



# Whadjuk Declaration

## WITS 2023 Communique: Call to Climate Action

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The World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA) and Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC) hosted the 2023 World Indigenous Tourism Summit held from 13th to 16th March 2023 on the lands of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nations.

The summit's theme: *'Tourism and Indigenous Earth Wisdom Weaving the Future that Benefits All'* emphasises the role Indigenous values and wisdom play in building tourism to be better equipped to survive in the future, asserting Indigenous rights in our home countries, and nurturing a growing awareness for the need to unite and engage in the equitable development of Indigenous economies globally.

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**Indigenous tourism has a pivotal role in the social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability of our communities; and carries time-honoured values of hospitality embedded in ancient cultures. The 2023 WITS has showcased this through the attendance of 580 Delegates from 23 countries, representing Indigenous communities, tourism operators and organisations, Government bodies and other interested stakeholders.**

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Guided by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Sustainable Tourism Development and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), the 2023 WITS Delegates resolved to adopt principles to inform the participation and input by Indigenous tourism to the development and application of policies and practice that aim to reduce carbon emissions and climate change, through the following declaration recognise that:

- Universal Indigenous values underpin intergenerational stewardship of cultural resources and understanding, social interaction and peace.
- Often Indigenous people are marginalized, disadvantaged and remote from the opportunity for social, economic and political participation and advancement.
- Whilst tourism provides the strongest driver to restore, protect and promote Indigenous cultures, it has the potential to diminish and destroy those cultures if not protected from natural risk – (climate change).
- For indigenous tourism to be successful and sustainable, Indigenous tourism needs to be based on traditional knowledge, cultures and practices and it must contribute to the wellbeing of Indigenous communities and the environment.
- Indigenous tourism provides a strong vehicle for cultural understanding, social interaction and peace.
- Universal Indigenous values underpin intergenerational stewardship of cultural resources and understanding, social interaction and peace.

As proud descendants of Indigenous people from around the world, we, the 2023 WITS Delegates, recognise and accept our inherent social and cultural obligation gifted to us from our 'Old People' (Ancestors) to protect, heal and preserve our lands; or in essence "look after country". We are concerned with the real and ever-increasing threat climate change poses to our way of life; and as custodians (kaitiaki) and knowledge holders of boodjar (country), we have a deeply vested responsibility and interest to protect it.

We hereby resolved to adopt the following principles; that...

- Respective authorities immediately place urgent priority on development and implementation of policies to assist in the reduction of carbon emissions to at least meet the targets of the Paris agreement.
- Tourism organisations, tourism peak bodies, tourism operators take urgent action to reduce carbon emissions, and take whatever other opportunities present, to lower emissions and slow climate change.
- Respect for customary law and lore, land and water, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, cultural heritage will appropriately underpin all planning tourism decisions related to emissions reduction policy development.
- Indigenous peoples will determine the extent and nature and organisational arrangements for their participation in climate change policy development and that governments and multilateral agencies will support the empowerment of Indigenous people.
- That governments have a duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous peoples before undertaking decisions on public policy and programs designed to foster the development of climate change policy.
- That equitable partnerships between the tourism industry and Indigenous people will include the sharing of cultural awareness and skills development which support the well-being of communities and enable enhancement of individual livelihoods.

Through this summit we call on governments and all sections of the tourism industry to support the leadership shown by the WAITOC-WINTA and seek collaborative partnerships and cooperation between Indigenous people and their tourism industry organisations.

In closing, we recognise our future and the future of our next generations and boodjar (country) lies in all of our hands. It is imperative we work together to take action now.