

# SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Best practice for management, development and marketing



*Meredith Wray, Dianne Dredge, Carmen Cox,  
Jeremy Buultjens, Mary Hollick, Diane Lee,  
Michael Pearlman, Carol Lacroix*

SUSTAINABLE  
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## **Abstract**

This report presents findings of a three-year research project undertaken to determine what regional tourism stakeholders have learnt from practice, and what they consider to have contributed to best practice, for the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations in Australia.

The project was initiated by the Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN), funded by Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) and coordinated by the Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre (ARTRC) at Southern Cross University. A team of seven STCRC researchers from five universities around Australia contributed to this research, which has been guided by an industry reference group comprising representatives from each state and territory tourism organisation and Tourism Australia.

The report identifies best practice principles and strategies for the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations. A selection of 'Best Practice Snapshots' are provided to demonstrate innovative or leading examples of how best practice has been achieved for the 21 destination case studies. A toolkit of these best practice principles and strategies are then provided as a checklist of priority areas for consideration by stakeholders involved in regional tourism planning and management.

Findings demonstrate that regional destinations that have a strong level of support from their state or territory governments, well-established regional and/or local tourism organisations, supportive local governments, and local leaders that foster and implement a shared vision for sustainable tourism across government, businesses and community stakeholders are well-placed to innovate, compete and implement sustainable tourism best practice into the future. Moreover, planning and implementing best practice for sustainable regional tourism destinations can contribute to regional economic development, conservation of natural, built and socio-cultural environments, community well-being, and exceptional visitor experiences.

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The authors wish to acknowledge the support and commitment of representatives from government, business and community stakeholder organisations representing the 21 destination case studies contributed to this research.

## **Acronyms**

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ARTRC	Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre
ARTN	Australian Regional Tourism Network
CBD	Central Business District
LTO	Local Tourism Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
QLD	Queensland
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
SA	South Australia
SCU	Southern Cross University
STCRC	Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre
STO	State Tourism Organisation
TAS	Tasmania
TRG	Tourism Reference Group
TFC	Tourism Forecasting Committee
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WTO	World Tourism Organisation



*Chapter 1*

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Tourism is well accepted as an important contributor to the economy and sustainable development of regional areas in Australia. Tourism is often advocated as a means to diversify economic conditions in rural and regional areas by providing alternative sources of employment and income generation arising from fluctuations and downturns in traditional industries such as agriculture and forestry, depressed commodity prices, and drought conditions<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, tourism can contribute to the enhancement of regional areas through public and private sector investment in new infrastructure and facilities. As at December 2008, 52 percent of expenditure by domestic overnight visitors, 58 percent of domestic day visitors and 20 percent of international visitor expenditure was spent in regional areas of Australia (\$23.2 billion, \$8.2 billion respectively and \$26.4 billion)<sup>2</sup>.

Over the next decade, however, the domestic and international tourism environment globally and within Australia is predicted to be dynamic, aggressively competitive and increasingly volatile attributable to the current global financial crisis that has led to falls in consumer and investor confidence. Given the significance of tourism to the Australia's regional economies and the volatility of domestic tourism in Australia, it is imperative that tourism is maintained and enhanced as an economic driver for the local economy, but planned and managed in a sustainable way to enhance and conserve the natural environment, protect the well-being of the residents and attract visitors with shared values.

Since the 1960s there has been a growing stream of research investigating tourism destination management, development, and marketing. The research is generally fragmented, often case specific and underpinned by a range of values, theoretical frameworks and world views, such that it is often difficult to draw meaningful insights and identify implications for practice. Moreover, many tourism managers, destination stakeholders and other tourism practitioners don't have the time, access to resources or skills to put this growing body of information into context and extract lessons for practice. As a result, many practitioners still tend to rely on gut feeling, anecdotal evidence and personal experience to guide them in their decision-making.

This three-year research project was initiated by the Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN), funded by Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) and coordinated by the Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre (ARTRC) at Southern Cross University. The genesis for this research stemmed from the annual Australian Regional Tourism Convention, held annually since 2001. Various presentations and forums at the Convention over the years had focused on the role of destinations in regional tourism and had highlighted various case studies of best practice from regional Australia. The ARTN recognised a need to establish a research project that identified and critically examined cases of best practice in the areas of sustainable destination planning, management, development and marketing.

The aim of this project is to provide government, industry and community stakeholders, across national, state, regional and destination levels, with practical guidance on best practice principles for the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations to inform future tourism planning and management initiatives.

A team of seven STCRC researchers from five universities around Australia have contributed to this research (see Appendix 1). In addition, an industry reference group comprising representatives from each state and territory tourism organisation and Tourism Australia have guided the project (see Appendix 2).

### **Research Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this research was to determine what regional tourism stakeholders have learnt from practice, and what they consider to have contributed to best practice, for the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations in Australia. From this aim, the project was guided by three objectives:

1. To identify principles of best practice from representatives of stakeholder organisations and groups engaged in the planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations in Australia, across national, and state, regional and destination levels;
2. To examine 21 case studies of practice in regional tourism destination planning, management, development and marketing involving every state and territory in Australia;
3. To develop best practice guidelines for stakeholders engaged in regional tourism destination planning, management, development and marketing.

## **Methodology**

The process of identifying best practices for sustainable destination planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations involved the following stages:

### **Stage One: Destination Selection**

The Industry Reference Group and the Project Reference Team were asked to nominate three destinations from their state or territory to represent a mix of specific destinations and destination regions that:

- represented different geographical locations (coastal, urban, remote or inland);
- represented different stages of development (emerging, growth or mature);
- had initiated 'best practice';
- demonstrated experiences that could build on existing research; and
- were interesting and varied case studies.

The list of nominated destinations and feedback from the Project Research Team was then considered by the Industry Reference Group and final selection was made (see Figure 1). A brief overview of the characteristics of these destinations is provided in Appendix 3.

### **Stage Two: Literature Review**

A review of academic literature related to theories and best practice related to sustainable destination management, development and marketing of tourism destinations was undertaken to inform and guide this research (see more in Chapter 2).

### **Stage Three: Destination Workshops**

Representatives of stakeholder organisations and groups actively engaged in the planning, management, development and marketing were invited to participate in focus group workshops that were undertaken in the 21 destinations from July 2006 to February 2007. The following outlines the Destination Workshops process:

- A key contact with considerable knowledge about tourism activity in each of the destinations (e.g. an STO or RTO representative or local Tourism Manager) was nominated by the relevant state or territory Industry Reference Group member to assist with identification of suitable workshop participants.
- Participants were invited to attend a two-hour workshop that was facilitated by senior staff members of the Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre (Meredith Wray and Jeremy Buultjens) in partnership with the member of the Research Team responsible for the destination research.
- Workshops explored what participants had learnt from practice, and what they consider to have contributed to the best practice, in the areas of planning, management, development and marketing of their destinations. In addition, the roles of the stakeholders engaged in these practices for these destinations across state, regional, and local levels.



**Figure 1: Destinations selected for analysis of best practice**

- Findings from the workshop were feedback to the destinations within six weeks of the workshops for comment.
- Focus group workshops were also undertaken at the Regional Tourism Convention in August 2006 with 61 delegates engaged in regional destination planning, management, development and marketing (see Appendix 4).
- Cross-case analysis of the data derived from the Destination Workshop process was undertaken to identify best practice themes.

### **Stage Three: In-depth Case Studies**

To supplement the data gained from the Destination Workshops, in-depth case studies were developed for the 21 destinations. Each member of the Project Research Team undertook three destination case studies. Analysis involved the review of secondary data and in-depth interviews with key informants representing stakeholder organisations and groups with considerable knowledge relating to the planning, management, development and marketing of the selected case study destinations across local, regional and state/territory levels. These informants had been nominated by Destination Workshop participants. Case studies sought to explain:

- the geographical, historical, industrial, environmental (socio-cultural, natural, economic) and institutional and political factors that have shaped the evolution of the selected destinations;
- the core and supporting resources of each destination (e.g. mix of visitor activities, experiences and infrastructure for tourism);
- tourism visitation analysis (where available);
- the roles, activities, influences and interactions of stakeholder groups (across national, state, regional and destination levels) engaged in the planning, management, development and marketing of the selected destinations; and
- what destination stakeholders have learnt from practice, and what they considered to have contributed to 'best practice', for the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of their selected destination or region.

### **Stage Five: Cross-Case Analysis**

This stage involved collating the common best practice principles that emerged from the Destination Workshops and case study research for the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of the 21 destinations. For each principle, strategies and key influences that been undertaken by the 21 destinations to improve performance and achieve sustainable tourism were identified and collated.

## **Stage Six: Pilot Testing**

Two important regional strategic tourism planning processes provided the major pilot studies for this project. Both destinations were case studies for this project:

*Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Management Plan 2008 to 2018*—The Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre at Southern Cross University was appointed by Tourism Victoria in collaboration with the Hepburn Regional Tourism Association, Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Tourism Inc., and Hepburn Shire Council to develop a ten-year strategic tourism management plan to guide the future development, management and marketing of tourism in the Hepburn Shire.

*Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan 2008 to 2018*—Byron Shire Council appointed the ARTRC to develop a ten-year strategic tourism management plan for Byron Shire.

Best practices principles and stages derived from Stage Five for the sustainable management, development and marketing of regional destinations were integrated into the strategic tourism management plans for both destinations where appropriate. Plans included specific strategies and actions for the short-term (one to three years), medium-term (three to five years) and longer-term (five to ten years). The strategic tourism planning process involved:

- a review of international and national literature on best practice in strategic tourism planning and sustainable tourism;
- audits to determine the nature of tourism activity and businesses within each destination (including visitation, accommodation, tour and transport operations, food and beverage services and retail outlets);
- stakeholder consultation workshops with stakeholder organisations with an interest in tourism (45 from Hepburn Shire and 70 from Byron Shire);
- citizen jury processes to engage local communities in the planning process (see more in Appendix 5);
- development of dedicated tourism planning Internet sites to engage and communicate local communities and interested stakeholders in the preparation of the plan; and
- the development of the strategic plans that integrated best practice principles identified in the cross-case analysis.

## **Stage Seven: Industry Report**

The Industry Reference Group and Project Research Team reviewed the collation of findings.

## **Significance**

This is an important and innovative project aimed at improving our knowledge and understanding of regional tourism. A project of this scale has not been undertaken on destinations around Australia to date. The project was identified by Chair of the ARTN (2008), Wayne Kayler-Thomson, as ‘the most important research project undertaken for the regional tourism industry in Australia which offers the prospect of accelerating the sustainability of the industry into the future’. Given the significance of tourism to the Australia’s regional economies and the volatility of domestic tourism in Australia, it is imperative that tourism is maintained and enhanced as an economic driver for the local communities, but planned and managed in a sustainable way to enhance and conserve the natural environment, protect the well-being of the residents and attract visitors with shared values.

## **Limitations**

Best practice principles and strategies identified in this report represent those practices identified and implemented by the 21 destinations selected for analysis in this research project and by representatives of stakeholders organisations engaged in regional tourism across national, state, regional and local levels that participated in best practice workshops at the 2006 Australian Regional Tourism Convention. Although this represents the most significant study of regional tourism practice undertaken in Australia to date, and that careful consideration was given to choice of destinations selected for analysis, there are most likely more examples of best practice that can be drawn from other regional Australian destinations.

Furthermore, destination case studies were undertaken by seven senior researchers with expertise in regional tourism and depend on their analysis and interpretation of best practice for each of their assigned

destinations. Other researchers may have interpreted these practices differently. The study of best practices was undertaken during 2006 to 2008. As such destination practices may have changed since this time.

## **Report Structure**

Chapter 1 provides a toolkit of the best practice principles and strategies to achieve sustainable destination planning, management, development and marketing for regional tourism destinations that have been derived from the analysis of 21 Australian regional destination case studies. These best practice principles and strategies are intended to provide a checklist of priority areas for consideration by stakeholders involved in regional tourism planning and management and recommended for inclusion in regional tourism planning processes.

From this, Chapter 2 explains the significant guiding principles derived from the literature review process that underpins this research. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present the best practice principles and strategies to achieve these practices derived from analysis of the 21 regional destinations for sustainable destination planning, management, development, and marketing respectively. A selection of 'Best Practice Snapshots' that represent innovative or leading examples derived from the 21 case studies are then provided to demonstrate how best practice has been achieved by regional destinations in Australia. Finally, Chapter 6 reviews the significant challenges and opportunities facing regional tourism in Australia and identifies the principal findings derived from the analysis of the 21 case studies examined for this research. Recommendations and directions for further research are also identified.

## **Considerations**

As will be discussed further in Chapter 2, no two regional tourism destinations are the same. The practices and strategies in this report are intended to provide a toolkit of ideas that can be considered, adapted where appropriate, and integrated into strategic regional tourism planning processes in order to achieve best practice for sustainable regional tourism planning, management, development and marketing.

Furthermore, although each dimension of best practice—sustainable destination management, sustainable destination planning and management, and sustainable destination marketing—are presented separately, it is important to empathise that these dimensions are inter-related and should be valued equally.



*Chapter 2*

**GUIDELINES TO ACHIEVE BEST PRACTICE FOR  
SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS**

This chapter provides a toolkit of the best practice principles and strategies to achieve sustainable destination planning, management, development and marketing. The toolkit is intended to provide a checklist of priority areas that stakeholders involved in tourism planning and management for regional tourism destinations can consider and integrate into regional tourism planning processes where appropriate. Although the toolkit presents each dimension of best practice—sustainable destination planning and management, sustainable destination development, and sustainable destination marketing separately—it is important to recognise that these dimensions are inter-related.

## Sustainable Destination Planning and Management

### Best Practice Principle One

Best practice regional tourism destinations establish long-term strategic planning processes to guide the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism. They:

- seek the support of local community champions or visionary leaders that have: technical, communication and facilitation skills, are well respected by the community, and that can effectively tap into local networks to lead the strategic planning process;
- engage experienced tourism consultants if tourism planning expertise is lacking at a destination level;
- seek the support of governments (local and state), industry (LTO, RTO, business groups) and community stakeholder organisations;
- establish effective consultation processes to engage and consult with interested government, business, community and Indigenous stakeholders across local, regional, state and national levels;
- engage the community in all stages of the planning process to ensure community ownership of the Plan;
- establish and communicate a shared vision for tourism amongst all stakeholders;
- undertake and utilise research to inform decision-making;
- undertake an assessment of the current and future market situation (e.g. audits of existing tourist facilities, identification of tourists' preferences and behaviours, identification of competitor destinations and consideration of broader issues—changing environmental conditions and resources, airline capacity, visitor markets, sustainability, prediction of future trends);
- specify realistic time frames—short-term (1–3 years, medium-term 3–5 years and longer-term 5–10 years);
- identify priority actions and identify implementation strategies (e.g. local government employment of a Tourism Officer, formation of a Reference Group);
- integrate with local and state government plans and policies, e.g. natural resource management, town and land use, social and cultural, economic development, infrastructure and risk management plans;
- establish a regular review framework (e.g. annually) to identify areas where strategies and actions need to change due to changing conditions; and
- facilitate learning amongst stakeholders about sustainable tourism.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Byron Shire

**Best Practice Snapshot 2:** Hunter Valley region

**Best Practice Snapshot 3:** Destination Daylesford

**Best Practice Snapshot 4:** Flinders Ranges Geotourism Strategy

**Best Practice Snapshot 5:** Cradle Mountain

**Best Practice Snapshot 6:** Alice Springs

**Best Practice Snapshot 7:** Launceston and the Tamar Valley

**Best Practice Snapshot 8:** Murray River region

**Best Practice Snapshot 9:** Port Arthur and Tasman

## **Sustainable Destination Planning and Management**

### **Best Practice Principle Two**

Best practice regional tourism destinations establish an effective destination management structure to lead and facilitate stakeholder cooperation for the sustainable development, management and marketing of tourism. They:

- encourage and support local leaders with extensive tourism or professional expertise who foster and drive collaborative approaches to tourism management through sound decision-making, analytical capabilities and engagement with stakeholders and their local community;
- identify clear roles and responsibilities for stakeholder organisation involvement (e.g. LTO, RTO, STO, local government, business groups, other government agencies, significant community groups);
- establish an overarching Board structure comprising representatives from local government, business and community stakeholder interests with expertise/knowledge of tourism;
- provide a structure for communication and information exchange about tourism amongst stakeholders;
- develop strategic and operational plans to guide the development, management and marketing of tourism;
- establish specialist committees (e.g. marketing, events, policy);
- utilise consultants, where appropriate, to ensure expert advice on tourism (e.g. strategic planning, issues);
- ensure support by full-time and part-time staff (e.g. marketing, event management, administration, finance and commercial services);
- foster on-going collaboration between business, governments and community across local, regional and state levels; and
- work collaboratively with surrounding regions and their LTOs/RTOs and local governments.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1: Hunter Valley region**

**Best Practice Snapshot 2: Byron Shire**

**Best Practice Snapshot 3: Destination Daylesford**

**Best Practice Snapshot 4: Great Ocean Road**

**Best Practice Snapshot 5: Noosa Council**

**Best Practice Snapshot 6: Cradle Mountain**

**Best Practice Snapshot 7: Launceston and Tamar Valley**

**Best Practice Snapshot 8: Barossa Valley**

## Sustainable Destination Planning and Management

### Best Practice Principle Three

Best practice regional tourism destinations have a strong level of support from their state or territory tourism organisations that:

- provide strong leadership and strategic tourism expertise to support local/regional destination development, management and marketing;
- facilitate strategic destination planning processes including financial support;
- plan and lobby for investment in public and private infrastructure for tourism (see more in Chapter 3);
- develop and implement strategic marketing plans and tactical marketing campaigns (see more in Chapter 5);
- provide support for grant applications (e.g. Australian Government grant initiatives); and
- facilitate cooperative networks across public private and public sectors involving relevant government departments and agencies, local governments, tourism and business operations and local communities.

### Best Practice Snapshot 1: Tourism Victoria and Grampians Marketing Inc.

### Best Practice Principle Four

Best practice regional tourism destinations are supported by effective regional tourism organisations and/or local tourism organisations that lead and coordinate tourism and business involvement that:

- have effective visionary leaders;
- have established a clear vision and identified the important values that underpin the role of the organisation in tourism;
- have developed effective Board structures with members with professional expertise in business and tourism;
- have established clear roles and responsibilities for their Board members;
- have longevity of people in executive positions and plan for succession;
- exhibit transparency and accountability in their decision-making;
- develop effective partnerships with state or territory tourism organisations, local government/s, business groups and their community;
- foster a good level of cooperation amongst local and regional tourism and business operators;
- coordinate and train local operators (e.g. service quality excellence, cooperative marketing initiatives); and
- integrate with other RTOs in their broader region.

### Best Practice Snapshot 1: Snowy Mountains region

### Best Practice Snapshot 2: Esperance

### Best Practice Snapshot 3: Alice Springs

### Best Practice Snapshot 4: Tennant Creek and Barkly region

## **Sustainable Destination Planning and Management**

### **Best Practice Principle Five**

Best practice regional tourism destinations have a good level of support from their local governments that:

- work cooperatively with local and regional tourism organisations to support sustainable tourism development, planning and marketing initiatives;
- establish a Tourism Advisory Committee to Council;
- appoint a Tourism Manager/Officer to guide and inform Council’s involvement in tourism;
- may lead the development of a tourism strategy planning process;
- provide financial support for the operation of local visitor information centre/s and development of other infrastructure and support facilities; and
- develop policies to support sustainable tourism development.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Tasman Council**

### **Best Practice Principle Six**

Best practice regional tourism destinations have a good level of support from Parks agencies and other relevant government authorities that:

- cooperate and provide advice in strategic planning processes for tourism;
- establish planning and management systems to preserve natural, heritage and cultural assets and effective visitor management systems;
- develop infrastructure and facilities development that enhance and better manage the natural environment and contribute to the visitor experience;
- plan and develop accessible spaces for recreation and leisure; and
- provide visitor information centres and quality interpretative services to enhance the visitor experience.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Department of Environment and Conservation (Western Australia) in the Esperance region**

### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service at Cradle Mountain**

### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Department of Environment and Conservation (Western Australia) and the Water Corporation in the Tapestry region**

## Sustainable Destination Planning and Management

### Best Practice Principle Seven

Best practice regional tourism destinations undertake research to support decision-making for tourism. They:

- budget for research and understand the need for research to inform decision-making;
- develop a research program to establish effective systems at the destination level to gather information about visitation and visitor needs and satisfaction levels;
- utilise research undertaken at state or national level;
- establish performance indicators to measure economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism;
- undertake continuous and consistent data collection;
- establish reporting and communication mechanisms to ensure findings are regularly communicated back to interested stakeholders.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Agnes Water/1770

**Best Practice Snapshot 2:** Daylesford and Hepburn Springs

**Best Practice Snapshot 3:** Snowy Mountains

**Best Practice Snapshot 4:** Noosa

**Best Practice Snapshot 5:** Kangaroo Island

**Best Practice Snapshot 6:** Tapestry region

### Best Practice Principle Eight

Best practice regional tourism destinations establish methods to improve funding for tourism. They:

- consider and introduce a tourism and business levy scheme;
- apply for National and state government grant opportunities (e.g. the Australian Government's TQUAL program);
- collect membership fees for the local and regional tourism associations;
- establish commercial booking services as part of visitor information centre operations.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Noosa

### Best Practice Principle Nine

Best practice regional tourism destinations educate and communicate the significance and local values of tourism to visitors, the community, governments and business. They:

- develop a Tourism Education and Communication Program to educate visitors about the environment, community values, appropriate visitor behaviour and safety and security issues;
- educate the community and local business about sustainable tourism; and
- educate local government employees and Councillors about sustainable tourism and the role of Council in supporting and managing the tourism industry.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Byron Shire

## **Sustainable Destination Planning and Management**

### **Best Practice Principle Ten**

Best practice regional tourism destinations foster service excellence. They:

- recognise the importance that all businesses, directly and indirectly involved in tourism, are educated and trained as to the need to provide quality customer service;
- develop or adopt a Service Excellence Program to ensure the delivery of exceptional and consistent service for all business and tourism operations;
- identify and implement appropriate service quality training programs for business owners and their staff;
- examine visitor satisfaction with service quality as part of destination visitor surveys;
- benchmark visitor satisfaction against other leading regional tourism destinations;
- encourage local business and tourism operations to become members of relevant industry associations;
- establish or adopt service quality accreditation schemes.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Daylesford and Hepburn Springs**

### **Best Practice Principle Eleven**

Best practice regional tourism destinations develop crisis management plans for tourism.

They:

- develop a crisis and risk management strategy for tourism to ensure an immediate response to crisis situations;
- work cooperatively with relevant agencies and stakeholders to develop crisis and risk management strategies for tourism (e.g. police, fire, ambulance, Parks authorities);
- develop emergency management plans for key infrastructure targets town centres, and key visitor sites;
- communicate key outcomes of strategy to the community, businesses, visitors, and interested stakeholders to ensure that residents and visitors are informed of risk and emergency management arrangements;
- incorporate crisis and risk management plans for tourism into local government risk management plans and emergency service risk management plans;
- encourage businesses to develop crisis and risk management strategies for their own operations and to provide adequate provision for tourism; and
- develop and implement tactical marketing campaigns to respond immediately to crisis situations.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Grampians**

## Sustainable Destination Development

### Best Practice Principle One

Best practice regional tourism destinations improve access for visitors by planning and developing effective transport infrastructure and systems. They:

- cooperate with road traffic authorities and other relevant government departments and agencies to plan for the improvement of road infrastructure to and within the destination;
- work with local airport authorities, airline services and transport carriers to improve visitor transport services;
- develop a Integrated Signage Strategy for directional and interpretative signage along transit routes and within the destination in cooperation with relevant state government agencies; and
- develop an Integrated Transport Strategy that investigates and improves transport options to and within the destination, to other destinations within the region, and considers alternative transport modes such as rail, cycleways and walkways.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Hunter Valley

**Best Practice Snapshot 2:** Shark Bay

**Best Practice Snapshot 3:** Kangaroo Island

### Best Practice Principle Two

Best practice regional tourism destinations plan and develop appropriate infrastructure and support facilities for tourism. They:

- audit infrastructure and facilities to determine priority infrastructure needs;
- develop an Investment and Infrastructure Strategy to plan for and attract public and private sector investment for priority infrastructure and facilities;
- design and develop infrastructure and support facilities that reflect the socio-cultural heritage of the destination and preserve the natural environment;
- seek and receive support from local, state and federal governments for planning and funding for infrastructure for tourism;
- plan for and improve parking facilities, amenities, services and facilities (e.g. public toilets, safe playgrounds, accessible public spaces, picnic areas, youth facilities);
- develop a Council Tourism Works Plan to ensure maintenance of facilities particularly during peak visitation periods; and
- improve town beautification and maintenance to create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Agnes Water/1770

**Best Practice Snapshot 2:** Launceston and Tamar Valley

**Best Practice Snapshot 3:** Alice Springs

## **Sustainable Destination Development**

### **Best Practice Principle Three**

Best practice regional tourism destinations plan and develop a range of appropriate visitor products and experiences. They:

- undertake a regular Tourism Product Audit process to monitor product offerings and to identify opportunities for new product development and investment opportunities;
- as part of visitor research programs (see more Chapter 4) regularly survey potential and current visitors to determine views about existing products and experiences, to identify new opportunities and to ensure that product development matches needs and expectations of visitors;
- develop a diverse range of appropriate visitor activities to complement their iconic attractions including: a range of accommodation types to suit different visitor markets, high quality food and beverage experiences, cultural, heritage and Indigenous experiences, festivals and special events, nature-based experiences, and recreational and leisure activities;
- support and encourage entrepreneurs to establish innovative visitor experiences that complement community and environmental values;
- maintain a good and consistent standard of product that meets or exceeds the expectation of guests;
- revitalise existing product to keep it fresh and exciting to meet the changing expectations of visitors;
- integrate new and enhanced products into destination marketing strategies (see more in Chapter 5);
- develop drive routes/day tour packages to encourage visitors to experience the broader destination region;
- develop special events that match the destination character and community values (see more in Chapter 5); and
- support the development of Indigenous visitor experiences in cooperation with local Aboriginal communities.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1: Hunter Valley region**

**Best Practice Snapshot 2: Great Ocean Road**

**Best Practice Snapshot 3: Destination Daylesford**

**Best Practice Snapshot 4: Kangaroo Island**

**Best Practice Snapshot 5: Barossa Valley**

**Best Practice Snapshot 6: Tapestry region**

**Best Practice Snapshot 7: Tennant Creek and Barkly region**

**Best Practice Snapshot 8: Katherine**

**Best Practice Snapshot 9: Cradle Mountain**

## Sustainable Destination Development

### Best Practice Principle Four

Best practice regional tourism destinations plan for the preservation of natural, built, socio-cultural environments. They:

- work cooperatively with relevant stakeholder groups and government authorities to enhance and preserve iconic attractions;
- preserve destination character and residential amenity through sound local government town and land use planning policies and development controls;
- provide clear design guidelines in local government control plans for tourism development;
- require effective environmental management practices for tourism developments;
- integrate planning for the preservation of natural, heritage, built, social and cultural in strategic tourism planning processes and other relevant local government plans and strategies;
- work with natural resource management and environmental agencies to assess and plan for visitor impacts;
- work with local environmental groups to investigate accreditation models that encourage and improve environmental performance and efficiency of tourism businesses;
- establish an environmental management framework that defines sustainability indicators to monitor environmental impacts (natural, social and economic);
- plan for the sustainable management systems of natural resources (e.g. sewage and water management); and
- support and encourage tourism operators to achieve environmental accreditation.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Byron Shire

**Best Practice Snapshot 2:** Great Ocean Road

**Best Practice Snapshot 3:** Grampians region

**Best Practice Snapshot 4:** Daylesford

**Best Practice Snapshot 5:** Noosa Shire

**Best Practice Snapshot 6:** Kangaroo Island

**Best Practice Snapshot 7:** Wilpena Pound

**Best Practice Snapshot 8:** Shark Bay

**Best Practice Snapshot 9:** Port Arthur

## **Sustainable Destination Marketing**

### **Best Practice Principle One**

Best practice regional destinations foster a cooperative approach to marketing. They:

- establish a dedicated and experienced marketing committee as part of the overarching destination management structure to guide and inform decision-making for destination marketing;
- develop a strategic tourism marketing plan to guide marketing efforts;
- employ experienced marketing staff to coordinate destination marketing efforts;
- seek a strong level of support from their STO to foster and lead cooperative marketing efforts across state/territory, regional and local levels;
- have a well-established RTO or LTO that leads and fosters participation and cooperative marketing initiatives amongst local operators and businesses (e.g. trade shows, tactical marketing campaigns);
- encourage the support of leading commercial tourism and business operators to contribute and invest in destination marketing initiatives;
- seek the support of local government for marketing activities;
- partner with neighbouring regions to develop stronger campaigns; and
- source adequate funding to ensure all levels of industry can participate in marketing campaigns.

**Best Practice Snapshot 1:** Great Ocean Road

**Best Practice Snapshot 2:** Daylesford and Macedon Ranges region

**Best Practice Snapshot 3:** Murray River region

**Best Practice Snapshot 4:** Barossa Valley

**Best Practice Snapshot 5:** Agnes Water/1770

**Best Practice Snapshot 6:** Port Arthur and the Tasman region

**Best Practice Snapshot 7:** Cradle Mountain

### **Best Practice Principle Two**

Best practice regional destinations develop strategic marketing plans. They:

- seek the support of their STO to assist with funding and expertise for strategic marketing planning;
- consult with local stakeholders to assess their views and preferences (government, business and community) to determine a vision and direction for destination marketing;
- undertake a situational analysis (competitor, visitation trends, consumer preferences) to estimate current and future demand levels;
- undertake research to inform marketing decision-making (see more in Chapter 4);
- establish and adhere to clear marketing objectives and strategies;
- establish standards for marketing (e.g. marketing training programs for operators);
- develop marketing action plans that outline responsibilities and activities for stakeholder organisations; and
- ensure destination level marketing plans link to regional and state marketing plans and strategies.

## Sustainable Destination Marketing

		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 1:</b> Hunter Valley region
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 2:</b> Tourism Noosa
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 3:</b> Alice Springs
		<p><b>Best Practice Principle Three</b></p> <p>Best practice regional destinations establish an effective and consistent destination brand and image that is used to position and promote the destination to attract appropriate visitor markets and guide the development of appropriate tourism product. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consult with government, business and community stakeholders to consider and establish a strong and consistent destination brand and image;</li> <li>• identify and focus on the competitive strengths of the destination;</li> <li>• undertake consumer research to inform decisions about how to best position the destination and recognise that the destination cannot appeal to all visitor markets;</li> <li>• ensure the brand and image reflects the strategic vision for the destination;</li> <li>• promote iconic features and attractions of the destination and their linkage to the broader region;</li> <li>• develop a ‘Brand Policy’ to protect the destination brand and to align further product and infrastructure development;</li> <li>• communicate the brand and image to industry operators and ask them to consider the destination brand when developing product and their own marketing (e.g. develop brand toolkits);</li> <li>• ensure consistent delivery of the brand through associated advertising, sales and promotional strategies;</li> <li>• link well with the regional and state brand and image;</li> <li>• use realistic images and messages to support the brand and image; and</li> <li>• regularly review and refresh the brand.</li> </ul>
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 1:</b> Daylesford and Hepburn Springs
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 2:</b> Agnes Water/1770
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 3:</b> Flinders Ranges and Wilpena Pound
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 4:</b> Barossa Valley
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 5:</b> Launceston and Tamar Valley
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 6:</b> Cradle Mountain
		<b>Best Practice Snapshot 7:</b> Katherine

## **Sustainable Destination Marketing**

### **Best Practice Principle Four**

Best practice regional tourism destinations identify and target appropriate visitor markets. They:

- understand the history and future direction of the consumer marketplace and the position of their destination in that marketplace;
- undertake research to identify and understand the unique reasons why visitors are attracted to the destination;
- identify appropriate target markets that ‘fit’ with the attractions and experiences available at the destination and community values;
- develop effective marketing strategies to target these visitor markets;
- ensure product development and visitor experiences suit these markets;
- do not rely on one or limited visitor markets; and
- consider the appeal of product to both domestic and international visitor markets.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Grampians**

### **Best Practice Principle Five**

Best practice regional tourism destinations develop innovative advertising, sales and promotion strategies to support the destination brand and image. They:

- promote the unique attributes of the destination and link to the diversity of visitor attractions and experiences within the destination/region;
- develop creative promotional and advertising images that are used consistently across all media and web collateral;
- develop tactical campaigns to even out seasonality or raise awareness of destination product and experiences;
- leverage public relations and media exposure that is linked to tactical campaigns or events;
- develop opportunities for public relation events (e.g. an opening of new infrastructure development, or creating competitions to attract attention);
- host regular famils for media and industry;
- encourage the support of leading tourism operators that act as ambassadors to showcase the destination;
- leverage from exposure of destination on movies and television programs;
- develop e-marketing strategies;
- participate in relevant tradeshow;
- develop promotional strategies for international visitor markets; and
- provide realistic messages and deliver the marketing promise.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Snowy Mountains**

### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Wilpena Pound and Flinders Ranges**

### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Shark Bay**

### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Esperance**

### **Best Practice Snapshot 5: Port Arthur**

## Sustainable Destination Marketing

	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 6: Alice Springs</b>
	<p><b>Best Practice Principle Six</b> Best practice regional tourism destinations provide quality visitor information and interpretation services. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide effective visitor information centres that are well managed and resourced (human and financial);</li> <li>• ensure a coordinated approach to visitor information services (e.g. link/network VICs within the destination/region);</li> <li>• provide consistent and quality visitor information (e.g. web site, visitor guide, signage);</li> <li>• provide quality central accommodation and tour booking services;</li> <li>• provide interactive interpretation experiences to give an opportunity for visitors to be involved;</li> <li>• provide good directional and interpretative signage;</li> <li>• develop opportunities for visitors to experience local product and experiences (e.g. food and wine trails, touring maps); and</li> <li>• provide training for VIC staff and tourism operators to ensure consistent communication of visitor information.</li> </ul>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 1: Hunter Valley region</b>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 2: Wilpena Pound and Flinders Ranges</b>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 3: Shark Bay</b>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 4: Barkly region</b>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 5: Cradle Mountain region</b>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 6: Launceston and Tamar Valley</b>
	<p><b>Best Practice Principle Seven</b> Best practice regional tourism destinations develop festivals and events that support the destination image. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an events strategy to better coordinate, manage and promote a destination's festivals and events;</li> <li>• develop festivals and events that align with the destination brand and image and appeal to local community and visitor markets; and</li> <li>• develop a research program to assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of festivals and events and the visitor profile and satisfaction data.</li> </ul>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 1: Hunter Valley region</b>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 2: Byron Bay</b>
	<b>Best Practice Snapshot 3: Launceston and Tamar Valley</b>

*Chapter 3*

## **RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

### **Introduction**

As outlined in Chapter 1, this research has been informed by a comprehensive review of influential theories and research related to sustainable destination management, development and marketing practice. Overall, the review determined that although how destinations are managed, developed, and marketed has been the focus of a considerable body of research since the 1960s, much of this research has been built around case studies, theoretical development and the borrowing of concepts, models and frameworks from other disciplines and fields of study (e.g. destination lifecycle and tourism systems models). As a result, the research was found to be expansive but fragmented. More importantly the review confirmed that:

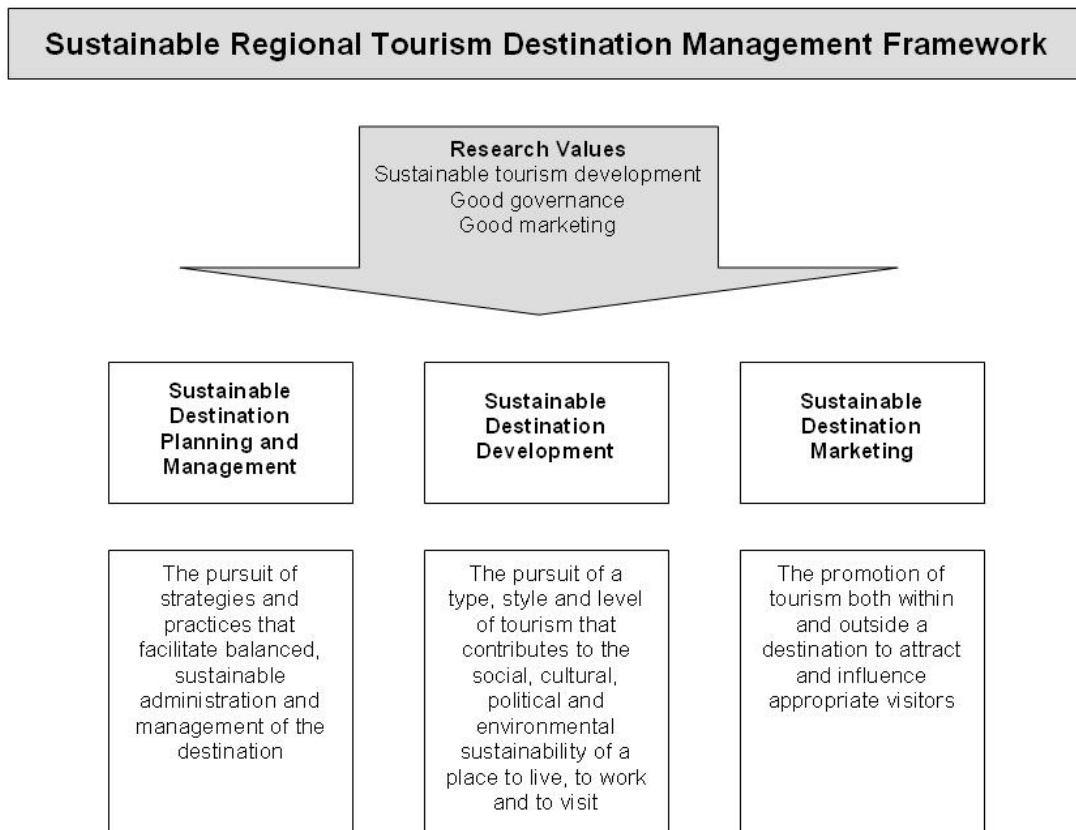
- Destinations are dynamic places characterised by complex sets of relations between community members, business interests and government. In this context, no two destinations are the same. Any number of conditions, such as destination size/scale, geography, climate, local economic conditions, social and cultural values, political orientations, tourist perceptions and movements combine to produce different issues and outcomes<sup>3</sup>. Destinations can therefore exist at multiple scales from local to international. They can be defined as geographical locations; clusters of attractions, services, activities and infrastructure; political-administrative units; or social, cultural, economic or spatial constructs, or any combination of these perspectives.
- Destinations are also characterised by different combinations of natural, built and human resources, receive different levels of support from governments, and have different capacities to innovate, compete and differentiate. It is therefore difficult to draw lessons about good or best practice from the literature because practice also requires local knowledge and an understanding of political sensitivities which are often embedded within specific destination contexts. It is therefore important that destination researchers and destination planning and management practitioners have a well formed appreciation for the complexity of destinations, how they are imagined and perceived, and how they are defined by different stakeholders and markets.
- Successful destinations are also founded on effective and sustainable planning and management. Good destination planning and management must adopt an approach whereby sustainable destination management, development and marketing practices are regarded as being inter-related and equally valued. In the past, at all levels of government in Australia, policy has given significant weight to marketing activities, sometimes to the detriment of an approach which balances marketing with development and management concerns<sup>4</sup>. More recently, with increasing realisation of the vulnerability of many destinations to environmental crises, market downturns and increased international competition, there has been a strengthening commitment to a balanced approach to destination planning and management. Good tourism destination planning and management should therefore be underpinned by sustainable tourism development, good governance and good marketing. Furthermore assigning a ‘one size fits all’ strategy for effective planning and management of tourism destinations is not appropriate.

