

I have advocated for those in the sector who are micro, small and medium sized tourism operators the professional development and assistance programs through a national clearing house. These types of operators are often fragmented in their internal operations due to lack of external assistance to improve their businesses to be more competitive and profitable.

Added to this is the rise of global tourism that has created a highly diverse market that increasingly focuses on being satisfied in their demands for quality and service. The professional management standards of micro, small and medium sized tourism operators are under constant pressure to improve the delivery of quality and service to their customers. The quality and service for the tourist is often reflected in the professional standards of the owner manager operator.

In light of these increased competitive pressures to offer increased quality and service I am advocating a National Centre of Entrepreneurial Tourism (NCET). NCET would provide strategic and practical assistance to the entrepreneurial firms to be sustainable in this sector. NCET would act as a one-stop-shop to assist in the requirements of professional development tourism owner/operators. NCET would work in partnership with the industry to achieve shared goals.

The major goals of NCET would be to provide research on the performance of the firms in the sector, to undertake professional development of owner/ operators, and provide industry specific advice and mentoring.

Establishment of a national clearing house like the NCET for Australian micro, small and medium sized tourism operators addresses an important issue in Australian public policy: how do tourism operators learn about innovation and best practice in their industry? Currently they rely on informal networks, profession-based conferences, generalist training programs and their own self-help strategies in finding out what works and how to implement effective practices for their particular business. NCET would provide a critical link in the professional development of tourism operators in globally competitive markets. This would provide to the industry and nation a more consistent product offering from the owner/ operators in this sector.

Professor Michael J. Christie
City of Mandurah
Chair in Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation
Murdoch Business School