

# ALTC project

## Building a Stronger Future: Balancing Professional and Liberal Education in Ideals in Tourism and Hospitality Education

### About the Project

The question of what constitutes a tourism and hospitality (T&H) degree has received considerable attention in a number of countries with significant debate over issues such as core knowledge requirements and accreditation.

In Australia, despite having a range of well-established and internationally recognised degrees for over 20 years, there has been little debate or clarity over what constitutes a tourism or hospitality degree, or exactly what such degrees should deliver. The aim of this project is to map the T&H education curricula including core knowledge requirements and the pathways that students can take within the curricula space (e.g. from professional/vocational education to liberal education) in order to clarify what constitutes T&H education in the higher education environment. It necessarily includes consideration of relationships with leisure, events and convention management, sports, social science, environment and other related areas of study.

The project is underpinned by a commitment to establishing collaborative dialogue between industry, higher education and the academic community about the future of tourism and hospitality education and practice. It also responds to a raft of policy developments that are having transcendental impacts on international and Australian higher education environments. The project is founded on respect for the diversity of tourism and hospitality degree offerings and the independence and autonomy of higher education institutions, and responds to the growing need for a collective vision for T&H higher education.

### Project Outcomes

Mapping the Tourism and Hospitality curricula space will:

- Inform strategic decision-making about T&H education;
- Inform curriculum content, graduate skills and knowledge requirements of graduates from within these various pathways;
- Provide information for the growing diversity of the student body by informing students about the T&H curriculum that can be used to assist in decision-making about a range of issues including pathways, work integrated learning (WIL) and employer expectations; and
- Inform discussions about T&H accreditation.

### Approach

This two-year project will involve four key overlapping and interconnected tasks:

1. Establish a collaboration framework: This collaborative consultative framework will adopt a networked approach to data collection and information dissemination. The project team seeks to establish a network of project 'champions' at each university that offers a T&H degree program. The role of the champions is to assist in data collection via an established survey methodology. Opportunities for research papers derived from this data are available for the champions.
2. Literature review and desktop analysis: A literature review of current factors affecting higher education and their impact on T&H education will be undertaken. An analysis of overseas trends and directions will be undertaken and information about current T&H degree offerings will be collected and analysed.

3. Data collection: The project involves the use of surveys of industry stakeholders, T&H educators and students. Interviews will be conducted with university managers.
4. Information dissemination and guidance: Discussion papers and preliminary results will be released throughout the course of the project and opportunities to disseminate and generate discussion and feedback will be sought in conferences, industry forums and via the ALTC and CAUTHE websites.

The Project Team comprises a range of researchers in four universities across Australia. The project team is supported by an international Reference Group who provides assistance and direction to the project. A group of Project Champions has been enlisted to help with collaboration and consultation.

## About the Project Team

This project brings together a number of senior and influential people across Australia from a range of vocational and liberal education tourism and hospitality education programs to collaboratively address these issues. The collection of people on this project and their capacity to bring clarity and instigate change is significant.

The members of the project team are:

- Associate Professor Dianne Dredge, Southern Cross University
- Dr Pierre Benckendorff, University of Queensland
- Ms Michele Day, Southern Cross University
- Dr Michael J. Gross, University of South Australia
- Ms Maree Walo, Southern Cross University
- Mr Paul Weeks, Sydney Hotel School/Southern Cross University
- Dr Paul A. Whitelaw, Victoria University

## About the Reference Group

A reference group has been appointed the members of which have considerable experience in T&H education and knowledge of the changes taking place in the higher education environment. The role of the reference group is to provide critical feedback at various points in the project's development.

The members of the project's Reference Group are:

- Associate Professor Perry Hobson, THE-ICE/Southern Cross University
- Professor Bob McKercher, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Mr Euan Robertson, Tourism and Transport Forum
- Professor Pauline Sheldon, University of Hawaii
- Professor Janet Taylor, Southern Cross University
- Professor John Tribe, University of Surrey

External Evaluator

- Professor David Airey University of Surrey will evaluate the project.

## Want to find out more?

For further information or to register your interest in becoming involved in the project, please contact:

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