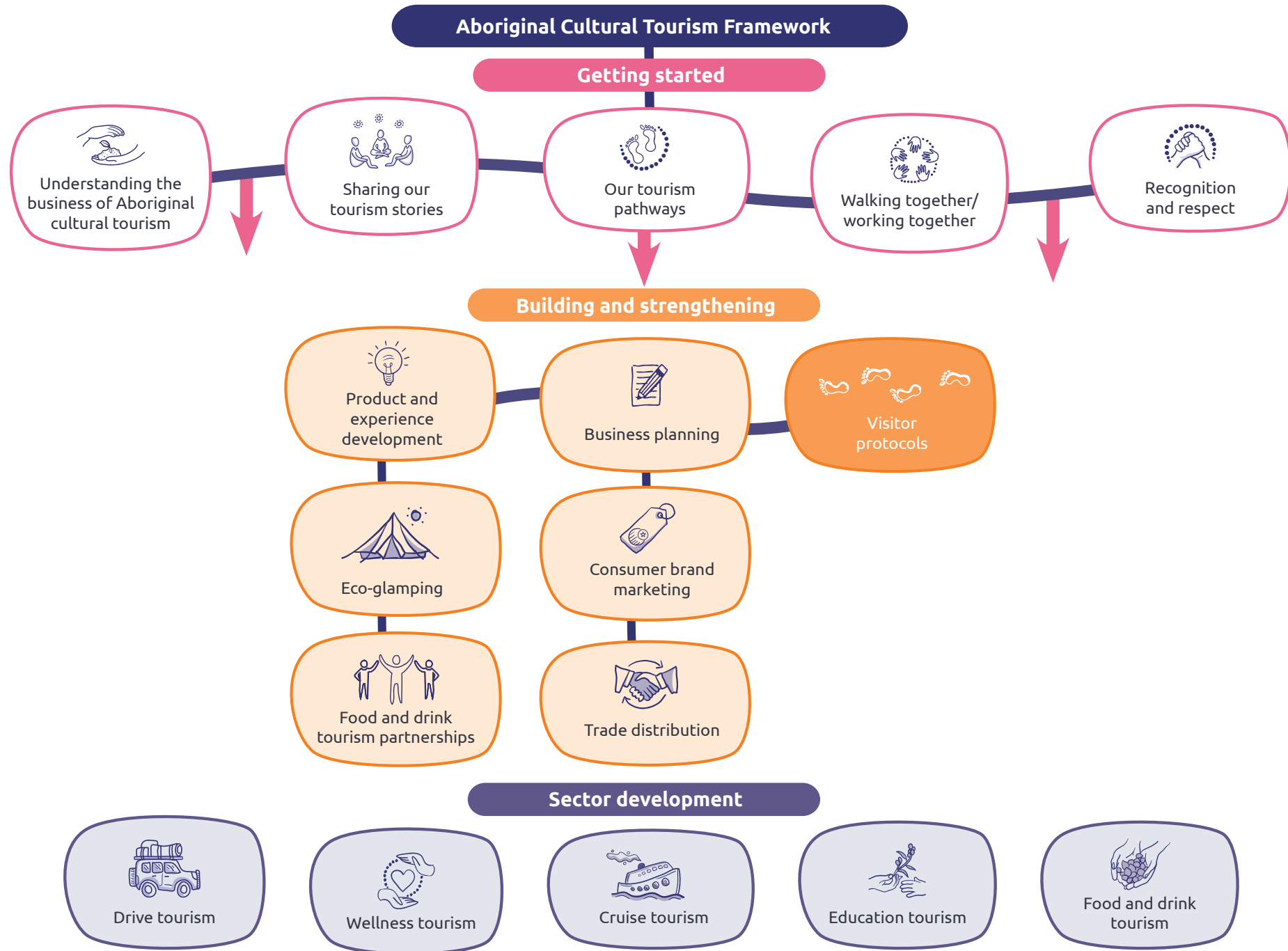
More information

For more information and access to other Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework resources visit www.tourismandeventsnnt.com.au or contact Tourism and Events NT's Aboriginal tourism team today.

PH: 08 8999 7420 E: Aboriginal.tourismeventsnt@nt.gov.au



Tools to help you



Sharing our visitor cultural protocols

Visitor protocols are a way we can help visitors enjoy their experience by understanding and respecting our community, culture and Country. Visitors don't know how to travel the right way or what our protocols are unless we teach and show them.

Why do we need to share our protocols?



Ensures immersive, enjoyable and safe visitor experiences

- When visitors are aware of cultural protocols, they can follow and respect them
- Visitors can truly immerse in our cultural ways with open hearts and minds. They leave seeing, feeling and thinking in a different way
- Visitors are Welcomed to Country the right way, keeping them and our community culturally and physically safe.



Keeps people and culture strong and respects our ways

- Sets the rules for tourism and visitors on Country
- Provides the right permission (for example: permits and other cultural approvals)
- Educates visitors about our culture, expectations and traditions (including during times of Cultural or Sorry Business), helping them to respect our ways
- Protects, strengthens and values what is important to us.



Protects our culture and Country

- Safeguards our sacred sites and Women and Men's cultural places. With rules for access or 'off limits' areas
- Promotes caring for Country by preventing damage to the environment, plants, animals and significant objects.

