GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING MAINLAND CHINESE TOURISTS TO NATIONAL PARKS
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Executive Summary

Context and Aims
In recent years international tourism to Queensland from Mainland China has increased dramatically with considerable growth forecast into the future. Currently many of these tourists have been associated with a number of negative impacts on the sites visited. These impacts can be linked to their unique cultural, national and experiential characteristics, which are very different to those of previous tourists in Queensland. The aim of this report is to review the available research on this group of visitors and provide guidelines for QPWS on how to respond this new and growing tourist group.

Key Features of Mainland Chinese Tourists
The research review identified several key features of relevance to visitor management in protected areas including:
- Conflict between traditional Confucian values, Communist ideology and the current trends towards social status and conspicuous consumption;
- Beliefs about understanding nature through culture and human connections which result in a desire for human stories rather than scientific information in interpretation;
- Everyday experience of extreme congestion, crowding and high levels of pollution and litter;
- Very different experiences of nature within China; and
- The importance of social acceptability in decision making.

Guidelines for Managing Mainland Chinese Tourists to National Parks

- Greater training for, and attention paid to, accompanying Chinese tour guides

- Site hardening and design

- More intensive enforcement of regulations

- Use of fees and activity scheduling to control and manage site access

- Design of alternative activities

- Provision of more Chinese language interpretation

- Pro-active Chinese social media communication strategy

- Focus interpretation on human stories rather than science

- Directly address assumed knowledge and activate appropriate values

- More systematic evaluation of Chinese visitors and their responses to National Park experiences

Contents

Mainland Chinese Tourists to National Parks: Background

In recent years international tourism from Mainland China has increased dramatically. Since 2013 mainland China has generated the largest number of international tourists worldwide with 122 million trips undertaken in 2016 (Travel China Guide, 2017) and it is predicted that this will increase to 220 million in 2025 (UNWTO, 2016). This trend is evident in Australia with more than 1.2 million Chinese arrivals into Australia in the year ending June 2017 (Tourism Research Australia, 2017a) and predictions that this will more than double by 2020 (Tourism Research Australia, 2017b). China is also the third largest source of international migration to Australia after the United Kingdom and New Zealand with more 500,000 Australian residents reporting in 2016 that they were born in China (ABS, 2017). Within Queensland Mainland China has been identified as a major target region for increasing tourism (TEQ, 2017). Research into Chinese tourists coming to Queensland has highlighted the importance of experiencing natural environments, especially the Great Barrier Reef and coastal and island locations (QTIC, 2013). It is therefore not surprising to find large increases in Chinese tourists to Queensland National Parks with all indicators suggesting continued growth in visitation from Mainland Chinese tourists.

Currently the most common type of tourist from Mainland China is travelling in Australia in large all-inclusive package tours. This group has been referred to as "First Wave" tourists (Agrusa, Kim & Wang, 2011). First Wave Chinese tourists are currently the most common type of international tourist from Mainland China because of the country's relatively recent changes allowing citizens to travel overseas and the dominance of Chinese tour agencies in organizing such travel. These tourists are often on their first trip overseas, are older, typically reside in large urban centres, and are members of the rapidly emerging new consumerist middle class (Fountain, Espiner & Xe, 2011).

It is important to note that this is one specific group of Chinese tourists and is not representative of all Chinese tourists. It is important to recognise that Chinese visitors from Mainland China are different to those from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and other Asian countries because of different histories, levels of travel experience, different languages, and different types of exposure to other cultures, environments and socio-political systems. There are also differences within tourists from Mainland China. As Mainland Chinese people gather more travel experience, and as the Chinese economy grows, the nature of international Chinese tourism is changing with significant growth in independent travelers who will have a much wider range of experiences, expectations, motivations and styles of travel (Jorgensen, Law & King, 2016). This is a pattern that has been seen in many other countries such as Australia, Japan, South Korea and Russia. Unlike these countries, a rise in independent travel may not

necessarily mean a decline in package or group travel from China as the collectivist nature of Chinese culture is said to support group travel (Meng, 2010) and destinations made popular by package tourists are likely to be very attractive to subsequent independent waves of Chinese tourists (Agrusa et al., 2011). In the future many destinations will be likely to have a variety of different package and independent Mainland Chinese visitors.

