



Summary of Issues and Insights

Sunshine Coast First Nations Tourism
May 2025

This summary report was prepared by TRC Tourism.

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Cultural Advice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this document may contain images or names of persons deceased.

Acknowledgement Of Country

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples of the lands, waters and communities we work together with. We pay our respects to their cultures; and to their Elders – past, present and emerging.

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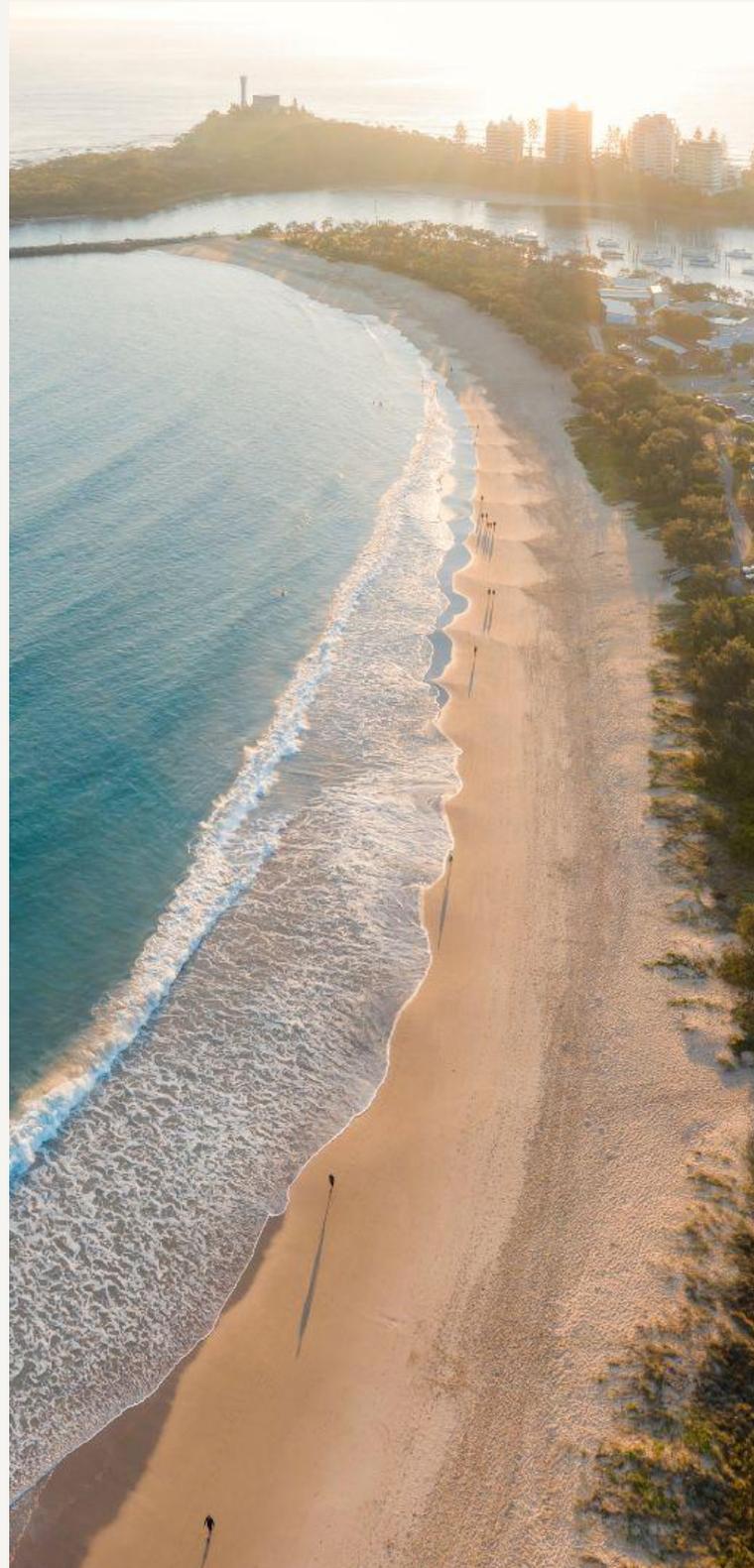
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This summary brings together the main issues and insights that were raised during the consultation on the Sunshine Coast First Nations Tourism Action Plan. We would appreciate your feedback if we have missed any major points, or of you would like to add anything to assist us in drafting the Plan.

Shared Vision Across Stakeholders



All groups shared a vision of respectful, immersive, and authentic First Nations-led tourism experiences, grounded in Country and culture.



Emphasis on self-determination—First Nations groups must lead tourism development at their own pace and based on their own aspirations.



The principle that “our people tell our stories” was a consistent theme, particularly in response to concerns about non-Indigenous operators using First Nations stories without permission.

Current Status



- Early in tourism development due to focus on Native Title.
- Some existing cultural activities (e.g., by Lyndon Davis), but no coordinated tourism plan.
- Unauthorised sharing of Kabi Kabi stories by others is a key concern.



- More advanced with tourism partnerships (e.g., guided walks, partnerships with Ocean View Estates).
- Recently established a base at the Gantry and exploring expansion of tourism experiences and cultural education.



- Keen to integrate First Nations content, but face challenges around access to cultural knowledge, uncertainty about protocols, and a lack of consistent contacts or resources.

Barriers and Challenges

Category	Challenges Identified
Access & Protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion around who can share stories and how. • No clear approval systems or central contacts. • Limited guidance for non-Indigenous operators.
Capacity & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited business skills, training, and tourism coordination in First Nations communities. • Few culturally competent mentors and trainers. • Burnout risk.
Infrastructure Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transport and accommodation to support First Nations tourism delivery. • Need for spaces for living, working, and hosting guests on Country.
Governance & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No shared tourism plans or clear policies for tourism on Country. • Need to define community-approved business models and cultural use guidelines.
Respect & Cultural Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of tokenism. • Misuse of cultural stories by operators without permission. • Need for cultural safety training for all involved in tourism.

Insights and Opportunities



Tourism is not only an economic activity—it is a means to support intergenerational knowledge transfer, language revitalisation, and cultural pride.



Opportunities exist to co-develop tourism products with non-Indigenous operators under community-led conditions (e.g., ‘Green Star’ cultural endorsement for operators).



The 2032 Olympics and other major events present a chance to amplify First Nations tourism if planned in partnership.



Each Nation (Kabi Kabi and Jinibarra) needs to define its own staged development plan and supporting business model.

Potential Actions Identified

Focus Area	Possible Actions
Community Tourism Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear, staged tourism strategies for both Kabi Kabi and Jinibarra, including experience design, business models, and cultural safeguards.
Central Contact & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a one-stop-shop or liaison with each of the First Nations corporations for cultural tourism advice, story permissions, and operator support.
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver targeted training: business skills, tour guiding, pricing, marketing, and cross-cultural awareness (via culturally competent RTOs). Potential for business support hub for supporting new and maturing businesses
Story Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement IP protection frameworks and endorsement systems for story sharing.
Showcasing & Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-create regional First Nations tourism branding/language use, increase visibility through VSC campaigns, and promote endorsed products.