What is immersive?

Immersive means creating an experience that makes visitors feel completely involved or surrounded, as if they are really part of it. When something is immersive, visitors feel like they are truly in the experience, not just watching or hearing about it from the outside.

What is cultural safety?

For Aboriginal people, cultural protocols are followed to keep people safe. These protocols honour our Ancestors and ensure we visit and travel on Country the right way.

If we don't follow our cultural protocols, we might be punished by our Ancestors or bad things may happen.

Cultural safety is about following our protocols, to keep our cultural ways and beliefs strong and our people and visitors safe.



How can we share our visitor cultural protocols?

Every culture, community, family and Country will have different cultural protocols.

Here are some steps to help you and your family share your cultural protocols with visitors:



- 1 Look for examples and research:** Learn from others who have shared their own visitor cultural protocols to help you decide what might work best for you.



- 2 Know who can help you:** Elders and family members can guide us on the lessons and laws our Ancestors gave us. Land councils, native title bodies and prescribed body corporates can advise us on the right Traditional Owners for Country and any permissions and permits needed for visitors. National Park agencies can inform us on their own laws and policies to keep culture and Country safe.



- 3 Use the checklist to build your own:** On page 7 of this guide you will find a checklist to help plan your own visitor cultural protocols.



- 4 Do a survey of your visitors:** If you are already an Aboriginal tourism business, do a survey of your visitors to see if they have understood your cultural protocols and if there are other things they'd like to learn to help with their experience.



- 5 Continue to review and change:** Different visitors from different places and cultures will have their own protocols. They will have different languages, ways of behaving and learning. Our visitor cultural protocols may need to change to ensure all visitors can understand them and have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Learning from others

Here are some examples of Aboriginal visitor guides and visitor cultural protocols to help you think about the ways you'd like to share your visitor cultural protocols.



[Welkam la Melabat Kantri – Welcome to our Country | Information for visitors to South East Arnhem Land](#)

Welkam la Melabat Kantri! Welcome to our Country and information book for visitors to South East Arnhem Land, NT

Provides maps, information about Country, communities, languages, cultural law and kinship. Visitor protocols educate visitors on how to dress, behave, visit and talk with community members appropriately. Visitor health and safety messages such as crocodiles, swimming and dogs.



[Tiwi Islands Visitor Protocols](#)

Visitor Protocols for the Tiwi Islands

Includes information about visitors needing a permit to visit the Tiwi Islands, transport and accommodation, rules for photography, filming and social media and protecting the environment.

For more information on right way tourism, protecting Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property and working together with the tourism industry, government and other support partners, read the [Walking together/working together](#) guide.

How do we use and share our visitor cultural protocols?

Although we know and have learned our cultural protocols from our Ancestors, for visitors we need to write them down so they learn about them before they visit and can respect them. Visitor cultural protocols can be shared with visitors throughout their visitor experience journey to ensure they are respectful, safe and have an enjoyable time when visiting your community and Country.

To learn more about visitors and the Visitor Experience Cycle, see the [Understanding the business of Aboriginal cultural tourism guide](#).



Preparing to share our visitor cultural protocols

Use this template to help you, your family and community share your own visitor cultural protocols.

VISITOR PROTOCOLS		
Caring for Country	• How can visitors treat your Country with care and respect? • Should they stay on paths, avoid touching plants, animals or objects and take all rubbish with them? • Are there any 'off limits' sites we need to protect and keep visitors away from?	
Immersive visitor experiences	• How will you keep visitors culturally safe when visiting your Country? For example: Welcome to Country ceremony, cultural inductions. • What activities are ok for visitors to immerse in to learn more about your cultural way of life? • What do visitors need to bring to stay physically safe on Country? For example: hat, sturdy shoes, water, insect repellent? • Are there any warnings to provide visitors before they arrive such as seasonal changes, extreme heat, wildlife or other risks and hazards?	

VISITOR PROTOCOLS

Respecting our community Visit: https://nt.gov.au/property/land/aboriginal-land-management/aboriginal-land-and-permits/land-permits to learn more about when visitor permits are needed to access Aboriginal land.	• Do visitors need a permit or other permissions to visit your Country or community? • What are the rules for visitors during times of Cultural or Sorry Business? • How do you feel about visitors asking questions, taking photos, videos or using drones? • Are there any kinship, men's, or women's rules, ways of dressing or other traditional practices that visitors need to be aware of?	
Sharing protocols	How do you want to share your protocols? ☐ Website ☐ Emails ☐ On signs ☐ Printed ☐ Cultural awareness/induction ☐ Surveys ☐ Other?	



References

Photo credits

Front Cover – Tarntipi Bush Camp, Tiwi Islands – Tourism and Events NT/Helen Orr

Page 2 – Guluyambi Cruise Kakadu – Tourism and Events NT/Shanaa McNaught

Page 5 – Bawaka Experience, East Arnhem Land – Tourism and Events NT/Shanaa McNaught

Page 10 – Karrke Aboriginal Cultural Experience – Tourism and Events NT/Joshua Griffen

Back Cover – Discovery session – Tourism and Events NT/Helen Orr/Lilla Disco