First Wave Chinese tourists have been linked to a number of problematic social and environmental behaviours at numerous destinations worldwide.   Social issues include general rudeness, a failure to use queues and waiting systems, abuse of service staff, a lack of respect for local cultural customs, noise, smoking in non-smoking areas, theft of items in hotels, restaurants and transport services, and privacy invasion. Environmental issues include littering, vandalism, failing to stay on paths and away from restricted areas, damage to environments and monuments, and harassment of wildlife, with incidents of harm to wildlife during the taking of photographs, and the cooking and eating of marine wildlife. Significant environmental damage can also be a consequence of the large volume of these First Wave tourists.   Many Chinese tourists are also unprepared for the risks associated with being in less controlled natural environments and have limited skills related to outdoor activities. This can lead to them engaging in unsafe practices and consequently putting site managers and staff at risk in rescue situations (Billings, 2017; Du, Bucklet & Tang, 2016).   Such problematic behaviours have been seen as deterring visitation by groups from other countries creating further problems for local tour operators (Li, 2014). It is important to note that these behaviours are not unique to international Chinese travel with many of these issues also evident and considered normal in domestic Chinese destinations, and associated with other types of tourist (Cheng, Jin & Wong, 2014; Willett, 2013).
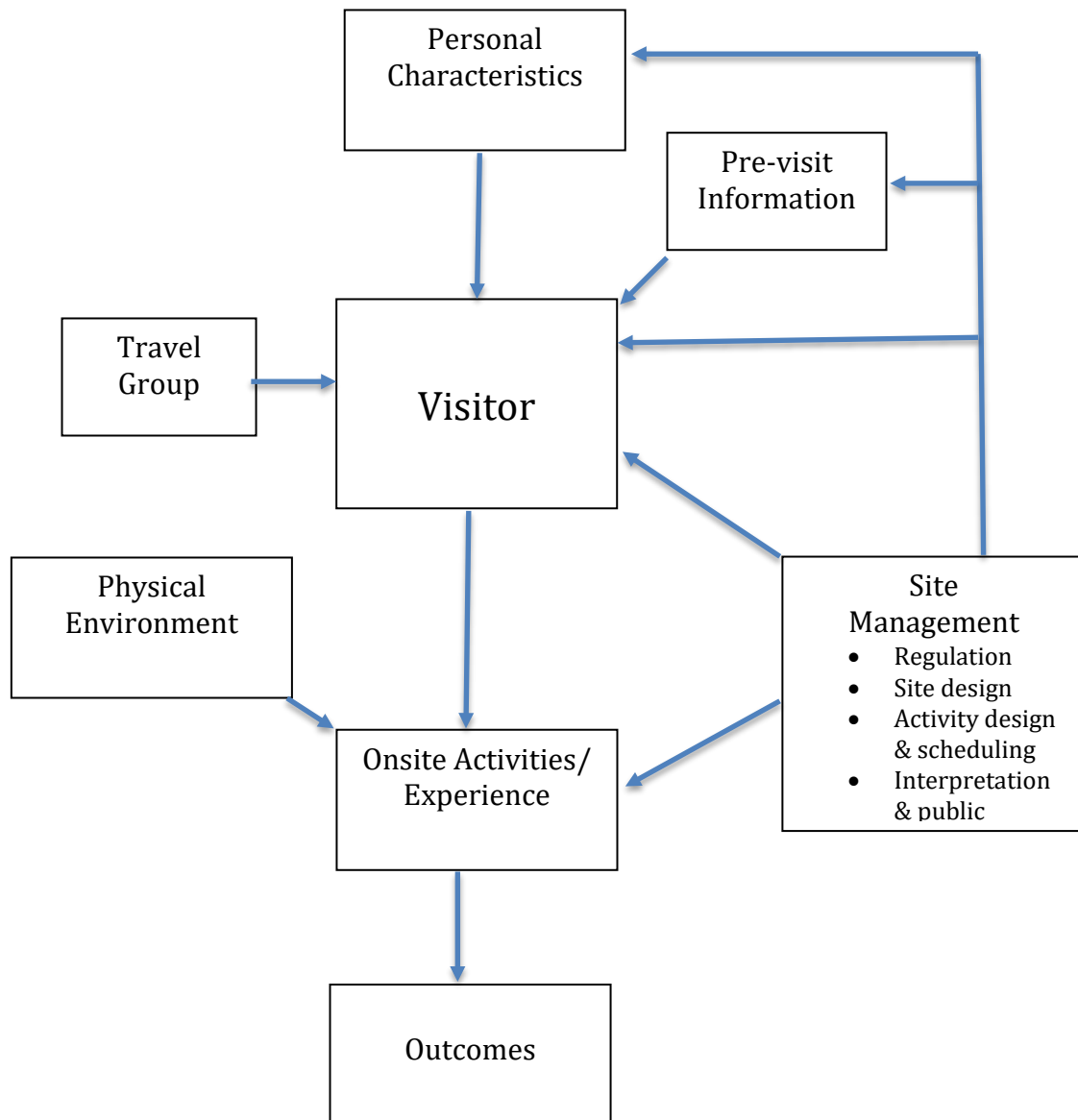
Aim of This Report

This report aims to provide an educational tool for QPWS about cultural and national differences related to protected area management and offer guidelines on how to respond to these differences to ensure protected areas are managed under the principles of ecological sustainability. This aim evolved out of an internship program developed between JCU Business and QPWS in response to management issues raised at Green Island National Park. The program provided Chinese speaking interns to assist with communication of minimal impact and safety behaviours to Mainland Chinese package tourists. The report reviews the available published evidence on Mainland Chinese tourists and incorporates lessons learnt from the Green Island program to date. This report focuses on characteristics and issues likely to be relevant to all Mainland Chinese international tourists and also examines elements specific to First Wave tourists as they are the current dominant group likely to be encountered in national parks in Queensland now and for the foreseeable future.

A Visitor Behaviour Management Framework

In order to effectively manage visitors behaviour in National Parks it is necessary to understand the factors that influence that behaviour. Figure 1 provides a summary of the factors that have been shown to influence visitor behavior in leisure settings. This summary combines both consistent research findings and factors identified in theoretical models from persuasive communication and attitude behaviour change. This figures highlights the main factors involved in onsite visitors behaviour starting with the personal characteristics that visitors bring with them. Engaging in minimal impact or environmentally responsible behaviour has been shown to be influenced by:

- age (younger visitors being more responsible);
- gender (women being more responsible);
- level of formal education (more education associated with being more responsible);
- personality (openness and conscientiousness associated with being more responsible);
- values, perceptions of nature, beliefs about human-nature relationships and ethics (mixed results across different cultures);
- environmental knowledge (higher levels of knowledge of environmental issues and functions associated with being more responsible);
- ascription of responsibility (seeing individuals as responsible for the environment rather than businesses or governments is linked to being more responsible);
- environmental attitudes (less anthropomorphic and anthropocentric attitudes towards the environment associated with being more responsible);
- motivations for site visitation (motives linked to experiencing wilderness, learning about the environment and engaging in more intensive non-consumptive wilderness activities linked to being more responsible, with general sightseeing and passive enjoyment less likely to connect to responsible actions);
- experience with the type of site or leisure activity (mixed results across different experiences);
- familiarity with the specific site (more frequent visitation is associated with more responsible behaviour); and
- place attachment (higher levels of personal connection to the specific site are linked to more responsible behaviour).
    (Sources: Gifford & Nilsson, 2014; Hughes & Moscardo, 2016; Lee, Jan & Huang, 2015; Moscardo, 2013 & 2017a)

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                    │     Personal     │ ◄──────────────┐
                    │  Characteristics │                │
                    └──────────────────┘                │
                             │              ┌──────────────┐
                             │              │   Pre-visit  │ ◄──┐
                             ▼              │  Information  │    │
 ┌──────────┐       ┌──────────────────┐   └──────────────┘    │
 │  Travel  │ ────► │                  │ ◄───────────────────────┤
 │  Group   │       │     Visitor      │                        │
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                             │          ┌───────────────────────┐
 ┌──────────────┐            │          │        Site           │
 │   Physical   │            │          │     Management        │
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         └────────► │ Onsite Activities/│◄─│  • Activity design   │
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Figure 1: Visitor Behaviour Management Framework
(Adapted from Moscardo, 2017a)

Visitors are also influenced by the pre-trip information they access about the site. Some of this pre-trip information is provided by tour operators or guides, depending on the form of travel the visitor takes to access the site, and some is provided by destination marketing organizations and site managers through their websites and promotional activities. The majority of pre-trip information is, however, provided by other travelers through word of mouth both directly and through travel review websites and social media platforms. Tour guides can also directly influence visitor behaviour by acting as a type of monitor but also through modeling appropriate behaviour.