With this in mind, it was determined that analysis of the 21 regional destinations would involve developing an understanding of the decision-making process, the background history, influences, decisions and critical events that have shaped the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of the case study destinations. This type of analysis is considered to provide an important tool in the management and possible development of regional destinations<sup>5</sup>.

### **Sustainable Regional Tourism Destination Framework**

A result of the review process, a Sustainable Regional Tourism Destinations framework was adopted to guide and inform this research (see Figure 2). The framework shows and defines three dimensions of best practice—sustainable destination planning and management, development and marketing.

Values related to sustainable tourism development, good governance and good marketing underpin this approach. This framework is utilised throughout this report as a foundation to present best practice principles and strategies used by the 21 destinations to achieve sustainable destination management, development and marketing.



**Figure 2: Sustainable Regional Tourism Destinations Framework<sup>1</sup>**

## Research Values

The research values that underpin this approach to understanding and fostering best practice for regional tourism destinations are explained as follows:

### Sustainable Tourism Development

A sustainable tourism destination is reached when environmental, community and economic values are balanced and resolved through collaboration and compromise to achieve a level and style of tourism that:

- protects and enhances the natural and built features upon which the tourism industry is based;
- is consistent with community values and aspirations both now and over the long term, and contributes to community development and well-being;
- is appropriately developed and marketed so that it is distinctive, competitive and synergetic, and with the flexibility to respond to market changes now and in the future;
- increases the contribution of tourism to the economy of regional destinations and promotes long-term industry viability; and
- increases destination appeal, delivers on brand promise, increases repeat visitation and enhances the reputation of the destination resulting in increased yield from tourism.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Dredge, D. 2008. Managing Local Tourism Master Class: Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council Workshop Materials, Southern Cross University, Tweed Heads, Australia.

It is useful to conceptualise sustainable tourism as a triangle. The three points on this triangle represent the environmental, social and economic values present in a destination (Figure 3).

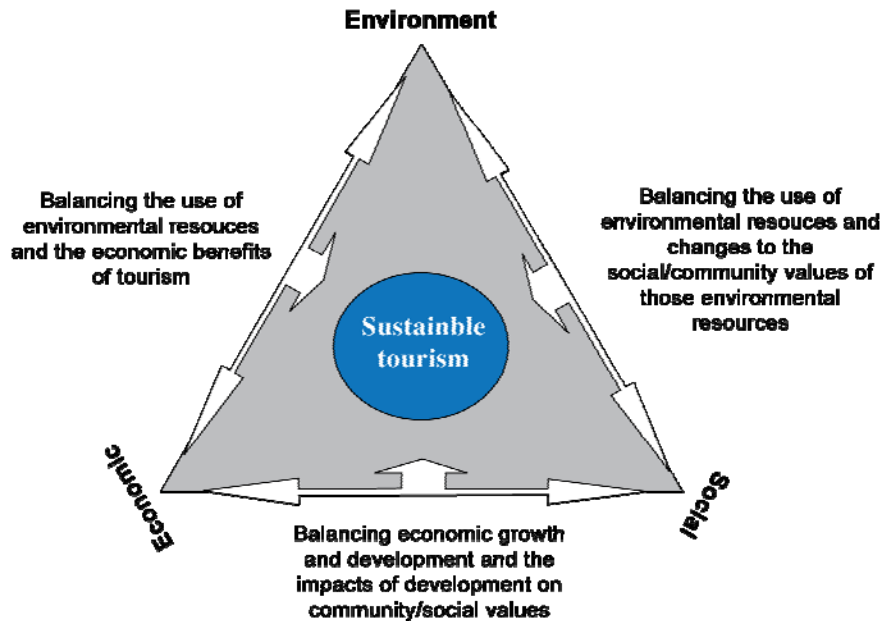


Figure 3: The Sustainable Tourism Triangle<sup>2</sup>

## Good Governance

Tourism is usually characterised by a diversity of stakeholders. Interests, expertise, knowledge and availability of these stakeholders result in different levels of interaction and engagement for different destination contexts. The underlying principle of good governance is to provide a collaborative forum in which the core competencies of individual actors and stakeholder agencies can be pooled to develop synergies and produce better outcomes than would otherwise be the case.

Good governance is required to build and resource destination management structures and processes that provide opportunities for constructive dialogue, information sharing, communication and shared decision-making about common issues and interests.

Governance therefore involves the establishment and maintenance of appropriate collaborative structures and processes to manage tourism across governments, business and community interests. Also of importance is the ability of key stakeholder organisations involved in tourism (e.g. local governments, local tourism organisations, business groups, regional tourism organisations, state tourism organisations, National Parks agencies) to develop their capacity to support effective destination management systems.

Effective destination management therefore requires fostering conditions for good collaborative governance including:

- vision and leadership;
- clear roles and responsibilities;
- clear operational structures and processes for framing and conducting debates and decision-making positive communication;
- engaged and participative communities;
- developing and sharing expertise and knowledge;
- transparent and accountable decision-making;

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Dredge, D. 2008. Managing Local Tourism Master Class: Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council Workshop Materials, Southern Cross University, Tweed Heads, Australia.

- critical questioning of assumptions and bias;
- self-learning, flexibility and adaptive management;
- diversity in the tourism system;
- effective relationship management;
- efficiency; and
- equity<sup>6,7</sup>.

## **Good Marketing**

Destination marketing has traditionally been aligned to growth orientated strategies that have mainly focused on image creation, advertising and sales promotion aimed at achieving growth in domestic and international visitation. Recent research, however, shows that destination marketing should adopt a sustainable approach where marketing is integrated with sustainable destination management and development objectives to ensure the needs of both visitors and residents are met in regional communities<sup>8</sup>.

Under such an approach marketing has a 'dual responsibility' to conserve the resources of a tourist destination as well as to provide a high quality visitor experience<sup>9</sup>. Rather than the traditional view that marketing simply involves selling and promoting products or places, destination marketing is a more strategic tourism management tool that should provide a balance between stakeholder's objectives for the development of tourism in the region as well as ensure the sustainability of the destination's resources<sup>8,10</sup>.

As such, destination marketing need not necessarily be in opposition to other principles of sustainable tourism development as marketing can in fact be used as a management tool to ensure that the 'right kind' of tourism is developed within regions, to take account of tourism capacity and visitor management issues.

Destination marketing should therefore serve as a mechanism to facilitate regional development objectives to ensure that the strategic objectives of destinations are achieved<sup>5</sup>. As such, good marketing provides a strategic tourism management tool that can provide a balance between stakeholder's objectives for the development of tourism in the region as well as ensure the sustainability of the destination's resources.

## **Definitions**

The following table outlines some basic definitions upon which this report is based.

**Table 1: Definitions**

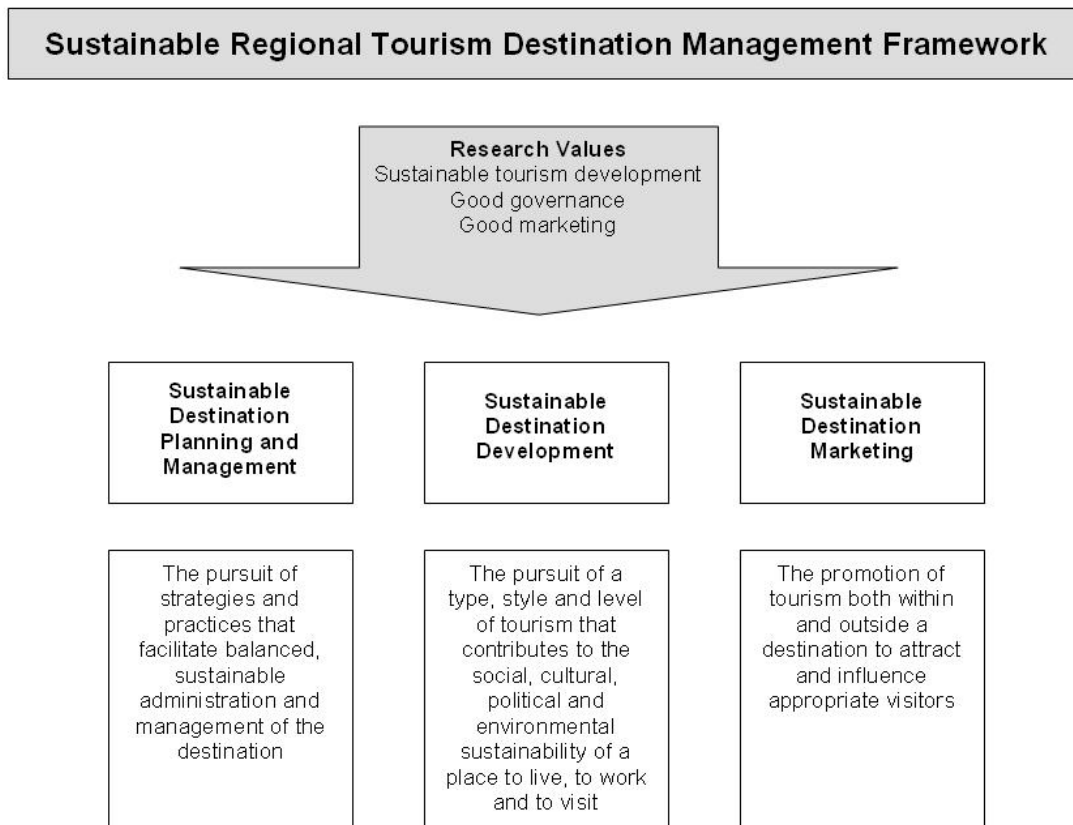
<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Best practice</b>	Practices that prove effective in enhancing and improving the sustainable performance of a destination. These practices may be a technique, method, procedure, decision, action or process that has been implemented and shown to be successful.
<b>Community</b>	Persons and public and private bodies who are potentially affected, both positively and negatively, by the impacts of tourism development within the boundaries of the destination area <sup>11</sup> .
<b>Destination</b>	A cluster of activities, sets of experiences and transactions that are created in the minds and through the activities of tourists, residents, operators, policy-makers and politicians.
<b>Planning</b>	The activity and process of policy development and relationship-building between various actors, agencies and interests that occurs up to the point of decision-making <sup>12</sup> .
<b>Policy</b>	A position, strategy or product which is adopted by government, and that expresses the outcome from the contestation between diverse ideas, values and interests <sup>11</sup> .
<b>Stakeholder</b>	Any individual or group with an active interest in a common problem or issue <sup>13</sup> .
<b>Tourist/visitor</b>	A person who travels away from their normal residential region for a temporary period of at least one night, to the extent that their behaviour involves a search for leisure experiences from interactions with features or characteristics of places they choose to visit <sup>14</sup> .
<b>Values</b>	The beliefs, ideas and principles that underpin groups, societies and individuals <sup>11</sup> .



*Chapter 4*

## **SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

This chapter identifies the best practice principles for the first dimension of best practice for sustainable regional tourism destinations—sustainable destination planning and management.



**Best practice principles for the sustainable planning and management of regional tourism destinations are to:**

- establish long-term strategic planning processes to guide the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism;
- establish an effective destination management structure to lead and facilitate stakeholder cooperation for the sustainable development, management and marketing of tourism;
- have a strong level of support from their state or territory tourism organisations;
- have effective regional tourism organisations and/or local tourism organisations that lead and coordinate tourism and business involvement;
- have a good level of support from their local governments;
- have a good level of support from Parks agencies and other relevant government authorities;
- undertake research to support decision-making for tourism;
- establish methods to improve funding for tourism;
- educate and communicate the significance and local values of tourism to visitors, the community, governments and business;
- foster service excellence; and
- develop crisis management plans for tourism.

The following sections identify the strategies and that have been undertaken by the 21 case study destinations to achieve these best practice principles for sustainable destination planning and management. Best practice snapshots derived from the case study research have been used to demonstrate how these best practices have been implemented in real destination contexts.

## **Best Practice Principle One**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations establish long-term strategic planning processes to guide the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism**

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Tourism planning is concerned with strategic decision-making process about the allocation of resources to achieve optimum economic, environmental and socio-cultural outcomes for destinations and their stakeholders. It is dependent on the conduct of research, the monitoring of changing environments, the evaluation of alternative strategies and the achievement of commitment amongst stakeholders. Best practice regional tourism destinations establish long-term strategic tourism planning processes to guide the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism.

#### **Best Practice Strategies**

To establish long-term strategic planning processes best practice regional destinations:

- seek the support of local community champions or visionary leaders that have: technical, communication and facilitation skills, are well respected by the community, and that can effectively tap into local networks to lead the strategic planning process;
- engage experienced tourism consultants if tourism planning expertise is lacking at a destination level;
- seek the support of governments (local and state), industry (LTO, RTO, Business groups) and community stakeholder organisations;
- establish effective consultation processes to engage and consult with interested government, business, community and Indigenous stakeholders across local, regional, state and national levels;
- engage the community in all stages of the planning process to ensure community ownership of the Plan;
- establish and communicate a shared vision for tourism amongst all stakeholders;
- undertake and utilise research to inform decision-making;
- undertake an assessment of the current and future market situation (e.g. audits of existing tourist facilities, identification of tourists' preferences and behaviours, identification of competitor destinations and consideration of broader issues—changing environmental conditions and resources, airline capacity, visitor markets, sustainability, prediction of future trends);
- specify realistic time frames—short-term (1–3 years, medium-term 3–5 years and longer-term 5–10 years);
- identify priority actions and identify implementation strategies (e.g. local government employment of a Tourism Officer, formation of a Reference Group);
- integrate with local and state government plans and policies, for example natural resource management, town and land use, social and cultural, economic development, infrastructure and risk management plans;
- establish a regular review framework (e.g. annually) to identify areas where strategies and actions need to change due to differing conditions; and
- facilitate learning amongst stakeholders about sustainable tourism.

## **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Development of a strategic tourism management plan to guide the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism for Byron Shire**

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Byron Shire Council (BSC) is committed to ensuring a sustainable future for Byron Shire that involves protecting and enhancing its sensitive natural environment while social and economic outcomes for its residents. In 2007, Council identified the need for a Tourism Management Plan and a supporting action plan that would help ensure the sustainable development, management and marketing of tourism for Byron Shire over the next 10 years.

Given the significance of tourism to the Shire's economy and the volatility of domestic tourism in Australia, it was considered imperative to maintain and enhance tourism as an economic driver for the local economy in a sustainable way in order to conserve the natural environment, protect the well-being of residents and attract visitors with shared values.

Despite the popularity of Byron Shire as a tourism destination, visitor numbers have remained relatively flat since 2002. In 2007, it was estimated that there were 1.1 million visitors to the Shire, a decrease of 15 percent from 2006. Although Byron Shire Council has developed sustainable development policies across many areas, it has not formulated a comprehensive tourism strategy since 1988<sup>3</sup>.

The *Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan (BSTMP) 2008–18* was developed as a living strategy to guide tourism in the Shire over the next 10 years. It was developed in consultation with a Byron Shire Council Steering Committee, a regional tourism expert panel, stakeholder organisations representing governments, business and community interests across local, regional and state levels, and a Citizen Jury that was established to gain input from community representatives.

The Plan was developed to:

- recognise the importance of Byron Shire as a destination;
- recognise Byron Bay as an iconic destination within the Shire;
- consider the destinations of Bangalow, Brunswick Heads, Mullumbimby, Ocean Shores/South Golden Beach, Byron Hinterland and the surrounding Shire, and the Shire's connection to the Northern Rivers region;
- consider and respond to the key areas of sustainability (economic, environmental, social);
- recognise the role of Byron Shire Council as a manager of the physical assets and infrastructure of the Shire;
- establish a shared vision for the future of tourism in Byron Shire with government, business and community stakeholders;
- reflect current best practice and innovation;
- adapt to changing conditions, local needs and issues (e.g. increased pressure from low cost carriers and fuel prices, natural impacts from prolonged drought and flood, and shifting consumer travel behaviour and preferences);
- integrate with existing Council policies, plans and strategies;
- outline short, medium and long-term actions for implementation; and
- incorporate an annual evaluation process.

Thirteen objectives were developed to guide the management, development, and marketing of tourism for the Shire over the next 10 years<sup>15</sup>. These objectives have been considered within Council's sustainability framework. Following is an outline of priorities identified for the Shire:

### ***Governance***

- Establishment of a Tourism Advisory Committee as an advisory Committee of Council to be positioned as the umbrella authority to lead and oversee the implementation of strategies and actions of the BSTMP;

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<sup>3</sup> A Tourism Capacity Study was developed by consultants in 2000 and a Tourism Management Options Paper was developed in cooperation with Tourism NSW in 2002.

- employment of a Tourism Officer to work with the Tourism Advisory Committee to implement strategic initiatives of the BSTMP;
- effective management and maintenance of infrastructure;
- integration of the BSTMP with other council and state government documents; and
- establishment of a research program to gather information on visitation, the economic, social and environmental benefits and impacts of tourism, and service quality.

### ***Economic***

- Investigation of funding for tourism management, development and marketing including the implementation of a tourism and business levy; and
- development and promotion of a consistent image for Byron Shire and its destinations related to their unique natural environment, laid-back atmosphere, spiritual and cultural diversity, health and well-being experiences and innovative enterprises.

### ***Social***

- Establishment of an education and communication program to ensure visitors, local businesses, local government and the community understand community values and tourism.

### ***Ecology***

- Development of Byron Shire as a world leading best practice environmentally responsible destination.

### ***Human Habitat***

- Development of an Investment and Infrastructure Strategy to identify and attract public and private sector investment for priority infrastructure and facilities; and
- respect for, and protection of, residential amenity and community values.

Strategies were established to address these and other objectives. An action plan outlined realistic short, medium and long-term actions for implementation over the next 10 years. An evaluation process was also outlined. At the time of writing, the Plan was on public exhibition for community comment<sup>15</sup>.

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## **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Strategic tourism planning guides the development and marketing of tourism for the Hunter Valley region**

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The management of tourism in the Hunter Valley region involves various government, tourism and wine industry stakeholder organisations across state, regional and local levels. The Hunter Regional Tourism Organisation (HRTO) is the peak industry body for tourism in the region. It is an independent, incorporated membership-based association funded by the private sector, Tourism New South Wales and local government. The role of HRTO is one of leadership and coordination and its core business is to stimulate the regional economy and grow employment opportunities.

The HRTO is the conduit between Tourism New South Wales, local tourism agencies, local governments and industry. Its mission is to establish, communicate and support the implementation of the strategic direction for tourism in the Hunter Region through processes which acknowledge the identity, importance, needs and opportunities of its sub-regions. HRTO is governed by a Board of Directors representative of the industry, sub-regions, local government and Tourism New South Wales.

To deliver objectives of the state strategic tourism plan, *Towards 2020—New South Wales Tourism Masterplan*, Tourism New South Wales requires its regional tourism organisations to develop three year plans that address initiatives for new infrastructure development, transport access, information and service, product development and enhancement, industry development and marketing strategies. In an effort to further tourism development and marketing of the Hunter Valley Region, Tourism New South Wales developed the *Hunter Valley Regional Tourism Plan 2005–08*. The destination region had reached a cross-road in terms of its tourism development. Visitor numbers have steadied, the region has a relative low market share of tourists compared to neighbouring regions, and new products are needed to boost tourism growth<sup>16</sup>.

The plan proposes ‘a new approach’ focused more on the needs of consumers. It is based on in-depth research and extensive consultation undertaken by Calais Consultants and Globe Consulting. It focuses on tasks that can be implemented over a three year period and insists on a new approach to promoting tourism in the Hunter Region. Tourism New South Wales supports new measures that will:

- identify and meet consumer needs;
- tap into new and growing markets;
- enable tourism operators to effectively communicate with consumers; and
- make it quick and easy for consumers to source and purchase tourism products and services.

The plan is divided into four key strategic areas: marketing, development, sales and management structures. The key objectives of the plan are to:

- provide a new strategic marketing direction for the Hunter Region (enabling the region to both effectively target and communicate to visitors, and to identify product development opportunities in line with market needs);
- identify ways to attract new and/or growing markets (intrastate markets, interstate markets, international markets, business tourism, cruise tourism, events);
- examine potential linkages within the Hunter Region and with neighbouring regions;
- prioritise infrastructure and development opportunities that will have maximum short to medium term impact for the region;
- increase the conversion of consumer interest to purchase of a holiday in the Hunter Region through improved information distribution, visitor services and the use of technology; and
- ensure the right structures are in place to deliver a new business model.

The Hunter Tourism Board was positioned as the authority to guide the plan’s funding and implementation through the development of detailed business plans. An ‘Implementation Program’ was allocated to each of the four strategic areas, identifying responsibilities, timeframes and budgets. Destination Marketing Teams (DMTs) were also established around the principal product zones, bringing together a network of product specialists to grow visitation.

**Table 2: Stakeholder organisations with an interest in tourism in the Hunter Valley region**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role and Activities</b>
<b>The Hunter Economic Development Corporation</b>	Appointed by the NSW State Government and supported by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development to promote economic development in the Hunter region.
<b>Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism</b>	An incorporated local tourism organisation with a membership base of over 550 businesses It operates an accredited visitor information centre located at the gateway to the Hunter Valley wine region that provides visitor information as well as wine education and tasting.
<b>The Hunter Valley Vineyards Association</b>	Formed in June 2008, the HVVA replaces the Hunter Valley Vineyard Association (HVVA) and Wine Hunter Marketing and was formed after an exhaustive 18 month process. The aim of the association is to develop and support the Hunter Valley through the implementation of a strategic business plan that addresses marketing, viticulture, winemaking and policy issues.

### Best Practice Snapshot 3: The Destination Daylesford strategic tourism planning process

Tourism Victoria identified the need for a strategic tourism plan for Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds to ensure future sustainable tourism development. This was backed by stakeholders including the Hepburn Shire Council, tourism and business operators and community groups. The aim of the plan was to:

- provide focus and direction for the local tourism industry;
- assure the on-going sustainability of the local tourism industry;
- provide a basis for local, state and federal government support;
- better utilise opportunities provided by the area's unique Mineral Water Reserves and Bathhouse redevelopment;
- address the challenges of a dynamic international and domestic tourism environment; and
- enhance and protect the well-being and uniqueness of this special place for visitors and its residents<sup>17</sup>.

The *Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan 2008–18* provided the first coordinated strategic and integrated approach to the management, development and marketing of tourism for the region. It was developed by the Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre at Southern Cross University in 2008, in collaboration with Tourism Victoria, the Hepburn Regional Tourism Association, Hepburn Shire Council and Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Tourism Incorporated. The plan intended to:

- further position Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds as a leading iconic mineral springs destination nationally and internationally;
- respond to the key areas of sustainability (economic, environmental, social);
- establish a shared vision for the future of tourism in Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds with government, business and community stakeholders;
- encourage dispersal of visitors to the emerging destinations of Creswick, Clunes and Trentham;
- recognise the connection of Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds to the nearby Macedon Ranges and Ballart regions;
- reflect current best practice and innovation;
- adapt to changing conditions, local needs and issues;
- outline realistic short, medium and long-term actions for implementation; and
- incorporate an annual evaluation process<sup>17</sup>.

It was recognised in the plan that a sustainable tourism destination is achieved by balancing social, environmental and economic values. There was a need to protect and enhance the natural and built features upon which the tourism industry is based to appropriately develop and market the destination. It was also important to ensure that tourism was consistent with community values and aspirations and contributed to community development and well-being.

Following is an outline of the process to develop the *Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan 2008–18*.

<b>Stage One</b>	A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to examine best practice in destination planning, determine how tourism had evolved and was managed in the destination and to examine the key issues associated with tourism.
<b>Stage Two</b>	A comprehensive situational analysis was undertaken that involved a detailed analysis of visitation statistics to develop a profile of visitation to the destination region, and an audit of all accommodation and tourism product facilities, attractions and supporting facilities within the Hepburn Shire.
<b>Stage Three</b>	A comprehensive consultation process was facilitated to engage business, government and community stakeholders throughout the strategic planning process. This involved stakeholder focus groups and a Citizen Jury process.
<b>Stage Four</b>	Development of the Destination Daylesford Strategic Plan and Action Plan.
<b>Stage Five</b>	Communication of the Plan to stakeholders.

The following vision for tourism in Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds was developed through consultation with government, industry and community stakeholders:

*To position Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds as an internationally and nationally renowned mineral water and wellness centre, sharing and celebrating its unique heritage, cultural diversity, community lifestyle, rural landscapes, natural resources, and built attractions with visitors. Over the next ten years and beyond tourism will be developed and facilitated by appropriate, balanced, sustainable, inclusive and visionary policies which ensure social, economic and environmental benefits for the community and offer best practice experiences for visitors.*

Ten objectives were developed to guide the sustainable destination management, development and marketing for Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds for 2008 to 2018. A detailed action plan outlined the rationale, recommendations and strategic initiatives associated with these objectives.

1. Establish an effective and collaborative tourism management structure to guide tourism locally that contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the region.
2. Integrate the Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan into local and state government policy and review existing development controls.
3. Undertake research to improve understanding of the value of tourism, visitor needs and satisfaction, and the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism.
4. Provide on-going local information and communication to ensure visitors, local businesses, local government and the community understand tourism and community values.
5. Establish Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds as a destination renowned for excellence in service quality.
6. Encourage the development of quality tourism product and investment outcomes consistent with the destination's brand positioning.
7. Develop Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds as an environmentally responsible destination.
8. Market Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds as a nationally and internationally renowned spa, wellness and mineral water centre, consistent with the Daylesford and Macedon Ranges product region as recognised in Victoria's Tourism Strategy
9. Maximise the effectiveness of visitor information services and interpretation for visitors.
10. Support and maximise the benefits of festivals and events across the region<sup>17</sup>.

The final version of the plan was released in August 2008 and received widespread industry and community approval. Acceptance of this potentially controversial plan is largely attributed to the thorough and genuine consultation process adopted throughout the strategic planning process. Tourism Victoria's Regional Advisor described the process as 'world's best practice'. The CEO of Tourism Victoria stated that: 'Tourism—if it is to work effectively—requires a level of cohesion and commitment ... this plan will enable Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and the region to become a renowned national and international star wellness and mineral water centre that it has the capacity to be'.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Flinders Ranges Geotourism Strategy reinvigorates tourism in the region**

The Flinders Ranges Tourism Operators Association (FRTOA) was formed in 2003 as a not-for-profit, volunteer organisation of regional tourism operators that works with the community and government agencies to build tourism initiatives and products. The association has approximately 30 members with the executive representing Arkaroola, Willow Springs and Barking Gecko Tours. Its main aims are to:

- promote and facilitate collaboration and self-help initiatives among operators, suppliers, customers and agencies of tourism in the Flinders Ranges (e.g. through industry forums and planning sessions);
- develop and promote the Flinders Ranges as a tourist destination;
- represent the interests of the tourism industry and operators in the Flinders Ranges; and
- raise local community awareness of the economic importance of tourism to the Flinders Ranges<sup>18</sup>.

The Flinders Ranges Geotourism Strategy (FRGS) was initiated by FRTOA in 2005, with support from the South Australian Tourism Commission, to reinvigorate regional tourism in the Flinders Ranges<sup>19</sup>. Geotourism is defined as a form of tourism that sustains the geographical character of a place.

Between August 2005 and February 2006, FRGS hosted three geotourism forums in the Flinders Ranges which focused on:

- the significance of the Flinders Ranges;
- protection issues; and
- Natural Landscapes (a joint branding initiative of Tourism Australia and Parks Australia).

The forums were attended by tourist operators, pastoralists, business people and community representatives. They were developed by a voluntary group of district representatives with input from the Northern Region Development Board (NRDB) and Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH). The forums identified a need to build knowledge, protect assets, improve infrastructure and services, access funding opportunities and learn more about markets<sup>19</sup>.

Strategic outcomes included an asset audit undertaken as part of the FRGS identified geotourism assets and opportunities, regional branding and markets and issues for the community.

### ***Vision***

The deeply evocative landscape and rich cultural heritage of the Flinders Ranges will be utilised to promote a distinctive, reinvigorated and sustainable tourism industry by 2012, providing stable employment opportunities for the Flinders Ranges community.

### ***Mission***

*We will achieve our vision through strong regional collaboration, delivery of high quality interpretation, investment in community knowledge and engagement with the region's youth.*

The FRGS identified four goals to achieve this mission:

- develop a stronger and more distinctive brand for the Flinders Ranges;
- generate new and sustainable economic opportunities for the Flinders Ranges community;
- create a strong sense of regional identity and connectivity between all districts; and
- protect the unique natural and cultural assets of the Flinders Ranges.

The community has retained strong ownership of the development process of the FRGS and has initiated a thorough and inclusive planning process. Future aims include a focus on investment in community knowledge. Through regular meetings and forums, the FRTOA has received broad community support to guide the development of tourism for the next five years. Implementation of its strategy is, nonetheless, dependent on the continued funding from Commonwealth, state and local government agencies.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 5: Stakeholder cooperation to develop an integrated planning framework to guide the management and development of tourism for Cradle Mountain**

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Cradle Mountain is a National Park with World Heritage Area listing. Tourism activity and operations are mostly guided by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (TP&WS). Tourism development in areas which fall outside TP&WS jurisdiction is generally managed by the local Kentish Council, with support from Cradle Coast Authority and Cradle Mountain Tourism Association.

In 2003, the Cradle Mountain Tourism Development Plan (CMTDP) was launched to ensure that future tourism development meets the conservation needs of the natural area, while providing an interesting and educational experience for visitors. The plan reflected a partnership between Tourism Tasmania, the Department of Economic Development, TP&WS, the Cradle Coast Authority, Kentish Council, Cradle Tourism Associated and Friends of Cradle<sup>20</sup>. It was developed in response to the need for a more integrated approach to the management of the Cradle area. The plan aims to ensure that future development of tourism infrastructure occurs within a framework that supports the World Heritage Area Plan. Key infrastructure projects recommended in the plan include new signage, a new village, new visitor centre, centralised sewerage systems and safe water storage<sup>20</sup>.

The CMTDP involves three key components which are outlined below.

#### ***1. Assessing the overall situation in Cradle***

Previous reports and documents were considered to help determine an accurate picture of tourism in the Cradle Mountain area. They revealed consistent issues relating to tourism development which are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3: Future tourism development issues identified by Cradle Mountain Stakeholders<sup>21</sup>**

A need for development to be compatible with the values of the World Heritage Area (WHA)
An integrated approach to tourism development within the whole of the Cradle area, both inside and outside of the WHA
There must be a long term vision for Cradle
Greater resources need to be given to presentation of WHA values
A need to upgrade Cradle Mountain and Dove Lake Roads whilst protecting WHA values and improving visitor safety
There needs to be a consistent, integrated and innovative approach to regulating and maintaining development
There must be a common set of planning controls that apply to both public and private development
There must be some upgrading of infrastructure and services to cope with increased visitation and to reduce environmental risks
There needs to be better information about visitor needs and experiences
There must be a coordinated and collaborative approach to manage the future tourism development at Cradle

## **2. Providing a planning framework to guide the plan**

Having identified key stakeholders relevant to future tourism development, a vision statement and set of objectives were prepared for discussion. The proposed vision states that:

*Cradle is a place with world class natural and cultural values where quality facilities and experiences are promoted, provided and managed in a sustainable manner<sup>21</sup>.*

From this, a key set of principles were devised to ensure the tourism vision could be achieved. These key principles aim to encourage:

- quality visitor experiences;
- efficient, effective, flexible and safe visitor access;
- a well designed built environment;
- best practice infrastructure;
- inspiring, engaging and informative interpretation;
- both new and existing visitor activities, products and services;
- a commitment to an integrated land use strategy;
- effective environmental management; and
- a collaborate and effective management system<sup>21</sup>

## **3. Outlining the delivery mechanisms for achieving the plan**

Twenty-six strategies were proposed to support the key tourism principles. They include:

- developing a better signage strategy for the region;
- avoiding the need for additional car park spaces by introducing an integrated transportation system;
- developing better sewerage and wastewater systems in the long term;
- establishing an overall Interpretation and Information Plan for Cradle;
- constructing a new visitor information centre; and
- adding to the existing activity base and linking new attractions which build on the prestige of the natural appeal of the area.

To assist with the implementation of the plan, and to support tourism activities in the region, Kentish Council employs a dedicated Tourism Development Officer whose full time position sits within the Community Development portfolio.

At the time of writing, several of the strategies proposed in the plan had been implemented. The new products have been developed, including the Tasmanian Devil Park (Devils@Cradle) and The Wilderness

Gallery (Cradle Mountain Chateau). Leary's Corner has also been upgraded to present a more appropriate nature-based image to visitors entering the Cradle Mountain area. A tourist shuttle bus service now runs during peak periods, transporting visitors from the visitor information centre into the Cradle Mountain National Park area.

#### **Best Practice Snapshot 6: Tourism stakeholders form alliance to develop shared vision for Alice Springs**

The Central Australian Tourism Industry Association (CATIA)—renamed Tourism Central Australia in 2007—has been the region's peak tourism body for more than 15 years. Its primary roles are marketing the region, servicing members and providing visitor information services. The organisation employs a team of full-time and part-time staff, and its general manager reports to an executive committee<sup>22</sup>. CATIA is perceived locally as a powerful tourism body that encourages and facilitates cooperation amongst agencies and tourism operators.

CATIA and Tourism Northern Territory (NT) have a long-standing relationship and share a common approach to destination management and marketing. The Regional Director for Central Australia within Tourism NT is located in Alice Springs, providing an opportunity for on-going collaboration and communication between the organisations.

Tourism NT and CATIA have helped to establish clear strategic visions and action plans to support tourism development in Alice Springs. Both organisations are represented on the Alice Springs Tourism Infrastructure Project Team which was established to support implementation of the *2006–15 Tourism Infrastructure Framework —Strengthening the Position of Alice Springs Tourism*. Other representative organisations include Alice Springs Town Council, the Department of the Chief Minister and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The team's goal is to ensure Alice Springs is highly regarded and recognised as a quality destination of choice that meets the needs of a growing tourism industry<sup>23</sup>. CATIA also supports Aboriginal involvement and cooperation in destination management and planning, and embraces the cultural diversity of Alice Springs.

Community cultural awareness is integral to the success of the Alice Springs tourism industry. The *Alice Springs Town Council Strategic Plan 2004–09* sets a vision for Alice Springs as 'a vibrant and growing community that embraces its cultural heritage, its unique identity and desert living environment'. Council's Strategic Plan identifies a goal to 'increase cultural awareness and understanding', while respect for special Aboriginal sites and customs is seen as critical to ensuring positive economic, community and environmental outcomes<sup>24</sup>. An equally important goal of the strategic plan is to achieve a 'united, supportive and healthy community'. This presents challenges for a socially and culturally diverse community with competing needs and visions for the town<sup>24</sup>.

Over the years, Tourism NT and CATIA have engaged external experts to help establish clear strategic tourism visions and action plans for Alice Springs and the Northern Territory. In 2005, Sustainable Tourism Services was commissioned by Tourism NT to assist in strengthening the position of Destination Alice Springs and provide a stronger platform for future marketing. This project culminated in a positioning paper titled *Strengthening the Position of Alice Springs Tourism: Taking the Next Steps*<sup>25</sup> which identified three main forms of tourism for the town:

1. heritage tourism;
2. Indigenous tourism; and
3. experiential tourism (taking advantage of Alice Springs' desert environment and outback adventure possibilities).

More recently AEC Group was engaged to produce the NT Tourism Strategic Plan 2008–12. This plan identified six core issues for Alice Springs:

1. developing the unique Northern Territory experience;
2. enhancing access, infrastructure and skills;
3. marketing and promoting the Northern Territory experience;
4. strengthening strategic partnerships;
5. advancing research and industry understanding; and
6. enhancing environmental sustainability.

This plan is backed by broad performance indicators developed by Tourism NT in the areas of Tourism Product, Tourism Investment, Tourism Demand and Tourism in Context<sup>26</sup>.

**Best Practice Snapshot 7: Stakeholder cooperation and strategic tourism planning to manage and market Launceston and Tamar Valley region**

Strategic planning has been integral to sustainable tourism development in the Launceston and Tamar Valley region. *The Launceston Tourism Plan 2005–10* was developed by the Launceston City Council, with support from Tourism Tasmania and Northern Tasmania Development, to provide a vision for tourism and identify marketing strategies. It involved the cooperation and input of key industry stakeholders and a Launceston Tourism Reference Group.

Developed prior to the establishment of the Launceston Tamar Valley region, it is likely to be revised to ensure its relevance to the wider region. The original plan was developed on the back of close consultation with the local community and other relevant stakeholders. While the plan focuses predominantly on the marketing of Launceston as a destination, it outlines a number of related strategic considerations outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4: Key components of the Launceston Tourism Plan**

<b>Plan objective</b>	<b>To identify and maximise future opportunities of visitor attraction, retention and economic yield for Launceston</b>
<b>Components of the plan</b>	An overview of the tourism market and profile of visitors
	Identification of target markets
	Marketing strategies towards identified target markets
	Challenges associated with planned strategies
	Branding of the destination
	Risk analysis associated with planned strategies
	Identification of future product/experience development needs
	Mechanisms and resources needed to implement strategies
	Action plans

Source: <sup>27</sup>

The plan provided the impetus for the Launceston Tourism Reference Group, which was established as a committee of the Launceston City Council to implement strategies outlined in the plan. The group consists of eight members including representatives from Tourism Tasmania, Council, Northern Tasmania Development and the tourism industry<sup>28</sup>.

Similar strategic plans were developed, in pre-merger days, for the Tamar Valley region. The *Tamar Valley Action Agenda* was developed by Tourism Tasmania in 2001 as part of the *Tasmanian Wine and Food Tourism Strategy*. It aimed to ‘be a stand alone regional development strategy for wine and food tourism for the Tamar Valley region, with Launceston positioned as the services hub’<sup>29</sup>. In 2004, Northern Tasmania Development developed a plan relevant to tourism in Launceston Tamar Valley and the broader region<sup>30</sup>.

All planning processes and supporting documentation have been essential to ensuring effective on-going management and marketing of the Launceston Tamar Valley as a tourist destination.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 8: Cross border collaboration to plan and manage tourism in the Murray River region**

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The Victorian, New South Wales and South Australian Governments have initiated regional planning and management imperatives to provide a framework for the development of regional tourism for the Murray River region.

***Tourism Victoria***

Tourism Victoria has taken a lead role in tourism planning, and has facilitated collaboration with New South Wales and South Australian tourism authorities. Specifically, it spearheaded development of *The Regional Tourism Development Plan—Murray 2004–07* which aimed to:

- engage the wider business community in tourism activities;
- identify, develop and support community/industry leaders within the region;
- increase community understanding and support for tourism; and
- raise the profile and positioning of the Murray as an iconic destination.

Criteria were incorporated in the plan to identify level 1, 2 and 3 destinations, as well as type A and B ‘villages’. To be rated or upgraded, a destination or village was required to successfully engage in destination planning.

