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MEDIA RELEASE

Tourism Minister Launches Connecting to Culture Toolkit for Industry



Federal Trade and Tourism Minister Senator the Hon Don Farrell has today launched a new toolkit designed to support tourism businesses to engage with First Nations people and culture.

Connecting to Culture – A toolkit guiding respectful engagement with First Nations People ('Connecting to Culture Toolkit') will assist non-First Nations-owned tourism businesses to build and foster meaningful and collaborative connections with First Nations people and communities.

Minister for Trade and Tourism Don Farrell said that the toolkit will form an integral part of ATIC's Quality Tourism Framework (QTF), which provides industry and operators with a suite of online training and accreditation programs maintained by ATIC.

"Helping tourism businesses access resources to build more culturally respectful, inclusive and authentic tourism products, will enrich and enhance the visitor experience for all travellers to our shores," said Minister Farrell.

"Australia's First Nations people and communities have a rich and ancient cultural heritage, and the new *Connecting to Culture Toolkit* will help businesses honour and preserve this."

Recognising the importance of responsible and inclusive tourism, the *Connecting to Culture Toolkit* encourages the development of authentic tourism practices that respect cultural, community, and environmental considerations.

Within the *Connecting to Culture Toolkit*, businesses are led through a process to identify current gaps in their engagement with First Nations culture and community. They are then guided on how to close these gaps through a directory of resources so they can progress with confidence and clarity.

"We are proud to introduce the *Connecting to Culture Toolkit*, which represents a major milestone in supporting Australian tourism businesses to engage with First Nations communities in a respectful and meaningful way," said Evan Hall, Chair, Australian Tourism Industry Council.

In association with



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“This toolkit provides businesses with the guidance they need to foster genuine connections and ensure that cultural integrity is at the heart of Australia’s tourism growth.”

“We hope that this enables more tourism businesses to engage with First Nations people and communities, and work towards fostering respectful and meaningful connections that align with cultural values and practices.”

ATIC’s First Nations Reference Group, comprised of First Nations representatives from across Australia, played an integral role in ensuring the toolkit was an accurate reflection of First Nations people and culture.

Desmond Campbell, Chair of the ATIC First Nations Reference Group, shared his thoughts saying, “through this toolkit, we’re helping tourism businesses build genuine, deeper connections with First Nations people and communities, ensuring that our cultures and values are respected.”

“It will open doors for First Nations communities across Australia to share their stories, engage with visitors, and benefit from tourism in ways that are both respectful and sustainable.”

Mr Campbell continued explaining, “the *Connecting to Culture Toolkit* provides the structure and opportunity for the world’s oldest continuing cultures and languages to be shared and celebrated ensuring their ongoing presence within Australia’s tourism landscape.”

“By providing businesses with the right guidance, we are helping to ensure that First Nations perspectives are truly heard and integrated into key aspects of the tourism journey.”

The Australian Government has provided \$8 million in funding to enhance and improve the QTF, which reaffirms its commitment to support small and regional tourism businesses enhance their quality, accessibility, sustainability and inclusiveness.

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