Features of the physical environment influence both the activities that visitors are able to engage in, and how these activities unfold. These environments also differ in terms of how fragile they are, how safe they are, and the extent to which they offer natural barriers to visitor access. All these features also influence the extent to which site managers can use site hardening and infrastructure such as fences and barriers to influence visitor behaviour.

Finally, visitor behaviour is influenced by site management in terms of: rules and regulations and their enforcement; site hardening and infrastructure; activity design and scheduling; and communication or interpretation. In many natural heritage leisure sites there are limits to the extent to which visitor behaviour can be managed by site hardening and in all leisure sites there has been a reluctance to engage in legislative enforcement because it can be both difficult for staff to do, and creates an undesirable atmosphere for visitors.   Thus interpretation has become a major tool for communicating information to visitors.   Interpretation aims to support site management directly through providing information about minimal impact or responsible actions, and indirectly by enhancing the visitor experience. In the latter case it is hoped that a positive experience is more likely to encourage place attachment and a desire amongst visitors to protect and conserve the site thus supporting more responsible onsite behavior and greater support for conservation off site.

General Principles for Effective Communication/Interpretation

There are consistent findings that can be used to generate principles for effective interpretation/communication based on evaluations research from a range of different places. See Ham (2016), Hughes and Moscardo (2016), Moscardo (2009), Moscardo and Ballantyne (2008), and Moscardo, Ballantyne and Hughes (2007) for more details.   The principles derived from these sources are listed in Table 1 and briefly explained in the following section.

Table 1: Basic Principles for Effective Communication/Interpretation

Design systems to make desired actions easy and convenient

Understand visitors

Attract attention and provide prompts

Make direct connections to visitors

Carefully structure information

Encourage engagement , participation and variety

(Based on Hughes & Moscardo, 2016: Moscardo, 2009; and Moscardo, Ballantyne & Hughes, 2007)

1. **Design systems to make desired actions easy and convenient**
   There is increasing evidence that the most effective approach to achieving desired behavior change in public settings is through the use of what has been referred to as choice architecture (Steg & Vlek, 2009: Truong, 2014) or nudging (Richardson et al., 2011). The use of built infrastructure such as boardwalks and trails to direct and control visitor flow and access are examples of this that have long been used in National Parks. This physical design can also be supplemented by timing of activities, and by the way in which offered activities are organized so that access and behaviour is monitored and controlled. It is also possible to use financial elements to influence behaviour through choices about what activities, equipment, facilities and services are provided for free versus for a fee and through the setting of fees at differential levels to manage the type and number of visitors. It is important carefully consider how to best use these features to make the desired actions as easy as possible for visitors. For example, Chinese participants in a focus group when discussing ways of managing Chinese swimmer and snorkeler safety issues while visiting Green Island National Park, suggested that charging for the use of snorkeling equipment might discourage less capable swimmers from getting into the water. They also suggested that scheduling specific times to collect equipment might allow for more effective safety demonstrations to be given to groups.

2. Understand visitors

Visitors can vary in terms of their pre-existing knowledge, values, attitudes, experiences, expectations and preferences and it is important to have an understanding of the key features of target visitors. Communication or interpretation can vary in terms of content, how the content is structured, the assumptions made about the knowledge that visitors bring with them to a setting; and the types of media used (ie., signage, printed brochures, guides, mobile apps). It is important to understand visitor preferences for different types of communication media. It is also important to identify assumptions made in communication messages about what visitors already know and understand and to check if these assumptions are correct. For example, signage on Green Island tells readers that it is illegal to take things from the national park and that visitors should not stand on the coral. The Chinese focus groups held to discuss visitor management on Green Island suggested that Chinese visitors have such limited experience of tropical marine environments that they may think that coral is rock and so believe that they are complying with requests. The directive to not take things from the national park assumes that visitors understand that the national park includes both the terrestrial and marine environments and again the Chinese focus group members suggested that few Chinese visitors would have encountered a marine national park and are likely to think that the rule applies only to things taken from the land, not the sea.

3. Attract attention and provide prompts

One challenge for park visitor management is providing information at the point where visitors both most need it and are most likely to be able to pay attention to it. Attracting visitor attention can be difficult as they are often in novel environments, eager to get to their activities and being subjected to information from multiple sources. It seems likely that repeating information in multiple media at multiple different points in a visit is necessary and this should include information provided prior to arrival. The increasing use of internet and mobile technologies to plan and prepare for travel and recreation experiences means that providing pre-visit information through websites and social media platforms is likely to be a very effective way to communicate with visitors.

In addition to communicating information about desired behaviours at multiple points in a visit and prior to arrival at a site, it is also important to recognise that visitors may not always be paying attention to behaviours, such as staying on paths and not getting too close to wildlife, when they should be because of distractions and the excitement of being in the environment. It is therefore important to also provide, wherever possible, short prompts (on signs or in talks) in locations where visitors are most likely to need reminding.

4. **Make direct connections to visitors**

A consistent finding in interpretation evaluation research is that people pay more attention to, and process in more detail, information that has a direct personal link to them. Making direct connections to visitors works at two levels. On the first level it means using language that they can understand. For some visitors this means providing information in multiple different languages. For those that speak the official language of a site (English in Queensland) this means using language at a level that all visitors can understand and avoiding the use of technical terms, and acronyms. Tests of English literacy amongst Australians aged 15-74 indicate that:

- 14% of the population is at or below level 1 literacy (can locate in short texts a single piece of information that is similar to that included in a question and can enter personal information into a document);
- 30% at level 2 literacy (can match texts to information requested in a question, can use a flyer to find out where to get more information about a topic, can locate information about a new law in a fire safety article and can paraphrase correctly content of simple text); and
- 38% at level 3 literacy (can read lengthy texts to identify and evaluate several pieces of information required to solve a problem and to draw inferences about an argument) (ABS, 2013).