In its *Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009–12*, Tourism Victoria indicates that it will work with state government agencies, the Regional Tourism Board, local government, investors and industry to facilitate the following priority projects:

- high quality accommodation with large capacity, integrated with a regional conference facility (Mildura, Wodonga and Yarrawonga);
- nature-based infrastructure and investment product along the Murray River, including consideration of a river trail with appointed visitor accommodation (similar to the Great Ocean Walk model);
- tourism infrastructure and product to support the Port of Echuca as a heritage port and Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement;
- implementation of the Mildura Riverfront Master Plan to create a riverside tourism precinct that integrates the Mildura CBD with the Murray River and marina; and
- completion of Bonegilla Migrant Centre experience.

*Victoria’s Nature-based Tourism Strategy 2008–12* was developed cooperatively by Tourism Victoria, Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment to plan for major opportunities for tourism development in the Murray region including:

- improved industry capacity to leverage the ‘The Murray River. Wind Down’ campaign;
- united vision across state tourism organisations; and
- developing and upgrading infrastructure along the Murray River.

The *Victorian Tourism Infrastructure Development Strategy* is being developed concurrently with the regional tourism development plans. The strategy is an independent assessment of project priorities for the decade ahead, based on consultation with stakeholders and investor groups. Recommended projects aim to:

- match market needs;
- enhance tourism product strengths;
- maximise infrastructure performance;
- offer a sustainable triple bottom line competitive advantage; and
- address regional development priorities.

Tourism Victoria has proposed additional priorities that include:

- creating a Regional Tourism Board, in cooperation with Tourism New South Wales and local stakeholders, that is responsible for tourism marketing, industry and product development;
- developing a General Service Agreement that is agreed by industry, Tourism New South Wales and Tourism Victoria;
- enhancing research to incorporate visitation data from Victoria and New South Wales; and

- enhancing the region's involvement in international marketing activities through initiatives such as Sydney Melbourne Touring.<sup>4</sup>

### *Tourism New South Wales*

Tourism New South Wales is currently producing three-year tourism plans for NSW regional areas to support the objectives of *Towards 2020—New South Wales Tourism Masterplan*. These plans focus on new infrastructure development, transport, access information and service, product development/enhancement and industry development. External marketing strategies will developed to:

- identify the region's competitive advantage;
- identify activities that build on the development initiatives as well as existing product strengths;
- identify key products;
- provide a market demand analysis and review visitation trends and forecasts;
- address distribution and marketing channel considerations;
- outline promotional activities (e.g. campaigns and public relations); and
- develop regional alliances and integrated destination marketing.

### *South Australian Tourism*

In South Australia, a series of plans and strategies have been specially developed to better manage tourism planning and development. The *Riverland Tourism Strategy* incorporates key findings of economic, market, resource, social, landscape, and environmental and planning policy investigations undertaken by QED Pty Ltd in partnership with the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC), Department of Environment and Heritage and regional councils. The plan focuses on critical success factors including:

- developing a clear brand position;
- providing memorable experiences;
- establishing 'iconic products';
- providing infrastructure that facilitates the regional experience;
- aligning planning policy to encourage investment in new product; and
- building the tourism industry's capacity and capability.

The plan sets a series of priority actions and strategies for implementation. It identifies nature, healthy lifestyles, water-sports and special interest tourism and recreational activities as fundamental to the Murray tourism experience.

The *South Australian Tourism Commission's Strategic Plan 2009–14* identifies 13 key strategies aimed at assisting the state's tourism sector to 'communicate, develop, leverage and activate'. The adoption of a whole-of-government approach to tourism is seen as critical to the plan's success. The South Australian Tourism Commission has also committed to developing regional integrated strategic tourism plans for the state's 12 tourism regions as part of its Sustainable Tourism Package. SATC will also encourage the use of destination management tools such as the Tourism Optimisation Management Tool to monitor the health and sustainability of South Australia's tourism destinations.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 9: Developing tourism in the Port Arthur and Tasman region through collaboration and community consultation**

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Development of the Port Arthur and Tasman region as a destination has progressed in more recent years through a cooperative, community-focused approach to planning and development involving the Tasman Council, Port Arthur and Tasman Tourism Association (formerly PARM), the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority and local tourism operators.

*The Tasman Tourism Development Strategy (TTDS)*, developed in 2005, has been the most important recent effort to guide the future development, management and marketing of tourism in the Tasman region. The plan was instigated by the Tasman Council and Tourism Tasmania, and developed in consultation with key tourism operators and representatives of stakeholder groups including the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority and Port Arthur Region Marketing (now PATTA). The Parks and Wildlife Service has been key to

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<sup>4</sup> Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009-2012, Tourism Victoria

successful implementation of the TTDS, providing a site planner to ensure any development of the Eaglehawk Neck Site preserves the iconic, natural features of the area.

The following provides an overview of the TTDS process and purpose:

*Enormous amounts of money, time and resources were invested in the development of the Tasman Tourism Development Strategy (TTDS). The strategy aims to strengthen the region’s tourism industry for the benefit of the whole community. The process for this strategy was consultative-based and community input was a key element of the development of the document. It was not developed as an overnight or short-term ‘fix’. The strategy has long-term implications for the development of tourism within the local region.*

*The Tasman Tourism Development Strategy (TTDS) is a blueprint for the repositioning of our region with future sustainability of the industry as its core aim. It contains the key elements for driving this region’s tourism industry forward, making it more appealing to the market and more competitive. It is about strengthening the offering by developing and promoting a ‘new’ set of experiences, to complement those that already exist.*

*The future success of our regional tourism industry lies in moving away from the traditional approach of relying solely on the iconic drawcard of PAHS as a ‘magnet’ for tourists ...<sup>31</sup>*

The Port Arthur and Tasman region is currently focusing its efforts on retaining visitors in the region by offering more tourist experiences and establishing the area as ‘a destination in its own right’. The four key strategies of the TTDS are noted in Table 5.

**Table 5: Key strategies of the Tasman Tourism Development Strategy<sup>32</sup>**

<b>Tourism Strategies for the Future</b>
(1) Maintain current market share and visitor experience
(2) Encourage investment to address infrastructure and product gaps
(3) Develop an iconic natural coastal precinct
(4) Communicate and promote ‘Destination Tasman’

Strategy 3 (‘to develop an iconic natural coastal precinct’) is considered essential to ensuring the region’s future development as a destination. It recognises the need to further develop its natural attractions to complement its cultural heritage status<sup>32</sup>. Such development will initially be focused on the establishment of a ‘single iconic natural coastal site’ at Eaglehawk Neck. This site lends itself to being recognised as a ‘point of arrival’ or ‘gateway’ into the region and offers a range of natural coastline features and tourism activities.

As well as developing a clear coastal precinct and gateway to the region, the strategy has identified a critical need to improve public amenities (e.g. toilets, visitor services centre), marine amenities, parking facilities, road signage and pedestrian accessibility for the benefit of residents and tourists<sup>32</sup>.

Substantial public funding and private sector investment is needed to effectively implement the strategy. At the time of writing, Tasmania’s largest hotel and resort chain, Federal Hotels and Resorts, was planning to develop a new luxury style accommodation property adjacent to the Historic Site by late 2010. This is expected to bring a higher yield visitor to the region<sup>33</sup>. Such investment and development of accommodation infrastructure in the region—considered critical to future tourism development—must complement the area’s natural attractions and enhance the local character. The developer is working closely with the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority to ensure that any new development has minimum visual negative impact on the Historic Site<sup>33</sup>.

## **Best Practice Principle Two**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations establish an effective destination management structure to lead and facilitate stakeholder cooperation for the sustainable development, management and marketing of tourism**

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As explained in Chapter 2, effective governance of sustainable regional destinations involves the establishment and maintenance of appropriate collaborative structures and processes to lead and manage tourism across governments, business and community interests. The underlying principle of good governance is to provide a collaborative forum in which the core competencies of individual actors and stakeholder agencies can be pooled to develop synergies and produce better outcomes than would otherwise be the case. To establish an effective destination management framework requires consideration of the willingness, expertise, knowledge and availability of government, business and community stakeholders to foster and support a collaborative approach to the management of tourism within different contexts.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To establish an effective destination management framework, best practice regional destinations:

- encourage and support local leaders with extensive tourism or professional expertise who foster and drive collaborative approaches to tourism management through sound decision-making, analytical capabilities and engagement with stakeholders and their local community;
- identify clear roles and responsibilities for stakeholder organisation involvement (e.g. LTO, RTO, STO, local government, business groups, other government agencies, significant community groups);
- establish an overarching Board structure comprising representatives from local government, business and community stakeholder interests with expertise/knowledge of tourism;
- provide a structure for communication and information exchange about tourism amongst stakeholders;
- develop strategic and operational plans to guide the development, management and marketing of tourism;
- establish specialist committees (e.g. marketing, events, policy);
- utilise consultants, where appropriate, to ensure expert advice on tourism (e.g. strategic planning, issues);
- ensure support by full-time and part-time staff (e.g. marketing, event management, administration, finance and commercial services);
- foster on-going collaboration between business, governments and community across local, regional and state levels; and
- work collaboratively with surrounding regions and their LTOs/RTOs and local governments.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Industry and government involvement and cooperation in the management of tourism for the Hunter Valley region**

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The management of tourism in the Hunter Valley region involves a number of government, tourism and wine industry stakeholder organisations across state, regional and local levels. The region boasts a mature and dynamic tourism industry structure incorporating the Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism, Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association and Hunter Valley Regional Tourist Organisation. Following is an outline of the functions and activities of the principal stakeholders.

#### ***Hunter Regional Tourism Organisation (HRTO)***

Hunter Regional Tourism Organisation (HRTO) was established in 1994 as the peak industry body for tourism in the Hunter Region, as part of a regional tourism framework comprising 16 RTOs established by Tourism New South Wales. HRTO is an independent, incorporated membership-based association funded by the private sector, Tourism New South Wales and local government. The HRTO provides leadership and coordination, and its core business is to stimulate the regional economy and grow regional employment opportunities in the region through increased visitation, longer visits and greater visitor spend.

The organisation provides a link between Tourism New South Wales and local tourism agencies, local governments and industry. The mission of the HRTO is to establish, communicate and support the implementation of a strategic direction for tourism in the Hunter Region through processes which acknowledge the identity, importance, needs and opportunities of its sub-regions.

HRTO is governed by a Board of Directors representative of industry, sub-regions, local government and Tourism New South Wales. In recent years, HRTO has coordinated the development of a regional strategic tourism plan which has encouraged stronger industry collaboration. The development of a strategic plan by a structured, focused group provided the catalyst for stronger regional relationships.

HRTO has improved coordination of local tourist associations and relationships with local governments. It has a strong, regional membership base and has been reasonably successful in capturing the Hunter Valley brand as part of the broader regional marketing program.

### ***Hunter Valley Wine Country***

Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism (HVWC) is a local tourism association and an incorporated body with a membership base of more than 550 businesses (refer <http://www.winecountry.com.au/>). It operates the visitor information centre located just outside of Cessnock. It identifies its mission to 'provide the very best visitor information services, marketing and promotional services, business tourism support and membership services'. The HVWC is has experienced significant growth in recent years.

### ***The Hunter Economic Development Corporation***

The Hunter Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) is an organisation appointed by the NSW State Government and supported by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development. Led by a Board of 10 regional and business leaders, its major task is to promote economic development in the Hunter region by:

- facilitating the creation of sustainable jobs;
- attracting investment;
- providing advice to government about the region's economic development issues; and
- demonstrating leadership and partnership to regional stakeholders.

To achieve its goals, the HEDC has developed an investment market strategy which focuses on:

- building local confidence in the region;
- improving the image of the Hunter nationally and internationally;
- targeting industry sectors and companies that can be matched with the Hunter's resources and skills; and
- developing investment packages for individual companies.

The HEDC has developed the 'Hunter Means Business' regional brand which has been adopted by regional stakeholders, providing a consistent message to potential investors.

### ***The Hunter Valley Wine Industry (HVWIA)***

The recently formed Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association (HVWIA) elected its inaugural management committee in June 2008. The new organisation replaced the Hunter Valley Vineyard Association (HVVA) and Wine Hunter Marketing and was formed after an exhaustive 18 month process. The HVWIA is united in its aims to develop and support the Hunter Valley through the implementation of a strategic business plan addressing marketing, viticulture, winemaking and policy issues.

The former Hunter Valley Vineyard Association (HVVA) actively promoted Hunter Valley wines in association with wine tourism and the tourism industry. It was prominent in worker safety, facilitated an annual blood testing programme and held regular viticultural seminars. The association positioned itself as the peak Hunter wine and grape industry body and reference group for government and non-government organisations.

It lobbied on behalf of the industry in accordance with its 'Objects of the Association' and undertook vineyard and winemaking research in conjunction with the NSW Department of Agriculture and wine industry research facilities. Licensing and development issues have traditionally been closely monitored by the HVVA. Its promotional activities had a direct impact on tourism development in the area. The HVWIA will assume this broader role and responsibility, with a stronger focus on marketing.

***Local Government Authorities (Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton)***

***Maitland City Council***

Maitland City Council operates a fully accredited visitor information centre near the Maitland City Centre. The Council's Corporate Plan states that 'Maitland will be promoted in the international and domestic market as a tourist destination for its exceptional heritage, cultural and natural values and a gateway to the Hunter Valley'.

Further, the Plan states that the Council will 'recognise and support the merging tourism model for the region ... and further capitalisation on events for further growth and profile'. It observes that council will support marketing of the region with neighbouring areas, with a strong focus on tourism development and infrastructure.

In the *Management Plan 2008–11*, Council commits to conducting regional economic development networks, working groups and taskforces (Hunter Economic Development Forum, HEDC and Department of State and Regional Development).

***Cessnock City Council***

Cessnock City Council identifies tourism as one of its four key economic development projects and strategies. The council is a strong supporter of Hunter Wine and Country Tourism and assists with funding for the information centre. Cessnock City Council states on its web site that: 'The wine and tourism industries are an integral and important part of the future economic development and employment growth within the area. Support for the continued competitiveness of the tourism industry and the creation of an environment where businesses can succeed are central to Council's objectives'.

Council believes that the Hunter is one of the most important markets for national and international tourism in NSW, and the lower Hunter vineyards represent the single most important tourist attraction within the Hunter region. In order to promote continued growth in the tourism sector, Council has indicated it will:

- continue to develop and encourage the private sector to develop tourism infrastructure facilities;
- maintain an active involvement in the Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism Inc;
- continue to participate in the collection and dissemination of tourism data;
- provide and annually update tourism statistics for existing businesses and new investors; and
- develop and participate in a Management Board for the Vintage Hunter Wine and Visitors Centre.

***Singleton Council***

Council operates its own visitor information centre and visitor web site (<http://www.singletontourism.com.au/>) which provides a comprehensive information service and booking facility. In its *Management Plan 2008/09–2011/12*, Council recognises 'wine tourism' as an emerging and important employment generator. The Plan identifies tourism promotion and development as having the potential to be a significant contributor to the local economy and states the following key objectives:

- to facilitate the development and expansion of infrastructure and services essential for a successful tourism sector;
- to contribute, with industry leadership, to the marketing and promotion of Singleton as an attractive rural tourism destination;
- to facilitate and encourage growth and development of the wine tourism segment of the Singleton tourism industry;
- to promote the district's natural, heritage, agricultural and industrial resources through a proactive industry driven tourism organisation; and
- to build partnerships with other tourism organisations that will ultimately lead to making the Singleton Tourism product more sustainable.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 2: Establishing a destination management structure to guide the development, management and marketing of tourism in Byron Shire**

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As part of the consultation process undertaken in 2008 to develop the *Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan (BSTMP) 2008–18*<sup>15</sup>, careful consideration was given to the development of a destination management structure to guide the development, management and marketing of tourism. The consultation process identified the need:

- to establish a framework to govern the management of tourism within the Shire;
- for the tourism industry to be united and balanced;
- to develop local stakeholder involvement and commitment to break down barriers between the industry, Council and the community;
- for strong and competitive local tourism bodies (representing the Shire's towns and villages) that work as strategic partners for the Shire;
- for a Shire-wide approach to tourism management (not Byron-centric);
- for a local tourism body that works with other bodies including Northern Rivers Tourism (NRT); and
- for development of trust, understanding and cooperation essential to success of a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) and its objectives.

Byron Shire Council has a central role in tourism within the Shire. It is the consenting authority for most development applications and is responsible for decisions related to land use planning through the development of a *Local Environment Plan*. The New South Wales Government is the consent authority for development deemed as State Significant Development.

Council is also involved in the planning, provision and management of community activities, services and infrastructure that are shared by residents and visitors. These include parks and reserves, roads, water management, sewage treatment facilities, pedestrian and streetscape improvements, and public amenities such as toilets, bikeways and parking areas. Council also owns and manages two caravan parks and contributes to tourism-related initiatives. Byron Shire is currently represented on the NRT.

The local tourism and business sectors are represented by business and community organisations including Byron United, the Brunswick Heads Chamber of Commerce and the Bangalow Chamber of Commerce. These organisations are guided by the efforts of voluntary committees.

Given the absence of well-established local tourism organisation that represents tourism and business interests across the Shire, the BSTMP recommends that, in the short-term, a skills-based Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) be established as a committee of Byron Shire Council.

The TAC would comprise 11 members reflecting a mix of local government, business, community and the environment. Members would have appropriate experience and skills. It would be positioned as the umbrella tourism advisory authority responsible for:

- leading the implementation of strategies and actions outlined in the Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan;
- fostering links and engagement between Council, industry and community; and
- working cooperatively with local, state and regional government departments and agencies, local tourism and business organisations, Northern Rivers Tourism, environmental stakeholder organisations and the community.

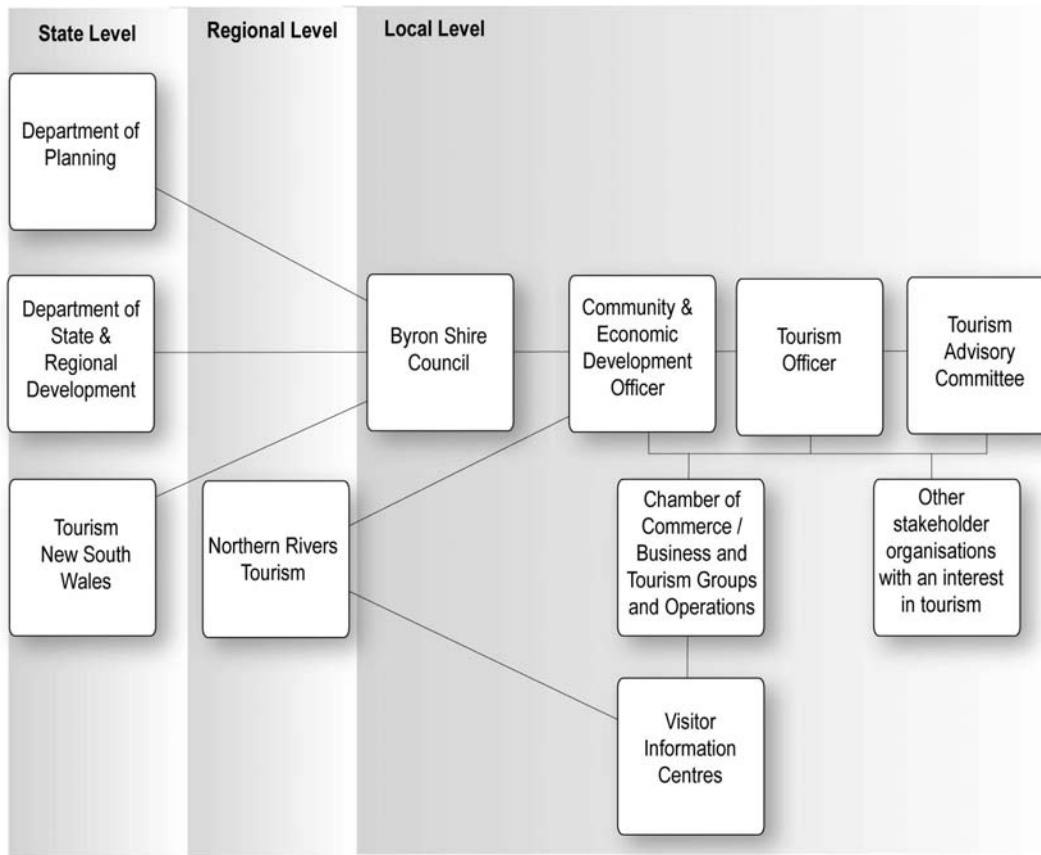
It was recommended that Byron Shire Council employ a full-time Tourism Officer to work with the TAC to implement strategic initiatives of the BSTMP and to manage Council's involvement in the management of tourism within the Shire. The Tourism Officer position should be supported with administrative funds and resources.

It was further recommended that the structure of the Tourism Advisory Committee be determined by a facilitated process comprising the BSTMP Steering Committee, the Tourism Advisory Panel and the Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre (ARTRC).

In the medium term, it was recommended that consideration be given to positioning the TAC within an industry-based organisation as the tourism and business sector matures across the Shire.

The following chart depicts the proposed management structure to guide the implementation of strategic initiatives of the BSTMP in the short-term. As at March 2009, Council were considering feedback from public exhibition of the Plan.

**Figure 4: Proposed tourism management structure for Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan**



### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Establishing an effective tourism management structure for Destination Daylesford**

At a local level, tourism management for Daylesford and Hepburn Springs had traditionally involved a number of different government and industry organisations. Locally, Hepburn Shire Council (HSC) provided funding for a Manager who was responsible for tourism economic development and recreation, as well operating the Shire's visitor information centres. Council also appointed a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) in 2006 to advise on tourism related issues. The TAC has not, however, been directly involved in the management of the local tourism industry.

From an industry perspective, many local and regional tourism associations had emerged over the years, only to disappear as the energy of voluntary committees dissipated. The Hepburn Regional Tourism Association (HRTA) was established in 2006 as an umbrella organisation to lead, represent and coordinate the interests of tourism operators in the region. The HRTA was positioned to complement the marketing role of the Daylesford Macedon Ranges Campaign Committee (DMRCC) and to work with the broader Daylesford and Macedon Ranges region, Hepburn Shire Council, local tourism associations and business groups.

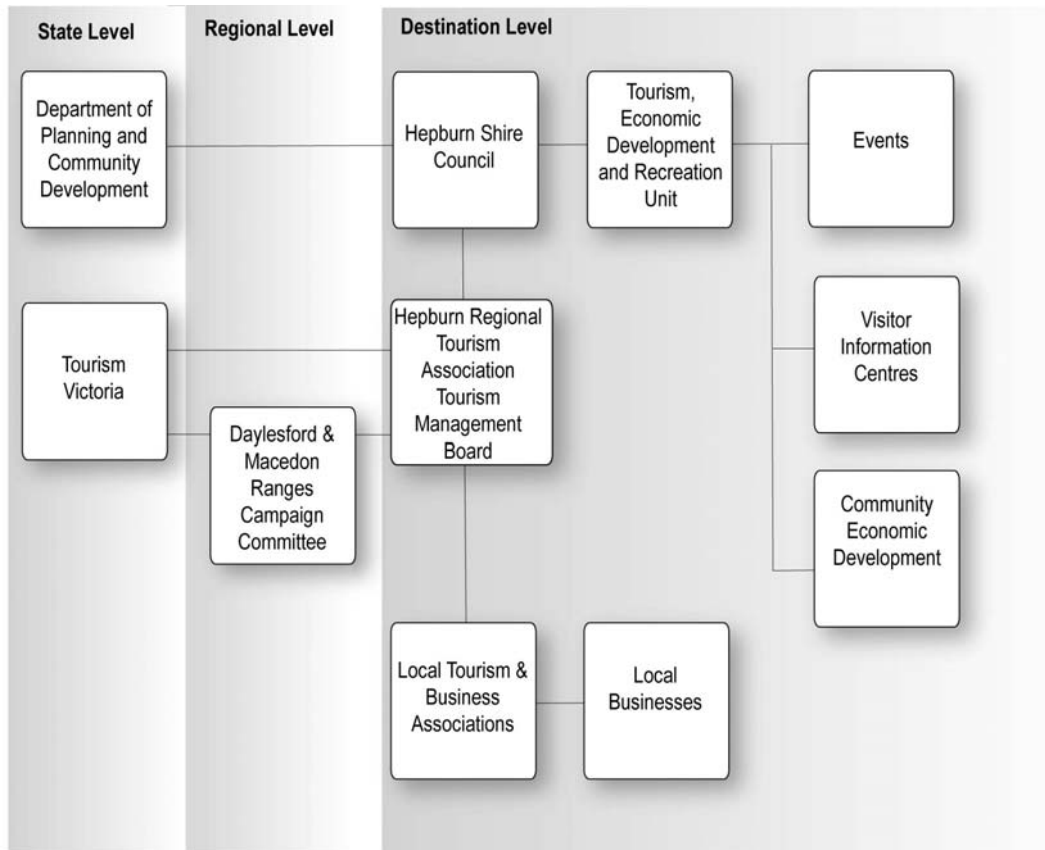
The HRTA gained considerable momentum since its establishment in 2006, and was well positioned to coordinate and represent the interests of local tourism and businesses. However, an adequately resourced, independent tourism management structure was needed to guide the management, development and marketing of tourism for Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and the broader region.

The *Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan 2008–18*<sup>17</sup>, developed in 2008 by the Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre at Southern Cross University, recommended that in the immediate term:

- a transitional Tourism Management Board (TMB) be established as a Board of the HRTA comprising representatives from the Destination Daylesford Steering Committee;
- the transitional TMB oversees the implementation of short-term strategies and actions of the Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan, and the establishment of a fully incorporated Tourism Management Board; and
- a Tourism Management Board be established as the Executive of the HRTA and positioned as the umbrella tourism authority to lead and work cooperatively with key government, industry and community stakeholder organisations and agencies to implement the strategic initiatives of the Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan.

Figure 5 shows the management structure that was developed.

**Figure 5: Proposed tourism management structure for Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds**



Tourism marketing initiatives that promote Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds were mostly undertaken by a few tourism operators in the absence of significant resources from the state government. However, since the emergence of Tourism Victoria’s ‘Jigsaw campaign’, local industry investment in marketing has been supplemented by funding from Tourism Victoria as part of a regional partnership program, and coordinated by the Daylesford Macedon Ranges Campaign Committee. This committee is well positioned to continue its role in coordinating marketing strategies for the destination in cooperation with Tourism Victoria.

#### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Great Ocean Road demonstrates enduring leadership through effective tourism structures and strong partnerships**

The Great Ocean Road region has long been regarded as a best practice region in Victoria and Australia for its strong local and regional tourism structures, professional leadership and cooperation both within the region and with state government bodies. The amalgamation of local government councils and the formation of the Great Ocean Road Marketing Committee (GORM) in the early 1990s, under the umbrella of Tourism Victoria's highly acclaimed Jigsaw Campaign, was an important milestone that provided strategic direction for tourism in the region. However, the region's success could not have been achieved without outstanding leadership from regional tourism organisations, backed by community champions with an understanding of strategic regional issues. Tourism structures in Victoria and the Great Ocean Road region are clearly defined.

##### *Great Ocean Road Marketing Committee (GORM)*

GORM is the independent peak marketing body for promoting the region to domestic markets under the auspices of Tourism Victoria's Regional Partnership Program. It is managed by a contracted Executive Officer and an Executive Committee consisting of representatives from its three partner RTOs—Geelong Otway Tourism, Shipwreck Coast Tourism and Discovery Coast Tourism—and specific skills-based representatives. A mix of state, local government and industry funding supports its marketing activities.

GORM has also played a pivotal role in coordinating tourism activities across the region. Through the RTOs, GORM represents an unprecedented cooperative partnership between 13 industry-supported local tourism associations (LTAs) and nine local councils across the region. The longevity, strength and maturity of the RTOs, particularly Geelong Otway Tourism and Shipwreck Coast Tourism, have resulted in continuity, focus and enduring partnerships, rarely achieved in regional tourism.

Both Geelong Otway Tourism and Shipwreck Coast Tourism have been frequently recognised as leading RTOs, winning state and national tourism awards. Since 1999, based on independent audits of its operational performance, Geelong Otway Tourism has consistently performed better than other RTOs. In some areas, it achieved best practice according to criteria set by the National Centre for Rural Tourism in 1998 for nationally accepted benchmarks and best practice systems in Australian RTOs<sup>34</sup>.

##### *Stakeholder cooperation*

The growth of sustainable tourism in the Great Ocean Road can also be attributed to stakeholder involvement in integrated planning processes. The strategic planning framework for tourism established by Tourism Victoria has filtered down to the regional level through regional tourism development plans, consistent with the state-wide strategy. All three RTOs in the Great Ocean Road region have an on-going consultative strategic planning process involving state government agencies, local councils, industry operators and destination communities. Strong working relationships have also been formed with Parks Victoria; the state government agency responsible for managing national, state and marine parks. Parks Victoria has contributed significant funding to develop visitor facilities and services in the region and participates on the Boards of the RTOs.

The integrated planning process was extended in 2004 with the development of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy<sup>35</sup>, which takes a whole-of-government and community approach to the longer term sustainability and development of the region. The creation of the Great Otway National Park, development of the Great Ocean Walk and initiatives to boost tourism and recreation opportunities in the Otway hinterland communities were direct outcomes of this strategy.

**Best Practice Snapshot 5: Noosa Council leads development of an effective and enduring destination management structure**

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Despite the growth of tourism during the 1980s, Noosa had no formal body responsible for the management of tourism. The Noosa District Tourist Association (NDTA) was formed in the late 1990s as a membership-based organisation that encouraged a collaborative approach to tourism development and planning. Not convinced of the effectiveness of this group, Noosa Council established and partly funded the Noosa Enterprise Group to ‘coordinate economic growth in Noosa, both in tourism and other areas, as well as developing of an event strategy’. At the outset, both organisations had conflicting approaches to the management of tourism in Noosa, resulting in considerable friction between Council and the NDTA. Over time, however, both organisations found common ground and began to share a mutual vision for tourism in the Shire.

In 1997, as a result of new planning legislation, Council facilitated a community consultation process aimed at formulating new statutory planning documents for the Shire. The Strategic Plan that emerged recognised the value of tourism to the Shire’s economy, and the reliance of the tourism industry on the natural environment. It identified the need to protect the natural environment and promote development consistent with the natural and community values of the Shire<sup>36</sup>.

Noosa Council subsequently designed and implemented a community governance model which enabled community involvement in long-term decision-making for the Shire. The Noosa Enterprise Group was disbanded and replaced with the Noosa Community Tourism Board (NCTB)—one of five community sector Boards established by Council. The NCTB consisted of community, industry and council representatives. Its primary roles were to oversee the development and management of tourism within the Shire, and to develop a strategic vision and directions for the tourism industry.

A 10-year tourism plan was subsequently developed by Tourism Noosa. It was based on sustainability principles that reflected and built upon the objectives outlined in Council’s Strategic Plan.

Meanwhile, Tourism Noosa continued to operate as an industry-based organisation, with an emphasis on destination marketing. However, Council’s Strategic Plan, and the formation of the NCTB, prompted a review of the functions of Tourism Noosa. The organisation was later reformed into a collaborative community Board with representatives from community and industry.

Tourism Noosa functioned primarily as the ‘marketing delivery arm of NCTB’ until both organisations formally merged into one entity—Tourism Noosa—in 2005. The transformation into a single Board was initiated by the two groups in an ‘effort to reduce administrative duplication and enhance operational processes’<sup>37</sup>.

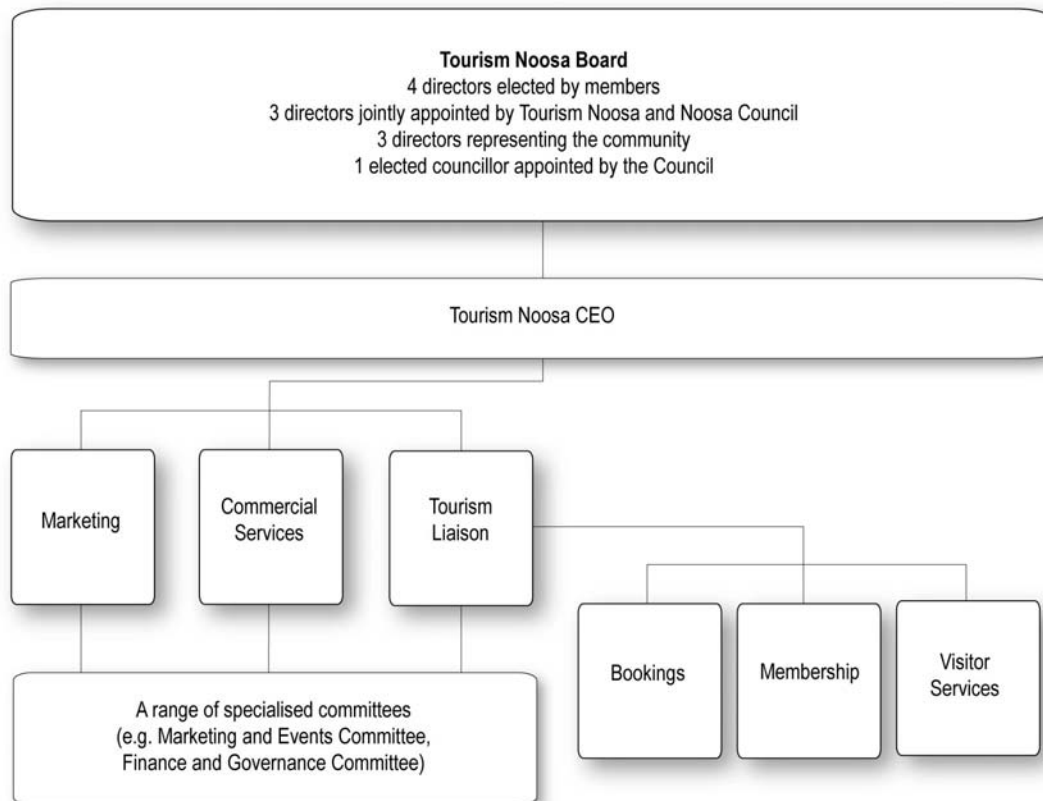
Tourism Noosa is now a Proprietary Limited company, funded primarily by Council’s tourism levy (introduced in 2000 on all tourism-related businesses). It also receives revenue through its membership fees and commission from online bookings.

Tourism Noosa is comprised of a Chief Executive Officer and 11 Board members that are volunteers (elected every two years from a pool of nominees with have sound business or tourism experience):

- four directors elected by members;
- three directors jointly appointed by Tourism Noosa and Noosa Council;
- three directors representing community; and
- one elected Noosa councillor<sup>37</sup>.

Tourism Noosa is now positioned as the key body responsible for the management and marketing of tourism in Noosa. It is principally responsible for implementing the *Noosa Sustainable Tourism Plan 2006–15*.

Figure 6: Tourism Noosa operating structure<sup>37</sup>



The vision of Tourism Noosa is clearly defined in the *Noosa Sustainable Tourism Plan 2006–15*, and has not changed since the first Community Tourism Plan was released by Tourism Noosa Community Board in 2002. Tourism Noosa aspires to become internationally recognised for achieving a tourism industry that is innovative and works with the community towards interdependent economic, social and environmental sustainability in Noosa<sup>37</sup>. The vision is supported by a range of principles and strategies that will guide the operation of Tourism Noosa in the next 10 years.

Noosa Council<sup>5</sup> expressly endorsed this tourism vision in several planning documents such as the Noosa Plan (2006) and the Noosa Corporate Plan (2003–07). This support from Council is enabling the Tourism Noosa Board to achieve its desired outcomes.

Interviews with a number of Tourism Noosa Board members indicate a strong individual and collective commitment to protect Noosa’s unique social, environmental and economic attributes. Most Board members are interested in preserving the iconic value of Noosa, even though it is intangible. They are also committed to maintaining Noosa’s existing lifestyle, brand, culture and built and natural environments.

Tourism Noosa plays a leading role in promoting its vision to industry. Businesses are supported to become sustainable through access to training by industry experts. Tourism Noosa has backed its vision by:

- appointing a CEO with extensive tourism experience;
- employing full time and part time staff (full time roles include a marketing manager, tourism liaison manager and a tourism development executive—part time roles include a PR/ event manager, travel consultants, administration and finance manager and a commercial services manager);
- employing consultants to undertake supporting research or provide professional advice;
- establishing specialised committees such as the Marketing and Event Committee and Finance and Governance Committee;

<sup>5</sup> NB: Noosa Shire Council was amalgamated with local government areas of Maroochy and Caloundra to form the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in 2008.

- being transparent and accountable, with a commitment to consultation and openness;
- establishing communication channels within the Board and with Tourism Noosa members and Council; and
- developing strategies that aim to inform members about its conduct and plans (e.g. monthly electronic newsletter, industry update nights and monthly networking events).

**Best Practice Snapshot 6: Cooperation between key tourism stakeholders ensures successful management of tourism at Cradle Mountain**

Cradle Mountain is a National Park with World Heritage Area listing. Tourism activity and operations are mostly guided by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (TP&WS). Tourism development in areas which fall outside TP&WS jurisdiction are generally managed by the local Kentish Council. Cradle Coast Authority and Cradle Mountain Tourism Association have an important role in the management of Cradle Mountain as a tourist destination. These stakeholder organisations work cooperatively to ensure the sustainable development, management and marketing of the Cradle Mountain region.

Following is an overview of each organisation’s role in the management for this iconic destination.

*Kentish Council*

The Kentish Council, which is based in Sheffield at the base of Cradle Mountain, is responsible for the local governance of the Kentish region. Part of the Council’s vision is to ‘recognise Kentish as a premier, exciting and enticing destination, offering a wide range of unique experiences and events’<sup>38</sup>. The tourism-related objectives of the Council, which fall under its Community Development Programme, are outlined in Table 6.

**Table 6: Tourism-related objectives of the Kentish Council**

Foster, encourage and create tourism in the areas of heritage preservation, townscapes and natural environment
Facilitate and encourage the provision of facilities and programmes to attract tourists and visitors to the municipality
Provide a modern, focused tourist information facility and coordinate the volunteer staffing

Source: <sup>38</sup> p. 18

Council employs a dedicated Tourism Development Officer whose full time position sits within the Community Development portfolio. Established in 2003, the position followed a push from Councillors and local tourism operators for a concerted effort to grow tourism in the region, and was welcomed by the industry. Council’s tourism activity extends beyond Cradle Mountain, focusing on the broader ‘Cradle Country’ region as a tourism destination. An initial objective of the new tourism role was to assist Council in implementing the tourism development plan, which had been developed for the entire municipality. The Kentish regional tourism development plan outlines nine tourism-related roles for Council:

- communication;
- research;
- branding;
- product development;
- marketing;
- training;
- events;
- touring route strategy; and
- infrastructure.

The Tourism Development Officer is also responsible for coordinating marketing activity to promote tourism in the municipality. This includes building and maintaining tourism industry networks within the region. Quarterly networking meetings have been established to provide a forum for tourism operators to share information and discuss issues with service providers such as retailers and transport operators.

Council also provides funding for the local visitor information centre (VIC) in Sheffield and employs a team of staff who operate the centre seven days a week. The Tourism Development Officer works closely with the VIC coordinator to ensure a coordinated approach to the marketing of tourism in the Cradle Country region.

Kentish Council has adopted the following best practices to ensure effective and sustainable tourism development in Cradle Mountain:

- establishment of a dedicated Tourism Development Officer to coordinate and direct Council's tourism related activity and strengthen communication amongst regional tourism stakeholders;
- holding networking forums for members of the tourism industry and related sectors;
- operating and funding the local visitor information centre which is an integral point of contact for visitors entering the areas surrounding Cradle Mountain; and
- establishing the Cradle Mountain Tourism Association to represent the specific interests of Cradle Mountain tourism operators.

