



VOYAGES
INDIGENOUS TOURISM
AUSTRALIA

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Referral Business Entry Point
Environment Assessment Branch
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
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Dear Sir / Madam

EPBC Act Referral
Ayers Rock Resort - Proposed Golf Course Development

Please find attached a completed referral and supporting documentation in relation to the proposed development of a golf course at Ayers Rock Resort, Yulara NT.

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia Pty Ltd ("Voyages") which owns and operates Ayers Rock Resort is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Indigenous Land Corporation ("ILC"), a statutory authority of the Australian Government. The ILC acquired Ayers Rock Resort in 2011 for the purpose of furthering its charter of acquiring and managing land to provide cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits to Indigenous Australians.

Together with the ILC, Voyages has established the National Indigenous Training Academy, based at Ayers Rock Resort. The academy provides accredited, enterprise based training in hospitality and related disciplines. Through the academy and Voyages direct employment programs, the number of Indigenous people employed at Ayers Rock Resort has increased from just two at the date of acquisition, to 169 as of the end of September this year, representing approximately 23% of the total workforce. Voyages has a target of achieving 350 Indigenous employees, or approximately 50% of the workforce by 2018 and is well on the way to achieving this goal.

The ability of Voyages to successfully deliver these employment and training outcomes is dependent on the commercial success of Ayers Rock Resort. In the 17 months since Voyages acquired the resort it has invested around \$40million in upgrades to the facilities including a complete renovation of Sails in the Desert hotel and the redevelopment of the conference facilities, recently launched as Uluru Meeting Place. These developments are part of a strategy of diversifying and growing the source markets for the resort from the traditional inbound and domestic leisure business. The proposed golf course development is a key part of this strategy to attract new markets to the resort and to also increase the range of activities available at the resort to increase the average length of stay and encourage repeat visitation.



Ayers Rock Resort is being repositioned as an Indigenous centre of excellence. Voyages has recently introduced a daily program of free-to-guest cultural activities including dance, theatre, arts and educational activities such as bush tucker walks. In many cases these activities have been developed in collaboration with local Anangu people thereby providing local business and employment opportunities as well as the opportunity to share their culture with guest from around Australia and the world.

In keeping with the focus on the local Indigenous culture, the proposed golf course will be developed in the most culturally and environmentally sensitive manner. At this stage the focus of development activities to date has been on ensuring the necessary environmental and cultural considerations are addressed, before any actual design or development work commences. A preferred site has been identified on Voyages' freehold land, adjacent to the existing resort. The site will allow for the best use of existing resort infrastructure and is adjacent to the existing water treatment plant to facilitate the use of recycled water. It is also concealed from the main road by a large dune, thereby ensuring the development has a minimal visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

An application was made to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority who have conducted a sacred sites review of the proposed site. An Authority Certificate has been issued in respect of the proposed development, a copy of which is attached to the referral.

In addition to the formal consultation with Traditional Owners completed as part of this sacred sites review, Voyages has held several community consultation meetings with people from the surrounding Indigenous communities, as well as other local stakeholders, to introduce the proposed golf course project and seek community feedback. Such meetings are held regularly and will provide an ongoing forum for informing the communities about the development as it progresses.

Two leading Australian golf course design firms, Thomson Perrett and Ogilvy Clayton, have been short-listed for the proposed development. Both firms have impeccable environmental credentials and a commitment to ensuring the course is designed with minimal disturbance of the land and in a culturally sensitive manner. Thomson Perrett was the architect of the recently completed Hamilton Island Golf Club located in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Ogilvy Clayton co-designed the world-renowned Barnbogle Dunes golf links in Tasmania, a benchmark in the design of a golf course in keeping with its natural surroundings. Both firms propose to incorporate Indigenous themes the design and operation of the proposed golf course. The course has the potential to be one of the great golf destinations of the world.



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The golf course itself will create some 22 permanent full time jobs, most of which will be suitable for relatively low-skilled Indigenous employees. More importantly, the golf course will be a major step in repositioning and growing the wider Ayers Rock Resort business by increasing visitation and average length of stay, thereby creating many more employment and training opportunities.

Voyages has commissioned leading environmental consultants Biosis to conduct a flora and fauna study of the proposed site and to develop an environmental management plan for the construction and operation of the proposed golf course. A hydrological study has also been completed by Australian Groundwater Technologies. Copies of these reports are attached to the referral.

It is proposed to incorporate interpretive and educational elements within the design and operation of the golf course. We recognise that the location is of the utmost cultural and environmental significance. We believe the golf course can make a positive contribution by educating guests about the significance of their surroundings including its unique flora and fauna as well as the stories of its local people. More practically, Voyages can make an active contribution to the recovery programs of threatened species which are known to inhabit the area.

Voyages is committed to completing the proposed development in the most environmentally and culturally sensitive manner. We believe we have adequately addressed the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action, details of which are provided in the attached referral. As the department completes its review of the referral, we will endeavour to provide any additional information that may be required to ensure all potential impacts are properly addressed.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of the referral, please contact in the first instance Mr Andrew Williams, Executive General Manager Finance at Voyages who is leading the project on behalf of the company. We look forward to your favourable consideration of the referral.

Yours Sincerely,



Koos Klein
Managing Director