It is important to note that people at one level cannot complete tasks at any higher level. These results suggest that organizing information so that it requires no higher than level 2 literacy would be advisable. This means using text made up of simple words and short sentences, highlighting key information using design features such as font and colour, and drawing very specific conclusions. There is also evidence that the use of active tense and personal pronouns that make text more like a conversation is more effective.
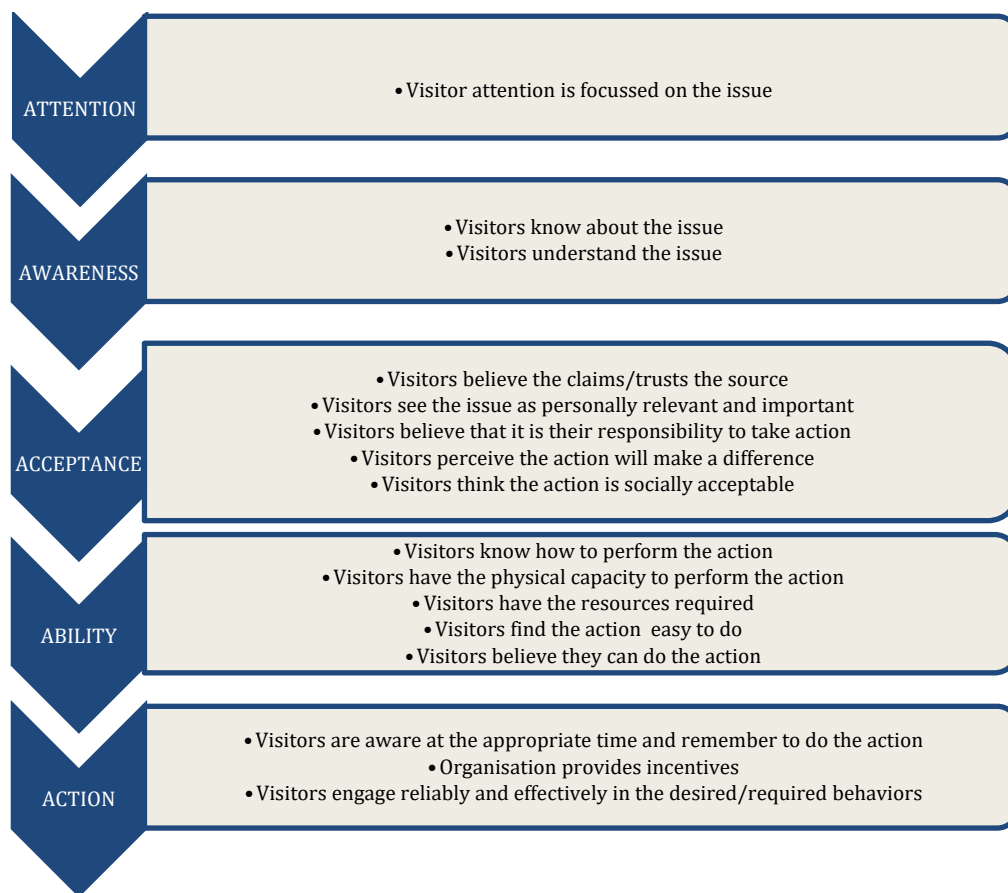
The second level of direct connection is about content and selecting topics, themes, consequences, stories and analogies that people can link to their own experience and interests. The aim is to create links between the site or topic and the visitor's home environment or everyday life. This can be done by using analogies and metaphors linked to everyday things, or by defining the implications of some action for the everyday world of the visitor.

5. **Carefully structure information**

Information needs to be organized into clear easy to follow structures. Two structures that have been found to be very effective for visitor communication are the use of different levels of headings in a news article style and the use of stories. The news article style involves having the main message as the clear title of the piece of information, with a secondary heading providing more detail on

that main message, and then the body of the text providing the argument or explanation that supports the main message. The alternative is the use of stories, which can be defined as descriptions of an event or set of connected events, the reactions of characters to that event, their decisions and the consequences of these reactions and decisions. Usually a story includes in its plot an adventure in which something unexpected, atypical or surprising happens (Moscardo, 2017b).

In addition to the structure of content, the available evidence indicates that there are specific types of information that must be included to support visitors engaging in minimal impact or responsible behaviours. Figure 2 provides a summary of these.

ATTENTION
- Visitor attention is focussed on the issue

AWARENESS
- Visitors know about the issue
- Visitors understand the issue

ACCEPTANCE
- Visitors believe the claims/trusts the source
- Visitors see the issue as personally relevant and important
- Visitors believe that it is their responsibility to take action
- Visitors perceive the action will make a difference
- Visitors think the action is socially acceptable

ABILITY
- Visitors know how to perform the action
- Visitors have the physical capacity to perform the action
- Visitors have the resources required
- Visitors find the action easy to do
- Visitors believe they can do the action

ACTION
- Visitors are aware at the appropriate time and remember to do the action
- Organisation provides incentives
- Visitors engage reliably and effectively in the desired/required behaviors

Figure 2: Main Elements to Support Minimal Impact or Responsible Action
(Based on Hughes & Moscardo 2016; Moscardo, 2013)

6. Encourage engagement, participation and variety

One way to build direct connections between management and visitors is to include opportunities for engagement in activities that support communication messages. Direct contact with environments and wildlife is a powerful tool for changing attitudes. Techniques such as games, discovery trails, treasure hunts and tips for how to appreciate landscapes can all be used to encourage greater visitor interaction with setting in a controlled fashion. The rapid increase in the use of mobile technologies offers a way to develop and offer such interaction without the need for physical infrastructure.

The Influence of Culture and Nationality on Visitor Behaviour

Moscardo (2007) summarizes several definitions of culture stating that
> "*culture can be seen as content that can be transmitted to others [such as assumptions and theories about how the world is organized] and that can act as a context for new information; a set of values and social norms to direct behaviour and influence what people seek and consider to be important, and ways of learning and responding to information*" (p. 58).

Although culture is often used synonymously with nation it is important to distinguish between these two concepts. Culture is about values and fundamental world-views that are taken for granted and influence all aspects of everyday life including how individuals respond to political, economic and physical systems.   Nations can be, and often are, made up of more than one culture, but all members of a nation share the same political, economic and physical systems. Culture can influence these systems but does not include them.