#### *Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service*

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service plays a key role in the management of Cradle Mountain as a tourist destination. It is primarily responsible for the management of any area that falls under the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan 1999*, including the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park<sup>39</sup>. The overall objective of this plan is:

*To identify, protect, conserve, present and, where appropriate, rehabilitate the world heritage and other natural and cultural values of the World Heritage Area (WHA), and to transmit that heritage to future generations in as good or better condition than the present.*<sup>39</sup>

TP&WS is responsible for the provision and maintenance of walking trails, tracks and other facilities which are provided to enable visitor access to natural areas, while ensuring the area is protected from negative impacts of visitation. TP&WS designs 'Visitor Services Zones' and 'Site Management Prescriptions' which aim to provide access to the area with minimal impact on the natural environment. Table 7 summarises the role of these visitor zones.

TP&WS also introduced a regional shuttle bus service, run by a local coach operator, which transports visitors to and from Cradle Mountain. This voluntary shuttle service operates on a user-pays system and was introduced to relieve traffic congestion, alleviate parking shortages in the National Park and educate visitors about the natural environment. The bus operates between the Cradle Mountain Information Centre and Dove Lake and has successfully reduced visitor traffic in the area by one-third<sup>40</sup>.

**Table 7: Visitor Service Zones and site management prescriptions<sup>39</sup>**

Design Visitor Service Zones (VSZ) and Sites to cater for a wide range of visitors, providing principally for the needs, interests and abilities of day visitors
Pencil Pine Cradle Valley and Lake St Clair are the dedicated VSZ
Within VSZ, provide for high levels of day and some overnight use by developing and/or maintaining a range of facilities and services (e.g. park accommodation to suitable design and scale; campground refreshment sales; interpretation and education centres; visitor information; and appropriate recreational and management facilities)
Permit concessionaire-operated facilities which contribute to the preservation of the World Heritage and other natural and cultural values of the WHA. Seek private sector investment in the provision of some facilities where appropriate
Review the present Visitor Service Sites—establish carrying capacities, note present and potential visitor experiences and develop approaches for the future management of these sites
Develop Visitor Site Services to cater for a range of levels and forms of day and overnight use to suit the needs of different visitors and provide a range of recreation opportunities. In general, cater for higher numbers of visitors at sites along major tourist routes ... Facilities may include park accommodation, interpretation and nature walks, picnic shelters, toilets, boat ramps and camping areas.
Helicopter and float plane landings may also potentially occur at limited sites
Prepare site plans for VSZ and major Visitor Service Sites prior to commencement of any new development or significant upgrading of facilities

In summary, TP&WS is an essential management organisation charged with maintaining the mountain's natural assets and enhancing the visitor experience through interpretation and education.

#### *Cradle Coast Authority*

The Cradle Coast Authority is a joint authority which coordinates economic activity and development across nine local government areas in the North West and West of Tasmania<sup>41</sup>. Like the Kentish Council, its jurisdiction stretches more broadly than Cradle Mountain. It has formally engaged with Tourism Tasmania to 'deliver strategies and programs at a local and regional level through its dedicated team of tourism personnel' and is committed to creating 'local, regional and state partnerships and implementing strategies to ensure that the region maximises its tourism potential'<sup>42</sup>.

The Authority operates as the regional tourism organisation (RTO) for the Cradle Coast region. Its key roles are to ensure the region is successfully developed as a tourism destination and to develop the range of tourism products and experiences available to visitors. While Cradle Mountain is the icon which draws visitors to the broader Cradle region, the Authority has been active in its efforts to broaden visitor awareness of surrounding towns and attractions. It has adopted a cooperative approach to the pursuit of tourism development, encouraging visitors to enhance their overall experience by experiencing other attractions such as food, crafts and cultural attractions.

The Cradle Mountain Authority has played a key role in developing the *Cradle Mountain Tourism Development Plan*. It has also managed and implemented partnerships, and identified tourism strategies that ensure a coordinated and cooperative approach to regional tourism activity.

#### *Cradle Mountain Tourism Association*

The Kentish Council initiated the formation of the Cradle Mountain Tourism Association in 2002 as:  
*A working group comprising business representatives and individuals that provides a commercial tourism service in the Cradle Mountain precinct. The group aims to develop and implement a marketing and development plan that will again establish Cradle Mountain as the pre-eminent natural holiday destination in Tasmania ...*  
*The Association is made up of representatives from the Council, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Essentially Cradle and Kentish Visitor Information Centre, as well as community representatives from the townships of Sheffield, Railton and Wilmot.*<sup>43</sup>

Members meet every few months to discuss tourism issues and to lobby other stakeholders on behalf of regional tourism operators. It provides a critical communication forum where operators can share information such as the status of accommodation, occupancy rates and common business concerns.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 7: Cooperation between local governments and tourism and business organisations to manage tourism for Launceston and Tamar Valley**

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Tourism in Launceston and the Tamar Valley involves cooperation between local governments and business and tourism organisations. The following outlines the roles of these key stakeholder groups.

*Local Governments*

The Launceston and Tamar Valley region traverses the boundaries of three local councils: Launceston City, George Town and West Tamar. It was managed as two separate tourist destinations until 2006, when a decision was made by tourism stakeholders and local councils to adopt a cooperative approach to marketing the region as one tourism experience.

While the three councils still represent the specific needs of their respective areas, they are now cooperating more on tourism-related issues and initiatives. Each council contributes funds for projects aimed at improving facilities and experiences for visitors and locals alike. The Launceston City Council, for example, has provided critical resources to improve the city precinct through its Council Infrastructure Program. New lighting, street furniture and building upgrades form part of this program to improve the town's appeal. Council also established, and funds, a 'Tourism Development Officer' role within its Marketing and Communications portfolio.

*Launceston Tamar Valley Tourism Association*

The Launceston Tamar Valley Tourism Association (LTVTA) was formed in 2006 to mark the beginning of a new cooperative approach to tourism management. It serves as the peak tourism organisation for Launceston Tamar Valley and environs. Formed with assistance from Northern Tasmania Development, it has a representative from each of the three councils of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town. The LTVTA is a financially independent, non-profit tourism organisation that aims to create a strong brand for Launceston Tamar Valley and maximise the benefits of tourism by encouraging more people to visit, stay longer, and spend more<sup>44</sup>.

The success of the LTVTA has been attributed to financial support of the three councils, and the enthusiasm and spirit of the individuals involved. Operating on a fee-for-membership basis, it provides a range of benefits to members in areas such as marketing, training, networking and tourism infrastructure.

*Cityprom and Launceston Chamber of Commerce*

Cityprom and the Launceston Chamber of Commerce have also played an important tourism role for the region, promoting the city precinct of Launceston and encouraging community groups to work together on tourism-related projects.

Cityprom is a marketing organisation that lobbies for the on-going enhancement of the city precinct. It is funded through a ratepayer levy and is administered by the Launceston City Council. It was formed in 1988 as an agreement between the Launceston City Council and a group of retailers to encourage the promotion and development of the central business district (CBD) of the city of Launceston. Cityprom has an executive Board of 12 members representing diverse organisations, and employs a part-time promotions officer and part-time executive officer. It brings together city retailers, professional offices and civic authorities who work to enhance the city's appeal as a tourist destination. Its functions and activities include promotional programs, decorations, publicity, special events, cooperative advertising and other joint ventures that benefit businesses within the city<sup>45</sup>.

The Launceston Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of all businesses and related groups within Launceston, including tourism operators. It is Australia's oldest Chamber of Commerce and works closely with the local council and Cityprom on economic development in the region. The chamber is an independent association of businesses and individuals committed to promoting the economic and social well-

being of the Launceston Region, with the aim of making it a preferred place to live, work, invest in and visit. It provides lobbying, business support, networking and development services for private and business members<sup>46</sup>.

While both groups represent a broader set of interests, each has contributed to the management and provision of necessary resources that improve the visitor experience in Launceston city.

**Best Practice Snapshot 8: Building sustainable long-term collaboration between the wine industry, tourism operators and local and regional councils in the Barossa Valley**

The Barossa Valley depends on a strong integrated regional tourism structure to ensure its overall success. A key component of this is the long-standing commitment to collaboration between the wine industry, tourism operators and local and regional councils. Prior to 1993 there were separate structures for both the wine and tourism industries. In 1993, the Barossa winemakers, tourism operators, local government and other key community groups came together to form the Barossa Wine and Tourism Association Inc. The association formed the industry body responsible for development, marketing and branding the Barossa Valley as Australia’s premium wine tourism destination.

A review in 2002 and 2003 resulted in the creation of a flatter structure for the association with separate pillars for wine, tourism, visitor services and events. The organisational structure of this umbrella body is illustrated in Figure 1. It incorporates four integrated management structures under one Board of Management to provide overall strategic direction. This includes representation from the Barossa Vintage Festival, Barossa Visitor Information Centre, Tourism Barossa and Wine Barossa which is now part of the Barossa Grape and Wine Growers Association.

**BAROSSA**  
WINE AND TOURISM

Organisational Structure



(Source: Barossa Wine and Tourism)

The Barossa Wine and Tourism Association symbolises the spirit of cooperation in the region that has driven development since the post-war period. The two key industry bodies are Tourism Barossa and Wine Barossa. Tourism Barossa is responsible for marketing and positioning the Barossa as a premium tourism destination in national and international markets. This is achieved through cooperative funding support from its key stakeholders—the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC), local and regional councils and member of the tourism industry. Wine Barossa derives its funding from its membership base of winemakers and grape growers and provides representation on issues of environmental sustainability, viticulture research and

development, and marketing and promotion of the Barossa Wine Brand. There are over 300 members that support marketing activities under the umbrella of Barossa Wine and Tourism.

The initial impetus for collaboration among stakeholders came from the winemakers. As the region's innovators, they recognise the importance of collaboration and strengthening the links between wine, tourism and events. These partnerships have expanded to include local government and the food growing sector. Formal funding agreements are in place between the Barossa Wine and Tourism Association and its local government partners. The local government bodies in the region (The Barossa Council, Town of Gawler and the Light Regional Council) and the Barossa and Light Regional Development Board have worked together with the Barossa Wine and Tourism Association to ensure the successful implementation of the Clare Valley and Barossa Region's Strategic Tourism Plan<sup>47</sup>.

The Barossa Council has also been the main financial contributor to the operation of the Barossa Visitor Information Centre. The Barossa and Light Regional Development Board, which aims to provide sustainable economic development and employment outcomes for the region, helped establish Food Barossa in 2002 as a pioneering regional food brand in Australia. In partnership with the state government, it also employed a Food Industry Development Officer to support regional food industry projects<sup>48</sup>. This has facilitated increased collaboration between the food, wine and tourism industries in the Barossa Valley.

The sustained long-term collaboration between the key stakeholders and the broader community has fostered tourism growth in the Barossa region. It has also resulted in a cooperative approach from all sectors of industry and the community in relation to the development, management and marketing of the Barossa Valley as a food and wine tourism destination.

## **Best Practice Principle Three**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations have a strong level of support from their state or territory tourism organisation**

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The level of support from state and territory tourism organisations (STOs) for regional destinations varies. Traditionally, STO support has focused on marketing initiatives. However, more recently, the role of many STOs has expanded to incorporate development and management functions.

#### **Best Practice Strategies**

Best practice regional tourism destinations have a strong level of support from their state and territory tourism organisations that:

- provide strong leadership and strategic tourism expertise to support local/regional destination development, management and marketing;
- facilitate strategic destination planning processes including financial support;
- plan and lobby for investment in public and private infrastructure for tourism (see more in Chapter 3);
- develop and implement strategic marketing plans and tactical marketing campaigns (see more in Chapter 5);
- provide support for grant applications (e.g. Australian Government grant initiatives); and
- facilitate cooperative networks across public private and public sectors involving relevant government departments and agencies, local governments, tourism and business operations and local communities.

## **Best Practice Snapshot**

The following best practice snapshot reflects many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Tourism Victoria supports development of a Grampians Marketing Inc. as a coordinating framework for tourism**

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The Stawell and Grampians Development Association (SGDA) was established in the early 1980s to provide a coordinated approach to tourism planning and management. In 1990, the SGDA was commissioned by the Victorian Tourism Commission (VTC) to prepare a background paper on tourism in the Grampians, in response to the increasing visitation and pressure for development in Halls Gap that followed declaration of the Grampians as a National Park in 1984.

The document warned that ‘Halls Gap is delicately poised to become either a quaint village set amongst a semi-wilderness environment or become another assortment of ad hoc development ...’<sup>49</sup>. The paper suggested development of new forms of accommodation, aimed at specific sections of the market, and dispersed to surrounding townships. It also recommended that such development be governed by ‘very tight, but positive, planning requirements’<sup>49</sup>. The paper set the direction for a destination plan and a shift to the development of more educational tourism product focused on the area’s Koori culture and pastoral heritage.

Council amalgamations in 1992 effectively tore apart the local tourism structure established for the Grampians region. As part of massive public sector reform, two hundred and ten Victorian councils were amalgamated into 78 councils. The new larger councils were expected to have a more powerful role in expanding regional economic activity and employment opportunities. At the local level, however, the well-established local tourism organisation was merged with municipalities to the north and west which had no tourism structure and little understanding of tourism benefits, products and services.

By 2000, there was a commonly held view that tourism had ‘lost its way’ (pers. comm. 2007) and the Stawell Council withdrew its support of the local tourism advisory Board. The allocation of tourism resources appeared to be based more on the need to retain financial support of councils rather than the tourism needs of visitors.

In 2000, a new Grampians tourism manager was appointed to address these issues, strengthen the role of local tourism associations (LTAs) and provide a regional focus for tourism. Business plans were developed for each LTA to build capacity of industry and Council. However, attempts to establish an RTO failed on two occasions as a result of council politics and operator apathy.

A subsequent structure established and funded by Tourism Victoria in 2005 has, however, been instrumental in bringing together local tourism operators. Work traditionally undertaken by a regional tourism organisation is now undertaken by the regional campaign committee—Grampians Marketing Inc (GMI). GMI, in cooperation with Tourism Victoria, has undertaken regional marketing since 2001 and developed the *GMI Strategic Marketing Plan 2002–06*. The plan focused on regional cooperation and local industry capacity building, and has yielded considerable success including:

- an average annual increase in international visitation of 8.3 percent compared to the state average of 4.4 percent for the period 1999–2003;
- improved visitor information services at Halls Gap and St Arnaud;
- increase in consumer awareness of the Grampians as a holiday destination (up from 7<sup>th</sup> highest in Victoria to 4<sup>th</sup>);
- development and strengthening of tourism product involving the Grampians, Pyrenees and Ballarat wine regions;
- completion of infrastructure projects across the region at Ararat, Stawell, Halls Gap, St Arnaud and Hamilton; and
- successful launch in 2004 of the Grampians in Tourism Victoria’s innovative Jigsaw campaign, *Space to Think*<sup>50</sup>.

## **Best Practice Principle Four**

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**Best practice regional tourism destinations are supported by effective regional tourism organisations and/or local tourism organisations that lead and coordinate tourism and business involvement**

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As part of their destination management structure best practice regional tourism destinations have a well-established industry-led regional tourism organisation (RTO). Where tourism regions are too broad or the destination is more mature than other destinations within the region, some destinations also benefit from the establishment of an effective local tourism organisation (LTO).

### **Best Practice Strategies**

Best practice regional destinations are supported by local and/or regional tourism organisation involvement in destination management that:

- have effective visionary leaders;
- have established a clear vision and identified the important values that underpin the role of the organisation in tourism;
- have developed effective Board structures with members with professional expertise in business and tourism;
- have established clear roles and responsibilities for their Board members;
- have longevity of people in executive positions and plan for succession;
- exhibit transparency and accountability in their decision-making;
- develop effective partnerships with state or territory tourism organisations, local government/s, business groups and their community;
- foster a good level of cooperation amongst local and regional tourism and business operators;
- coordinate and train local operators (e.g. service quality excellence, cooperative marketing initiatives); and
- integrate with other RTOs in their broader region.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

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**Best Practice Snapshot 1: Establishment of a skills-based board to lead the RTO and coordinate tourism in the Snowy Mountains region**

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Tourism in the Snowy Mountains is managed by Tourism Snowy Mountains (TSM), with support from Tourism New South Wales. TSM was established by Tourism New South Wales in 1994 and is responsible for taking the lead on destination and product development and marketing for the region. It is a focused, professional and efficient organisation which, since 2004, has been run by a 'skills-based' Board.

Previously, Board members had been elected on their geographical representation rather than chosen for their skills. The new Board selection process required amendments to the constitution and followed legal advice. Existing members were given three months notice to consider the proposed models, with more than 75 percent of members supporting the new system.

The new Board structure also signalled the involvement of larger resorts which previously had no interest in the TSM. As new Board members, they were required to consider tourism projects in terms of broader tourism strategy, and their involvement heralded a new cooperative approach to regional tourism.

Today, the TSM Board plays a significant role in bringing industry players together in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration. The on-going communication between local resorts, operators, Councils, local government and TSM helps to ensure the effective management of the region's infrastructure to meet tourism demand.

TSM has taken a lead role in educating local government about the value of sustainable tourism and encouraging investment in tourism and infrastructure projects. The organisation has also helped bridge the divide between small tourism operators and larger resorts. In May 2008, 22 local stakeholders attended a local

government areas tourism forum presented by TSM to highlight the value of the Snowy Mountains tourism industry, and explore opportunities for regional collaboration.

The Snowy Mountains tourism industry is now working more closely with TSM and Tourism New South Wales, with investment in campaign activity increasing from \$172,000 in 2006 to \$608,000 in 2008.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 2: Early establishment of the Esperance Regional Tourism Association as a mechanism to coordinate tourism**

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The Esperance Regional Tourism Association (ERTA) was formed in the 1970s and comprised a group of tourism operators who have played a key role in tourism marketing, planning and development of the region. In addition, the organisation has taken an active role in lobbying stakeholders to support quality tourism projects. Its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was funded by the West Australian Government to manage regional tourism and the local Visitor Centre. ERTA provided an integral link between the following organisations:

- Esperance Shire;
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Department of Environment and Conservation;
- Goldfield Esperance Development Commission;
- regional and state tourism organisations;
- Australia's Golden Outback; and
- Tourism Western Australia.

In 2004, however, Western Australia's tourism industry structure was significantly rationalised and the state's 10 regionally-based tourism marketing organisations reduced to five new regional tourism organisations (RTOs). Formerly a zone in its own right, Esperance was reclassified as a sub-region within a zone, and funding for ERTA and the visitor centre ceased.

ERTA continued to operate as a volunteer organisation, but its capacity to meet the region's tourism needs was significantly compromised. In response, ERTA began lobbying Esperance Shire to maintain control of the Visitor Centre, and support tourism operators who were at risk of being forgotten by the Esperance local government organisation which perceived Esperance as an agricultural district.

ERTA proposed a structure in which the Shire was responsible for managing the Visitor Centre while ERTA retained responsibility for the centre's marketing functions. This approach addressed a number of issues including:

- Shire concerns about funding the promotion of enterprise;
- the need for Esperance Shire to play a key role in tourism planning and management; and
- the need to facilitate cooperation between ERTA and Esperance Shire and between the Shire and tourism operators in the region.

ERTA lobbied Esperance Shire with this proposition, demonstrating the significance of tourism to the region, and the economic and social benefits to the whole community of a well-run Visitor Centre. As a result of these efforts, a temporary organisation known as the Visitor Centre Advisory Board was formed to consider the proposed structure. After a period of consultation, the Shire accepted the agreement, representing a landmark event in the history of tourism management in the region.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Regional tourism association encourages and facilitates cooperation amongst stakeholders in Alice Springs**

The Central Australian Tourism Industry Association (CATIA) is the local regional tourism organisation responsible for tourism in Central Australia, including Alice Springs. It has operated for 15 years and is principally responsible for marketing the region, servicing its members and providing visitor information services. CATIA employs a team of full-time and part-time staff and the general manager reports to an executive committee of CATIA members<sup>22</sup>.

CATIA is perceived locally as a powerful representative body with a strong membership base that encourages and facilitates collaboration with other agencies and amongst local operators. CATIA also has strong ties with Tourism NT and the organisations work collaboratively on a range of tourism initiatives. Tourism NT's Regional Director for Central Australia is located in Alice Springs, enabling on-going communication between the two organisations.

Tourism NT and CATIA have established clear strategic tourism visions and action plans to support tourism development in Alice Springs. In 2005, Tourism NT commissioned a study which aimed to strengthen the Destination Alice Springs campaign and provide a stronger platform for future marketing of the town. The study provided the impetus for a positioning paper—*Strengthening the Position of Alice Springs Tourism: Taking the Next Steps*<sup>25</sup>—which identified the following forms of tourism appropriate for the Alice Springs market:

- heritage tourism;
- Indigenous tourism; and
- experiential tourism (taking advantage of Alice Springs' desert environment and outback adventure possibilities).

In 2006, the Alice Springs Tourism Infrastructure Project Team was established to support implementation of the *2006–15 Tourism Infrastructure Framework —Strengthening the Position of Alice Springs Tourism*<sup>23</sup>. The Project Team included members from Alice Springs Town Council, Tourism NT, CATIA, Department of the Chief Minister and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The team's goal was to ensure Alice Springs was highly regarded and recognised as a quality destination of choice that met the needs of a growing tourism industry.<sup>23</sup>

### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Barkly Tourism signals regional approach to the management and promotion of tourism in the Tennant Creek and Barkly region**

Traditionally, the management of tourism in the Barkly region focused on activities and services in Tennant Creek. In 2004, the establishment of a regional tourism association—Barkly Tourism – signalled a new, regional approach to tourism management and marketing.

Barkly Tourism replaced the existing Tennant Creek Regional Tourism Association (TCRTA). The name was changed to reflect a commitment to embrace the entire region through the harmonisation and encouragement of industry working together. 'Collaboration rather than cannibalism' has been the catch-cry of Barkly Tourism, which advocates a cooperative regional vision for tourism.

Barkly Tourism is a viable tourism organisation, run by local operators, which encourages regional consultation and participation. The organisation employed a Marketing Manager in 2004 to coordinate, plan, promote and implement marketing strategies and campaigns and leverage media opportunities. The position was upgraded to General Manager in July 2006. Barkly Tourism has approximately 80 members including local tourism operators, community organisations and individuals as well as members from surrounding regions such as Central Australia, Katherine and Mt Isa who had a vested interest in the health of their neighbouring tourism industry.

Barkly Tourism was previously funded by the Northern Territory Government (through Tourism NT), as well as membership and advertising. In 2008, the Northern Territory Government reallocated \$360,000 in funding for tourism in the Barkly region to the Territory's two largest regional tourism authorities (RTAs):

Tourism Central Australia, in Alice Springs, and Tourism Top End, in Darwin. Of this, \$140,000 was reallocated to Tourism Central Australia for marketing and industry development in the Barkly region. A further \$100,000 was allocated to support a new industry development role for the region, based in Tennant Creek, and \$30,000 was assigned to the Barkly Regional Tourism Development Plan.

## **Best Practice Principle Five**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations have a good level of support from their local government**

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Local government has significant responsibilities that impact on the way tourism develops and is managed at the destination level<sup>51</sup>. Its responsibilities include: infrastructure provision and maintenance, land use planning, environmental management, public health and safety management, local economic development, open space provision and maintenance; education, training and employment; tourism promotion and marketing; arts and cultural development; community development; and human services.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

Best practice regional tourism destinations have local governments that:

- work cooperatively with local and regional tourism organisations to support sustainable tourism development, planning and marketing initiatives;
- establish a Tourism Advisory Committee to Council;
- appoint a Tourism Manager/Officer to guide and inform Council's involvement in tourism;
- may lead the development of a tourism strategy planning process;
- provide financial support for the operation of local visitor information centre/s and development of other infrastructure and support facilities; and
- develop policies to support sustainable tourism development.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Tasman Council involvement and support for tourism in Port Arthur and Tasman region**

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With a small resource base for tourism management existing in the region, the Tasman Council has played an integral role in the development and management of tourism. The Council has established a 'tourism officer' position which sits under the 'Economic, Community and Business Development' division<sup>31</sup>. Council was integral in the development of the Tasman Tourism Development Strategy in 2005. Along with the provision of general facilities and services for the local community and its visitors, it also provides critical resources needed for the successful implementation of the tourism strategy. It works closely with the organisations noted above towards the future development of tourism in the Port Arthur and Tasman region. The Tasman Council's commitment to the sustainable development of tourism in the region is evidenced by the existence of the following strategies which were embedded into its own Strategic Plan which was developed in 2005 as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Tourism strategies from the Council’s Strategic Plan<sup>32</sup>**

<b>Key Result Area 7:</b>
<b>Maximisation of tourism potential for the Municipality, and the value of experiences for tourists</b>
<b>Key Council Strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of an annual calendar of cultural and community events [date to be determined] and incorporate this calendar into the marketing program for the Tasman Tourism Development Strategy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and support infrastructure and services to increase tourist numbers and the diversity of tourism experiences in the area</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and support more effective coordination mechanisms for tourism in the region</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seek, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, new tourism initiatives that benefit the Municipality and that are sustainable and sympathetic to Tasman’s heritage and environmental values</li> </ul>

To date, some of the key practices that it has followed that have assisted in progress towards achieving its tourism objectives include:

- *Development of an integrated tourism development plan that consulted heavily with local community.* The Tasman Council was a primary driver of this strategy, which aims to provide a holistic approach to tourism development in the region.
- *Appointment of a dedicated Tourism Officer position.* With funding from the Commonwealth and state governments, the Tasman Council has employed a full time person who is dedicated to pursuing the implementation of strategies contained in the Tourism Strategy and to seeking funding to achieve these plans. At the time of writing, this position was funded as a 12 month post, but future continuation of the role was anticipated.
- *Careful consideration of proposed new tourism developments for good fit with the natural environment.* The Council is committed to taking into consideration the broader views of the local community regarding the nature of any new development which occurs in the region in relation to tourism. Any new development approvals must be of a nature that fit well with the existing natural and heritage environment of the Port Arthur and Tasman region and avoid any detrimental impacts on the existing community.

## Best Practice Principle Six

### Best practice regional tourism destinations have a good level of support from Parks agencies and other relevant government authorities

State government, National Parks authorities and other relevant government departments and authorities have a significant role in destination management in regional areas.

#### Best Practice Strategies

Best practice regional tourism destinations have a good level of support from Parks agencies and other relevant government authorities that:

- cooperate and provide advice in strategic planning processes for tourism;
- establish planning and management systems to preserve natural, heritage and cultural assets and effective visitor management systems;
- develop infrastructure and facilities development that enhance and better manage the natural environment and contribute to the visitor experience;
- plan and develop accessible spaces for recreation and leisure; and
- provide visitor information centres and quality interpretative services to enhance the visitor experience.

## **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Department of Environment and Conservation (Western Australia) plays a key role in conserving pristine wilderness sites in the Esperance region**

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Esperance is famous for its coastline, wilderness and scenery. It is home to iconic landmarks including Cape Le Grand, Cape Arid and Stokes Inlet National Park as well as Peak Charles, Frank Hann, the Fitzgerald River National Parks and the islands of the Recherche Archipelago. The region also incorporates the Fitzgerald World Biosphere Reserve which is endorsed by the United Nations as ‘the most important Mediterranean ecosystem reserve in the world’<sup>52</sup>. Tourism activities in Esperance are principally nature-based and include bush walking, camping, wildlife encounters and boat cruises.

Management of tourism operations within the region is guided by organisations such as the Department of Environment and Conservation and UNESCO. Day to day administration is principally undertaken by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in accordance with existing Western Australian legislation<sup>53</sup>. DEC takes a lead role in tourism management and conservation by:

- providing protected area status;
- developing infrastructure within National Parks that support eco-tourism;
- developing visitor experiences that support conservation values; and
- employing rangers who live on site in the National Parks, providing an opportunity for visitors to interact with professional park staff on a daily basis.

The DEC has played a lead role in resisting large-scale, ad hoc tourism development in natural areas within the Esperance region through the development of a *Strategic Output Plan* to guide activities for the region, with an emphasis on conserving natural spaces. Maintaining this vision and resisting development across the region has required on-going effort from individual DEC Managers. To achieve long-term protection of natural assets, stakeholders have called for the vision outlined in the *Strategic Output Plan* to be cemented in policy and incorporated in a management plan that guides activities in the region. Development of a management plan for the region is currently underway under the leadership of an advisory committee.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service plays key role in tourism management at Cradle Mountain**

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The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (TP&WS) plays a significant role in managing tourism at Cradle Mountain, and is responsible for managing all activities in the renowned Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park. The National Park is managed according to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan 1999 which aims to:

*Identify, protect, conserve, present and, where appropriate, rehabilitate the world heritage and other natural and cultural values of the WHA, and to transmit that heritage to future generations in as good or better condition than the present.*<sup>39</sup>

TP&WS is responsible for all National Park activities, amenities and infrastructure including walking trails, tracks and other visitor facilities. Its works diligently to showcase the park’s natural beauty to visitors while ensuring its protection from the potential negative impacts of tourism. It designs ‘Visitor Services Zones’ and ‘Site Management Prescriptions’ which provide sustainable access to the National Park.

**Table 9: Visitor Service Zones and site management prescriptions<sup>39</sup>**

Design Visitor Service Zones (VSZ) and Sites to cater for a wide range of visitors, providing principally for the needs, interests and abilities of day visitors
Pencil Pine–Cradle Valley and Lake St Clair are the dedicated VSZ
Within VSZ, provide for high levels of day and some overnight use by developing and/or maintaining a range of facilities and services (e.g. park accommodation to suitable design and scale; campgrounds' refreshment sales; interpretation and education centres; visitor information; and appropriate recreational and management facilities)
Permit concessionaire-operated facilities which contribute to the preservation of the World Heritage and other natural and cultural values of the WHA. Seek private sector investment in the provision of some facilities where appropriate
Review the present Visitor Service Sites—establish carrying capacities, note present and potential visitor experiences and develop approaches for the future management of these sites
Develop Visitor Site Services to cater for a range of levels and forms of day and overnight use to suit the needs of different visitors and provide a range of recreation opportunities. In general, cater for higher numbers of visitors at sites along major tourist routes ... Facilities may include park accommodation, interpretation and nature walks, picnic shelters, toilets, boat ramps and camping areas
Helicopter and float plane landings may also potentially occur at limited sites
Prepare site plans for VSZ and major Visitor Service Sites prior to commencement of any new development or significant upgrading of facilities

As part of its commitment to developing sustainable and responsible tourism, TP&WS initiated a shuttle bus service which transports visitors to Cradle Mountain. This voluntary shuttle service was introduced to relieve traffic congestion and alleviate parking shortages in the National Park. It operates between the Cradle Mountain Information Centre and Dove Lake. Operated on a user-pays basis, the shuttle has been successful in reducing visitor traffic by one-third<sup>40</sup>. The on-Board commentary also provides visitors with a unique educational experience.

TP&WS is an essential management organisation that maintains and protects the park's natural assets while ensuring a safe, educational and enjoyable visitor experience. Its activities are essential to the successful management of tourism in the area.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Role of the Department of Environment and Conservation (Western Australia) and the Water Corporation in the management of protected areas in the Tapestry region**

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in Western Australia, and the Water Corporation, are involved in the management of protected areas and tourism within the Tapestry region including Wellington National Park, the Leschenaultia Conservation Park in the Shire of Harvey and the Logue Brook Dam. They have played a key role in developing infrastructure and facilities for which include:

- the Bibbulmun Track (1000 kilometre walk trail between Perth and the south coast) and Munda Biddi Mountain Bike Trail (900 kilometre track passing through the eastern side of the region);
- camping areas;
- road access;
- interpretation infrastructure; and
- areas for day use.

DEC and the Water Corporation have also worked together to develop sustainable management practices for inland lakes that have been historically associated with water-based activities. They have also made strategic decisions to restrict access to sensitive forest areas. This approach to ecologically sustainable tourism has been widely supported by tourism operators in the region.

## **Best Practice Principle Seven**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations undertake research to support decision-making for tourism**

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Destinations that have established research and data collection systems to support decision-making are better able to plan effectively and adapt to changing market trends and circumstances. This information can then be used to help guide planning decisions about future development, product development and marketing, to improve industry performance and service quality and to better understand the economic, social and environmental benefits and impacts of tourism.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To undertake research to support decision-making for tourism best practice regional tourism destinations:

- budget for research and understand the need for research to inform decision-making;
- develop a Research Program to establish effective systems at the destination level to gather information about visitation and visitor needs and satisfaction levels;
- utilise research undertaken at state or national level;
- establish performance indicators to measure economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism;
- undertake continuous and consistent data collection;
- establish reporting and communication mechanisms to ensure findings are regularly communicated back to interested stakeholders.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Developing a base-line data collection system to inform decision-making for Agnes Water/1770**

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Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce (DCTC) is developing key performance indicators (KPIs) to help guide sustainable tourism in the region. The following six indicators have been proposed by the DCTC to inform tourism marketing strategies and assist in evaluating existing campaigns:

- number of bed nights spent in the destination;
- total increase in visitor numbers measured against historical data;
- increase in visitor yield;
- traffic indicators;
- 1800 number usage; and
- email enquiries.

DCTC volunteers collect data from the following sources:

- tourism operators and business owners;
- local government traffic data; and
- Agnes Water and Miriam Vale visitor centres.

There are several challenges associated with collecting data for Agnes Water/1770. Tourism operators and business owners are often reluctant to share information due to fear of competition, while data collection methods do not always provide accurate results. For example, counting the number of vehicles travelling from north or south does not necessarily reflect the number of tourists to the towns. Furthermore, information provided by retailers is often generic and hard to obtain, and there is very little historical data available to compare results.

The evaluation of indicators is complicated. It is difficult to establish whether any changes are a direct result of marketing and promotional activities or a consequence of external factors (e.g. increases in fuel prices). DCTC is aware of the limitations associated with its current method of data collection. However, resource constraints are likely to prevent the organisation from developing a more comprehensive and accurate data collection process in the future. More generic data about tourism trends in the state and the region is available via the Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited (GAPDL) and Tourism Queensland web sites and

publications—though this data is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the experiences within Agnes Water/1770.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 2: Regional Awareness Perceptions Study to inform strategic marketing initiatives for Daylesford and Hepburn Springs**

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Daylesford and Hepburn Springs has been identified as a Level 1 destination region by Tourism Victoria. It has been recognised for attracting a strong mix of international, interstate and intrastate visitors and having an international appeal aligned to Victoria’s key product strengths. Tourism Victoria has worked with the Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Campaign Committee to help the region achieve this status, providing considerable marketing and professional support.

At a national level, Tourism Victoria undertakes a Regional Awareness Perceptions Study (RAPS) every three years to test brand health and awareness of the region by people across Australia. RAPS research<sup>54</sup> has consistently revealed a number of impediments to tourism growth in Daylesford and Hepburn Springs:

- low awareness of Daylesford by the rest of Australia, despite a high awareness of Victoria;
- high mid-week seasonality and inconsistent operator performance;
- unclear market positioning (e.g. product border confusion, proliferation of marketing material and messages, uncoordinated marketing efforts and limited evaluation of marketing effectiveness); and
- lack of product differentiation, lack of tour packages and limited access to prime tourism assets due to poor signage and interpretation.

More positive findings from the RAPS research revealed that Daylesford was the leading individual destination in Victoria among intrastate and interstate respondents to RAPS research, followed by Hepburn Springs. This research was used to help inform the regional tourism plans and reposition Daylesford as the leading regional brand. Spa and wellness experiences are now a core feature of the national marketing campaign for the Daylesford and Hepburn Springs region (see more in Chapter 5 under Branding and Image).

*Victoria’s Spa and Wellness Tourism Action Plan 2005–10*, quantified the growth in the spa and wellness industry in Australia. The Daylesford region was identified as having the greatest depth and breadth of spa and wellness product experiences and the capacity to be recognised as Australia’s spa capital. However, at a global level, this research highlighted the low awareness of spa and wellness locations in Australia, and reinforced the opportunity for Daylesford and Hepburn Springs to be positioned nationally.

As a result, a destination marketing plan was developed as part of Tourism Victoria’s *Melbourne and Surrounds Regional Tourism Development Plan*, and launched in April 2006 with a budget of \$600,000 to support its implementation. This plan complemented Melbourne’s image-positioning and provided a strong base on which to encourage regional dispersal from Melbourne to Daylesford and Hepburn Springs.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 3: Undertaking research to inform development of the Snowy Mountains as a year-round destination**

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Project SCAN was undertaken for the Snowy Mountains region in 2005 to encourage cross-border cooperation and improve visitor appeal through effective tourism development and marketing. The project was a joint venture between Tourism Snowy Mountains, the Capital Country Development Board, Australian Capital Tourism Corporation and the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation. It aimed to identify gaps in the tourism market, explore investment opportunities and assess tourism experiences through surveys<sup>55</sup>. Project SCAN exemplifies the value of regional research to support effective tourism development and marketing. It successfully identified an opportunity for summer activities in the region to boost visitor numbers in the traditional off-season.

Five years ago, 80 percent of tourists visited the Snowy Mountains region during the three-month winter season. Project SCAN encouraged the promotion of townships such as Jindabyne and Thredbo as year-round destinations offering a range of tourist experiences. Fishing and mountain biking were among the activities developed to attract and support a growing number of summer tourists. This also helped to cap the number of winter visitors, thereby minimising negative environmental impacts.

Project SCAN identified the fine balance required to ensure the commercial viability of the Snowy Mountains region while preserving its natural beauty and offering quality tourism experiences. It recommended

limiting the number of tour operators as well as the number of visitors per operator. These limits were also intended to ensure that all visitors had rewarding and enjoyable experiences.

The development of extreme and alternative sports all year round has contributed to the sustainable tourism success of the Snowy Mountains. With the saturation of the ski fields and the resorts at peak times, winter activities such as cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing and snowboarding emerged<sup>56</sup>. Summer activities such as bush walking, fishing, bike riding, abseiling and four-wheel driving were also developed and marketed.

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### **Best Practice Research Snapshot 4: Research and analysis guide strategic planning and tourism operations in Noosa**

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Research is a key tool used by Tourism Noosa to guide tourism management and marketing for the region. Data is sourced from various national, state and regional tourism research reports to determine tourism trends and inform decision-making. Tourism Noosa also relies on local visitor surveys and other relevant data collected by Council, industry, sector Boards and private consultants.

Over the past six years, Tourism Noosa has commissioned production of the Noosa Tourism Monitor report from Melbourne-based Economic and Market Development Advisers (EDMA). This report is produced three times a year and comprises four key sections:

1. An overview of the Australian economic situation and key external factors
2. Noosa's performance and key visitor survey results (including Key Performance Indicators)
3. NoosaMo: Noosa's accommodation forecasting model developed by EDMA
4. A strategic summary and overview<sup>57</sup>.

This information guides tourism development and enables Tourism Noosa to monitor local tourism performance. It also ensures that strategic objectives and actions proposed by the industry are sustainable and compatible with global, national and local trends.

In 2002, private consultants KPMG produced a comprehensive report for Noosa Community Tourism Board relating to opportunities to develop new tourism products within Noosa. The report recommended the formation of four tourism clusters within Noosa as a way to diversify its tourism experience and increase the competitiveness of Noosa as a tourist destination within the domestic and international markets. The findings of this report were used to guide the development of the organisation's business plan and have since been incorporated into the *Noosa Sustainable Tourism Plan 2006–15* as one of the proposed strategies to support a sustainable industry.

The KPMG report also highlighted risks associated with focusing Noosa's promotional campaigns on single products, such as the beach, and recommended the development of new tourism products to increase demand for tourism services during off-peak periods. Subsequent reports reiterated the negative impacts of fluctuating peaks and troughs in visitor numbers.

