

Deloraine, Tasmania

## JAHADI INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES

*Jahadi Indigenous Experiences*, developed by Hank and Carol Horton, offers the visitor a chance to learn about Tasmania from the perspective of Palawa Aborigines. It is regarded as Tasmania's first Indigenous tour experience. Their tours include visits to fascinating sites of both cultural and natural significance. *Jahadi* also offers an Indigenous art and craft product gallery, exhibiting the work of nine local artists. Their contribution to the wider local community includes school educational programs, coordination of Indigenous youth programs, assistance with the protection of Aboriginal heritage and culture and active involvement with the development of the local tourism industry.

### The Story So Far . . .

Hank and Carol Horton commenced *Jahadi* five years ago. The Horton's are descendants of the Trawl-wool-way Aboriginal Tribe and believe knowledge of their ancient culture can enrich the lives of today's young people. Their initiative began as a program of assisting and mentoring Indigenous young people through a Youth and Family Support Program, targeting young men and women caught up in the juvenile justice system. They soon developed a series of camps which they ran with the assistance of local Aboriginal Elders. Recognised for the contribution this was making to rehabilitate Indigenous young people, *Jahadi* received a grant to run this program formally, which continues to this day.

With this success in Aboriginal interpretation, *Jahadi* introduced a range of Aboriginal Experience Sessions and with Tasmania lacking any high profile Aboriginal tourism venture they set about developing the program as an independent tourism operation. In 2002 the Horton's opened their art gallery and shop, YyTabba Art Gallery ( '*noisy running water*').

## BUILDING THE FUTURE THROUGH ENTERPRISE Stories of Successful Enterprises and Entrepreneurs

Their business development has involved extensive business planning, and achieving tourism industry recognition including full accreditation from both the Tourism Council of Tasmania and Aboriginal Tourism Australia. Moving from youth development work into tourism has involved learning a whole new industry. In the words of Catherine Stark, Manager of the Great Western Tiers Visitor Centre – *‘Hank and Carol experienced a huge learning curve with tourism but they are so hardworking, passionate and committed. They have handled the experience very well. They entered with an open mind and set out learning about marketing and product development.’* Kathy Gatenby, Nature Based Tourism Manager with Tourism Tasmania shares – *‘Hank and Carol have experienced a long and often difficult road entering the tourism industry, but they are so determined, passionate about sharing the story of their people and have such a positive attitude. They have created something special’.*

The operation of *Jahadi* is essentially self-funded through income it receives from individuals, groups and schools undertaking their tours and income from sales of art works and other Indigenous merchandise from their Art Gallery and Shop. The only outside financial assistance they receive is for running their Indigenous Youth Program. During the last summer season over 2500 people visited their gallery and 50 full day tours were provided.

### The Impact

*Jahadi’s* pioneering initiatives have had a significant impact on the tourism industry and the local community. *Jahadi’s* contribution to the tourism industry has been recognised through Hank’s appointment to the Board of Aboriginal Tourism Australia. In both 2002 and 2004, *Jahadi* was *‘Highly Commended in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism’* and as part of Australia’s Centenary Celebrations, the Hortons received a Centenary Medal for their contribution to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

At the local level, Hank and Carol are strongly committed to enhancing the quality and the level of cooperation between tourism operators. They are active members of many tourism associations and regularly partner with other operations to present the visitor with

## Building The Future Through Enterprise –

### Stories of Successful Enterprises and Entrepreneurs

a complete tourism package. The Hortons are always prepared to find the time to advise others about the tourism industry and are strong advocates of tourism training. In the words of Kathy Gatenby *'the Hortons do not just put time into their own business, but give generously to the development of tourism in Tasmania generally'*. In particular, the Horton's have always been willing to assist other non- Indigenous tourism operators with knowledge about Indigenous interpretation and protocols. Through Tasmania TAFE, Hank has also assisted with the preparation of guidelines for tourism operators regarding Indigenous interpretation.

*Jahadi* has also influenced local community attitudes towards Indigenous people through offering a positive perspective on Indigenous life to local school children. Schools have been particularly supportive of this program, as it has offered them another dimension through which they can teach issues in cultural diversity. Both Hank and Carol make time to visit schools in the region and provide presentations on Aboriginal culture. The Manager of Meander Valley Council, Mark Shetton, summarised their local contribution – *'Jahadi strives to create meaningful experience that bring the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Meander Valley to life. I applaud their integrity and enterprise'*.

The status of Indigenous people in the area has also grown with the growth of *Jahadi Indigenous Experiences*. There is strong local pride about *Jahadi's* contribution to local and state tourism. Evidence of changed attitudes can also be seen in the gradual change in people's attitude to their local Aboriginal Elder, 'Uncle Viv Beeton'. From a position of virtual anonymity, his active involvement with *Jahadi* programs has seen his recognition and standing in the local community increase substantially.

Hank and Carol see the greatest impact of *Jahadi Indigenous Experiences* as the difference their operation has made to the local Indigenous community in giving them more independence, enhanced pride, options for study and employment and in general, as they put it, *'increasing their chances'*.

## Success Factors

Hank and Carol believe there are five critical success factors for their operation.

### *Commitment to their Indigenous Community*

Being from the Northern Region of Tasmania assisted in their acceptance by the other Indigenous communities within the region. However their involvement of Elders wherever possible has earned the entire Indigenous community in this area further respect from the non-Indigenous community.

### *Entrepreneurial Zeal*

When Hank and Carol recognised the limited Indigenous tourism product within Tasmania, they recognised an entrepreneurial opportunity. They capitalised on the experience and success of their family and school tours to develop a unique tourist

operation. It was this initial lack of competition and '*window of opportunity*' in the area of Aboriginal tourism which they believe gave them a valuable competitive edge in the market.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS**

- Commitment to their Indigenous Community
- Entrepreneurial Zeal
- Serious Passion
- Merchandising Innovation
- Networking and Cross Promotion

### *Serious Passion*

Having a serious passion for wanting to assist Indigenous people '*find their roots*' was the initial motivation for Hank and Carol to establish their enterprise. Their continued passion for creating further employment opportunities and providing increased '*life choices*' for other Indigenous people is a daily source of motivation.

### *Merchandising Innovation*

*Jahadi* prides itself on the range of innovative merchandising products they have introduced. Rather than simply sell one-off art products, *Jahadi Indigenous Experiences*

has arranged for reproductions of popular works in posters, jig saws and placemats, always ensuring all intellectual property rights remain with local artists.

### ***Networking and Cross Promotion***

*Jahadi Indigenous Experiences* has invested in networking with many other Indigenous and industry organisations at both state and national levels. They have also actively engaged in cross-promotion activities with a wide range of accommodation, restaurant, self-drive and bus touring operations resulting in increased profile in the market.

## **Advice to other Indigenous people contemplating the enterprise option**

Hank focuses on the number of themes he considers basic to business success, especially within the tourism sector -

- *'Make sure you have a true passion for the type of operation you are going into.'*
- *'Look carefully at all the proper business considerations, openly and objectively. You don't want to go into it with rose colored glasses.'*
- *'You must be prepared for a long term commitment.'*
- *'Never look at other operators as competitors. Always think how your operation can add value to the overall tourism product of your area.'*
- *'Be prepared to learn a lot of new tasks and undertaking plenty of new short courses, even being prepared to go back to school again.'*

## For Further Information

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