Thus it would be expected that cultural groups might vary in terms of their perceptions of nature and human-nature relationships; environmental values, ethical stances, motivations for visiting natural sites, environmental attitudes, norms about environmental action, reference groups for these norms, types of acceptable or desirable nature based activities, place attachment, and ways of learning new information. It would also be expected that the economic, political and physical systems of different nations would influence ability to travel, forms of travel, travel and leisure expenditure, experiences of nature based leisure and thus expectations for these types of experience elsewhere, education about environments and responsible behaviour.

Relevant Mainland Chinese Cultural and National Characteristics

If we consider both culture and nationality then it can be seen that the behaviours of Mainland Chinese visitors in natural protected areas when travelling internationally are influenced by:
- traditional Chinese cultural values, mostly derived from Confucianism;
- communist ideology and its changes in the past 70 years especially those recent policies encouraging wealth accumulation and consumption;
- the consequences of rapid economic development across a very large population; and
- the recent adoption of a global consumer culture.

For more information on these factors see Lin and Wang (2010), Sun, D'Alessandro and Johnson (2014), and Xu, Cui, Sofield and Li (2014). A literature review of research into the factors that influence Mainland Chinese tourist travel behaviours in general and their engagement in minimal impact or environmentally responsible behavior in natural environments, consistently identified seven key, relevant themes and four notes of caution.

1. **Applicability of the structure and theories of environmentally responsible behaviour**

   A consistent research finding is that the theories and structure linking different variables to environmentally responsible behaviour are the same for the Chinese as they are for other groups, but the content of the variables and the base conditions can be very different (Cheng & Wu, 2015; Polonsky, Kilbourne & Vocino, 2014; Xu & Fox, 2014; Chiu, Lee & Chen, 2014). For example, most theories of effective interpretation argue that more direct engagement with wildlife combined with intensive interpretation can enhance visitor satisfaction, encourage more positive ecological attitudes towards wildlife, and through these, support more wildlife conservation behaviours. These links have been shown to be appropriate for Chinese visitors, but their definition of what is an appropriate direct engagement activity can be very different with many preferring wildlife feeding and shows to viewing wildlife in their natural habitat. Their beliefs about what are the most effective wildlife conservation actions are also very different with much higher acceptance of commercial use of wildlife, which is seen as an incentive for conservation.

2. **The dual and conflicting nature of Chinese cultural values**

   While several studies have focused on the implications of traditional Confucian values for environmental awareness and action, there is increasing recognition that current Chinese culture is characterized by many dualities and conflict between different value systems (Lin & Wang, 2010; Sun et al, 2014). For example, Confucian values were traditionally directed at the elite in society, and developed within a social structure that had no middle class. In addition, the first communist ideologies rejected Confucius and with the decline in education during the cultural revolution many Chinese citizens had little exposure to this philosophy (Zhang & Schwartz, 1997). Although the current communist party has embraced a return to traditional Confucian values, they have also endorsed rapid economic development and praised the acquisition of wealth as a desirable life goal, encouraging the widespread adoption of contemporary consumer values.   Not surprisingly, while there is often a public presentation of Confucian values such as modesty and moderation, there is clear evidence of increasing

adoption of materialism and conspicuous consumption (Bartolini & Sarracino, 2015; Durvasula & Lysonski, 2010; Podoshen, Li & Zhang, 2011).   The rapid rise in the popularity of international travel is an example of this, as travel was not an activity sanctioned by Confucius, and there is consistent evidence that Chinese international travelers, across all categories, are more driven by social status and prestige than other groups (Chio, 2010; Jin, Hu & Kavan, 2016; Suntikul, Tang & Pratt, 2016).

3. **Understanding nature through culture**

One enduring and widely adopted Confucian value is the concept of harmony between humans and nature. While some have argued that this concept is consistent with current global approaches to sustainability, others have noted that Confucius placed humans as more important than nature, and presented a conception of nature in which harmony can only be achieved when humans have added to, or made use of, nature (Grumbine & Xu, 2011; Li, Cheng, Beeton, Sigler & Halog, 2016). Thus, most studies indicate that Chinese are more likely than many other groups to have anthropocentric environmental attitudes and often ascribe human attributes to wildlife (anthropomorphism) (Cui, Xu & Wall, 2012; Fox & Xu, 2017).

Additionally, many Chinese believe that nature only has meaning in relation to human use and that natural settings are enhanced by evidence of human presence such as buildings and infrastructure. Chinese visitors are more likely to seek to understand a landscape by connecting it to some cultural marker with a particular emphasis on linking nature to art, poetry, literature, folklore, history, and visitation by, or connections to, famous people, both historical and contemporary (Cheng et al, 2014; Cui, Liao & Xu, 2017; Ballantyne, Hughes, Ding & Liu, 2014; Fountain et al, 2011). A consistent finding from the available evidence is that Chinese visitors have little experience of scientific interpretation and prefer to have natural environments explained through human stories (Cheng, Wong, Wearing & McDonald, 2017; Xu, Cui, Ballantyne & Packer, 2013). Several authors have argued for the use of art and literature and poetry as the source of such stories, but others have noted that there is distinction in China between the art and literature favored by the elite and the folk tales and popular celebrity stories which are more appealing to the wider population (Cui, et al., 2017).

4. **Experience of everyday life in China**

Most international tourists from mainland China live in either Tier 1 (more than 15 million residents) or Tier 2 (3-5 million residents) cities. According to QTIC

(2013) more than 90% of Chinese visitors to Queensland are from Tier 1 (51%) or Tier 2 (41%) cities. This means that all of these tourists have spent a lifetime competing with others in massive, dense populations for scarce resources and, not surprisingly, do not value patience or politeness to strangers (Gao, 2016; Sun & Budruk, 2017). This group of Chinese tourists has also lived in a world with many rules which are not always consistently enforced and some may believe that it is both possible and appropriate to pay for exemptions to such rules (Gao, 2016). Finally, all Chinese tourists are used to significant litter and environmental pollution and degradation in their daily lives (Sun, Zhang & Ryan, 2015).