To address this, Tourism Noosa developed and promoted four tourism clusters, offering a range of activities associated with adventure, cuisine, culture and nature. The organisation also designed an event strategy aimed at increasing visitation during off-peak periods.

During 2007, Tourism Noosa began collecting data in collaboration with Noosa Council<sup>6</sup> on the impacts of tourism on the local economy, community and environment. This monitoring tool has been employed by Tourism Noosa to ensure that local tourism activities are sustainable and, if not, can be remedied in a timely and affective manner.

Research is also used to direct Noosa's tourism campaigns to appropriate visitor markets. For example, data collated by Roy Morgan Tracking Study revealed that the primary visitor market in Noosa belong to the *re-energise in style* segment, or those who have above average income and who have a very high average trip

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<sup>6</sup> NB: Noosa Shire Council was amalgamated with local government areas of Maroochy and Caloundra to form the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in 2008.

expenditure. Accordingly Tourism Noosa directed its advertising campaign for this segment to feature inspirational and stylish lifestyle images. For the secondary market, consisting of *long weekenders* who enjoy pampering, restaurants, shopping and the beach, Tourism Noosa employed more tactical offers and advertising techniques<sup>58</sup>.

Tourism Noosa provides its members with access to all data and research that it has commissioned, undertaken or sourced. Local market trends and research findings are available on the Tourism Noosa web site and key findings are communicated through a monthly newsletter and at meetings. Having access to this information promotes transparency within the organisation and informs business decision-making.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 5: Establishment of a comprehensive research program to inform sustainable tourism decision-making for Kangaroo Island**

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Kangaroo Island has invested in the future of sustainable tourism by developing one of the most comprehensive data sets to guide planning and decision-making—the Kangaroo Island Tourism Optimisation Management Model (TOMM). TOMM stakeholders have a strong commitment to the research process and have established an effective method to ensure that information collected is used in a way that improves tourism outcomes in the region.

The following key indicators of tourism activity were developed by TOMM stakeholders following rigorous consultation to measure and interpret data relative to acceptable ranges for each indicator:

- average length of stay;
- visitor numbers;
- visitor satisfaction;
- changes in wildlife populations; and
- the ability of residents to influence tourism related decisions.

These indicators are continuously refined as more information becomes available.

Collection of data requires significant resources and funding is provided by stakeholder agencies on the TOMM Management Committee. The two main sources of research used are the Annual Visitor Exit Survey and the Annual Resident Survey (since 2000) which are contracted to external research agencies. In addition, partner agencies collect environmental data, such as wildlife populations, at key tourist sites.

The research provides useful trend information for comparative purposes but is not directly comparable with data from the National Visitor Survey or the International Visitor Survey. Improvements in methodology have ensured data is robust and reported in a consistent format, enabling local and state agencies to draw on results to inform and guide future directions.

The outcomes have resulted in greater collaboration and interest from stakeholder agencies in addressing tourism problems and opportunities as they arise. For example, there is continuous review and consultation among groups regarding the relevance of the indicators in relation to sustainability on Kangaroo Island. To ensure the findings are easily communicated to residents and local operators, a summary of results are printed in the local newspaper and fact sheets are regularly posted on the TOMM web site.

Gaps still exist in the development and measurement of environmental indicators. The ‘Leave Only Footprints’ Program<sup>59</sup> attempts to address this by identifying gaps and strengthening reporting mechanisms between the national resource management sector and the tourism industry.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 6: Tourism Western Australia and Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre lead research program to inform decision-making for the Tapestry Region**

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Tourism Western Australia took a lead role in encouraging shire councils within the Tapestry region to jointly fund tourism research through Sustainable Research Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC). Previously, each council or sub-region had operated independently with no shared tourism vision, and little interest in a cooperative approach to tourism management, planning and market. As a result, regional tourism operators in the region lacked meaningful data relating to visitor numbers, patterns and trends.

The STCRC project was identified by Tourism Western Australia as an opportunity to develop meaningful data, promote communication amongst the shires, and encourage a collaborative approach to tourism development for the Tapestry region. The STCRC research provided a data set that tourism operators could use to inform tourism development in their local areas. Other key outcomes included:

- the regional value of iconic attractions in Bunbury such as the Bunbury Dolphin Discovery Centre (DDC);
- the need for on-going local government and industry support for the DDC as a major tourism attraction;
- the need for more attractions that offer a wider range of experiences and encourage longer lengths of stay; and
- the need to foster relationships and synergies across the sub-regions to maximise the use of attractions for the region as a whole.

The research findings provided the impetus for local tourism operators to spearhead creative and effective tourism initiatives. Local operators in the hinterland worked together with the support of local government and industry to develop the 'Harvest Highway'. This tourism drive trail links food and beverage tourism products along a corridor that stretches across the Tapestry region en route to destinations further south. In Bunbury, stakeholders in the local visitor centre began promoting attractions outside their local township in an effort to encourage a broader tourism experience.

### **Best Practice Principle Eight**

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#### **Best practice regional tourism destinations establish methods to improve funding for tourism**

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Many regional destinations have traditionally relied on local or state government funding support for tourism infrastructure development, management and marketing initiatives. Best practice for Noosa has demonstrated the effectiveness of establishing a tourism and business levy system that is collected from all businesses. The funds raised from the levy are used to directly support tourism management systems, development of infrastructure and facilities, destination marketing initiatives, conservation of natural and heritage environments, and to contribute to relevant community initiatives. The funds are also used to undertake research and education programs. Development and implementation of levy schemes, however, requires careful consideration and consultation with business and the community to ensure acceptance of their introduction over time.

#### **Best Practice Strategies**

To establish methods to improve funding for tourism best practice regional tourism destinations:

- consider and introduce a tourism and business levy scheme;
- apply for national and state government grant opportunities (e.g. the Australian Government's TQUAL program);
- collect membership fees for the local and regional tourism associations; and
- establish commercial booking services as part of visitor information centre operations.

#### **Best Practice Snapshot**

The following best practice snapshot reflects many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

##### **Best Practice Funding Snapshot 1: Implementing a Tourism and Economic Levy for Noosa**

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Tourism Noosa is responsible for the planning, management and marketing of tourism in the Shire. About 80 percent of Tourism Noosa's budget is derived from the Tourism and Economic Levy, collected from local businesses and properties involved in tourism operations. The remaining 20 percent is collected from membership fees and commissions through online bookings.

The levy was introduced in 2001 by Council following extensive consultation with community and business operators, and with the support of industry. Council and Tourism Noosa worked collaboratively to increase community and business awareness of the economic benefits of tourism, while promoting Tourism Noosa as an independent professional entity representing the community and business interests of the Shire.

The tourism levy is collected by Noosa Council<sup>7</sup>, and its value is based on the size, revenue and location of the business. Initially, revenue from the levy could not be used for any purpose other than tourism. However, in 2005 Noosa Council extended the scope of the levy to enable funding for 'broader economic development initiatives delivered by Noosa Council's Economic Strategies and Innovations Unit' in collaboration with Tourism Noosa<sup>60</sup>.

In 2005–06 Tourism Noosa received a total budget of \$2.1 million, of which \$1.6 million was derived from the tourism levy (Noosa Council 2006). Board members believe that the levy provides Tourism Noosa with a strong sense of economic security and enables the organisation to undertake long-term planning and commit to projects without fear of budget cuts or political influences.

Beyond collection of the levy, Council does not provide additional financial support to Tourism Noosa. Council defines its core role as providing services and infrastructure to the community and visitors while entrusting tourism management and planning to Tourism Noosa. Council has a representative on the Tourism Noosa Board who is responsible for overseeing the management of funds and reporting to Council on the operations of the organisation. Tourism Noosa also presents Council with an annual business plan and budget proposal for approval.

## **Best Practice Principle Nine**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations educate and communicate the significance and local values of tourism to visitors, the community, governments and business**

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Communication of the significance of tourism can enable host communities, local tourism and business sectors (directly and indirectly involved in tourism), governments and other decision-makers to better understand what tourism is, how it operates in communities, and its social and economic contribution to regional areas. Decision-makers and investors are then more likely to make decisions and develop policies that better account for the needs of the tourism sector and the community, attract funding, and better manage community infrastructure and resources.

In turn, education and information to visitors about a host destination's community values and the impacts of negative visitor behaviour can help to ensure residential amenity and minimise social and environmental impacts (e.g. drunken behaviour, noise, neighbour disturbance, garbage and litter, parking and traffic problems in residential areas). There is also a need to provide information to visitors and residents about crisis management plans to ensure their safety and security systems within a destination in case of crisis.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To educate and communicate the significance and local values of tourism to visitors, the community, governments and business best practice regional tourism destinations:

- develop a Tourism Education and Communication program to educate visitors about the environment, community values, appropriate visitor behaviour and safety and security issues;
- educate the community and local business about sustainable tourism; and
- educate local government employees and Councillors about sustainable tourism and the role of Council in supporting and managing the tourism industry.

### **Best Practice Snapshot**

The following best practice snapshot reflects many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Developing an education and communications program to ensure consistent and on-going education about tourism, community and environmental values**

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As part of the planning process to develop the *Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan (BSTMP) 2008–18* the stakeholder consultation process identified the need for the education of visitors:

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<sup>7</sup> NB: Noosa Shire Council was amalgamated with local government areas of Maroochy and Caloundra to form the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in 2008.

- to respect residential amenity and to minimise impacts. For example related to: drunken behaviour, noise, neighbour disturbance, garbage and litter, parking and traffic problems in residential areas;
- to ensure respect for the local community and environment; and
- for residents about safety and security issues. For example related to: to alcohol and drugs, safety and emergency plans <sup>15</sup>.

The consultation process also identified the need to better educate the community, local businesses and Council to foster understanding about the benefits of tourism and the need to better plan and manage its impacts. As a result, an important objective of the BSTMP was ‘to provide on-going local education and communication to ensure visitors, local businesses, local government and the community understand tourism and community values’ <sup>15</sup>.

The Plan recommended that a Tourism Education and Communications Program be developed to ensure there is consistent and on-going education to visitors, the community, business sector and local government about tourism, community and environmental values. In addition, it was recommended that a communications campaign be developed to educate visitors about community values, appropriate visitor behaviour and safety and security. This information should be provided to all visitors through distribution by accommodation providers, accommodation booking agencies, visitor information centres, the Holiday Letting Organisation and retail outlets that serve tourists <sup>15</sup>.

Key strategies included:

- development of an Tourism Education and Communications Program to educate visitors about the environment, community values, appropriate visitor behaviour and safety and security (for e.g., road rules, surf conditions, insect protection, and emergency procedures);
- development of an Education Program to educate the community and local businesses about tourism; and
- development of an Education Program to educate Byron Shire Council employees and Councillors about tourism and the role of Council in supporting and managing the tourism industry.

From an industry perspective, a Holiday Letting Organisation (HLO) was established in 2005 to represent property owners of holiday letting properties. This was in response to community complaints about the impacts of tourism on residential amenity that resulted in Byron Shire Council’s plan to stop holiday letting of residential properties (houses and apartments) in areas of Byron Bay zoned as residential. HLO has developed a code of practice for its members and an accreditation program for those that comply. The code of practice aims to encourage the traditional visitors and filter out the party people by:

- advertising of properties targeted at traditional visitors with explicit ‘no partying’ warnings;
- carefully screening tenants at all points in the booking cycle; and
- implementing a ‘two strikes and you’re out’ contract for tenants.

HLO has also implanted a security system since the 2004–05 summer period to ensure the ‘two strikes and you’re out’ policy is effective. A Security System Manager also manages the data and follows up on complaints to verify, at a personal level, that the residents and property owners are satisfied with the system. This is used to continuously improve the quality of holiday letting for property owners, visitors and residents <sup>61</sup>.

## **Best Practice Principle Ten**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations foster service excellence**

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The quality of a visitor’s experience comprises a range of service interactions that a visitor has within a destination region including service encountered when purchasing petrol, groceries or a newspaper, through to fine dining and luxury accommodation experiences. The quality of all of these service interactions plays an important part in a destination’s ability to assemble and deliver a complete and satisfying visitor experience.

Many of the destinations in this research have leading hospitality and tourism operations that have established a superior customer service culture and benchmark for other local operations. This research, however, found that there was a need to establish a ‘whole of destination’ approach to improving and delivering customer service across all tourism and business operations.

## **Best Practice Strategies**

To achieve best practice in the delivery of quality service best practice regional tourism destinations:

- recognise the importance that all businesses, directly and indirectly involved in tourism, are educated and trained as to the need to provide quality customer service;
- develop or adopt a Service Excellence Program to ensure the delivery of exceptional and consistent service for all business and tourism operations;
- identify and implement appropriate service quality training programs for business owners and their staff;
- examine visitor satisfaction with service quality as part of destination visitor surveys;
- benchmark visitor satisfaction against other leading regional tourism destinations;
- encourage local business and tourism operations to become members of relevant industry associations;
- establish or adopt service quality accreditation schemes.

## **Best Practice Snapshot**

The following best practice snapshot reflects many of the best practice principles outlined above:

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Establishing Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds as a destination renowned for excellence in service quality**

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Daylesford and Hepburn Springs has established a reputation for excellence in tourism services. Since the 1980s, the area has developed as a popular and fashionable destination bolstered by the influence of entrepreneurs and operators that have developed iconic tourism and hospitality operations associated with health and well-being.

One of the earliest entrepreneurs to capitalise on the region's potential was Alla Wolf-Tasker who established Daylesford's international and national award-winning Lake House resort on the edge of Lake Daylesford. The Lake House opened in 1984, employing a pool of local trainees and apprentices. Other key attractions such as the Central Springs Inn, 'Lavandula' Swiss Italian farm, Harvest 1 organic bakery and the Convent Gallery evolved as other entrepreneurs moved to the region. These entrepreneurs shared an attachment to community values and a commitment to quality enterprises that enriched the character of local towns. Today, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs hosts 65 operators that provide spa, health and wellness services, as well as award-winning restaurants, retail shopping and more than 80 local café s and galleries.

The emergence of local eateries—and arrival of illustrious restaurateurs, award-winning chefs, sommeliers, baristas, winemakers and producers—also fuelled a revival in the agricultural sector. Demand for olives, grapes, herbs and organic produce grew to new levels. The Daylesford Macedon Produce Group was established to represent the interests of growers, producers and provedores whose cellar doors and farm gate produce who were supplying local café s, restaurants and farmers' markets.

The stakeholder consultation process that supported development of the *Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan 2008–18*, however, identified the need for improved service training and skill development, educational support for small businesses, and local training opportunities in service quality, hospitality and wellness. It recommended that Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Surrounds aspire to become a destination renowned for excellence in service quality.

Specific recommendations of the Plan included:

- education and training for service-related businesses to improve customer service;
- training to improve workforce skills and quality; and
- development of a Service Excellence Program to ensure the delivery of exceptional and consistent service for all business and tourism operations<sup>17</sup>.

## **Best Practice Principle Eleven**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations develop crisis management plans for tourism**

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Best practice destinations prepare a crisis and risk management strategy in order to be prepared for any unexpected crisis that may affect business viability, community well-being and the environment. A logical and systematic approach to risk and crisis management can reduce the impacts and losses associated with any adverse event and can provide a framework from which both businesses and destinations can apply crisis management strategies for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Examples of issues and scenarios

that could be addressed include drought, bushfire and flood. Changes in economic conditions can also impact on a destination region, for example, increased fuel prices, a downturn in international travel, and terrorist attacks.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To develop crisis management plans for tourism best practice regional tourism destinations:

- develop a crisis and risk management strategy for tourism to ensure an immediate response to crisis situations;
- work cooperatively with relevant agencies and stakeholders to develop crisis and risk management strategies for tourism (e.g., police, fire, ambulance, Parks authorities);
- develop emergency management plans for key infrastructure targets town centres, and key visitor sites;
- communicate key outcomes of strategy to the community, businesses, visitors, and interested stakeholders to ensure that residents and visitors are informed of risk and emergency management arrangements;
- incorporate crisis and risk management plans for tourism into local government risk management plans and emergency service risk management plans;
- encourage businesses to develop crisis and risk management strategies for their own operations and to provide adequate provision for tourism; and
- develop and implement tactical marketing campaigns to respond immediately to crisis situations.

### **Best Practice Snapshot**

The following best practice snapshot reflects many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

#### **Best Practice Crisis Management Snapshot 1: Grampians demonstrates proactive response to 2006 bushfires**

Grampians Marketing Inc (GMI) is the regional marketing campaign committee responsible for promotional activities in the region. During the devastating bushfires in the summer of 2006, which swept through the central Grampians National Park for 14 days, the committee demonstrated exemplary skills in crisis management. Within four days of the fires starting, key tourism stakeholders formed a cooperative response, led by GMI, to:

- address tourist perceptions that the Grampians was burnt out and inaccessible; and
- deliver a positive message of recovery to attract visitors back to the Grampians as soon as possible.

In preparing its response, the Grampians tourism industry considered the 2003 bushfires that swept through north-eastern Victoria. While the fires had only affected specific sites, visitors perceived that the entire region was burnt out. Cooperation between local councils and tourism had been critical in successfully identifying the best short, medium and long term strategies to ensure the recovery and future growth of tourism in regional Victoria. Similarly, management of the Grampians crisis was underpinned by cooperation amongst stakeholders and open communication with consumers.

The Grampians Regional Tourism Recovery Group was established, involving a coalition of the Campaign Committee, Parks Victoria, all regional Shire Councils, Tourism Victoria, regional tourism and business associations, the business community, local tourism operators and Tourism Alliance Victoria.

During the bushfires, GMI drove the crisis plan and response by developing a structure to manage delivery of tourism messages. Perceptions that the whole area was devastated were countered by regular media updates, as well as web and instant email updates. GMI maintained constant contact with land managers, Parks Victoria and Tourism Victoria for the most up-to-date information. As a result, a clear and consistent message was conveyed, that environmental regeneration and the recovery of park facilities are well underway.

Bushfire relief funding from the Victorian government was allocated to affected local councils to employ a communications coordinator, public relations firm and administrator. Local operators who had lost income because of the initial decline in visitation were appointed by Parks Victoria to assist in the redevelopment program. A 12-month program of industry development and capacity building, focused on short, sharp delivery of business planning modules, was also funded.

Despite an immediate decline in domestic overnight visitation, compounded by on-going drought and increases in fuel prices, the region still managed to attract 2 million domestic visitor nights, an increase of 15.2 percent from 2006 to 2007. The average length of stay was 3.4 nights in 2007, up from 2.6 nights in 2006. The

Grampians region also received approximately 38,100 international overnight visitors, an increase of 30.8 percent from 2006 to 2007.

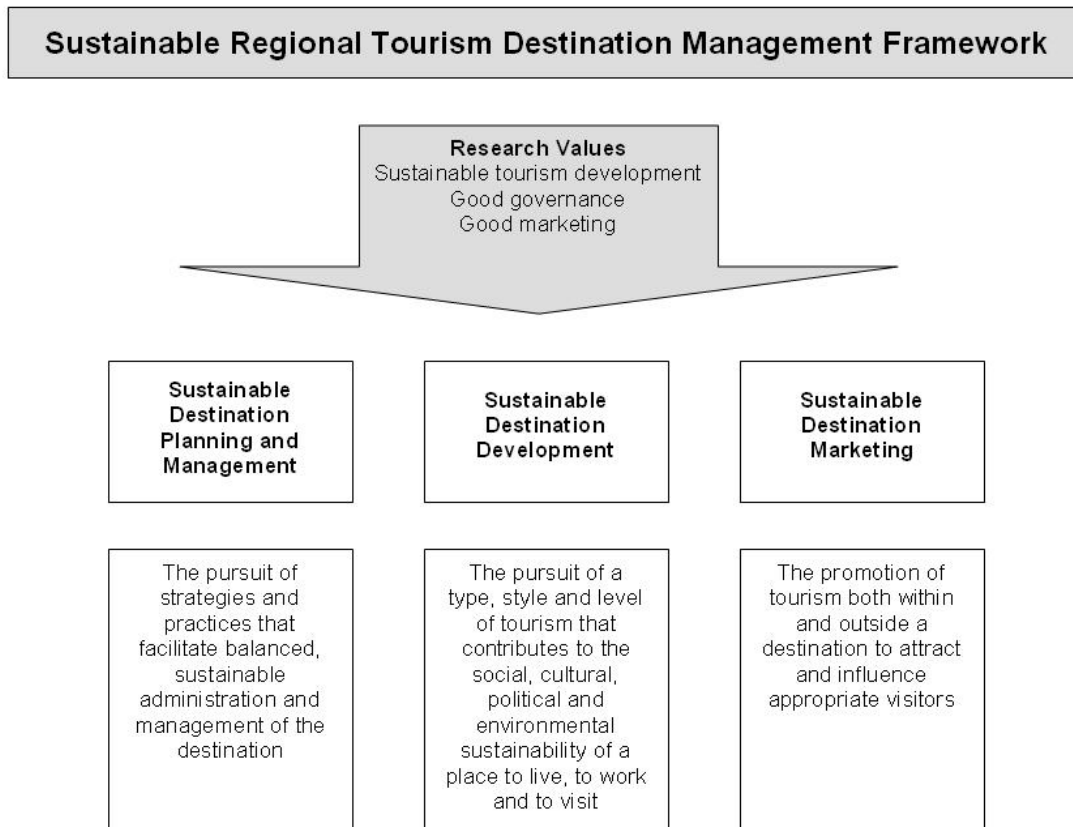
Success in the implementation of crisis management strategies immediately following the bushfires required leadership and cooperation. In the Grampians, it was driven by tourism managers through the Grampians Regional Tourism Recovery Group. Ongoing cooperation between Parks Victoria and tourism area managers was strengthened by the campaign, and Parks Victoria has subsequently integrated tourism fully into its planning process.

*Chapter 5*

## SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

This chapter identifies the best practice principles for the second dimension of best practice for regional tourism destinations—sustainable destination development.



**Best practices principles for the sustainable development of regional tourism destinations:**

- improve access for visitors by planning and developing effective transport infrastructure and systems;
- plan and develop appropriate infrastructure and support facilities for tourism;
- plan and develop a range of appropriate visitor products and experiences;
- plan for the preservation of natural, built and socio-cultural environments.

The following sections identify the strategies and that have been undertaken by the 21 case study destinations to achieve these best practice principles for sustainable destination development. Best practice snapshots derived from the case study research have been used to demonstrate how these best practices have been implemented in real destination contexts.

## **Best Practice Principle One**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations improve access for visitors by planning and developing effective transport infrastructure and systems**

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Successful regional destinations are easily accessible to visitors. A destination's accessibility can be influenced by: their proximity to key population centres, the location and capacity of airports, changing airfares and competition among airline carriers, frequency and carrying capacity of other forms of transport (coaches, buses, ferry and shuttle services), and road infrastructure and transport systems to and within a destination.

#### **Best Practice Strategies**

To improve visitor access best practice regional tourism destinations:

- cooperate with road traffic authorities and other relevant government departments and agencies to plan for the improvement of road infrastructure to and within the destination;
- work with local airport authorities, airline services and transport carriers to improve visitor transport services;
- develop a Integrated Signage Strategy for directional and interpretative signage along transit routes and within the destination in cooperation with relevant state government agencies; and
- develop an Integrated Transport Strategy that investigates and improves transport options to and within the destination, to other destinations within the region, and considers alternative transport modes such as rail, cycleways and walkways.

#### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Long-term planning for the development and improvement of infrastructure and services at Newcastle Airport in the Hunter Valley**

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Newcastle Airport operates under a lease from the Commonwealth Government and is a tenant of the Department of Defence at RAAF Base Williamtown. While Newcastle Airport is a military airfield, civilian operations are conducted according to an operating agreement between the Department of Defence and Newcastle Airport Limited (NAL).

Low cost carriers began servicing Newcastle Airport in May 2000 and in 2001 a major expansion of the airport's apron and terminal was completed. In 2004, Virgin Blue announced it would run direct flights between Newcastle and the Gold Coast in response to strong lobbying from the Hunter business and tourism communities. In 2005, Jetstar announced a \$29 million engineering infrastructure development at Newcastle Airport to maintain its Airbus A320 fleet. Today, the airport is serviced by Jetstar, Virgin Blue, QantasLink, Aeropelican, Brindabella Airlines and Norfolk Air which operate flights to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Canberra, Port Macquarie and Norfolk Island.

Since the introduction of civilian flights, Newcastle Airport has experienced a significant and dramatic increase in domestic airline passengers. Between 2003 and 2006, the number of inbound and outbound passenger movements increased from 214,000 to 890,000<sup>8</sup>. Average growth of around three percent per annum is projected for the period 2005–06 to 2009–10 and even stronger growth is forecast between 2009–10 and 2014–15 as more seats are released to meet demand<sup>7</sup>.

The NAL has developed a Master Plan in 2007 that provides a blueprint for planning and development of the airport for the next 20 years. The Plan identifies key growth areas for Newcastle Airport that will:

- enhance the Airport's economic contribution;
- promote competitive air services;
- improve business and tourism efficiency through the establishment of an aerospace industry 'cluster'.

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<sup>8</sup> Newcastle Airport Master Plan (2007)

The NAL Plan focuses on the growth of domestic and international services, the establishment of new precincts for aircraft maintenance, and a business park for airport and aerospace-related business.

This commitment to improve infrastructure and services at Newcastle Airport will continue to positively impact the number of domestic and international ‘tourists’ to the Hunter Valley region.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Improved road infrastructure and introduction of commercial air services to Shark Bay**

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Shark Bay is located at the most westerly point of Australia midway along the coast of Western Australia. Its major population centre is Denham; a town of about 600 people located in the centre of the bay approximately 820 kilometres from Perth. Tourism in Shark Bay emerged in the early 1960s after the road from Geraldton to Carnarvon was sealed. Interaction with dolphins was an early drawcard to the region and led to the development of Monkey Mia Resort which offered tourists an opportunity to watch local fisherman hand feeding dolphins.

A caravan park was established at Monkey Mia in 1975<sup>62</sup> but difficulty accessing Shark Bay coupled with a lack of visitor facilities and low public awareness restricted the number of visitors to around 10,000 each year<sup>63</sup>. The sealing of the Denham-Hamelin Road in 1985 and the establishment of an information centre, boat ramp, entrance tollbooth and barbeques at Monkey Mia contributed to a significant increase in visitors to the region.

In 1988 the state government provided funds to seal the Denham – Monkey Mia Road, landscape the resort and build car parks and toilets. The upgrade generated more tourist activity which, in turn, encouraged the caravan park redevelopment in 1989–90, construction of a visitor information centre and tourist facilities at Monkey Mia Resort, and development of backpacker and youth hostel accommodation in 2003<sup>62</sup>.

In 2004, Tourism Western Australia identified Shark Bay as a ‘key site for tourism development in Western Australia’ with a high degree of icon significance and lower degree of market readiness. Gaps were identified in the areas of access, accommodation, amenities and activities.

Strategies developed to improve access to and within the region included:

- progressive realignment of a four-wheel drive track in the Francois Peron National Park;
- sealing the road to the Person Homestead;
- sealing western access roads off Denham Road; and
- constructing a road from Kalbarri to Shark Bay<sup>64</sup>.

Strategies to address demand for top-range accommodation included:

- investigating the provision of 3.5 – 4-star accommodation; and
- developing a 5-star resort and a safari camp in Francois Peron National Park.

Strategies to improve amenities included:

- on-going expansion of the Monkey Mia Resort;
- upgrading the Hamelin Pool car park to improve access for vehicles including buses;
- exploring the feasibility of a marina and ocean swimming pool in the Denham area; and
- identifying the need for additional toilets and facilities in Denham and throughout the region generally<sup>64</sup>.

Research by Tourism Western Australia (2007) indicates that most visitors access Shark Bay and the surrounding region by road. In the period 2005– 06, 73 percent of domestic tourists travelled to Shark Bay by car. For the same period, the majority of international tourists reported travelling to the region by road, although 35 percent of these tourists travelled by bus. Only one percent of international tourists, and seven percent of domestic tourists, travelled by air to Shark Bay during this period<sup>65</sup>.

### ***Road infrastructure***

A major sealed road links Shark Bay with the North West Coastal highway. The two main tourist centres of Denham and Monkey Mia are both accessible by sealed road. Denham is 820 kilometres by road to Denham (10 hour drive) while Monkey Mia Resort is 24 kilometres from Denham (20 minute drive). Occasional flooding during the cyclone season from December to March can restrict access to sealed and unsealed roads<sup>64, 66</sup>.

### ***Air services***

Skywest regional airlines service the Monkey Mia airport several times weekly from Perth or Geraldton. Connecting flights link Perth with all of Australia's major capitals. The Monkey Mia airport is a 10 minute drive from both Denham and Monkey Mia. Flights also operate to Geraldton, Carnarvon, Exmouth and Meekatharra in the Coral Coast.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Transport infrastructure investment at Kangaroo Island improves tourist accessibility**

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Kangaroo Island is readily accessible from the mainland by air and sea from Adelaide and the Fleurieu Peninsula respectively. Daily 30-minute flights operate to and from Adelaide on small aircraft and capacity is limited by airport infrastructure at Kingscote Airport on Kangaroo Island. Most visitors travel to the island on the Sealink passenger and vehicle ferry which runs daily 45-minute services between the closest point on the mainland, Cape Jervis, and Kangaroo Island's second largest town, Penneshaw.

Sealink has serviced the island since the mid-1980s and has been a major catalyst for tourism growth, introducing 'fast ferry' services in 1998 and undertaking \$8 million worth of extensive upgrades to its terminal and visitor facilities. Sealink also promotes tourism to Kangaroo Island as an integrated transport and tourism operator, providing packaged and coach tours on the island. It is the recipient of significant state and national tourism awards.

Tourism is an extremely important driver of transport demand to and from Kangaroo Island. It is the primary revenue source for Sealink and is the main factor influencing the frequency of ferry services. The island incorporates a 1600 kilometre road network of which approximately 85 percent is unsealed. This has presented challenges for tourists wanting to explore key sites, particularly in coastal areas.

In 2001–02, Council undertook major upgrades to the West End Highway and South Coast Road that significantly increased access to tourist nodes for two-wheel drive vehicles and provided a circular touring route for motorists. Better roads and more relaxed hire car conditions have contributed to an increase in independent driving tourists seeking nature-based experiences.

The 2006 Tourism Australia National Road Tourism Strategy specifically identified the Adelaide, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island route as a priority national touring route, and affirmed Kangaroo Island's growing international reputation as an unspoiled eco-tourism destination that attracts the nature-loving, self-drive touring market (SD+D 2007).

The 2007 Kangaroo Island Regional Transport Strategy (SD+D 2007) reports that Council must secure on-going infrastructure funding for federal government, state government and industry sources to further improve visitor access and reduce the cost of on-going road maintenance. The challenge for Kangaroo Island will be to ensure continued investment in road infrastructure while maintaining the island's image as a relatively remote nature-based tourism destination.

## **Best Practice Principle Two**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations plan and develop appropriate infrastructure and support facilities for tourism**

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A lack of adequate infrastructure and support facilities can limit the realisation of tourism potential at a destination. Careful planning and management is required to ensure a balance between tourism growth and development of supporting infrastructure and facilities<sup>67</sup>. In addition to road infrastructure and transport systems identified in the previous section, best practice regional tourism destinations establish adequate infrastructure and facilities so the destination develops as a good place to live, to do business and to visit.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To improve infrastructure and support facilities best practice regional tourism destinations:

- audit infrastructure and facilities to determine priority infrastructure needs;
- develop an Investment and Infrastructure Strategy to plan for and attract public and private sector investment for priority infrastructure and facilities;

- design and develop infrastructure and support facilities that reflect the socio-cultural heritage of the destination and preserve the natural environment;
- seek and receive support from local, state and federal governments for planning and funding for infrastructure for tourism;
- plan for and improve parking facilities, amenities, services and facilities (e.g. public toilets, safe playgrounds, accessible public spaces, picnic areas, youth facilities);
- develop a Council Tourism Works Plan to ensure maintenance of facilities particularly during peak visitation periods; and
- improve town beautification and maintenance to create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

#### **Best Practice 1: Need for improved infrastructure, support services and accessibility to realise the potential of Agnes Water/1770**

The tourism potential of Agnes Water/1770 began to emerge as more visitors visited the area in the late 1980s and 1990s. In 1999 Tourism Queensland commissioned Tourism Potential Pty Ltd to explore the opportunities and constraints associated with tourism development of this destination, focusing on general and marine tourism. The study concluded that:

*Agnes Water/1770 is an emerging tourism destination with a growth potential of nine percent per year over the next five years. But it lacks the tourism focus, marketing, operator base and infrastructure of more established destinations* <sup>68p. ii</sup>

The study found that while population and visitor numbers to Agnes Water/1770 continued to grow, its appeal to broader markets was limited by infrastructure (e.g. water, sewerage), services (e.g. food beverage establishments, financial services, entertainment and cultural venues) and lack of sealed road access to both towns. It was also reported that visitor accommodation options were limited and tourism was further hampered by planning and zoning restrictions and a lack of business and marketing skills amongst the local tourism industry <sup>68</sup>.

The report suggested that the destination's tourism potential could be realised through more effective collaboration between local and state governments. Further, the state government could play an important role in providing 'complementary planning and development resources to the Shire' <sup>68</sup>.

In 2004 the road to Agnes Water was sealed, leading to a significant increase in both real estate speculation and development. The decline in sugar milling and grazing industries resulted in the release of land for subdivision, and investors who recognised the tourism potential of the area began purchasing large parcels of land for property development.

Property values increased dramatically in a short time, with luxury apartments sold for up to \$4.5 million in Agnes Water in 2005 <sup>69</sup>. While the area has experienced a significant increase in luxury accommodation, there has been an overall decrease in caravan and camping facilities for budget and self-drive tourists. This problem was exacerbated by the recent sale of the camping ground in Agnes Water to a property developer.

There are currently plans for the establishment of a small commercial airport in Agnes Water <sup>70</sup>. If approved, the airport will be a joint venture between the Shire and Sydney developer Mijo, and will service small 50-seat planes and corporate jets<sup>69</sup>. This development is expected to significantly increase demand for luxury apartments, and developers are already purchasing large parcels of land in both Agnes Water and 1770.

Today, the Shire attempts to manage the growth and type of development through a planning scheme which identifies Agnes Water as a 'district centre' for visitors and residents with zoning and height restrictions on residential and commercial development <sup>71</sup>. Development in 1770 is limited to infill development within low and medium density areas, while expansion of existing tourism operations is subject to a range of operational approvals. Natural areas around Agnes Water and 1770 are protected from development through inclusion in the Shire's conservation zone <sup>71</sup>.

Rapid development in the area has presented many challenges for MVSC and will continue to challenge its successor, Gladstone Regional Council. The former Council struggled to cope with the large number of development applications, resulting in numerous complaints to the Queensland Ombudsman's office regarding the administrative management of development applications under the Integrated Planning Act (IPA) 1997<sup>72</sup>. An investigation revealed that MVSC has struggled to cope with the large number of development applications in a professional manner and has failed, in some cases, to fully comply with the IPA<sup>72</sup>.

Development is also putting pressure on existing infrastructure such as water and electricity. Council is currently planning to construct a reverse osmosis desalination plant and the local energy company is in the process of upgrading its facilities in the wake of regular and costly blackouts. Insufficient parking spaces, limited mobility between tourist attractions<sup>9</sup>, lack of public toilets and pressure on the existing sewerage system are also presenting challenges for Agnes Water/1770. Council does not have the financial capacity to remedy all of these issues and the responsibility is partly resting with developers and tourism operators.

Findings the money to develop and maintain tourism infrastructure within Agnes Water/ Seventeen Seventy has been a source of some conflict between Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce (DCTC) and the Council. During 2007, Council was awarded a \$495,000 grant from the state government for the redevelopment of the foreshore camping area in 1770 providing Council could match the grant dollar-for-dollar and that funding would be restricted to enhancing the foreshore area. Council rejected the offer, inciting a battle with the Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce (DCTC).

DCTC requested a special council meeting be held, at which it tabled the following reasons why the grant should be accepted:

- tourism activities within Agnes Water and 1770 contribute significantly to the Shire's economy;
- the environmental integrity of the foreshore area is currently under threat due to tourism pressures, insufficient infrastructure and inadequate environmental management;
- the money required to match the proposal is available from the proceeds of the sale of the Council owned 1770 Caravan Park; and
- refusing to accept the grant could potentially damage Council's chances of receiving any future grants.

After some discussion, the decision was overturned and Council accepted the grant. This experience demonstrates some of the difficulties and challenges associated with tourism development in an emerging destination with a small, cash-strapped local council.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Developing the appeal of the Launceston Tamar Valley region**

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In the past five years, a number of key developments have occurred in the Launceston Tamar Valley region to benefit visitors and residents. These developments are summarised under the following headings:

- preserving the unique heritage;
- redeveloping key city precincts;
- developing the Tamar Valley Wine Route;
- developing a cultural centre;
- hosting major events; and
- cooperation between private and public sector tourism stakeholders.

#### ***Preserving the unique heritage***

Launceston's charm as a city destination is characterised by the unique architecture of its Central Business District (CBD) and surrounding areas. Many heritage buildings, some of which have been converted to bed and breakfast operations, were built in the 1830s and have been carefully restored or converted to provide visitors with pleasant and functional accommodation that complements the town's historic character.

Local entrepreneurs and the Launceston City Council have maintained and preserved the town's historic buildings while supporting construction of newer developments such as Seaport and Peppers Resort that add value to the tourism experience.

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<sup>9</sup> During 2007 a private operator began running an hourly bus service between Agnes Water and 1770. This could potentially improve accessibility and connectivity between tourist attractions in the area.

One of the Tamar Valley's significant destinations, Low Head, has also been carefully preserved to maintain its historic value. The Low Head Pilot Station is Australia's oldest continually operating Pilot Station and is a prominent icon in the region, providing visitors with a unique historical experience. Low Head is also home to a renowned marine environment and boasts one of the world's best cold water sponge gardens— attracting dive, snorkel and school excursion groups.

### ***Redeveloping key city precincts***

There has been significant investment in upgrading several accommodation properties in Launceston over the past seven years to ensure the area retains its appeal for locals and tourists alike. Launceston's old seaport area, located five minutes from the CBD, was redeveloped in 2002 to provide residents and visitors with a distinct marina environment offering accommodation, al fresco dining, bars and extensive Boardwalks.

The Seaport development, incorporating The Peppers Seaport Hotel, was led by local developer Errol Stewart, with the support of the 'Business North' group. It has been a critical factor in maintaining the appeal of Launceston, providing a central point of recreational activity in the city.

The (Cataract) Gorge has also been enhanced to provide a wilderness experience just 15 minutes walk from the city centre. It incorporates walking and hiking trails, the world's longest single span chairlift, a swimming pool, restaurant, kiosk, peacocks and wildlife, gardens, suspension bridge, Interpretation Centre and lookouts with spectacular views. The million dollar development, funded by Launceston Council, complements the area's natural built environment.

At the time of writing, the Launceston City Council had invited the local public to provide input into the direction of a Gorge Conservation Management Plan <sup>73</sup>.

### ***Developing the Tamar Valley Wine Route***

In the mid-1990s emphasis was given to the development and promotion of food and wine tourism experiences in Tamar Valley. The Tamar Valley Wine Route was developed, incorporating several well-respected wineries and food producers. A touring itinerary was developed by the region's economic development agency, Northern Tasmania, to link 21 local wineries from Launceston and north along the East Tamar and West Tamar areas. The wine trail route provided visitors with a more structured and informative food and wine experience. Its development was facilitated by the network of vineyards that worked in conjunction with Northern Tasmania.

