

# What is a Tourist Attraction?

QuickStart Guide to a Tourism Business  
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## TOWARDS A DEFINITION

To define a **Tourist Attraction** is not simple. Here are two definitions:

1. *A physical or cultural feature of a particular place that individual travellers or tourists perceive as capable of meeting one or more of their specific leisure-related needs. Such features may be ambient in nature (eg. climate, culture, vegetation or scenery), or they may be specific to a location, such as a theatre performance, a museum or a waterfall.<sup>1</sup>*
2. *Positive or favourable attributes of an area for a given activity or set of activities as desired by a given customer or market, including climate, scenery, activities, culture.*
  - (a) *Man made attractions are physical structures (Sydney Harbour Bridge) or events (Olympics).*
  - (b) *Natural attractions are physical phenomena deemed unusual and /or beautiful (Bungle Bungles).*
  - (c) *Secondary attractions have tourist appeal, but are not the primary reason for visiting a location.*
  - (d) *A negative attraction is an attribute of an area that tends to make some customer or market choose **not** to visit as for example pollution or crime.<sup>2</sup>*

## TYPES OF ATTRACTIONS

There are basically two types of attractions:

- Built Attractions
- Natural Attractions

In attempting to embrace the core values of these definitions, Tourism Western Australia has developed the following set of **essential** and **desirable** recognition criteria for assessing a Tourist Attraction. The use of these criteria will ensure that uniform standards provide a fair and equitable assessment of all Tourist Attractions.

A **Tourist Attraction** will need to meet all of the **essential** recognition criteria before a recommendation is made to Main Roads Western Australia or a local government for the erection of appropriate road signs.

<sup>1</sup> Dictionary of Travel & Tourism Hospitality Terms (Robert Harris & Joy Howard, Melbourne, Hospitality Press, 1996)

<sup>2</sup> The Dictionary of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism (Charles J. Metelka, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Delamr, New York, 1990)

## BUILT ATTRACTIONS – RECOGNITION CRITERIA

### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Most importantly:

- **Tourism** must clearly be an important part of the business

In addition, the attraction must:

- provide a substantive tourist experience in addition to, or part of, the commercial establishment's normal activities
- have all relevant State and Local Government licenses and approvals to operate as a commercial tourist attraction including health, planning, parking and disabled access facilities.
- be a member of a recognised local tourism organisation
- be open on weekends and three other days of the week including public holidays
- clearly display opening times (if not open 7 days):
  - at the entrance to the property or establishment
  - in brochures and all promotional mediums (advertisements, web sites, etc)
- be open at least between 10am and 4pm
- produce a leaflet or brochure describing the attraction
- be distinctly signed at the property line so that the attraction can be easily identified
- be clean and well presented at all times
- have clean and conveniently located toilet facilities

### DESIRABLE CRITERIA

It would be desirable for the attraction to also:

- be open every day
- be Quality Assured by Tourism Council Western Australia
- provide a parking area for coaches and caravans
- keep a record of visitor numbers (eg. by way of a visitors book)

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Arts & crafts outlets, nurseries, garden centres and the like are generally **not** considered to be tourist attractions **unless** the premises are significantly large and they provide some kind of value added experience such as having a well known or established artist in residence, or they conduct interpretative tours of their premises.

Wineries must provide wine tastings and cellar door sales. Wineries, which are only 'open by appointment', are not considered to be a tourist attraction for road signage purposes.

Historic sites, buildings, etc must be classified by the Heritage Council of WA.

## **NATURAL ATTRACTIONS - RECOGNITION CRITERIA**

Natural attractions comprise geographic or other natural features of tourist interest:

- National Parks and Reserves
- Waterfalls, lakes, dams and other water catchment areas
- Beaches
- Caves, rock formations
- Scenic lookouts, viewing areas, vistas and areas of impressive natural beauty

## **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

The natural attraction must:

- be managed by a recognised agency or body
- be recognised by Tourism Western Australia as a significant feature of tourist interest
- be accessible to the public at least 9 months of the year
- clearly display when the attraction is closed (if not open year round):
  - at the turn-off to the attraction
  - in brochures and all promotional mediums (advertisements, websites, etc)
- have adequate designated parking areas at the site
- be distinctly signed at the entrance point so that the natural attraction can be easily identified
- have clean and well presented visitor facilities
- have access roads, walking tracks and viewing platforms maintained in a safe and satisfactory condition all year-round by the management body responsible

## **DESIRABLE CRITERIA**

It would be desirable for the natural attraction to also:

- have clean and conveniently located toilet facilities
- provide a parking area for coaches
- be interpreted

## ENQUIRIES

General enquiries or comments regarding the '*QuickStart Guide to a Tourism Business*' or this document '*What is a Tourist Attraction?*' should be addressed to:

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