5. Experience of nature based tourism within China

Mainland Chinese tourists' experience of leisure trips within their own country to natural protected areas is also very different to that of Australians with most of these sites characterized by:
- very large and dense crowds;
- extensive site hardening, amenities and facilities;
- intensive commercial activity within and around the protected area;
- wildlife shows and wildlife feeding; and
- opportunities to buy products made from threatened and endangered species (Suntikul, et al., 2016; Zhong, Buckley, Wardle & Wang, 2015).

Protected natural areas in China offer very different visitor experiences to those offered in Australia, with significant site hardening, extensive physical infrastructure, and wide spread commercial activities (Miller-Rushing, Primack, Ma & Zhou, 2017). As a consequence of these experiences and everyday life in large urban centres, Chinese visitors are very used to and tolerant of intense crowding at tourist attractions and in natural environments (Jin et al., 2016 & Sun & Budruk, 2017). As with many other aspects of life in China, natural leisure environments are managed by the central government in a very top-down approach. This has resulted in many Chinese citizens believing that responsibility for environmental and wildlife conservation to be exclusively the responsibility of government, making them less likely to pay attention to messages encouraging them to take individual responsibility (Chen et al., 2011; Gao, Huang & Zhang, 2017; Hughes, Ballantyne & Packer, 2014). Gao and colleagues (2017) also note that many Chinese tourists believe that entry fees do, or should, include programs to mitigate or repair negative impacts of visitation further weakening their sense of personal responsibility. Despite the existence of numerous rules and regulations, consistent enforcement of these is rare leading some to conclude that weak rule of law is a barrier to promoting environmentally responsible behaviour and that threats of fines are unlikely to

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be effective deterrents to undesirable behaviour (Cheng et al., 2014; Grumbine & Xu, 2011).

There is also evidence that Chinese visitors primarily see natural environments as places for physical exercise (Cheng et al., 2014; Cheng et al., 2017). Thus walking on hardened trails, and viewing scenery are the most common activities offered in Chinese natural areas. These offer little physical risk or challenge and this means that Chinese visitors are often unprepared for the physical stresses associated with many outdoor activities offered in natural environments in Australia (Du et al., 2016). Where wildlife interaction is available it is usually built around wildlife shows and feeding wildlife to have photographs taken with them and is focused on a limited number of species seen as suitable and safe for this type of interaction. Several commentators have argued that Chinese visitors in Australian natural environments may need softer, lower risk activities that are highly structured and guided (Du et al, 2016; Packer, Ballantyne & Hughes, 2014). The available evidence also indicates that Chinese visitors have no particular preferences for interpretive media with similar preference ratings for things like interpretive signs and guided tours, but do differ in the content they want in the interpretation with a focus on human stories and culture rather than scientific descriptions of nature (cf., Hughes, et al., 2014).

6. **The power of the social group**

   A second widespread and dominant feature of Chinese culture is that of collectivism. "*Collectivistic cultures encourage people to develop interdependent selves, in which people fundamentally see themselves as interconnected in important ways with close others, and to prioritize good relationship functioning over their own, idiosyncratic goals*" (Cohen, Wu & Miller, 2016, p. 1238). Chinese visitors appear to be most comfortable when traveling in groups, and when guided by other Chinese visitors either directly whilst traveling with them or by copying other Chinese visitors at destination sites, or indirectly through social media travel posts and blogs (Cheng et al., 2017; Xiang, 2013). Other Chinese, especially celebrities, are the dominant reference group for acceptable behaviour (Du et al., 2016; Fox & Xu, 2017; Suntikul et al., 2016).

   This use of other Chinese for guidance and information is reinforced by the language barriers many international Chinese tourists face. Very few first wave package tourists or older Chinese travelers in general speak English and they often do not speak the official Mandarin language, nor can they read a large number of the new simplified Chinese symbols (Agrusa et al., 2011; Churchman, 2011; Morgan & Qiao, 2016). There is also evidence that even Chinese visitors with high levels of English language may have difficulty with more technical words used and the assumptions made about prior knowledge in interpretive settings outside their country (Moscardo & Hughes, 2016). This suggests that

the use of audio guides and guided Chinese language tours, mobile applications in Chinese, and information in Chinese presented on websites, may offer the best option for interpretation in many sites (Ballantyne et al., 2014; Moscardo & Hughes, 2016).

"More than in many countries, social media are deeply integrated into Chinese people's lives" (Zhang & Pentina, 2012, p. 312). "China also has the world's most active environment for social media" (Chiu, Ip & Silverman, 2012, p.2). There has been massive growth in internet, social media and smart phone usage in China in the last five years with recent reports suggesting that

- 65% of adults (91% of those living in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities) use the internet at least occasionally;
- 91% of Chinese internet users have a social media account (compared to 67% of American internet users);
- 88% of Chinese social media users are active daily and spend nearly 2 hours each day on social media which is nearly four times longer than in America; and
- Annual increases in internet and social media usage amongst Chinese adults have typically been around 30% (Chiu, Lin & Silverman, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2016; Social Media Authority, 2016; We Are Social Singapore, 2017).

This very intense level of social media usage and engagement is important because the collectivist nature of Chinese culture means that Chinese people rely heavily on recommendations and information provided by peers, opinion leaders and celebrities through these social networks much more than any other national group (Chiu, Ip & Silverman, 2012; RVC, 2016; Social Media Authority, 2016; Zhang, Ito, Wu & Li, 2017; Zhang & Pentina, 2012; Zhang, Zhao & Xu, 2016). In response to this many organisations are becoming active in the different Chinese social media networks in order to provide information to Chinese users. There is some initial evidence suggest that protected area management agencies can influence responsible behaviours of Chinese visitors through active involvement in Chinese social networks providing updates, information on desired behaviors and their benefits and sharing positive stories from existing visitors and/or celebrities (Cheng, et al., 2017). Major Chinese social network sites that could be used by agencies include Sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo, Qzone, Youku, Todou, Renren, Qyer, Kaixin001, and Mafengwo (Chiu, Ip & Silverman, 2012; Crampton, 2011; Social Media Authority, 2016; We are Social Singapore, 2017).