The region's success as a food and wine destination has been further cemented by the proliferation of restaurateurs whose entrepreneurial drive and culinary talents have provided Launceston with a key strength in cuisine. Restaurants such as Stillwater, Tee and Mee and Strathlynn attract visitors seeking quality dining experiences, culinary expertise and local produce.

### ***Developing the Tamar Valley Wine Route***

Cultural attractions and artwork often go hand in hand with food and wine as visitor attractions. The development of Launceston's Inveresk cultural arts precinct has been a logical addition to the region's local attraction base. It is home to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (adjacent to the historic rail yard), Design Centre and University of Tasmania arts department. The precinct incorporates world standard art gallery space, exhibition areas and café s and was developed by local council as a visitor attraction and to strengthen community pride in the region's artistic and creative talents.

### ***Cooperation between private and public sector tourism stakeholders***

The successful development of the Launceston Tamar Valley region as a tourist destination can be attributed to the entrepreneurial drive of locals involved in the industry, and the cooperation of private sector stakeholders and local councils.

Many of the region's attractions have been engineered by local entrepreneurs keen to attract tourists while simultaneously showcasing their community's talents and achievements. Many of these operators have been actively engaged in improving the region's tourism experiences and have lobbied council and other stakeholders to improve services and facilities. They are essential to the on-going success of the destination.

Meanwhile, the public sector—represented by the local councils that operate in the Launceston Tamar Valley region—has largely supported private operators by investing in infrastructure and facilities required by locals and visitors. Redevelopments such as the Gorge and Seaport precincts are the result of successful private and public sector partnerships. The region’s three local councils have also come together to consider further tourism issues from a joint regional perspective, with the aim of maximising all tourism opportunities (see more in Chapter 3).

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Sustainable development of tourism ‘key sites’ and infrastructure in Alice Springs**

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Sustainable development of tourism sites in Alice Springs has involved effective and on-going consultation with community stakeholders. The Alice Springs Desert Park is a world-class tourism development that showcases the natural and cultural environment of the region. The Park covers 1300 hectares and is adjacent to the West MacDonnell National Park. The site has cultural significance for the local Arrernte people. Tourists can participate in a self-guided walk through different habitats or join one of the regular guide presentations conducted by local professionals, including Aboriginal staff.

The Alice Springs Convention Centre is another key tourism development in town. Recognising the community’s desire for sustainable development that supports the ‘feel and ambience’ of Alice Springs, the centre was built according to strict planning and height restrictions. The commitment to low key development was confirmed by the Alice Springs Tourism Infrastructure Project Team which developed the *2006–15 Tourism Infrastructure Framework —Strengthening the Position of Alice Springs Tourism* strategy.

## **Best Practice Principle Three**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations plan and develop a range of appropriate visitor products and experiences**

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A destination that offers a diversity of visitor experiences is in a better competitive position than one that has a limited mix of activities. Best practice destinations recognise that in addition to their iconic attractions there is a need to provide and promote a diversity of appropriate tourism product and visitor activities to enhance the visitor experience, improve yield, increase length of stay throughout the year, and encourage repeat visitation.

#### **Best Practice Strategies**

To plan and develop appropriate visitor products and experiences best practice regional tourism destinations:

- undertake a regular Tourism Product Audit process to monitor product offerings and to identify opportunities for new product development and investment opportunities;
- as part of visitor research programs (see more Chapter 4) regularly survey potential and current visitors to determine views about existing products and experiences, to identify new opportunities and to ensure that product development matches needs and expectations of visitors;
- develop a diverse range of appropriate visitor activities to complement their iconic attractions including: a range of accommodation types to suit different visitor markets, high quality food and beverage experiences, cultural, heritage and Indigenous experiences, festivals and special events, nature-based experiences, and recreational and leisure activities;
- support and encourage entrepreneurs to establish innovative visitor experiences that complement community and environmental values;
- maintain a good and consistent standard of product that meets or exceeds the expectation of guests;
- revitalise existing product to keep it fresh and exciting to meet the changing expectations of visitors;
- integrate new and enhanced products into destination marketing strategies (see more in Chapter 5);
- develop drive routes/day tour packages to encourage visitors to experience the broader destination region;
- develop special events that match the destination character and community values (see more in Chapter 5); and
- support the development of Indigenous visitor experiences in cooperation with local Aboriginal communities.

### Best Practice Snapshots

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Influence of entrepreneurs in establishing the Hunter Valley region as an important wine and tourism region**

Located 160 kilometres from Sydney, the Hunter Valley is acknowledged as one of Australia's premier wine growing regions, known for red and white wine varieties. The growth of the Hunter Valley viticulture industry—and demand for its wines in international markets—can be attributed to the drive, passion and enthusiasm of extraordinary entrepreneurs over the past 100 years. The evolution of small wineries into tourism-focused operations has cemented the Hunter Valley as an important regional destination attracting significant domestic and international visitors. It is estimated that around 2.3 million tourists visit the Hunter Valley Wine Country each year, generating \$300 million for the local economy in 2005–06.

The first real 'wine tourism boom' for the Hunter Valley occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. It coincided with the growth in Australia's economic wealth and the emergence of 'drive holidays' attributed to the advent of affordable cars, the caravan boom of the 1960s and the extension of bus and rail networks. At the same time, Sydney emerged as Australia's pre-eminent gateway city for international arrivals, providing the impetus for day-trips to the Hunter region. Thanks to more efficient road and air access—and effective marketing—short breaks and wine tasting became synonymous.

Since the 1960s, it is estimated that a further 100 vineyards have opened. Since the 1980s, the Hunter Valley has attracted the development of quality private sector infrastructure and visitor experiences to complement the wine tourism experience. The area now boasts 140 accommodation houses providing 3000 beds, including major developments such as the Hunter Valley Gardens established in 2003 and the Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Resort established in 2006. Leisure experiences include world-class golf courses such as The Vintage and Cypress Lakes. Food and local produce have also become an important part of the Hunter Valley experience with an increasing number of award-winning restaurants and the emergence of a 'cottage industry' showcasing local products and crafts. The development of major events has added a new tourism dimension. Opera in the Vineyards, Jazz in the Vines, Lovedale Long Lunch and other events attract significant visitors to the region each year.

The development and recognition of the Hunter Valley and its wine tourism product has been driven by a number of strong local identities, families and personalities—mostly wine makers—over an extended period of time. Without their passion and vision, the region may not have progressed so successfully from a wine growing region to international wine and food destination. Fortuitously, the entrepreneurs who have been attracted to the region for lifestyle reasons seem to share the same passion and values as the longer-term residents.

Following is a list of events that have helped stimulate the development and growth of wine and tourism in the Hunter Valley:

- 1858:** English immigrant Edward Tyrrell plants his first vines in the Hunter Valley and, by the turn of the century, his land is regarded as some of the finest for a vineyard
- 1863:** Rail link from Newcastle reaches Singleton
- 1930:** The Barrington Guest House opens near Barrington Tops National Park
- 1960:** First publication of Hunter Valley Research Foundation's 'This is Newcastle'—a forerunner to 'Newcastle and the Hunter Region'
- 1968:** Wyndham Estate is operated by Percy and then Brian McGuigan; one of the region's most successful family operations
- 1963:** Lake's Folly, regarded as Australia's first boutique winery, is founded at Pokolbin
- 1968:** Len Evans establishes Rothbury Estate which rapidly becomes a Hunter landmark
- 1968:** 100 wineries are operating in the region making it possibly Australia's most popular wine tourism destination
- 1986:** Barrington Tops is inscribed in the World Heritage list
- 1990:** Eaglereach Wilderness Resort opens near Barrington Tops as one of the first 'eco-tourism resorts' in New South Wales

- 1999:** Newcastle's BHP steelworks closes and the city commences a reinvention of itself as a cosmopolitan beach city with development of boutique accommodation, waterfront restaurants and outdoor cafés and larger hotels
- 2001:** Major expansions to Newcastle Airport's apron and terminal become operational
- 2003:** Greg Norman's Vintage Golf Course and Tourist Resort opens
- 2003:** \$45 million Crowne Plaza Hotel on Newcastle Harbour foreshore completed
- 2003:** The Hunter Valley Gardens opens on 25 hectares with 12 themed gardens, conference centre, pub, restaurant accommodation and vineyard—attracting more than 200,000 visitors annually
- 2004:** Virgin Blue announces it will run direct flights between Newcastle and the Gold Coast in response to strong lobbying from the Hunter business and tourism communities
- 2005:** Jetstar announces \$29m engineering infrastructure development at Newcastle Airport to maintain its Airbus A320 fleet
- 2006:** Establishment of Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Resort, a purpose-built Crowne Plaza resort on the site of the Hunter Valley Golf and Country Club located within the heart of the vineyard district.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 2: Great Ocean Road: Development of internationally recognised, quality nature-based tourism products and experiences**

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Victoria's Great Ocean Road is internationally recognised as one of the most spectacular coastal journeys in the world, and is one of the top ten regional areas visited in Australia. The region is renowned for its maritime and shipwreck history as well as its diverse natural assets including rugged cliffs, raging surf, spectacular bays, coves and beaches, lush rainforests and abundant wildlife. Most nature-based activities take place in National and State Parks, where there has been continuous investment in services and infrastructure by successive Victorian Governments since the early 1990s to attract more visitors and improve the state's tourism competitiveness<sup>74</sup>. This has facilitated significant growth in tourism, particularly from international visitors.

The tourism significance of the region's natural assets has been further enhanced by the extension of existing National Parks, including the Great Otway National Park established in 2005, and Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries such as the Twelve Apostles Marine National Park established in 2002.

While beach visits and dining out are the most popular activities for all visitors, the National and State Parks, bush walking and wildlife are major drawcards for international visitors<sup>75</sup>. The region offers many quality nature-based and soft adventure activities and experiences for independent and small group tourists—notably bush walking along the Great South West Walk and the Great Ocean Walk, cycling, whale watching, surfing, canoeing and mountain-biking.

To help ensure sustainable development in the region there has been increasing emphasis on developing product in the hinterland. This serves to take pressure off coastal towns and attractions while encouraging extended visits outside of peak periods. The Otway Fly Tree Top Walk and Café was developed to support this strategy. Opened in 2003, it is the world's longest and highest tree top walk and offers a year-round tourism experience. Costing \$6.5 million to develop, it was funded by the federal government under the DOTARS Regional Assistance Program.

Other complementary products developed to support tourism in the hinterland include boutique wineries and breweries, local produce (e.g. berries, ice cream, honey and cheeses), art and craft galleries, high quality boutique accommodation and emerging health and well-being products.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 3: Tourism product audit informs long-term strategic tourism planning for Destination Daylesford**

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A comprehensive tourism product audit was undertaken during 2007 as part of a strategic tourism planning process guiding the development of the Destination Daylesford Strategic Tourism Plan 2008 to 2018. The audit aimed to identify, categorise and count all visitor accommodation, attractions and activities, tourism-related retail businesses, restaurants/food and beverage operations, spa and wellness centres and transport operations within the Hepburn Shire destination region. This region includes the major towns of Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Creswick, Clunes and Trentham.

## **SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS PROJECT**

For the purpose of the audit process, an accommodation facility was defined as being any establishment listed by an accommodation agency (real estate or Internet-based) or promoted by signage at the premises, irrespective of whether they had received council approval. Tourism-related retail businesses were defined as those retail operations that could be accessed or sought by visitors to the area.

The accommodation audit aimed to identify the number and location of visitor accommodation properties, to classify properties according to accommodation type, and to estimate the number of bed spaces provided by each property (where bed space capacities for accommodation establishments were not provided through published sources, conservative estimates were used).

Premises offering visitor accommodation were identified by examining:

- secondary data sources relating to accommodation facilities within the destination region;
- brochures and Internet web sites produced by real estate agencies in Hepburn Shire that offered visitor accommodation facilities in June – August 2007
- principal Internet web sites produced by Internet accommodation agencies that offered visitor accommodation facilities for the destination in June – August 2007;
- field observation by the researchers of premises offering visitor accommodation identified by signs and notice boards throughout Hepburn Shire; and
- confirmation by telephone with major accommodation providers such as caravan parks and resorts.

The final accommodation list was confirmed by people familiar with accommodation properties throughout the destinations.

The audit determined that there were 3,941 bed spaces recorded across 419 establishments (Table 10).

**Table 10: Accommodation types in Hepburn Shire<sup>17</sup>**

<b>Accommodation Type</b>	<b>Number of Establishments</b>	<b>Number of Bed Spaces</b>	<b>% of Total Establishments</b>	<b>% of Total Bed Spaces</b>
<b>Holiday Houses</b>	283	1629	68%	41%
<b>Camping/Caravan</b>	4	734	1%	19%
<b>Hotels/Motels</b>	17	698	4%	18%
<b>Holiday Apartments</b>	65	540	16%	14%
<b>B&amp;B/Guest House</b>	50	340	12%	9%
<b>Total</b>	419	3941	100%	100%

The study identified that accommodation in the region had the following characteristics:

- holiday houses account for almost 70 percent of properties, and 41 percent of bed spaces;
- the region's four camping ground/caravan parks account for approximately 20 percent of total bed capacity;
- commercial forms of accommodation such as hotels/motels and holiday apartments account for 18 percent and 14 percent of total bed spaces respectively;
- most bed spaces (53 percent) and establishments (55 percent) are located in Daylesford; and
- Hepburn Springs is the next largest provider, with 110 establishments accounting for a further 22 percent of bed spaces.

In terms of tourist facilities and attractions the audit revealed that there are approximately 600 individual facilities and attractions available to tourists visiting the Hepburn Shire region (Table 11).

**Table 11: Tourism products in Hepburn Shire<sup>17</sup>**

<b>Total Shire Tourism Products</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Retail</b>	239	40%
<b>Spas and Wellness</b>	65	11%
<b>Galleries/Museums</b>	60	10%
<b>Attractions</b>	55	9%
<b>Other Food Providers</b>	51	9%
<b>Activities</b>	42	7%
<b>Café s</b>	31	5%
<b>Restaurants</b>	30	5%
<b>Wineries</b>	26	4%
<b>Total</b>	599	100%

The following summarises the key findings of the Hepburn Shire accommodation and tourism audit:

- There are more than 400 individual accommodation establishments in the Shire, most of which holiday houses;
- Most of bed spaces are contained in the townships of Daylesford (53 percent) and Hepburn Springs (22 percent);
- Limited accommodation is available in the townships of Creswick and Trentham, each of which contain seven and eight properties respectively;
- The most prominent form of supporting tourism product throughout the Shire is retail outlets (239 in total);
- There are 65 spa and wellness centres located throughout the Shire;
- Daylesford is the key township in the Shire in terms of accommodation and range of tourism attractions (including spa and wellness facilities, tourist activities, galleries and museums);
- Hepburn Springs is the second largest tourist destination with more than 20 percent of the Shire’s accommodation, supported by a wide range of tourism attractions and facilities;
- Wineries are a prominent attraction throughout the surrounding Hepburn Shire region;
- The Shire is largely accessed by visitors using private vehicles or hire cars, with relatively limited public transportation services available for town-to-town travel; and
- The audit revealed that Daylesford is a key region which is home to more than half of the Shire’s tourism activities and food providers—and more than 60 percent of the Shire’s spa and wellness facilities.

The audit process identified opportunities for development of further accommodation and tourism products in Hepburn Shire. These observations are based on the audit of establishments presented in the previous sections. Further consultation on these issues will be undertaken with members of the local tourism industry through the tourism planning process.

Early indications of opportunities for tourism development include:

- increasing accommodation capacity in the smaller towns of Trentham, Clunes and Creswick to allow dispersal of visitors and encourage overnight stays in these areas;
- developing the range of local tourism products in smaller towns and the surrounding Shire to encourage increased day-trip or overnight visitation to these areas;
- maximising visitation to existing wineries in the surrounding Shire by developing wine trails and/or day tour packages;
- considering development of nature-based accommodation in the surrounding Shire;
- increasing the number of tourism-related retail outlets in Hepburn Springs;
- developing a wider range of activities in Hepburn Springs to engage visitors in natural experiences (e.g. walking/driving trails linking the natural attractions of Hepburn Springs); and
- encouraging the development of restaurant facilities in Creswick and Clunes.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Development of world-class nature-based and eco-tourism product development on Kangaroo Island**

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Kangaroo Island is renowned as a world-class nature-based and eco-tourism destination and iconic Australian destination. Visitors are attracted to wildlife that can be observed in largely undisturbed natural habitats. The island boasts spectacular coastal scenery and pristine beaches and is largely unspoiled by development.

The Department for Environment and Heritage manages 26 protected areas on the island, the most popular of which are Flinders Chase National Park and Seal Bay Conservation Area. Flinders Chase National Park features spectacular granite rock formations and provides access to wildlife including New Zealand fur-seals. Seal Bay Conservation Bay is home to the third largest population of Australian Sea-lions and runs guided tours enabling visitors to enjoy an intimate experience with the mammals from a safe distance.

Other popular outdoor activities include bush walking, bird watching, cycling, caving, swimming, fishing, boating, scuba diving and sand Boarding. A number of small, professional tour operators pro offer visitor experiences related to natural and marine environments.

Kangaroo Island has a proven track record in developing secondary attractions, many of which are linked to the island's natural and cultural heritage and complement its natural assets. This is particularly evident in the growth of small-scale food and wine tourism businesses, where producers have diversified from general farming in response to the gradual decline in traditional areas of agricultural production. This has enhanced the sophistication of the island's tourism product and encourages visitors to extend their stay.

There are now approximately 30 wine producers on the island and a number of boutique wineries have emerged, offering visitors a truly local wine and food experience (<http://www.goodfoodkangarooisland.com>). In addition, a number of well-established commercial food producers provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the production process and sample and purchase local produce. The most notable examples are honey farms, which produce pure honey from the Ligurian bee; a sheep dairy which produces quality yoghurts and cheeses; and a marron farm where visitors can taste freshwater crayfish. Other speciality food products include olive oil, native jams, local seafood and free range chicken and eggs. Kangaroo Island's growing reputation as a culinary destination was recognised in early 2007 when it was named as Australia's Best Regional Food Destination at the Vogue Entertaining and Travel Produce Awards <sup>76</sup>. Other secondary experiences include lighthouse and sheep shearing tours, heritage accommodation and art and craft galleries.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 5: Development of a high quality food and wine industry in the Barossa Valley**

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The Barossa Valley is historically a long established wine producing region. Lutheran settlers pioneered grape growing and wine production which resulted in the first commercial winery at Jacob's Creek in 1848 <sup>48</sup>. Since then the Barossa Valley has evolved into Australia's largest wine processing region and has gained an international reputation for the high quality of its wines. There are over 60 cellar doors at large, medium and small wineries across the region <sup>77</sup>.

The combination of the Barossa Valley's reputation for quality wines and wineries and its strong cultural traditions and European heritage create a unique appeal for visitors to the region. A survey of cellar door visitors to South Australian wineries, undertaken for the South Australian Tourism Commission in 2003, indicated that the Barossa region clearly outperformed its competitors. Key attributes noted by visitors were the quality of cellar door facilities, the wine, the region's events, heritage and historic buildings, and the region's attractive setting <sup>78</sup>. The Barossa Valley's fine wine and rich heritage is promoted through festivals and events such as the biennial Barossa Vintage Festival, which celebrates local wine, food and culture. It is Australia's largest and most established wine festival, attracting approximately 50,000 visitors <sup>79</sup>.

Food culture in the Barossa region is fast becoming as important as its wine heritage. The increased commercialisation of regional produce, the establishment of Barossa Slow (the first slow food movement in Australia) as well as the emergence of international food identities such as Maggie Beer have generated a renewed interest in the food industry. The creation of a cooperative of regional food producers in 2000 (Food Barossa) and establishment of the Barossa Farmers Market has provided a vehicle for local producers to market

and sell their fresh local produce to visitors, whilst ensuring authenticity and quality. The range and diversity of food outlets in the Barossa region has expanded beyond the traditional bakeries since the 1990's to include cafés, delicatessens and restaurants<sup>48</sup>.

The evolution of the food industry has enabled the Barossa region to develop complementary food and wine experiences that add value to the region's products. An example of this is the Butcher Baker Winemaker Trail which packages regional food and wine experiences. The attractiveness of the region has been further enhanced by new products and experiences on offer such as boutique accommodation, galleries, retail outlets, and nature-based adventure activities.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 6: Support for the development of tourist attractions in the Tapestry region by industry and local government**

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The Dolphin Discovery Centre Inc. in Bunbury (BDDC), and the wild cetaceans experience, are commonly recognised as significant attractions within the Tapestry region. The historical antecedents of the BDDC lie in the feeding, attraction and habituation of wild dolphins, first by a local resident between 1968 and 1975, and later in the late 1980s (long after the feeding had ceased and dolphins no longer visited) by a group of business people who saw the possibility of a dolphin attraction as a substantive opportunity for tourism in Bunbury.

A series of steps were taken that led to the development of wild dolphin tourism as it exists today:

- A licence for provisioning of wild dolphins was obtained from the former Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM);
- The Dolphin Trust—a not-for-profit organisation with a constitution centred on the theme of tourism for conservation and research—was established;
- A site was secured through the Southwest Development Commission;
- Funds were raised through the business community, enabling the employment of a renowned dolphin trainer to entice the dolphins and manage dolphin interactions and operation;
- Other contributions were obtained, including a basic shelter facility from a local mining organisation; and
- A rigorous business plan was developed to underpin the ethos of conservation as the predominant aim for the organisation.

These new developments provided the base necessary to secure funding that would enable the business to be economically viable. Contributions and sponsorship from local government and the business community provided for the development of a swim tours, a boat and a building that would house interpretative and retail facilities. The building alone generates approximately \$140,000 per annum in admission fees.

The BDDC manager was also able to secure the involvement of stakeholders involved with best practice in cetacean tourism in Monkey Mia, and attracted the attention of international experts in cetacean research who recognised the significance of the Bunbury site for research. Successful collaboration with these stakeholders resulted in the establishment of a \$286,000 research facility and employment of researchers from Murdoch University on the BDDC site.

Despite the development of key leisure attractions in the Bunbury area, leisure tourism has become more significant in the hinterland region. This can be attributed to increased opportunities for regional development (including tourism) and improved access to the region. A program of road development between Perth and the destination has reduced travel time, made the journey safer and enhanced the overall desirability of travel to the Tapestry region.

The increase in tourism to the hinterland has prompted the development of various leisure tourism attractions. The Harvey Cheese Factory, for example, represents a private enterprise based on adding value to the region's dairy industry through cheese production. Harvey Cheese demonstrates how tourism can operate to sustain a region economically by adding value to a traditional industry. The company is essentially a tourism enterprise, with 70 percent of its produce consumed by tourists and purchased on site. The success of the enterprise is partly due to the support of the local shire which provided information about sites and fostered partnerships with key stakeholders in the dairy industry.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 7: Aboriginal involvement in cultural tourism development in Tennant Creek and Barkly region**

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Tourism emerged in Tennant Creek and the Barkly region in the 1940s, when the Warramunga Aborigines at Tennant Creek made implements and traditional weapons for sale to visitors<sup>80</sup>. In the 1970s, the Indigenous movement commenced its campaign for rights to self-determination and control of country. By 2006, the Warumunga and other Indigenous people had returned to Tennant Creek to establish new communities, and the local Aboriginal community had a more substantive role in tourism, providing strategic and educational input into tourism planning and management.

Aboriginal involvement in tourism helped shape the local industry in Tennant Creek. In July 2003 the opening of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Arts and Cultural Centre gave visitors an opportunity to learn about Aboriginal life, history and the land of the Barkly region<sup>81</sup>. In 1987 the Papula Apparr-Kari Language and Culture Centre was established to improve the knowledge, understanding and awareness of the 16 traditional Aboriginal languages existing in the Barkly region<sup>81</sup>.

In 2003 Tourism NT, via the Central Land Council (CLC), provided \$42,000 to reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the sacred woman's site of Kunjarra<sup>82</sup>. The project also aimed to educate visitors about Kunjarra and encouraged the local Indigenous community and tour operators to utilise the site<sup>82</sup>.

Another important Indigenous contribution to tourism is Barkly Regional Arts. It is a thriving networking and resource centre that responds to the cultural and artistic needs of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous communities. The centre offers advice, provides administration facilities, rehearsal space, musical equipment, and promotes local artists. The Winanjikari Music Centre is a major initiative of Barkly Regional Arts, employing 10 musicians. It is open for visitors to explore contemporary Aboriginal music.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 8: Cooperation of Aboriginal owners and other stakeholders in the development of existing iconic natural attractions in Katherine**

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Katherine is the third largest town in the Northern Territory and is located approximately 312 kilometres south-east of Darwin on the Katherine River. This modern, thriving regional centre offers services to communities from the Western Australian border to the Gulf of Carpentaria on the Queensland border. The major tourism attractions offered by the Katherine region are nature-based and include Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge and National Park, Flora River Nature Park, Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park, the Katherine Hot Springs and Leliyn (Edith Falls)<sup>83</sup>.

Katherine town is located a short distance from the historic town of Mataranka and the thermal springs in Elsey National Park. It is also the southern gateway to Kakadu National Park and Arnhem Land. The Nitmiluk Gorge National Park attracts more than 200,000 visitors each year<sup>84</sup> and can be explored by canoe, boat cruise, hiking and helicopter flights<sup>85</sup>. The Nitmiluk Visitor Centre at Katherine Gorge has informative displays outlining the geology, landscape and Aboriginal history of the National Park<sup>85</sup>.

Nitmiluk National Park has been identified as a 'high profile park' with the potential for increased visitation. Notwithstanding its existing services and facilities, plans are underway to enhance the park's visitor experiences and improve visitor safety<sup>86</sup>.

A Draft Master Plan proposes that 'in accordance with the Jawoyn<sup>10</sup> People's Economic Development Strategy and the Nitmiluk Board's intention, appropriate high quality accommodation facilities be developed at Nitmiluk National Park'<sup>86</sup>. A Nitmiluk Commercial Development Plan has also been developed by a Nitmiluk Working Group, with representatives from the Jawoyn Association, Parks and Wildlife, Department of the Chief Minister and Tourism NT. This group worked in close consultation with the Nitmiluk Board of Management, Nitmiluk Tours and members of the tourism industry<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Jawoyn is a word used in reference to people, culture, language and territory. 17 clans make up the Jawoyn tribe. They are the traditional owners of Nitmiluk National Park.

The Plan aims to build Nitmiluk's reputation as one of the world's best nature-based tourism destinations. Future tourism initiatives include:

- new walking trails which include a world-class 325 kilometre track linking Nitmiluk to Kakadu National Park;
- specialist boat cruises;
- lodge and resort-style accommodation facility within the Gorge precinct;
- Jawoyn Cultural Centre; and
- guided tours at Mt Todd Dam <sup>87</sup>.

The development of Nitmiluk National Park has progressed with the cooperation of various tourism stakeholders and the acknowledgement of Aboriginal ownership and management of key attractions .

Several organisations are also working to assist the traditional owners. The Northern Territory Parks and Conservation Draft Master Plan states a commitment to 'providing assistance and capacity building to enable Aboriginal traditional owners to undertake conservation management in jointly managed parks and reserves' <sup>86</sup>.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 9: Development of Cradle Mountain as an iconic tourism attraction supported by appropriate product development**

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Development of Cradle Mountain as an iconic tourism destination has been enhanced by:

- early identification and conservation of the area's unique natural environment;
- appropriate private sector development and investment in infrastructure; and
- government support for planned development.

In 1982 the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park was added to the World Heritage List, cementing its position as a unique international tourist destination. In response to thriving tourism, the Cradle Mountain Campground was established in 1987 by the Cosy Cabin Chain, and the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre opened in 1989 as part of the World Heritage Program <sup>88</sup>. Today the Park is governed by the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan 1999*.

While Cradle Mountain is the 'icon' destination for tourists, it has traditionally formed part of a broader tour of surrounding towns including Sheffield, Railton, Wilmot and Davenport. More recently, there have been moves to actively promote the Cradle Country region as a unique tourism destination offering diverse natural, historic, heritage and food experiences.

Visitors to Cradle Mountain can experience diverse natural landscapes on foot along established bush tracks. The following key walks are promoted to encourage a complete tourism experience:

- Pencil Pine Falls and Rainforest Walk (20 minute circuit);
- Enchanted Walk (20 minute circuit);
- Knyvet Falls Walk (45 minutes return);
- King Billy Walk (45 minute circuit);
- Cradle Valley Boardwalk (8.5 kilometres);
- Waldheim and Weindorfers Forest Walk (20 minute circuit);
- Dove Lake Circuit (1–2 hour circuit);
- Lake Lilla Walk (30 minutes return);
- Cradle Mountain Summit Walk (8 hours); and
- The Overland Track (65 kilometres, 5–6 day duration).

Other popular tourism activities include four-wheel driving, horse riding and wildlife observation. Several day spas and wilderness galleries are run by accommodation operators in the area. Table 12 provides an overview of the main attractions and accommodation providers operating within the Cradle Mountain area.

**Table 12: Tourism Attractions and Accommodation in Cradle Mountain**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Attractions</b>	Cradle Mountain World Heritage Area and bush walking	Nature-based
	The Wilderness Gallery (Cradle Mountain Chateau)	Culture/Arts
	Waldheim Alpine Spa Complex (Cradle Mountain Lodge)	Spa tourism
	Devils@Cradle Interpretation and Viewing Centre	Nature-based (wildlife)
	Waldheim Chalet (Interactive History)	Historic
	Cradle Mountain Helicopter rides	Adventure/transport
<b>Accommodation</b>	Cradle Chalet Boutique Luxury Lodge	Boutique 4 ½ star cabins
	Cradle Mountain Chateau	Hotel
	Cradle Mountain Cosy Cabins	Self-contained cabins
	Cradle Mountain Highlanders B&B	Self-contained cabins
	Cradle Mountain Lodge	Luxury cabins/resort
	Cradle Mountain Tourist Park	Camping/backpackers
	Cradle Mountain Wilderness Village	Luxury cabins
	Lemonthyme Lodge	Luxury cabins
	Waldheim in the Park	Self-contained cabins

As suggested in Table 12, accommodation options in Cradle Mountain range from luxury properties to budget cabins and camping grounds.

## **Best Practice Principle Four**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations plan for the preservation of natural, heritage, built, and socio-cultural environments**

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Many regional destinations depend heavily on their natural, built and socio-cultural attributes and values to attract and appeal to visitors. These attributes define much of the aesthetic and visual appeal offered by the destination and also its historical and contemporary lifestyle experiences<sup>67</sup>. If these assets are not maintained or are compromised the destination may lose appeal to visitors and support of the local community. Best practice from regional destinations shows that a pro-active approach is required to plan and manage these resources sustainably and to ensure a particular type, style and level of tourism development that aligns with destination character and community values. These destinations recognise that a good place to live is a good place to visit and establish planning and management strategies to preserve their natural, heritage and built and socio-cultural environments.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To plan for the preservation of natural, heritage, built and socio-cultural environments, best practice regional tourism destinations:

- work cooperatively with relevant stakeholder groups and government authorities to enhance and preserve iconic attractions;
- preserve destination character and residential amenity through sound local government town and land use planning policies and development controls;
- provide clear design guidelines in local government control plans for tourism development;
- require effective environmental management practices for tourism developments;
- integrate planning for the preservation of natural, heritage, built, social and cultural in strategic tourism planning processes and other relevant local government plans and strategies;
- work with natural resource management and environmental agencies to assess and plan for visitor impacts;

- work with local environmental groups to investigate accreditation models that encourage and improve environmental performance and efficiency of tourism businesses;
- establish an environmental management framework that defines sustainability indicators to monitor environmental impacts (natural, social and economic);
- plan for the sustainable management systems of natural resources (e.g. sewage and water management); and
- support and encourage tourism operators to achieve environmental accreditation.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Integrating best practice for sustainable tourism development into local government land use planning mechanisms**

As part of the strategic tourism planning process to develop the *Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan (BSTMP) 2008–18*, it was recommended that specific tourism directions be embedded in the following Byron Shire Council strategic plans and policy documents:

- Council Management Plan;
- Sustainability Strategic Plan Cultural Plan;
- Infrastructure and Risk Management Plan;
- Economic Development Plan;
- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy; and
- Rural Settlement Strategy and Social Plan.

The tourism consultation process also highlighted the need for effective planning and development controls to:

- ensure sensitive design and low impact development (scale and location) that is in harmony with the environment;
- curb unapproved development;
- minimise environmental impacts;
- ensure residential and neighborhood amenity;
- protect the unique character of the Shire and its village atmospheres; and
- address the issue of holiday-letting in residential areas across the Shire <sup>15</sup>.

As a result, the BSTMP recommended that local and state government land use planning and development control policies be reviewed and amended to better guide the location and design of future development within the Shire with consideration for the impacts on infrastructure and facilities. It was also suggested that Settlement Strategies be developed by Council to outline community visions for the Shire's growth, character, image, built form, heritage values, infrastructure and natural resources <sup>15</sup>.

Tourism planners engaged to develop the BSTMP worked with Council planners to embed the following tourism recommendations into Council's Local Environment Plan that was being developed:

- ensure the new Local Environment Plan had provisions to encourage sustainable tourism development and consider recommendations contained in the BSTMP Situational Analysis;
- review development control and land use policies to guide the location and design of future development within the Shire;
- review findings of accommodation audit to consider and plan for appropriate levels of visitor accommodation in residential areas;
- ensure Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan processes had provisions the environment and ecosystems are protected and enhanced;
- ensure Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan processes had provisions for the retention of low-cost tourist accommodation (e.g. caravan parks and holiday cabins);
- ensure Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan processes encourage rural tourism developments in rural zones that support Farm and Nature Tourism Business Development Program recommendations;
- consider recommendations regarding rural tourism development outlined in the *2002 Tourism Management Options Paper*;

- ensure future plans for rural tourism development are undertaken in consultation with rural communities and assess infrastructure needs to support such development; and
- ensure the new Local Environment Plan provisions to resolve the issue of holiday letting in residential areas<sup>15</sup>.

The BSTMP also recommended that industry and potential tourism investors be provided with clearly articulated development guidelines. Specifically, the BSTMP calls for Council to:

- publish articulated planning and development guidelines on the Byron Shire Council web site;
- promote the local economy and profile Byron Shire businesses on Council's web site;
- ensure Council Compliance Officers monitor tourism operations;
- investigate the potential for a 'badging system' for Council-approved accommodation;
- proactively work with the holiday letting sector to improve management practices and performance; and
- ensure Council policy seeks equitable Section 94 contributions for tourism development<sup>15</sup>.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 2: Great Ocean Road demonstrates ongoing commitment to protection and conservation of natural environment**

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The Great Ocean Road consists of protected natural areas in the form of National Parks, Marine National Parks, Marine Sanctuaries and State Parks and Reserves.

Successive state governments have recognised the environmental and cultural significance of the Great Ocean Road from a planning, management and tourism perspective. Historically, there has been a commitment to the protection and conservation of the natural environment both along the coastline and in the hinterland. As early as the 1870s, a 30-metre foreshore reserve was established along the coastline<sup>35</sup>.

The subsequent establishment of more protected areas and introduction of Victorian Planning Provisions provided a broad framework for land use planning and development along the Great Ocean Road. As well as protecting natural vistas, this framework restricted certain forms of development and ensured there was no 'ribbon development' outside of the main townships of Torquay, Anglesea, Lorne, Apollo Bay and Port Campbell.

During the period 2001 to 2004, a significant initiative was instigated by the state government to develop a Great Ocean Road Region Strategy. It was driven by the impacts of future growth on the region's long-term sustainability. The strategy took a whole-of-government and community approach to planning and development of the region over the next 20 years. It involved extensive consultation with key government, community and industry stakeholders along the Great Ocean Road. From a tourism perspective, important outcomes included:

- *A commitment to strengthen protection for public lands and parks*

This resulted in the creation of the Great Otway National Park in 2005, with a substantial funding commitment for operational management, and the finalisation of management plans for the Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries along the Great Ocean Road which identified opportunities for low impact tourism and recreational activities.
- *The strengthening of coastal protection and controls on township development*

This reinforced the role and resourcing of foreshore committees in the planning and management of coastal areas and provided protection for inappropriate development, such as subdivision, between and within coastal townships. It emphasised low impact tourism development.
- *Encouraging sustainable tourism and resource use through the geographical and seasonal dispersion of visitors*

This strategy focused on boosting employment and tourism in the Otways area hinterland communities with an emphasis on 'soft infrastructure' (e.g. walking and cycling tracks) as well as the completion of the 91 kilometre Great Ocean Walk along the coastline.
- *Focus on world best practice sustainable tourism*

This strategy encouraged environmental responsibility throughout the Great Ocean Road Region and participation in certification and accreditation schemes that recognise environmental responsibility (e.g. Green Globe 21 and Eco-tourism Certification). Geelong Otway Tourism and Shipwreck Coast Tourism have committed themselves to these sustainable tourism benchmarking programs from an organisational and operator perspective.

This commitment to the protection and conservation of the natural environment is also embedded in the charter of Parks Victoria, the state government agency responsible for managing National, State and Marine Parks, Sanctuaries and Reserves. It is also a key objective that underpins the strategic plans of the regional tourism organisations throughout the Great Ocean Road region.

The strategy is supported by strong engagement in planning by environmentally conscious communities along the Great Ocean Road.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 3: Recognition of need to protect and sustain the natural environment in the Grampians region**

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Situated in central-western Victoria, the Grampians region has been a tourist destination for more than 140 years. The Grampians National Park (GNP) is the fourth largest and one of the highest profile parks in Victoria. It is recognised as the single most important botanical reserve in the state. The Park protects a diverse range of ecosystems, including almost one third of the state's Indigenous flora which attracts thousands of tourists each spring. Other popular tourist activities include scenic driving, camping, bush walking and rock climbing. The park is also home to significant Aboriginal cultural sites, including the largest concentration of rock art sites in the state.

Locals have long recognised the need to protect and sustain the natural environment as a core asset, setting aside publicly owned protected areas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1868, field naturalists alerted the public to the special qualities of the Grampians, and Government botanist Ferdinand von Muller established a network of field naturalists across the region. Parks Victoria supported conservation measures by providing tourism infrastructure and interpretation. Following the onset of the great Depression, The federal government established a scheme to build roads and walking tracks in the Grampians, providing jobs for thousands of unemployed.

After a long conservation campaign, led largely by locals, the Grampians National Park was declared in 1984. Management of the area, based on the principles of sustainability, was closely scrutinised by local interest groups, the Department of Conservation and Environment and the Victorian National Parks Association.

In the early 1990s, a Grampians Surround Strategy Steering Committee was formed to prepare a planning strategy for the area of private land which fringes the Grampians National Park. The Grampians Surround Strategy resolved to support the development of tourism while protecting the environment of the surrounding area through a number of strategies. Specific area policies were developed for Halls Gap and surrounding towns to concentrate the provision of tourist amenities at gateway points and contain development.

Local leadership encouraged early and consistent support for tourism from local government. Professional area managers were appointed to the region, and the first Victorian council-funded visitor information centre was established in the 1980s. This coincided with early moves to develop a framework for tourism planning for the region. The Stawell and Grampians Development Association brought local operators together in a cohesive structure, and established a tourism advisory Board to provide advice to Council and improve operating standards and service delivery. Tourism colleagues across regions cooperated to develop and promote the Great Southern Touring Route to an international market. Council support is still integral to successful tourism development and planning in the region.