7. **Features Specific to First Wave Tourists**

   While First Wave tourists have generated sufficient money to travel internationally and are often seen as quite wealthy within China, they are still relatively restricted financially when compared to other international tourists and are very price sensitive seeking budget options whenever possible (Du, Buckley & Tang, 2016). First Wave Chinese tourists often have very little formal education and have had very little exposure to information about countries outside China as they grew up during the Cultural Revolution, an era in which the communist government limited education and blocked virtually all communication with the wider world (Li, 2016; Olander & Van Staden, 2016). First Wave tourists are very unlikely to have any English language skills and may have limited recognition of many of the characters used in the official national Chinese script (Jiaqing, 2013).

Cautions

It is also important to remember four points of caution. Firstly, Chinese visitors are not a homogenous group, with many significant differences in values, attitudes and behavior across different age groups, educational backgrounds, urban versus rural residence and different regions (Cui et al., 2017; Fountain et al., 2011; Jorgensen et al., 2016). It is typical to see a first wave of older package tourists from a region which has changed legislation to allow international travel, followed by a second wave of independent travelers and this is already emerging for Chinese tourists. Unlike other generating countries, this second wave of independently organised Chinese tourists are still likely to travel in groups although these groups will be made of extended family across several generations and friends. Further, unlike previous countries entering international travel this second wave is likely to go the same places as the first wave did and to actively seek to share destinations with, rather than avoid, these first wave visitors. This means that destinations that are currently popular with first wave Chinese tourists will remain popular with all Chinese tourists but the experiences and expectations of the newer visitors will be different. **It is important to remember that a variety of different management options will be needed to match the variety of different visitor pressures**.

Secondly, not all of the negative behaviours reported for first wave package tourists from Mainland China are necessarily linked to being Chinese. In other words, all first time international travelers with limited local language skills travelling in budget package tours are likely to exhibit some of these negative impacts regardless of culture or nationality (Jorgensen et al., 2016). There is evidence that Chinese tourists are sensitive to perceived discrimination against them (Agrusa et al 2011; Ye, Zhang &

Yuen, 2013). **It is important to avoid management actions that target only one type of package tourist.**

Thirdly, China is undergoing rapid change and this has been manifested in a significant rise in experienced international travelers and in environmental awareness and concern (Cheng et al., 2014; Fox & Xu, 2017; Jorgensen et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2015). **It is important to design flexibility into management activities to allow for potential changes in key conditions.**

Finally, while much of the discussion to date has focused on the negative impacts of first wave Chinese visitors, there is evidence:

- that they do appreciate pristine natural environments when exposed to them in a positive way;
- that they are open to learning while travelling; and
- that positive and rewarding experiences in natural environments while on holiday does encourage greater environmental awareness, concern and reflection upon their own actions (Cheng et al., 2014; Cheng & Wu, 2015; Fountain et al., 2011; Gao et al., 2017; Han, Lee & Hwang, 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Suntikul et al., 2016; Xiao, Dunlap & Hong, 2013).

While large numbers of Chinese tourists can place pressure on natural sites, this can also offer a significant opportunity to support sustainability beyond the specific site. The provision of effective interpretation that highlights the direct links between visitor actions and negative impacts, highlights the positive benefits from visitors' personal actions and provides evidence that other Chinese visitors support these desired behaviours, can result in significant positive change (Fox & Xu, 2017; Gao et al., 2017).

Chinese Visitor Management Options Tried Elsewhere

Pressures from large numbers of first wave package tourists from Mainland China have been reported in many different international destinations. This rise in visitor numbers has been very rapid and so management responses are very recent and have not been evaluated for effectiveness. The Chinese government itself has issued a guide for appropriate behaviour while travelling, has threatened to ban individuals reported to them for negative behaviour from further international travel, and has encouraged Chinese tourists to submit photographs and blogs about other Chinese tourists behaving badly for public shaming on a government website. To date there is little evidence that any of these measures have been effective and while the public shaming website is popular, it is unclear how many tourists, if any, have actually been banned from further international travel. Other options used by destination region and site managers have included:

- complete bans on all Chinese tour groups;

- limiting the numbers of people in tour groups and the number of tour groups allowed into sites;
- only allowing tour groups to enter with accredited local tour guides;
- banning tour guides whose groups behave badly (thus shifting responsibility to the tour guides);
- providing site specific brochures/booklets on responsible behaviours;
- decreasing numbers by increasing charges for activities, entrance and use of equipment;
- providing specialized Chinese language tours lead by local Chinese speaking tour guides; and
- being pro-active in social media posting regular bogs to sites such Weibo praising Chinese tourist behaving responsibly, focusing on how minimal impact behaviour is good for the environment, suggesting the minimal impact activities as the best ways to experience sites and providing interpretive content in small news items.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the most effective options have been shifting responsibility to guides and limiting or banning tour guides whose groups behave badly, decreasing numbers by increasing fees, providing specialized Chinese language tours and getting pro-active in Chinese social media. It is important to note that this is anecdotal evidence only and more systematic evaluation research is needed to test out different options for managing Chinese tourists.

Suggested Guidelines for Managing Mainland Chinese Tourists to National Parks

1. **Greater training for, and attention paid to, accompanying Chinese tour guides**
   Most first wave Mainland Chinese visitors are accompanied by a Chinese speaking locally based tour guide. Often these guides provide some minimal information about what there is to do at a site and then leave their groups alone for the duration of their stay at the attraction or site. These guides could be given more intensive and formal training leading to some sort of certification for National Parks. Such training would support them in spending more time with their groups on site and help them to develop their own minimal impact/responsible action interpretive activities.

2. **Site hardening and design**
   In many locations the sheer volume of Chinese visitors has meant that attraction and site managers have had to invest in considerable site hardening. This is not the most desirable strategy because it is costly and it can change the nature of the experience in negative ways for both the Chinese and other visitors. In some places it may, however, be the only option. A preferable option, if appropriate, is to think about site design (through provision and placement of paths, and viewing areas) so that visitors with less time and less interest in intensive environmental, adventure or wilderness activities are directed to those parts of a site that are most likely to provide them with an opportunity to learn about the sites and experience its key features, and to take photographs.

3. **More intensive enforcement of regulations**
   In a number of other places this has been suggested as a management option for the first wave of Mainland Chinese visitors. It can, however, be a difficult option to implement because it requires significant resources, penalties need to be sufficiently large to be a deterrent, and it can be difficult for staff to implement as it leads to confrontation with visitors. On the other hand if tour guides do not see enforcement on a regular basis they may support continued visitor transgressions by communicating their belief that management are not serious about penalties despite listing them in signs and other communications. A lack of enforcement can undermine the authority and credibility of management for all their communications. One solution may be to choose periods of time during which there will be intensive enforcement with extensive targeted social and

other media coverage of transgressions. The key is not to communicate when these time periods will be so that the message becomes "that at anytime there may be enforcement so better not to engage in the target behaviours".