Thanks to the efforts of a passionate local community, and support of the public sector, the Grampians has been spared from inappropriate development. Sound principles of sustainability continue to underpin the management of the Grampians National Park.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 4: Commitment to protecting natural mineral springs and retaining local character in Daylesford**

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Described in a 2006 British Airways magazine as the 'number one funky town in the world', Daylesford is a best practice example of a small, sophisticated village that manages to retain its integrity and character while protecting its key natural resource in the face of enormous tourism demand. Located within the 'Spa Country' of

Victoria, Daylesford is home to 80 percent of Australia's mineral water reserves and Wombat State Forest. It has been a popular day-trip and short-break destination for more than 130 years.

Daylesford is synonymous with health and well-being and is renowned for its natural beauty, historic architecture, Victorian character, innovative and quality tourism enterprises, dynamic creative industries and diverse communities. Today, Daylesford thrives with the support of government-led investment and local entrepreneurs who have established unique tourism attractions reflecting the town's character. Daylesford's success as a sustainable tourism destination is largely thanks to the protection of its mineral water resource by local Council and the Victorian Government.

When mining activity threatened the mineral waters in 1864, a newly formed local committee petitioned the Victorian Government to establish Australia's first mineral water reserve. Soon after, the Wombat State Forest and Hepburn Springs Reserve were set aside as wise allocations of land for 'non-mining purposes'. The Hepburn Mineral Springs Bathhouse was established as Australia's original spa experience in 1895.

The town's tourism revival was triggered once again in the 1970s by local concerns about the region's mineral waters. Victorian Government legislation was passed in 1979 to support a levy on mineral water extraction and stipulate its use. A plan for managing the region's mineral springs was subsequently developed, and levies have since been used to fund redevelopments of the mineral springs and Hepburn Bathhouse. The Victorian Government continues to recognise the significance of the region as a unique destination, most recently contributing more than \$10 million to help Council fund the 2008 Hepburn Bathhouse redevelopment.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 5: Foresight of Noosa Shire Council in protecting the natural character of the area for the long-term benefit of residents and visitors**

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Up until the 1980s, tourism in the Noosa Shire developed in an ad hoc fashion. Tourism facilities grew according to the needs of the visitors and, with the state government pushing a strong pro-development agenda across the state, environmental values were a low priority<sup>90</sup>. It was against this background that a group of Noosa residents began lobbying for the protection of Noosa North Shore from development. The group's agenda was supported by a sympathetic Council which passed the North Shore Policy Plan, restricting development north of the river.

The Plan was almost overturned in 1985 with the election of a new, pro-development Council that sought to rezone the area to enable the development of a large resort. These moves by Council were thwarted by local pressure, backed by intervention from the state government. The 1988 local elections resulted in the appointment of a new pro-environment Council, led by Mayor Noel Playford, and the emergence of new approach to sustainable tourism development in the Shire. Working closely with the local conservation body, Noosa Parks Association, Council acknowledged the importance of protecting Noosa's natural character for the benefit of residents and tourists<sup>91</sup>.

During his nine-year term as Mayor, Noel Playford supported a range of policies to position Noosa as a unique, 'laid-back' tourist destination. These policies included a population cap, introduction of a conservation levy and prohibition of high rise development (NSC 1983–87). The proceeds of the environmental levy enabled council to purchase vacant land on the north shore of the river, to which it applied stringent development restrictions. Council also extended Noosa National Park, thereby boosting Noosa's image as an eco-tourist destination<sup>90</sup>.

During the following years, tourism became a vital contributor to the local economy, supporting the growth of associated sectors such as the service industry, real estate and construction.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 6: Commitment to protecting the natural environment on Kangaroo Island**

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In a 2007 survey for the US publication *National Geographic Traveler* by a panel of 522 experts, Kangaroo Island was ranked the best island destination in the Asia-Pacific region and equal fifth in the world out of 111 islands for its commitment to sustainable tourism and environmental preservation<sup>92</sup>.

This commitment to sustainable tourism and conservation has been shared by state and local governments, the island community and the tourism industry since the early 1900s. In 1919, Flinders Chase National Park was established on Kangaroo Island. In 1993, South Australia's first Wilderness Protection Areas were established on Kangaroo Island and today approximately one third of the island is conserved in government or private protected areas<sup>93</sup>.

The commitment to environmental protection has been supported by a comprehensive state and local planning and legislative framework, established in the 1970s to protect the coastline against inappropriate development and impose state-wide controls on the clearance of native vegetation (Coast Protection Act 1972, Native Vegetation Act 1991, Development Act 1993 and Environment Protection Act 1993). In 2004, the South Australian Government created regional Natural Resources Management Boards, assisting Kangaroo Island to achieve greater consistency between local council development plans and natural resources management plans.

Kangaroo Island's success as a natural tourism destination was backed by early measures to protect key assets and manage visitor information centres at key tourism locations such as the Seal Bay Conservation Park and Flinders Chase National Park, which both attract more than 100,000 visitors each year. These measures include:

- restricted access;
- user fees;
- tours by trained guides;
- investment in enhanced infrastructure and interpretation through a system of Boardwalks, trails and interpretative panels; and
- development of visitor centres to orientate and inform visitors.

Programs have also been developed to educate visitors and tourism operators about the significance of Kangaroo Island's unique environment. A new program titled 'Leave Only Footprints' is being developed to effectively monitor the environmental impacts of tourism on the island ([www.tomm.info](http://www.tomm.info)).

Kangaroo Island has a strong tradition of stakeholder involvement and community consultation in its sustainable tourism planning processes and activities. These processes have clearly articulated the values of the community and their commitment to preserve the natural environment.

In 1997, the Dudley and Kingscote Councils were merged to form one cohesive Kangaroo Island Council, providing a catalyst for uniting the community—and one point of contact for all community concerns, complaints and suggestions. Studies undertaken in consultation with community stakeholders in the 1980s and 1990s consistently identified the need for effective control and management of tourism to minimise its impact on the island's environment and lifestyle.

These studies culminated in the Tourism Optimisation Management Model (TOMM), which was developed in 1997<sup>94</sup> with federal government funding. TOMM is a community and stakeholder-driven sustainable tourism management model that monitors tourism activity and impacts on the island. It aims to assist and inform better decision-making about the development, management and marketing of tourism for Kangaroo Island<sup>95</sup>.

TOMM is a cooperative and collaborative partnership between the key agencies responsible for the management of tourism on Kangaroo Island. A TOMM Management Committee was established in 1997 to oversee the implementation of the model and guide the project. The committee comprises representatives of the community, tourism industry and the following partner stakeholder agencies that provide on-going annual funding of the project:

- Kangaroo Island Council;
- Kangaroo Island Development Board;
- Tourism Kangaroo Island;
- Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board;
- Department for Environment and Heritage; and
- South Australian Tourism Commission.

This collaboration between stakeholder agencies, the community and the tourism industry remains critical to ensuring informed decision-making, information sharing and sustainable tourism growth on Kangaroo Island.

Today, Kangaroo Island is a discrete regional administrative entity for most South Australian Government departments and agencies, reflecting its unique and strong identity as well as its environmental significance.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 7: Role of the Department of Environment and Heritage in conservation and management of Wilpena Pound Reserve**

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The Flinders Ranges National Park is administered by the Outback Region of the South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH). The DEH has had an active role in tourism within the Flinders Ranges from the outset, juggling competing demands of tourism and conservation. Wilpena Pound is a complicated management site for DEH. As an iconic visitor attraction it attracts domestic and international tourists who want to stay in the heart of the Pound. To meet this tourism demand, a hardened site has been developed within a fragile and unique ecosystem.

The DEH is responsible for preparing management plans and undertaking the prescribed community consultation process. All draft management plans undergo three months of public consultation followed by assessment, including recommended changes and adoption by the Minister <sup>96</sup>. The day-to-day management of the Park is administered by district staff in accordance with the provisions of the management plan. Park district headquarters are located at Wilpena while Orparinna serves as the base for conservation works (DEH, 2007).

The aim for the Flinders Ranges National Park is 'to conserve wildlife in its natural environment for the enjoyment and benefit of the larger community while ensuring best practice standards are maintained' (DEH, 2007). To achieve this, the following objectives have been identified:

- expand integrated pest control through continued implementation of the Bounceback program;
- monitor and protect wildlife of conservation significance;
- involve the Adnyamathanha people in park management and ensure their continued association with the land;
- redevelop and enhance visitor services through environmentally sensitive developments and world-class design;
- work with Flinders Ranges Tourist Services to ensure the successful management of the Wilpena Pound Visitor Centre; and
- generate revenue, including park entry and camping fees, to assist in achieving the objectives <sup>96</sup>.

The Bounceback program aims to rebuild regions damaged by overgrazing, loss of vegetation, erosion, pest control and feral animals. The program has successfully brought together surrounding property owners and managers, and encouraged cooperative management activities to achieve these objectives.

DEH management is also responsible for designating zones which aim to 'ensure that park use and management actions remain compatible with the protection of park value and constrains the use of land in zones to conditions specified in the plan' <sup>96</sup>. Following are the zones pertaining to Wilpena Pound which establish a framework for the sustainable use of the reserve:

- Development Zone encompassing the Wilpena Pound Resort and other tourist facilities at Wilpena;
- Natural Area Zone (i.e. Visitor Use Zones) including designated tracks, roads and camping areas; and
- Limited Access Zone (i.e. Conservation Zones) comprising the most biologically sensitive areas of the Park.

As well as establishing Visitor Use Zones, DEH issues vehicle and camping permits for Wilpena and wider regional sites as well as tickets for self-guided tours of the Old Wilpena Station and Old Wilpena Woolshed. After-hours ticketing relies on an honour system of payment at the southern entrance to the Pound.

The Wilpena Visitor Centre is managed as a partnership between DEH and the Wilpena Pound Resort operators. The centre provides a focal point for information on the Pound and wider region, providing tickets for self-guided tours and walking maps. Permits are issued to commercial tour operators who meet DEH requirements. Licence fees are paid into a General Reserves Trust which is used to improve visitor services and facilities within the park <sup>97</sup>.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 8: World Heritage listing and sustainable management practices to protect the natural environment in Shark Bay**

Shark Bay is renowned for its exceptional scenery and is considered as one of the best tourism attractions in Western Australia. In 1991, Shark Bay was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage area. It is home to six species of endangered animals as is one of only 14 places in the world to meet the following four natural criteria for World Heritage listing:

1. Major stages of the world's evolutionary history
2. Geological and biological processes
3. Natural beauty
4. Threatened species<sup>53,62</sup>.

In terms of its natural assets, Shark Bay has the largest and richest beds of sea-grass in the world. These flowering plants that grow in marine or estuarine areas cover more than 4,000 square kilometres of the bay. The sea grass beds support a population of about 10,000 dugong—one of the largest colonies in the world<sup>98</sup>. The Shark Bay region has around 700 species of wildflowers, 100 species of amphibians and reptiles and 230 species of bird species and is recognised as one of the most important shorebird sites in Australia. The Bernier and Dorre Islands in Shark Bay are home to five species of endangered mammals.

Other significant attractions include Shell Beach, Francois Peron National Park, Eagle Bluff, Steep Point and Dirk Hartog Island, the Ocean Park Aquarium and the World Heritage Discovery Centre. Shell Beach, one of the unusual features of Shark Bay, is a 60 kilometre stretch of coastline composed almost entirely of tiny white shells of the burrowing Bivalve *Fragum erugatum*<sup>98,99</sup>.

Francois Peron National Park was purchased by the state government in 1990 and declared a National Park in 1993. It covers approximately 52,500 hectares at the northern extreme of the Peron Peninsula. It is one of the most important natural areas in Australia and home to many rare and endangered species<sup>100</sup>. Eagle Bluff, located approximately 20 kilometres south of Denham, is named after the osprey, or sea eagle, which nests on the rock island just offshore. A major feature of Eagle Bluff is a Boardwalk, which extends over the ocean. Steep Point, approximately 260 kilometres from Denham, is popular for fishing, four-wheel driving, photography and bush camping<sup>66</sup>.

Dirk Hartog Island is a 15-minute flight from Denham. It is considered to be one of only two major nesting sites for loggerhead turtles in the world and has diverse and prolific wildlife<sup>66</sup>. Ocean Park is an aquaculture venture that consists of a constructed lagoon with bridges to a central island gazebo, enabling visitors to view marine animals<sup>66</sup>. The World Heritage Discovery Centre, located in Denham, incorporates artefacts, specimens, models, photo galleries, illustrations, dioramas and electronic media to tell the story of Shark Bay.

Monkey Mia, situated northeast of the township of Denham, is an international tourist 'hot spot' where visitors can get 'up close and personal' with bottle-nosed dolphins and dugongs<sup>98</sup>. The site is currently regarded as one of Australia's most iconic wildlife sites—on par with crocodiles in the Northern Territory and fairy penguins in Victoria<sup>62</sup>.

Tourism in Shark Bay has therefore developed around these nature-based tourism sites and experiences in the marine and terrestrial environments. Rugged sea cliffs, tranquil bays and inlets with wide, sandy beaches are significant natural attractions.

Stakeholders have adopted a sustainable approach to the development and marketing of tourism in Shark Bay since its emergence as a visitor destination. The qualities that originally attracted visitors to the region had been maintained over time. Shark Bay is recognised as an 'eco' tourism destination, famous for its clean, safe swimming beaches and diverse wildlife.

Policies designed to conserve the natural environment and promote sustainability have been key to the success of Shark Bay as a natural attraction. Projects to re-introduce native fauna in the Francois Peron National Park, and policies designed to prevent tourists from taking shells from Shell Beach, are best practice examples of

sustainable tourism development and planning. Policies have also been developed to support sustainable recreational fishing. Local residents continue to be engaged in decision-making processes that impact on their well being and that of the natural environment.

Management of tourist operations in the Shark Bay region is guided by regulations established by the Federal Government's Department of Environment and Heritage World Heritage Unit, as well as an agreement between the Federal Government and the Western Australian State Government. Day – to-day administration is principally undertaken by the Department of Environment and Conservation in accordance with existing Western Australian legislation incorporating the Fisheries Act, Local Government Act, Land Act, Conservation and Land Management Act and the Environmental Protection Act.

Within the World Heritage property, parks and reserves are subject to various regulations and management regimes. The Monkey Mia marine reserve is classified as an A Class Marine Park Reserve and is managed according to the Shark Bay Marine Reserves Management Plan 1996-2006. The terrestrial reserve is constituted by three C Class reserves, jointly vested in the Department of Environment and Conservation (then Conservation and Land Management) and the Shire of Shark Bay in 1988<sup>62</sup>.

The Department of Environment and Conservation has responsibility for managing the following activities within the Shark Bay region:

- design of facilities;
- planning of recreation sites;
- well-being of the dolphins (feeding and interaction policies);
- conservation of natural values; and
- preparation of interpretation and informational material<sup>62</sup>.

The Shire of Shark Bay is responsible for maintaining infrastructure, administration, accounting and management of human resources at Monkey Mia commercial operations<sup>62</sup>. There are no Aboriginal reserves in the Shark Bay area.

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**Best Practice Snapshot 9: Ongoing development and preservation of the Port Arthur Historic Site**

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The Port Arthur Historic Site was purchased by the Tasmanian State Government in 1946, following the release of the 'McGowan Plan' which emphasised the historical and architectural value of the site<sup>101</sup>. A new motel was opened behind the site in 1960 to support tourism growth. Up until the early 1970s, the site was the focus of all tourism activity. In 1973, Tasman Municipal Council vacated the site, making way for a new visitor centre. A regular ferry service was also introduced, enabling tourists to commute from Port Arthur to the nearby Isle of the Dead.

The Port Arthur Conservation and Development Project commenced in 1979, involving the relocation of the township and development of bypass roads to facilitate movement around the region by locals and tourists. This project was underpinned by a strong focus on conservation and the development of historic resources in the broader Tasman Peninsula region. Funding for the project ended in 1986 and, the following year, the Tasmanian Parliament passed an Act which transferred authority and management responsibility for the site to the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHMSA)<sup>101</sup>. Funded by the Tasmanian State Government, PAHMSA still manages the site today.

PAHMSA was responsible for coordinating the on-going operation, preservation and management of the Historic Site. Table 13 provides an overview of PAHMSA's key vision and business functions. While it is heavily involved in the general management and marketing of the broader Port Arthur and Tasman tourism region, its primary focus is management and development of the historic site.

**Table 13: PAHMSA’s vision and business functions<sup>102</sup>**

<b>Vision</b>	<i>To conserve, manage and promote the Port Arthur Historic Site as a cultural tourism place of international significance.</i>
<b>Business Functions</b>	Ensuring the preservation and management of the Historic Site as an example of a major convict settlement and penal institution of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century
	Coordinating archaeological activities of the Historic Site
	Promoting an understanding of the historical and archaeological importance of the Historic Site
	Promoting the Historic Site as a tourist destination
	Providing adequate facilities for the use of visitors
	Using its best endeavours to secure financial assistance by way of grants, sponsorship and other means

PAHMSA has adopted a number of best practice management strategies to ensure these functions are undertaken in support of broader tourism development in the region:

***Adoption of best practice in conservation planning***

Through the on-going pursuit of state government funding, PAHMSA received a significant commitment to conservation funding in 2000. This enabled the employment of conservation experts. It has also been integral to the development of a highly successful interpretation program.

***A strong focus on interpreting the site experience***

The employment of highly skilled interpretation specialists has provided visitors to the site with information about the site’s historical significance, the ruins and surrounding natural environment. This is critical to ensuring visitors understand the importance of the destination.

***Development of new experiences to maintain the site’s appeal***

Over the years, PAHMSA has developed the way in which visitors can experience the Historic Site. For example, the introduction of Ghost Tours of the site at night in the early 1980s provided a new perspective of Port Arthur’s history and enhanced the visitor experience, adding an additional ‘product’ to the site which encouraged some visitors to extend their day-trip to an overnight stay.

*Involvement of the local community in the development of the site.* The support of the local community has been acknowledged as of paramount importance to the Site as not only does it trigger a sense of pride and connection with the history of the region for locals, but it is also a source of employment for many residents. PAHMSA has engaged with the local population in numerous ways over the years, regularly involving the local community in tourism events held at the site to ensure that they remain connected and involved in its development.

*Recognition of local community as valued staff and provision of training to support their roles.* PAHMSA, and other key bodies such as the Tasman Council, have pushed for the on-going development of its staff resources through the implementation of various training programs for both employees of the Historic Site and members of the local tourism industry in general. Examples include courses in customer service aimed at raising the standard of service provided by staff which ultimately results in an improved visitor experience and an up-skilled labour force. Employment of local community members is seen as critical to the success of the Historic Site as they bring to their roles a strong and passionate knowledge of the tourism ‘product’ and the region’s history, which in turn provides visitors with an enhanced experience.

*Continued search for funding and recognition of the Site’s historic value.* Today, PAHMSA continues to seek new funding sources for the on-going management and preservation of the Site and its development as a tourism attraction. The Site has been nominated for, and has won, several Tasmanian Tourism Awards

over the past six years. PAHMS has also been successful in gaining inclusion of the Site in the National Heritage List from 2005, and in 2006 it submitted an application to become part of a serial nomination on the World Heritage List along with several other significant Australian convict sites<sup>102</sup>. Other key roles of PAHMSA relate to marketing of the Site, and the destination more broadly.

During the 1980s, tourism development continued in the form of on-going preservation projects at the historic site and further development of new visitor experiences, such as nightly Ghost Tours.

PAHMSA actively introduced and encouraged key cultural events to the site up until the tragic event of the 1996 Port Arthur Massacre which occurred predominantly at the site's Broad Arrow Café. Some of the site's public tourism spaces were subsequently redeveloped.

There was a noticeable downturn in visitor numbers to Port Arthur for three months following the tragedy and overnight visitor numbers continued to decline, making more day-trip visits instead<sup>103</sup>.

Despite the negative impact of the Port Arthur tragedy in 1996, the event provided a catalyst for strengthening the partnership between local tourism industry members, the local community and Tourism Tasmania—all of whom were determined to restore tourism visitation and development to the region<sup>103</sup>.

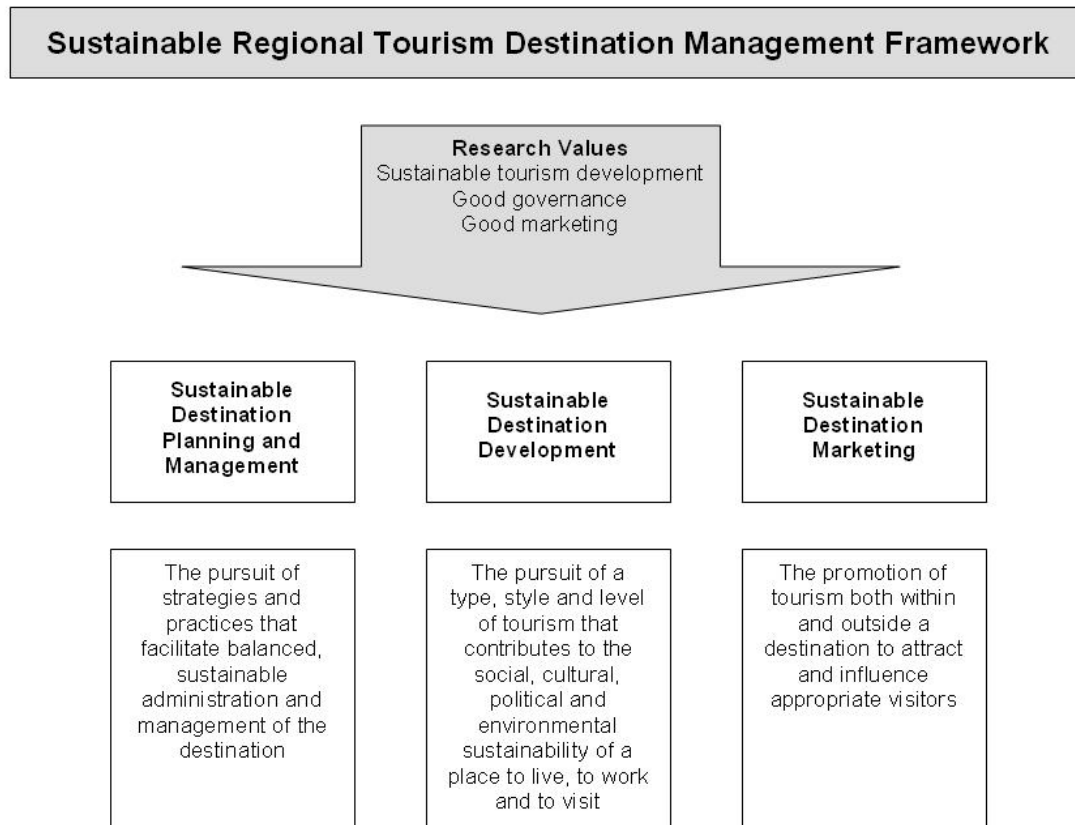


*Chapter 6*

## SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION MARKETING

### Introduction

This chapter identifies the best practice principles for the third dimension of best practice for sustainable regional tourism destinations—sustainable destination marketing.



**Best practices principles for the sustainable marketing of regional tourism destinations are to:**

- foster a cooperative approach to marketing;
- develop strategic marketing plans;
- establish an effective and consistent destination brand and image that is used to position and promote the destination to attract appropriate visitor markets and guide the development of appropriate tourism product;
- identify and target appropriate visitor markets;
- develop innovative advertising, sales and promotion strategies to support the destination brand and image;
- provide quality visitor information and interpretation services; and
- develop festivals and events that support the destination image.

The following sections identify the strategies that have been undertaken by the 21 case study destinations to achieve these best practice principles for sustainable marketing. Best practice snapshots derived from the case study research have been used to demonstrate how these best practices have been implemented in real destination contexts.

## Best Practice Principle One

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### Best practice regional destinations foster a co-operative approach to marketing

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Cooperation in destination marketing is considered essential to destination competitiveness and success, and requires partnerships to be developed between public and private sector stakeholders involved in tourism. Given that destinations are made up of a range of different tourism attractions, services, facilities and experiences it is not surprising that destination marketing presents many challenges and requires numerous activities to be coordinated. One of the greatest challenges for destination marketers is how to bring all of the various stakeholders together to cooperate in their marketing efforts rather than send confusing messages to the marketplace.

Regional and local tourism organisations are often challenged in terms of coordinating and implementing cooperative marketing initiatives due to: a general lack of willingness to cooperate among participants; fragmentation of marketing efforts; lack of financial resources for marketing; inconsistent imagery presented in the marketplace; and rivalry between stakeholders in the region<sup>104</sup>. There is, therefore, huge potential for the efforts of RTOs and/or LTOs to be negated by conflicting messages sent to potential visitors by other agents involved in marketing activities for the same region<sup>105</sup>. The achievement of a successful destination marketing strategy for a regional destination therefore requires all of these various marketing efforts to come together in a coordinated and consistent manner.

### Best Practice Strategies

To foster a cooperative approach to marketing best practice regional tourism destinations:

- establish a dedicated and experienced marketing committee as part of the overarching destination management structure to guide and inform decision-making for destination marketing;
- develop a strategic tourism marketing plan to guide marketing efforts;
- employ experienced marketing staff to coordinate destination marketing efforts;
- seek a strong level of support from their STO to foster and lead cooperative marketing efforts across state/territory, regional and local levels;
- have a well-established RTO or LTO that leads and fosters participation and cooperative marketing initiatives amongst local operators and businesses (e.g. trade shows, tactical marketing campaigns);
- encourage the support of leading commercial tourism and business operators to contribute and invest in destination marketing initiatives;
- seek support of local government for marketing activities;
- partner with neighbouring regions to develop stronger campaigns; and
- source adequate funding to ensure all levels of industry can participate in marketing campaigns.

### Best Practice Snapshots

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice strategies outlined above:

#### Best Practice Snapshot 1: Strong cooperative marketing to position the Great Ocean Road in domestic and international markets

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The Great Ocean Road region is Victoria's premier regional destination for domestic and international tourists. In 2007, it attracted approximately 2.6 million domestic tourists and 167,000 international tourists, representing more than half of all international tourists to regional Victoria<sup>106</sup>.

The major growth in domestic tourism to the region occurred in the 1990s following the implementation of Tourism Victoria's highly successful Jigsaw campaign. Significant growth in international tourism occurred in the period 1999–2004 as a result of increased overseas promotion and on-going development of the Great Southern Touring Route. Although, tourism has leveled in recent years, following the national trend, the region continues to perform better than most other Victorian regions, achieving average annual growth in international visitation of almost 4 percent from 1999–2007<sup>106</sup>.

The creation of Tourism Victoria's campaign regions and the establishment of the Great Ocean Road Marketing Committee (GORM) in 1993 provided impetus for effective regional marketing. The state government has provided on-going funding for cooperative domestic marketing campaigns matched by industry

operators and local councils through their respective regional tourism organisations (RTOs). The commitment of tourism operators and local councils has enabled the region to access sufficient funds to implement marketing campaigns that impact on the market place.

The state government alone provided over \$4.5 million in direct tourism support to the Great Ocean Road region for brand and tactical marketing between 1999 and 2007. However, Tourism Victoria takes a ‘hands off’ approach, providing advice and support but allowing GORM to retain effective control of the allocation of marketing expenditure. The marketing campaigns are supported by strategic research to monitor trends.

In the intensively competitive international market, the RTO leaders quickly recognised the need to work cooperatively with other regions to make a significant impact. A cooperative marketing alliance was formed with two other Victorian campaign regions (Grampians and Goldfields) in 1991 to establish ‘The Great Southern Touring Route’. This product is marketed at key international travel and trade shows and links the Great Ocean Road, the Grampians and Ballarat in a self-drive tour, targeted at high yield international tourists. The success of this long-running campaign partly explains the rapid and continued growth of international tourism to the region. This concept has been further adapted to promote a Melbourne to Adelaide touring route (via the Great Ocean Road) in collaboration with the South Australian Tourism Commission.

A further key success factor in the growth of tourism to the region has been strong and consistent branding. At the outset, marketing campaigns focused on the Twelve Apostles as the iconic natural attraction to raise domestic and international awareness of both the Great Ocean Road and the region. Subsequent campaigns have reinforced the region’s brand as a quality nature-based and touring destination, drawing on a broader range of images and experiences. This has allowed specific destinations in the region to position their products and experiences to their target markets within the overall brand strategy. In recognition of changing consumer trends, the most recent campaigns have focused on promoting hinterland experiences, highlighting the need to escape the stresses of everyday life and spend time relaxing and revitalising in outstanding natural settings. This, coupled with an off-peak winter campaign, addresses a strategic aim to disperse tourists both spatially and temporally.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Tourism Victoria’s Regional Partners Program promotes Daylesford and Macedon Ranges region**

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Tourism Victoria provides funding, strategic marketing and assistance with financial management and governance to support tourism development and planning in regional areas including Daylesford and Macedon Ranges. The state government initiated a major shift in marketing regional Victoria, focusing on key destinations instead of geographical regions. The *Victorian Tourism Industry Strategic Plan 2002–06* created a hierarchy of destinations and villages that dictate priorities for marketing and promotion by Tourism Victoria. Special interest destinations and villages are rated Level 1, 2 or 3 (destinations) or Type A or B (Villages).

Daylesford is considered a Level 1 Destination, defined as:

*Destinations that currently or potentially attract a strong mix of international, interstate and intrastate visitors and particularly demonstrate international and national appeal matched to Victoria’s product strengths. Proximity to Melbourne is an important factor. These destinations have the capacity to:*

- attract significant visitor numbers;
- provide a range of accommodation, attractions and services to maximise visitor yield (length of stay and expenditure);
- contribute to visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally); and
- provide high visitor satisfaction.

Cooperative marketing activities undertaken by Tourism Victoria and the regions is managed under the Regional Partnership Program (RPP) and funded by Tourism Victoria. The RPP facilitates the integrated marketing of regional Victoria, with a focus on destinations and products. More detailed advice and extra resources are available to Campaign Committees via the Regional Marketing Coordinators (RMCs) employed by Tourism Victoria. The RMCs facilitate development of marketing strategies.

Campaign Committees are incorporated bodies established to develop and implement a regional marketing campaign for their product region in accordance with the RPP guidelines. The Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Campaign Committee provides leadership and manages cooperative marketing activities. It

offers strategic direction to local and regional tourism organisations and educates operators about the benefits of cooperative marketing and industry accreditation. The committee also develops and implements three-year marketing plans and one-year action plans, as well as travel products. A key role for the Committee is communicating with the local industry, local government, community and other stakeholders about tourism activities and ensuring cooperation with the RTA.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Cross-border cooperation to promote the Murray River region**

In 2004, the Mildura Murray Outback, Goulburn, Murray Waters and Tourism Murray River Campaign Committees amalgamated to form the Murray Campaign Committee. The organisational restructure intended to facilitate borderless tourism and tripartite participation by Tourism Victoria, Tourism New South Wales and the industry<sup>107</sup>. The new Murray Campaign Committee consists of:

- one representative from key regional tourism associations along the Murray River: (Mildura, Echuca–Moama and Albury–Wodonga);
- one representative from Tourism Victoria;
- one representative from Tourism New South Wales; and
- two skills-based industry representatives.

The committee plays a key role in facilitating communication and cooperation amongst industry players and other stakeholders, and aims to position itself as the peak marketing body for the Murray region. To achieve this, the committee will need to foster and strengthen strategic alliances with Tourism Victoria, Tourism New South Wales, the North East Victoria Region and the South Australia Tourism Council.

The committee's consumer campaign web site (located at [www.visitmurray.com.au/about-visit-murray](http://www.visitmurray.com.au/about-visit-murray)) enables users to learn about River Murray destinations and attractions, and encourages potential visitors to book their holidays through the regional visitor centres. The Murray Campaign is jointly funded by Tourism New South Wales, Tourism Victoria and the federal government.

In 2006, the New South Wales and Victorian Governments joined forces to promote the Murray region and undertake cross-border marketing. Tourism Victoria and Tourism New South Wales each provided \$250,000 over two years for the campaign, with AusIndustry contributing \$250,000 over two years. *The Murray River. Wind Down* campaign promoted the region's key strengths:

- food and wine;
- history and heritage; and
- golf and water-based activities.

Print advertisements reinforcing the 'wind down' theme were published in newspapers and magazines in Melbourne and regional Victoria, regional New South Wales, South Australia and the ACT. They also featured in *Gourmet Traveller*, *delicious*, *Open Road* and *Royal Auto* magazines. This collaborative campaign incorporated the following marketing elements:

- brand and visual identity—The Murray River. Wind Down;
- print advertising with the themes of house boating, fishing, golf and food and wine;
- web site promoting local tourism operators;
- fold-out map for visitors;
- online advertising and consumer email marketing;
- search engine marketing on sites such as Google; and
- extensive public relations activities.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Creating strong state and regional tourism marketing structures in the Barossa Valley**

The Barossa Valley is a good example of the effective use of coordinated state and regional tourism marketing activities. The South Australia Tourism Commission's (SATC) Regional Marketing Unit provides strategic marketing direction and advice to each of the 12 tourism regions of South Australia. The Unit works in partnership with the Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs) or Marketing Committees to develop and deliver strategic marketing campaigns to the intrastate, national and international markets. A key feature of the structure, which differs from some of the other states in Australia, is that the Regional Marketing Manager and the support staff are directly employed by the SATC and provide a direct link to each region. The role of the marketing

manager and the regional tourism organisation is to develop, implement and coordinate tactical marketing activities for their region, including advertising, promotions and media communications. The Regional Marketing Unit also allocates SATC funds to RTAs for destination marketing activities, which must be matched by industry funding from the region. The SATC provides additional funding to the regions through the Regional Events and Festivals Program, the Community Events Development Fund and the Tourism Development Fund for regional tourism infrastructure projects.

The strength of the relationship between the SATC and BWT has ensured a cohesive and consistent approach to marketing the region over many years. This is reflected in the clear and consistent communication of the Barossa's brand values in state level marketing of the destination. It has also been a catalyst for gaining the commitment and support of tourism, wine and food industry operators to marketing the region, not only through membership of the regional tourism organisation but also through direct participation in its marketing activities. In 2006–07, the SATC provided in excess of \$200,000 for destination marketing activities by BWT, which was matched by funds from BWT membership revenue.

Key activities supported include:

- destination marketing campaigns such as interstate 'Drop In Stop Over' and 'Brilliant Bargains';
- the production and distribution of promotional collateral such as the annual Barossa Visitor Guide and the Barossa Butcher Baker Winemaker Trail;
- attendance at significant consumer and trade shows such as the Australian Tourism Exchange;
- media communications such as the production of the Barossa Media Kit, and SATC and Tourism Australia's media and trade familiarisation programs;
- print and TV advertising campaigns such as the 'My Australia' national domestic marketing campaign; and
- digital marketing through the development and maintenance of the online web site Barossa.com<sup>47</sup>.

In addition to direct marketing activities, there is strong collaboration between the SATC and BWT in relation to other related activities. These include:

- research and distribution of the Barossa Regional Tourism profile, development and implementation of visitor satisfaction surveys and advertising awareness campaigns;
- infrastructure development through partnerships in tourism signage programs;
- industry development initiatives such as the Barossa Tourism Awards and industry sector-specific forums to assist industry product and market development; and
- efforts to create and enhance synergies between industry, regional, state and national marketing initiatives.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 5: Collaboration between regional and local tourism organisations to market Agnes Water/1770**

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Tourism operators in Agnes Water/1770 have traditionally taken an independent approach to tourism product development and marketing rather than working together to promote the region as a destination. Attempts by individuals and small groups to encourage cooperative tourism marketing were often unsupported and short-lived. The establishment of the Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce (DCTC) Marketing Committee signalled a shift towards a more collaborative, comprehensive and consistent approach to tourism marketing.

Today, promotion of Agnes Water/1770 as a destination is predominately undertaken at a regional or local level. The Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd (GAPDL) works with the DCTC to promote the area as one of Central Queensland's most iconic attractions. Both organisations pool their resources to undertake marketing activities that increase awareness of the region as a whole. This approach also enables GAPDL (which predominately consists of non-coastal destinations), to promote the attractive coastal strip between Agnes Water and 1770, and adjacent islands, to domestic and international markets.

As well as promoting Central Queensland as a whole, the GAPDL promotes individual tourist attractions and products owned and operated by its members within Agnes Water/1770. The Bundaberg Region Limited and the DCTC provide a similar service to financial members. GAPDL has also developed regional products such as The Pacific Coast Touring Route, which promotes Agnes Water/1770 to the international drive market<sup>108</sup>.

In contrast, the DCTC focuses its marketing activities on the domestic market—specifically targeting visitors who arrive from within a 550 kilometre radius of Agnes Water/1770. Its activities are often linked to

initiatives funded by GAPDL or Tourism Queensland. DCTC also undertakes independent marketing activities to support specific events, products or attractions.

During 2005–06 the DCTC produced an independent marketing plan, which identifies a range of promotional initiatives aimed at increasing visitor numbers and duration of stay in Agnes Water/1770<sup>109p. 3</sup>. The key focus of the plan was to raise awareness of the region's unique natural attributes and diversity, while avoiding the promotion of individual businesses and tourist attractions. The marketing plan underpinned a cooperative marketing campaign, funded by members to deliver the following outcomes:

- production of a cluster brochure promoting the *'Town of 1770/Agnes Water Southern Great Barrier Reef'* at domestic and international tourist information centres, accommodation and car rental offices, Tourism Queensland/ Tourism Australia international offices, key trade shows, travel agents, and mines within 500 kilometres radius of Agnes Water;
- production of a web site and promotional DVD;
- creation of Agnes Water/1770 merchandise for sale in local visitor centres and commercial outlets;
- production of advertising signage; and
- promotion of the region in travelling shows.

The DCTC uses a range of mediums to advertise the destination including print media, promotional product /merchandising, direct mail, Internet and editorial<sup>109p. 19</sup>.

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 6: Industry and government join forces to market Port Arthur and the Tasman region**

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Collaboration between key tourism stakeholders has been integral to the success of tourism marketing in Port Arthur and the Tasman region. The region's key tourism drivers include the Port Arthur and Tasman Tourism Association, Tourism Tasmania, individual tourism operators and entrepreneurs, and the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.

The establishment of the Port Arthur Region Marketing group in 2000 (later renamed the Port Arthur and Tasman Tourism Association—PATTA), was critical to the region's marketing success. It was initiated to provide a cooperative marketing approach, and a focal point for the region's many small tourism operators. The association gained support from the local tourism industry because it was driven by locals who shared a common vision for Port Arthur and the wider region. While the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Association was a key financial supporter of the marketing group, it recognised and supported the group's focus to promote the wider region, including other attractions and tourism operators.

The renaming of the group to PATTA in 2006 signalled a shift to showcase the collective region of Port Arthur and the Tasman Peninsula to potential visitors. One of the key marketing objectives of the group was to promote the region's nature-based and historic tourism assets—rather than focusing solely on the Port Arthur historic site. PATTA is now made up of key members from the Historic Site and Tasman Council, as well as local tourism operators, accommodation providers and other stakeholders.

Tourism Tasmania has been an integral partner, assisting the Port Arthur and Tasman region with marketing initiatives. The Historic Site and other regional attractions and operators feature predominantly in various publications promoting the State of Tasmania. Tourism Tasmania has also worked with the airline industry to secure better access to Tasmania, and incorporated Port Arthur and Tasman Valley in the state-wide Visiting Journalists Program.