4. **Use of fees and activity scheduling to control and manage access to sites**
   As many Chinese visitors are price sensitive the use of fees can be a very effective way to discourage visitors from engaging in activities that they are unprepared for, such as longer distance hiking and snorkeling, and to limit the numbers of visitors seeking to go into more sensitive areas. It may also be possible to manage the behaviors and impacts of groups through the scheduling of activities. For example, in marine settings rather than allow people to snorkel whenever they wish it might be possible to schedule specific times for groups of snorkelers which would allow for greater control over the number of snorkelers and provide an opportunity to give group safety and minimal impact briefings.

5. **Design of alternative activities**
   This option involves both the development of new or additional activities as well as highlighting existing activities that may not be well known amongst first wave package tourists. Few of these visitors have much pre-existing knowledge of sites or attractions in Australia and so it should not be assumed that they are expecting the same activities as are popular with other tourists. Activities such as longer walks or walks on less commonly used trails could be encouraged through information provided to tour companies or to accompanying guides.
   New and additional activities could include working with local tour guides to create and translate Indigenous site tours into Chinese as human stories and links between nature and culture are especially important to Chinese tourists. Providing ranger talks on a regular basis that include opportunities for visitors to touch and/or photograph wildlife in a controlled setting might also be considered. Chinese visitors have been described as very curious and interested in learning whilst travelling, and in other locations report enjoying games such as hunting for information to answer questions or to collect photographic opportunities.

6. **Provision of more Chinese language interpretation**
   It is clear that Chinese visitors need more information in their own language. This can be a challenge for protected area managers in part because of the difficulties of providing hard copy versions of interpretation (such as signs and brochures) in multiple languages and in part because the decision to provide information in one language may suggest that other visitors are not as welcome or important. The choice to provide interpretation in only a few languages also

assumes that the current dominant foreign language groups are likely to be the same over extended periods of time. Given that the fastest growing international tourism markets to Australia after China are India, some countries in the Middle East, Thailand and the Philippines, and that Korean and Japanese visitors continue to be major groups for Australia, it might be more cost effective to find alternative ways to offer different language access to sites. Further, given the large numbers of Mainland Chinese visitors in groups and the lower levels of literacy associated with the simplified Chinese script, it may be better consider provision of language interpretation through Chinese speaking guides or through internet and mobile technologies. In the former case it may be possible to use Chinese students studying in Australia as volunteers or interns. The intern program run during the Chinese/Lunar New Year period in 2017 on Green Island was associated with a range of positive outcomes. In the latter case, additional Chinese (and in the longer term other group) language interpretation could be provided through podcasts available on websites and linked to specific locations onsite through the use of QR codes attached to existing signs, or through mobile apps including audio-guided tours downloadable through free wifi on site or in transit to sites. Such material should include human stories wherever possible.

7. **Pro-active Chinese social media communication strategy**
   As noted previously, having a regular presence on social media sites, such as Weibo for Chinese visitors, has been reported as an effective communication tool in other places and is being increasingly used both in China for domestic tourism and by a range of other commercial tourism operators outside China. This option requires regular postings to range of social media sites that include:
   - Images of tourists (especially popular culture celebrities if possible) behaving responsibly with tags praising them and explaining what they are doing and why that is good for the environment;
   - Guidelines about how to take responsible photographs in the various settings;
   - General information on what makes the protected areas special and how to visit them;
   - Interpretive content presented in small news items, preferably linked to human stories about sites (Indigenous stories and European history are options); and
   - Reposts of blogs made by other Chinese tourists that demonstrate positive behaviours and experiences

8. **Focus interpretation on human stories rather than science**

One consistent and clear finding from existing research into Chinese visitors in a range of heritage settings is their desire to explore and understand the setting through human stories and cultural dimensions. Several different types or approaches to these human aspects of a setting can be identified including:

- Indigenous creation stories associated with a site - a number of artists, most notably Cai Guo Qiang, have argued that there are many connections between Indigenous Australian's stories about Rainbow Serpents and the landscape and Chinese stories about Dragons;
- Indigenous stories in general about the site and life in the area;
- European history of the site;
- Links to the site in art, poetry and literature; and
- Celebrity visitors to the site.

9. **Directly address assumed knowledge and activate appropriate values**

Some of the discussion of Mainland Chinese visitors and their impacts on the places they visit can be judgmental and negative. As noted in the earlier section on cautions, it is important to suspend judgment and instead to consider why other responses and actions might be so different to those we expect. Such a consideration should focus on identifying the assumptions that we make about how systems work and what people already know about a place or action. Once these assumptions have been identified they can be specifically addressed in communication so that all visitors share the same basic understanding relevant to the setting. For example, on Green Island one key message is that people should not stand on coral, a statement that assumes the audience can identify coral. Focus groups with Chinese visitors suggested that they could not identify coral and so it might be better to phrase that message as people should try to only stand on clear sand.

It is also desirable for interpretation messages to directly address people's values and to seek to activate those values that are most likely to support desirable actions. Therefore with Chinese visitors it may be useful to specifically talk about respect, different concepts of harmony with nature, and the importance of maintaining wellbeing for family into the future, as forces that should encourage responsible or minimal impact behavior. So rather than describing protected area status based on concepts like biodiversity and endangered species it might be better to phrase a site's significance in terms of an example of how humans can coexist with nature and engage in management

action that protect that nature, or to encourage visitors to specifically consider how they might demonstrate respect through their actions and decisions.

10. **More systematic evaluation of Chinese visitors and their responses to National Park experiences**

   The current set of suggested principles is based on the best available evidence, but much of this evidence has been collected within China and the overall body of knowledge on Chinese tourists in Australia is limited. It is recommended that more detailed investigations of Chinese tourist attitudes, knowledge, expectations and experiences related to national parks and other protected heritage environments in Australia be conducted to explore issues raised in this report in more detail. Studies also need to be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of any changes to visitor management or interpretation in these protected areas.

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