The Convict Trail touring itinerary is another collaborative initiative which promotes a range of heritage and convict site experiences as part of an integrated, themed journey. While Port Arthur is a tourism icon in its own right, the local tourism industry recognises the value of the Convict Trail in drawing additional domestic and international visitors.

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 7: Cooperative approach to branding and promotion of Cradle Mountain and the broader region**

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The marketing of Cradle Mountain as a destination involves a range of stakeholders including local tourism operators, Kentish Council, Cradle Coast Authority and Tourism Tasmania.

Tourism Tasmania has provided strong marketing support for Cradle Mountain, promoting it as both an iconic destination, and as part of a broader 'Cradle Country Touring Route'. Tourism Tasmania undertakes a range of initiatives to promote Cradle Mountain as a state icon. These include:

- well targeted promotional activities in key visitor origin markets (e.g. billboard promotions in Sydney);
- inclusion of Cradle Mountain in the Visiting Journalists Program which showcases Tasmanian destinations to key travel media;
- working with local tourism operators to ensure promotional activities align with target markets, product offerings and Tasmania's destination marketing activities;
- providing high quality research and information resources to support and inform local marketing decisions and activities; and
- providing grant funding to operators and other tourism stakeholders (e.g. local councils) to develop tourism marketing strategies.

Commercial operators also assist in regional promotion. In Cradle Mountain, independent tourism activity is largely been driven by the largest commercial accommodation properties—Cradle Mountain Chateau and Cradle Mountain Lodge. Both properties have undertaken marketing activities that simultaneously promote their own operations as well as the regional destination.

Large-scale promotion of these properties to key interstate and international markets has provided significant exposure for the Cradle region. Federal Hotels, which operates the Cradle Mountain Chateau, has invested heavily in the branding of 'Pure Cradle' as part of its 'Pure Tasmania' campaign. The company's web site promotes Cradle Mountain as a total tourism experience, showcasing its food and wine, wildlife and history (see [www.puretasmania.com.au](http://www.puretasmania.com.au)). The Cradle Mountain Lodge web site ([www.cradlemountainlodge.com.au](http://www.cradlemountainlodge.com.au)) also showcases regional attractions.

A range of new tourism products have also been developed to extend the Cradle Mountain visitor experience and encourage longer length of stay. The region's major accommodation properties have introduced day spas facilities, while Cradle Mountain Chateau has also opened a Wilderness Gallery to showcase local artwork. Wildlife enthusiasts have also been treated to a new Tasmanian Devil wildlife park, Devils@Cradle.

In nearby Sheffield, visitors en-route to or from Cradle Mountain can stay in luxury bed and breakfast accommodation which has been converted from former dairy farms. Events such as 'Tastings at the Top' have also become a popular drawcard for local and international visitors. This event, hosted by Cradle Mountain Lodge, has been held annually since 1999 and involves degustation dinners, cooking demonstrations, fresh produce markets and wine tastings. The addition of 'spa and wellness' products; local arts; eateries; wildlife and accommodation have enhanced the region's reputation as a sustainable tourism destination.

Considerable efforts have been made by local operators and Cradle Coast Authority to appropriately brand the destination. At an individual level, the Federal Hotel chain promotes its local accommodation property under the 'Pure Cradle' brand, raising awareness of both the hotel and the region as a tourist destination.

The 'Cradle Coast Regional Touring Routes' brand was developed to specifically promote a broader regional identity and involved collaboration between Tourism Tasmania, the Cradle Coast Authority and relevant local councils. Cradle Mountain is a key attraction promoted within two of these touring routes ('Cradle Country Touring Route' and 'Wilderness Way Touring Route'). The aim of this branding is to 'give a strong purpose for visiting the region and undertaking a range of activities that help improve length of stay, employment and yield'<sup>110</sup>.

Meanwhile, the three local Councils of Kentish, Latrobe and Devonport have combined resources to produce a 'Cradle Country Visitors Guide' and 'Cradle Country Motivational Guide' which actively promote a range of products and attractions under the brand 'Cradle Country'. The Kentish Council has also allocated funds to develop a formal destination branding program.

Through these various branding efforts, Cradle Mountain has been positioned as a beautiful, remote, yet accessible wilderness experience that appeals to nature lovers and general tourists. The destination has essentially been positioned as 'experience' driven.

## Best Practice Principle Two

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### Best practice regional destinations develop strategic marketing plans

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Destination marketing should be developed as part of the strategic planning process (see more in Chapter 4).

### Best Practice Strategies

To facilitate the development of strategic marketing plans best practice regional destinations:

- seek the support of their STO to assist with funding and expertise for strategic marketing planning;
- consult with local stakeholders to assess their views and preferences (government, business and community) to determine a vision and direction for destination marketing;
- undertake a situational analysis (competitor, visitation trends, consumer preferences) to estimate current and future demand levels;
- undertake research to inform marketing decision-making (see more in Chapter 4);
- establish and adhere to clear marketing objectives and strategies;
- establish standards for marketing (e.g. marketing training programs for operators);
- develop Marketing Action Plans that outline responsibilities and activities for stakeholder organisations; and
- ensure destination level marketing plans link to regional and state marketing plans and strategies.

### Best Practice Snapshots

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice principles outlined above:

#### Best Practice Snapshot 1: Strategic plan sets the direction for marketing ‘Australia’s Hunter Valley’

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The Hunter Valley region consists of numerous proximate destinations offering complementary consumer experiences. Tourism New South Wales worked closely with Hunter Tourism and the industry in developing the *Hunter Valley Regional Tourism Plan 2005–08*, to provide a new strategic marketing platform for the region. The Plan established the ‘Australia’s Hunter Valley’ as one of five Product Zones within the broader Hunter region. Tourism New South Wales and Hunter Tourism are the lead agencies responsible for implementing the plan’s marketing strategies.

Significant marketing strategies of the *Hunter Valley Regional Tourism Plan 2005–08* included:

- expanding the wine country area to encompass all wine experience products across Cessnock, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Dungog—and the wine and heritage experiences of the Maitland area. The intention is to expand and reposition the wine country product/experience;
- consolidating all wine experiences under one ‘Hunter Valley’;
- positioning the Hunter Valley as the premium and oldest wine destination in Australia, with diverse attractions to offer consumers;
- positioning the Hunter Valley as Australia’s accessible wine region, with increased interstate flight access to Newcastle airport; and
- dividing *Australia’s Hunter Valley* into precincts offering different experiences to attract a wider variety of consumer segments and encourage repeat visitation.

#### Best Practice Snapshot 2: Sustainable destination marketing planning results in destination promotion awards for Tourism Noosa

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In November 2006, Tourism Noosa received the *Tourism Queensland Award for Destination Promotion* for its successful development of industry partnerships that are helping guide strategic marketing and tourism development in the Noosa region. The following year, Tourism Noosa took out the national award for destination promotion in recognition of its achievements in raising the profile of the holiday destination through effective marketing, public relations, product development, sustainability, business planning and visitor services. The marketing achievements of Tourism Noosa can be attributed to the development and implementation of successful marketing plans and strategies and on-going collaboration between Tourism Noosa and regional stakeholders.

Sustainable destination marketing is a key element of the *Noosa Sustainable Tourism Plan 2006–15*. The awareness that tourism is strongly influenced by broad global, national and local trends enabled Tourism Noosa to develop comprehensive strategies that aim to enhance the resilience of the industry to external events<sup>37</sup>. Opportunities and challenges are addressed in the Tourism Noosa annual marketing plan. To achieve market sustainability, Tourism Noosa identified five broad marketing objectives:

- build awareness of the Noosa brand;
- even out seasonal troughs;
- enhance visitor experience by promoting Noosa’s diverse attractions;
- increase visitor yield;
- influence conversion to visit<sup>58</sup>.

These objectives have been addressed through a range of marketing strategies and activities that are summarised in Table 14.

**Table 14: Marketing objectives and activities that promote industry sustainability**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Sustainable Marketing Strategy</b>	<b>Supporting Activities</b>
<b>Build awareness of the Noosa brand</b>	All marketing is consistent with the Noosa brand Public relations International and domestic marketing Visitor services	Visual promotion tools (TV, magazines, brochures) Merchandising Improve TN’s web site Implement consistent marketing based on the Noosa brand.
<b>Even out seasonal troughs</b>	Public relations International and domestic marketing Visitor services	Launch Noosa Mayfiesta Campaign featuring: – Noosa triathlon and multisport festival (October/November) – Noosa Longweekend (June) – A Celebration of Australian Food and Wine (May) Undertake proactive public relations to encourage publicity for Noosa as a diverse and stylish tourist destination. Promote a range of activities through brochures, TV, magazines, and tourist information centres.
<b>Enhance visitor experience by promoting Noosa’s diverse attractions</b>	Public relations International and domestic marketing Visitor services	Formation of tourism clusters based on four themes: nature, cuisine, adventure and cultural Launch of the Noosa Experience guide, which provides visitor information on tours and activities available in Noosa Undertake proactive public relations to encourage publicity for Noosa as a diverse and stylish tourist destination (trade sales missions, trade and journalist familiarisation, etc.)
<b>Increase visitor yield</b>	Public relations International and domestic marketing	Encourage high quality services throughout all businesses in Noosa through training, accreditations, consistent advertising. Design campaign targeting the re-energise in style market segment (focus more on the domestic market from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne) Promote Noosa to key high yielding international markets (NZ, UK, Europe, US, Singapore and Japan)
<b>Influence conversion to visit</b>	Public relations International and domestic marketing	Launch of the brand campaigns ‘There’s only one Noosa’, and ‘re-energise in style’, which highlight the uniqueness and quality of Noosa Undertake proactive public relations to encourage publicity for Noosa as a diverse and stylish tourist destination

### ***Image creation and branding***

One of the marketing objectives of Tourism Noosa is to promote the destination as a place of natural beauty with a sophisticated lifestyle, international standards and laid back atmosphere. This message has been consistent since the 1970s, though the emphasis on each quality has shifted over time<sup>111</sup>. Today, marketing strategies in Noosa are guided by the Noosa brand 'Holiday Noosa Style' which was introduced in 2004 by Tourism Noosa to reflect the core values of Noosa which were defined by community and visitors as 'genuine, natural, relaxed, sophisticated and unique'<sup>112</sup>.

Growing competition from other well-resourced domestic and international destinations encouraged Tourism Noosa to strengthen its advertising focus on Noosa's unique attributes and diverse activities. In 2006, Tourism Noosa launched an advertising campaign titled 'There's only one Noosa', to combat the increasing use of Noosa imagery by other destinations seeking to emulate Noosa. As well as promoting the beach, this campaign encouraged visitors to enjoy a range of activities including action, adventure, nature, culture, indulgence and cuisine. It promoted Noosa as a sophisticated and relaxed destination rich in natural beauty. The key target market for this campaign was the *re-energise in style* segment, which has 'above average prosperity and very high average trip spend'<sup>37</sup>.

### ***Advertising, sales and promotion***

Noosa is advertised as a tourist destination in regional and local media by Tourism Noosa in collaboration with Tourism Sunshine Coast (TSC). TSC receives grants and funding from Tourism Queensland and Tourism Australia to support large scale domestic and international advertising which is leveraged by Tourism Noosa.

While TSC focuses on promoting a group of destinations with different characteristics its overall message supports and enhances the marketing activities of Tourism Noosa. TSC uses the Noosa icon to attract visitors to the region, while Tourism Noosa relies on the campaigns to attract visitors outside its primary target.

Tourism Noosa employs a range of media and advertising strategies to promote the destination to its key domestic and international markets. These include traditional magazine and print media placements, as well as online marketing, pay television, SMS promotion, touch-screens in visitor information centres and Smart Car advertising<sup>58</sup>. It is currently developing its online booking system and Internet promotion campaigns, and encouraging industry participation in international trade shows and events by subsidising its members.

Tourism Noosa also promotes a coordinated and cooperative approach to marketing with private businesses to ensure delivery of consistent tourism messages. TN employs a range of strategies to support that aim including:

- a cooperative marketing program, which was launched in 2005 to provide 'a streamlined and cost effective way for members to be involved in a targeted promotion into key markets'<sup>112</sup>;
- a stylish design template for all advertising material produced by Tourism Noosa to ensure a streamline design approach;
- cooperative advertising, whereby TN offers advertising opportunities to its members at a subsidised rate; and
- the formation of a marketing advisory panel consisting of up to 20 industry representatives which provides Tourism Noosa with feedback on its marketing activities.

### ***Research***

Research is integral to the success of Tourism Noosa. The organisation's marketing objectives and strategies are based on global, national and local data from a variety of sources. Research is also undertaken by external consultants and presented in a way that is 'relevant to the organisation's marketing activities'.

In 2002, research conducted by KPMG highlighted the risks associated with focusing Noosa's promotional campaigns on a single product (the beach) and recommended the development of new tourism products to increase demand for tourism services over off-peak periods. Other reports highlighted the negative impacts of tourism peaks and troughs. Tourism Noosa responded by developing and promoting four additional tourism clusters products which offered a wide range of activities associated with adventure, cuisine, culture and nature. It also designed an event strategy which aimed to increase visitation during off-peak periods.

Research is also used to direct Noosa's tourism campaigns to the right visitor markets. For example, data collated by Roy Morgan Tracking Study revealed that the primary visitor market in Noosa is the *re-energise in style* segment. Accordingly Tourism Noosa directed its advertising campaign for this segment to feature inspirational and stylish lifestyle images. For the secondary market, consisting of *long weekenders* who enjoy pampering, restaurants, shopping and the beach, Tourism Noosa employed more tactical offers (e.g. driving inquiries) and advertising techniques<sup>58</sup>.

Tourism Noosa provides its members with access to all tourism research, including local market trends and key findings, to promote transparency within the organisation and inform business decision-making.

### Best Practice Snapshot 3: Consultants establish a vision for Alice Springs

Consultants have been engaged by Tourism Northern Territory (NT) and Central Australian Tourism Industry Association (CATIA) for many years to help establish clear strategic tourism visions and action plans for Alice Springs and the Territory. In 2005, Sustainable Tourism Services was commissioned by Tourism NT to assist with strengthening the position of *Destination Alice Springs*, which had been identified as one of six priority destinations. The aim of the project was to provide a stronger platform for future marketing of the town.

Sustainable Tourism Services developed a preliminary document titled *Strengthening the Position of Alice Springs Tourism: Taking the Next Steps* which helped to identify three main forms of tourism for the town:

- heritage tourism;
- Indigenous tourism;
- experiential tourism (taking advantage of Alice Springs desert environment and outback adventure possibilities)<sup>113</sup>.

In 2006, the Alice Springs Tourism Infrastructure Project Team was developed in response to the *2006–15 Tourism Infrastructure Framework —Strengthening the Position of Alice Springs Tourism*<sup>23</sup>. The Project Team was comprised of members from Alice Springs Town Council, Tourism NT, CATIA, Department of the Chief Minister, and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. Its goal was 'ensuring Alice Springs is highly regarded and recognised as a quality destination of choice that meets the needs of a growing tourism industry'<sup>23</sup>.

More recently AEC Group was engaged to produce the *NT Tourism Strategic Plan 2008–12*. This plan identified six core issues:

- developing the unique Northern Territory experience;
- enhancing access, infrastructure and skills;
- marketing and promoting the Northern Territory experience;
- strengthening strategic partnerships;
- advancing research and industry understanding; and
- enhancing environmental sustainability.

The consultants recommended a range of measures to support the plan including broad performance indicators in the following four key areas:

- Tourism Product
- Tourism Investment
- Tourism Demand
- Tourism in Context<sup>26</sup>.

## Best Practice Principle Three

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### **Best practice regional destinations establish an effective and consistent destination brand and image that is used to position and promote the destination to attract appropriate visitor markets and guide the development of appropriate tourism product**

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Developing a strong brand image for any destination is becoming increasingly important<sup>114</sup>. Ensuring that the brand imagery projected about the destination actually matches the experience is even more essential. Destination marketing must therefore present a strong brand and regional images that:

- are 'live' so that visitors feel the authenticity and uniqueness of the region;
- enable the destination to fit a clear position in the tourists' mind<sup>115</sup>;
- ensure that consumers perceive the destination product correctly, as opposed to being disappointed when they arrive at the destination only to find it doesn't offer what they perceived it would<sup>115</sup>; and
- promote holiday 'experiences' rather than actual tourist attractions and features<sup>114</sup>.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To establish an effective and consistent destination brand and image best practice regional tourism destinations:

- consult with government, business and community stakeholders to consider and establish a strong and consistent destination brand and image;
- identify and focus on the competitive strengths of the destination;
- undertake consumer research to inform decisions about how to best position the destination and recognise that the destination cannot appeal to all visitor markets;
- ensure the brand and image reflects the strategic vision for the destination;
- promote iconic features and attractions of the destination and their linkage to the broader region;
- develop a 'Brand Policy' to protect the destination brand and to align further product and infrastructure development;
- communicate the brand and image to industry operators and ask them to consider the destination brand when developing product and their own marketing (e.g. develop brand toolkits);
- ensure consistent delivery of the brand through associated advertising, sales and promotional strategies;
- link well with the regional and state brand and image;
- use realistic images and messages to support the brand and image; and
- regularly review and refresh the brand.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice principles outlined above:

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Daylesford campaign encourages regional tourism dispersal from Melbourne**

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Daylesford launched a destination marketing plan in April 2006 as part of Tourism Victoria's *Melbourne and Surrounds Regional Tourism Development Plan*. The plan's aim was to complement Melbourne's image while promoting Daylesford as a key tourist destination and encouraging regional dispersal from Melbourne.

Spa and wellness experiences feature as a core aspect of the national marketing campaign for the Daylesford/Hepburn Springs region. A \$600,000 budget was set for the project. The challenge was to develop a brand identity that would give the region a unique and creative personality.

Research findings were influential in the positioning of Daylesford. A study by Tourism Victoria revealed a market segment of visitors who feel overwhelmed by life and are looking for holidays where they can focus on their emotional well-being<sup>116</sup>. The research findings led to a creative campaign based around the concept that '*in Daylesford, you can escape to your own private fairy tale*'.

The campaign objectives were:

- increase awareness of Daylesford and its rational and emotional attributes in key source markets;
- highlight the region as a short drive from Melbourne and an additional trip for interstate visitors;

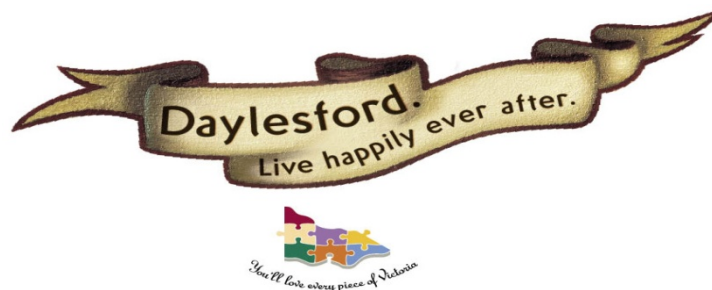
- position Daylesford as the icon Mineral Springs destination in Australia;
- increase visitation of the socially aware market segment;
- increase length of stay and expenditure in Daylesford and the greater Macedon Ranges region; and
- generate consumer response to the campaign.

The campaign strategy incorporated an integrated approach using the following components:

- develop a brand campaign for Daylesford targeted to key markets;
- ensure ability of the broader region to support the brand campaign;
- undertake consumer promotions; and
- develop collateral and online information to incorporate brand elements.

The strategy focused on the unique aspect of a village borne from and dedicated to the idea of well being and rejuvenation. The message to the market was that 'Daylesford is a village dedicated to making you feel unbelievable, whether through eating great food, drinking great wine, having an incredible massage or taking to the waters to enjoy the spa'.

The execution of the brand utilised naive and child like artwork to depict Daylesford as a fairytale destination.



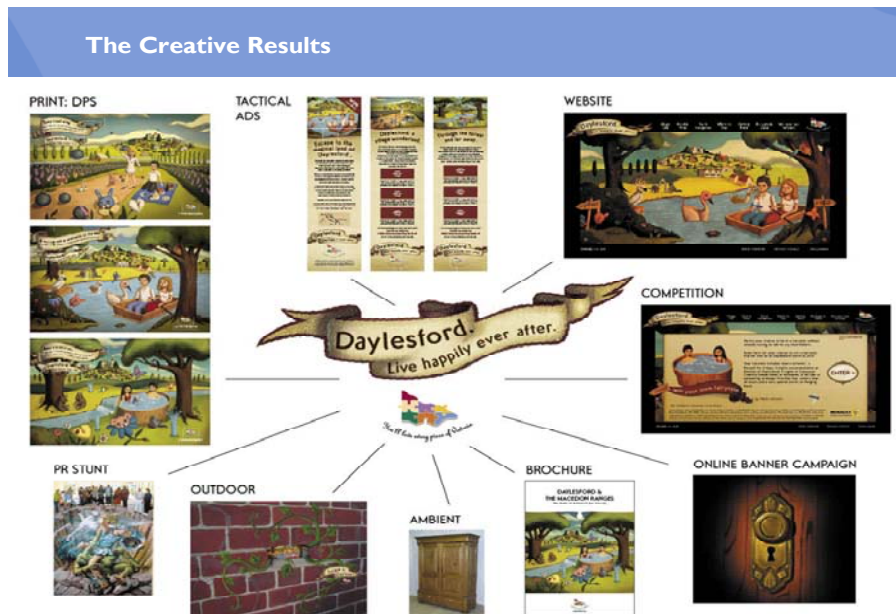
**Figure 7: Tourism Victoria, 2006 Daylesford brand tag line**

The campaign target audience is categorised as the socially aware and 'holistic healthies'. The core age for this demographic is 35–45 years, with campaign appeals to the broader age of 25–55. As 50 percent of the value segments have families, it was important that families should not feel excluded from the brand message. The segment represents middle to high income earners, professionals, tertiary educated with a strong public sector bent. The primary geographic target was NSW (Sydney) and the secondary markets were Queensland (Brisbane), South Australia (Adelaide), and Victoria (Melbourne).

To create awareness the Daylesford campaign incorporated:

- a dedicated micro web site within Tourism Victoria's *visitvictoria.com* site. It offered regional information, deals and packages and page links for operators to generate bookings;
- a \$10,000 prize to the region was offered to launch the campaign. As a result of this competition, the region developed a database of more than 13,000 names. This has been used to liaise with consumers via e-newsletters;
- an advertising and PR campaign that featured in media throughout Australia, with a focus on the Sydney market. In conjunction, the Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Campaign Committee contributed to operator specific strip ads in a number of mainstream print publications; and
- development of a regional Jigsaw brochure that was distributed through the visitor information centres throughout the state and Melbourne's Federation Square.

Tourism Victoria oversees campaign consistency and quality by giving operators the option to buy into print and television advertising shells. The campaign was delivered through multi-faceted mediums (see Figure 8).



Source: Tourism Victoria: Regional Marketing Unit 2007

**Figure 8: Daylesford Campaign creative results**

The campaign has been exposed to more than 550,000 unique users, and online media directed almost 50,000 visitors to the Daylesford web site. The overall click-thru rate (CTR) for the campaign was 0.74 percent. Best performing advertisement placements included a half page banners across various Sydney Morning Herald sections which generated a CTR between 0.8 – 1.41percent. Overall the campaign was deemed very successful by the operators who were involved.

### Best Practice Snapshot 2: Establishing a consistent brand for Agnes Water/1770

The Discovery Coast Tourism Committee (DCTC) marketing plan is used by tourism organisations to ensure a collaborative and consistent approach to brand identity in the region. The aim of the plan is to overcome confusion in the marketplace and position Agnes Water/1770 as key destination for tourists in Central Queensland.

The importance of a consistent brand and image was acknowledged by Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited (GAPDL) and Tourism Queensland in the Destination Management Plan for Central Queensland (the Gladstone Region Edition, 2007). Research from the report about consumer perceptions of Central Queensland revealed the region faces three barriers to increasing visitor numbers:

- gateway syndrome;
- lack of signature icons; and
- lack of clarity about where Central Queensland is located.

The DCTC developed the caption ‘1770/Agnes Water Southern Great Barrier Reef’ as a platform for its brand identity. The objective was for the slogan to be used in advertising material subject to the committee’s approval.

The inclusion of the Great Barrier Reef in the caption was a controversial issue. Some stakeholders believed the area should be promoted as the Birthplace of Queensland or the first landing place of Captain James Cook. However, the final decision was made based on the wider appeal of the Great Barrier Reef. The heritage value of the area has not been left out and the brand image includes an anchor to symbolise the landing of Captain Cook. A simple font type was used to give the caption a historical feel.

The brand identity for Agnes Water/1770 is incorporated in the DCTC web site and a range of merchandising products sold at visitor information centres. A gap in consistent branding exists with Miriam Vale

Shire Council<sup>11</sup>, as Council's marketing materials promote the destination as the 'Discovery Coast Birthplace of Queensland'. Individual tourism operators also use a wide range of images and captions not consistent with the branding set out for the region by DCTC.

A key objective of the DCTC is to increase visitor's awareness of the unique natural attributes of the area. Advertising images used by DCTC are focused on its natural beauty, such as beaches and National Parks, instead of built environment.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Aligning Flinders Ranges and Wilpena Pound with 'South Australia. A brilliant blend.'**

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South Australia's decline in tourism market share prompted the South Australia Tourism Commission (SATC) to strengthen South Australia's profile as a nature destination. Efforts by the SATC to create a unique brand identity for Flinders Ranges and Wilpena Pound as an accessible outback experience provide a key point of difference for South Australia's marketing strategy. Under cooperative marketing arrangements all regional marketing activities are aligned with the state brand message: 'South Australia. A brilliant blend'. Communication materials reinforce this message.

Despite its signature landscapes and profile as a leading South Australian nature destination, the Flinders Ranges has yet to maximise its potential. Attempts to brand Flinders Ranges are undermined to a significant degree by Tourism Australia's international marketing of the outback which is focused predominantly on the Northern Territory.

To encourage South Australians to 'think local' and consider the Flinders Ranges as a holiday destination, the state government undertook a new marketing campaign in 2007 offering visitors one night's free accommodation and bonuses such as picnic lunch hampers and railway passes. The campaign included a 30-second commercial, filmed on location in the Flinders Ranges, along with flyers and advertisements in key newspapers. Enquiries are directed to [www.southaustralia.com](http://www.southaustralia.com) and the South Australian Visitor and Travel Centre.

Twelve local celebrities were also recruited to promote their favourite regional holiday destination in South Australia as part of the SATC's intrastate marketing campaign. The campaign focused on experiences derived through '*meeting people, visiting new places, participating in activities and creating memories, then retelling those stories time and time again*'<sup>117</sup>. The campaign was implemented in partnership with Channel 9 and supported by the Department for Environment and Heritage, which ran concurrent ads promoting the state's National Parks, camping and walking activities.

The state tourism web site [southaustralia.com](http://southaustralia.com) was redeveloped in 2006 to include a simple intuitive holiday planner, virtual travel guides and online maps, allowing visitors to plan and book holidays online. The site allows visitors to download personal itineraries and virtual audio tours to mobile phones, MP3 players and other devices.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Establishing and maintaining an iconic brand and strong image for the Barossa region**

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The Barossa Valley is well-established as Australia's premier wine tourism region with both domestic and international visitors. It has strong brand recognition as one of Australia's oldest wine producing regions, which was first established as early as the late 1800s. Its wineries have an international reputation for producing quality wines, which are frequently successful in winning international wine awards at wine shows throughout the world.

Wine producers established the successful international marketing and branding of Barossa wines that has resulted in positioning the region as a wine tourism destination. The profile of the region was raised and the Barossa brand name became iconic. This is demonstrated by the Barossa Valley achieving consistently high

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<sup>11</sup> Miriam Shire Council now forms part of the Gladstone Regional Council

levels of visitation and awareness as a wine region in surveys conducted on domestic and international tourists<sup>48</sup>.

The branding of the Barossa as a wine tourism region has been reinforced by the South Australian Tourism Commission's (SATC) positioning of South Australia as the home of Australian wine and the Barossa's leading role in that positioning strategy. The SATC has strongly promoted the state's wine and food competitiveness in its interstate and international marketing activities. For example, it was strongly featured in the 2006–07 'My Australia' national domestic marketing campaign. Its brand positioning has been supported by consistent messaging and imagery in marketing collateral and in cooperative marketing campaigns undertaken by the SATC and the Barossa Wine and Tourism Association. To retain its position as a leading wine tourism region, the brand has been extended to include distinctive attributes associated with the region—its quality regional food, its strong German and English cultural heritage, and its festivals and events that build on traditions of wine, food, heritage, music and arts<sup>118</sup>. The brand promise is well supported by high quality supporting infrastructure in the form of excellent cellar door facilities, good quality restaurants and cafés, and interesting historical buildings and accommodation. The extension of the branding to food has ensured the region is well positioned as a quality wine and food destination in a highly competitive market.

In order to maintain its position in the face of increased competition, there has been a strong focus on the lifestyle attributes of the brand, based on the results of extensive consumer research. Whilst the Barossa's reputation for wine and its renowned Anglo-German heritage remains the dominant brand, sub-brands emphasise complementary products and experiences the region offers that meet the needs of target markets to reconnect with themselves and others, to reinvigorate from the stresses of life and to feel a sense of achievement. Consequently, promotional material has placed greater emphasis on iconic brands, products and people in the region, its peace and tranquillity, and the nature-based activities the region offers for visitors to improve their health and well-being. In relation to food tourism, a careful balance is sought between indulgence and healthy locally grown produce. In addition, interpretation of the region's cultural heritage and living traditions has been further developed to engender a stronger connection by visitors to the region's history and sense of place.

The challenge for the Barossa in the future will be to ensure its product remains sufficiently differentiated and its brand notably distinctive to remain ahead of its competitors.

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#### **Best Practice Brand Snapshot 5: Cooperative branding and marketing strategy to position Launceston and Tamar Valley as one region**

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The efforts of Launceston and Tamar Valley to work as one region have paid off, culminating in the creation of a stronger, more integrated brand for the area. A number of best practices have been observed which have relied heavily on the cooperation of a range of stakeholders.

In response to the amalgamation of the Launceston and Tamar Valley regions, a new brand campaign was launched for the region in December 2006. The new 'Sensational' brand campaign was led by Tourism Tasmania and included involvement from the councils in the region, Northern Tasmania Development and industry representatives.

To promote the new brand, a web site was launched with new imagery and better access to accommodation, attractions and tours as well as events information, maps and touring routes<sup>119</sup>. An example of the brand imagery that is part of the new campaign is shown in Figure 9. This is a series of e-postcards that can be accessed from the new web site and used as an additional branding/promotional tool for visitors to the site.

The key features of the new brand were explained by West Tamar's Mayor as follows:

*This new brand is about confidence, about optimism, and about pride. It's a brand that any operator can use whether they're a restaurant, a hotel or pub, a B&B, a retail shop, a heritage attraction, a wildlife park, a museum—it works for everyone, wherever they are in the area Launceston, West or East Tamar it doesn't matter because our visitors will see us as one.*<sup>120</sup>

While the Launceston Tamar Valley region undertakes its own marketing activities to attract tourists, it has been strongly supported by Tourism Tasmania which provides resources and expertise to maximise exposure in domestic and international markets. Tourism Tasmania has assisted the region by:

- helping to develop the region's successful 'Sensational' brand;
- providing advice and resources to support the operation of visitor information centres throughout the region;
- assisting with development of touring routes, including the Tamar Valley Wine Route;
- providing industry data and market research to assist in developing tourism planning initiatives;
- showcasing the Launceston Tamar Valley region as a destination at key tourism tradeshows such as the Australian Tourism Exchange; and
- including Launceston Tamar Valley operators, such as Boags Brewery and regional wineries, in the Visiting Journalists Program.

The Launceston Tamar Valley tourism industry works to ensure that any local marketing initiatives complement and leverage state tourism strategies and activities. The messages portrayed in the Launceston Tamar Valley brand do not confuse the audience when considered against the broader branding of Tasmania.

Figure 9: E-Postcards reflecting the 'Sensational' Launceston Tamar Valley brand



[www.ltvtasmania.com.au](http://www.ltvtasmania.com.au)

*Sensational*  
Launceston Tamar Valley



[www.ltvtasmania.com.au](http://www.ltvtasmania.com.au)

*Sensational*  
Launceston Tamar Valley



[www.ltvtasmania.com.au](http://www.ltvtasmania.com.au)

*Sensational*  
Launceston Tamar Valley

### **Best Practice Snapshot 6: Branding Cradle Mountain and broader region as an accessible wilderness experience**

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Cradle Mountain's brand identity is the result of integrating various marketing initiatives by local councils, individual operators and the Cradle Coast Authority. Stakeholders from the region have made branding a key focus and successfully established Cradle Mountain as a local icon while promoting the wide range of attractions within the Cradle Country/Tasmania North West region.

The image of Cradle Mountain in the market is of natural beauty and remote—yet accessible—wilderness. It appeals to both nature lovers and general tourists. The destination has essentially been positioned as 'experience' driven. Significant branding initiatives include:

- the 'Pure Cradle' campaign developed by the Federal Hotel;
- promotion of the 'Cradle Coast Regional Touring Routes' by Tourism Tasmania, the Cradle Coast Authority and local councils;
- development of the 'Cradle Country Visitors Guide' and 'Cradle Country Motivational Guide' by local councils; and
- an initiative by Kentish Council to establish a formal destination branding program.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 7: Collaborative marketing approach by Katherine Regional Tourism Association and Tourism Northern Territory creates a uniform regional brand**

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The Katherine Regional Tourism Association (KRTA) and Tourism Northern Territory have joined forces to develop a consistent and uniform marketing and branding strategy. The approach ensures consistent themes run throughout marketing campaigns, with the aim of dispersing visitors throughout the region and increasing visitor length of stay.

In 2004–05 Tourism NT undertook market and consumer research to identify potential Territory customers. The research resulted in the identification of the *Spirited Traveller* and a new communications strategy targeted at individual travellers instead of geographical areas<sup>121</sup>. The tag line, 'Share Our Story' was designed to reach 'Spirited Travellers'<sup>121</sup>. In 2007 the brand was used in a national marketing campaign adopted by the RTA.

The Katherine and Tennant Creek 'Drive' marketing campaign was held from April to June 2007. The success of the campaign stemmed from its focus on the self-drive market<sup>121</sup>. It was delivered through a 100-page self-drive booklet produced in partnership with *Northern Territory News*. It was distributed at key caravan and camping shows in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane as well as editorial, advertising and online features in key publications<sup>121</sup>.

The 'Share Our Story' strategy enabled Tourism NT to market all Northern Territory destinations in a consistent manner<sup>26</sup>. As a result Katherine was included in the overall Northern Territory marketing strategy but also positioned as a separate destination.

## Best Practice Principle Four

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### Best practice regional tourism destinations identify and target appropriate visitor markets

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One of the early decisions that a destination must identify is: what kind of visitor are they are hoping to attract? Not all types of tourists are equally suited and welcomed by any given regional destination. Destinations must consider and establish the kinds of visitors they are willing and able to target through their marketing. Visitor markets should be considered by the destination stakeholders in terms of their relative ‘fit’ with the attractions and experiences available at the destination and with the local community’s objectives for tourism<sup>122</sup>.

While attracting visitors to the region through destination marketing is essential on one hand, it must be done in a way that will not ruin the experience and negate the initial aim of marketing the region to tourists. The drive for sustainability needs to feature in marketing decisions as many consumers of tourism experiences now prefer peace and quiet, access to natural and real tourism experiences rather than ones that have been artificially or detrimentally impacted by over promotion<sup>123</sup>.

### Best Practice Strategies

To identify and target appropriate visitor markets best practice regional tourism destinations:

- understand the history and future direction of the consumer marketplace and the position of their destination in that marketplace;
- undertake research to identify and understand the unique reasons why visitors are attracted to the destination;
- identify appropriate target markets that ‘fit’ with the attractions and experiences available at the destination and community values;
- develop effective marketing strategies to target these visitor markets;
- ensure product development and visitor experiences suit these markets;
- do not rely on one or limited visitor markets; and
- consider the appeal of product to both domestic and international visitor markets.

### Best Practice Snapshots

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice principles outlined above:

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#### Best Practice Snapshot 1: Research supports repositioning campaign for the Grampians to target new markets

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In 2004 a new marketing campaign was launched by Tourism Victoria to provide fresh motivation for visitors to explore the Grampians region. The aim of the ‘*Space to Think*’ campaign was to shift the perception of the Grampians as a camping and relaxation destination, and position the region as a place where visitors can reconnect with nature in an environment free of commercialism. Campaign imagery was developed to present the Grampians region as a tonic for the mind, body and soul; a perfect place to escape the stress of everyday life.

The campaign was based on market research into existing and potential new markets, targeting 20–44 year olds from Melbourne and Adelaide who are drawn to natural experiences. Further research indicated that this primary target market is looking for a holiday that provides an ‘escape from the everyday routine’ in a place that is ‘raw and uncommercialised’, where they can be ‘touched by nature’ Mojo cited in<sup>124</sup>.

In response to this research, ‘*Space to Think*’ promotes the Grampians as a premier tourist destination for nature-based experiences, with a focus on the region’s unique natural attractions and adventure activities. Feedback from potential consumers has driven the campaign’s marketing values and message. As a result it has continued to highlight the region’s strength in nature, touring, and Aboriginal culture.

#### *Communicating with the Market*

The ‘*Space to Think*’ jigsaw campaign was initially profiled at six Melbourne cinemas for three months, in suburbs that support the South Australian and Victorian markets. The cinema presence was reinforced by foyer displays featuring Grampians packages and postcards directing consumers to the web site.

The tagline—*Big nature gives me the space and perspective I need*—has been reinforced with iconic images from the Grampians National Park which convey the region’s purity and natural environment.

**Figure 10: Sample of the creative result**



Source: Tourism Victoria, Regional Marketing unit 2007

### ***Tactical Campaign***

An operator-supported marketing campaign was implemented with the cinema campaign in 2005. It featured a new brochure and supporting marketing material, including a Grampians packages flyer, web information, a touring map and targeted media advertising campaign.

The flagship of the Grampians campaign was the Grampians Jigsaw Brochure which was complemented by a new Grampians Touring Map which highlighted the diversity of the region. Seventy thousand copies of the reworked brochure were distributed nationwide by Tourism Victoria and the travel trade. Incentives to encourage operator buy-in to the program were also provided.

The official GMI web site was the call to action for the campaign and featured on all marketing collateral. GMI also subsidised national print media advertising opportunities to encourage local operator buy-in.

### ***Funding and Outcomes***

Funding was provided on a dollar for dollar basis through the Regional Partnership Program. Tactical activities were dependent on the level of buy-in from operators. One of the challenges for GMI in implementing the tactical campaign was to develop strategies that would improve cooperative marketing opportunities.

Results of the 2005 Regional Awareness and Perceptions Study indicated that awareness of the Grampians region increased from 45 percent in 2003 to 48 percent in 2005. Results also indicated strong awareness of the Grampians key attributes among the highest yield value segments.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Tourism Northern Territory helps to identify and target new market segment for Tennant Creek and Barkly region**

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In 2004–05, Tourism NT undertook extensive market and consumer research to identify potential Territory customers. This research identified the *Spirited Traveller* and signalled the launch of a new Territory tourism product aimed at a market segment rather than a geographical area <sup>125</sup>.

A new communications strategy, with the tagline Share Our Story, was developed to reach and communicate with the *Spirited Travellers* <sup>125</sup>. The ‘Share Our Story’ campaign targeted the self-drive market <sup>121</sup> and was delivered through diverse methods including:

- publication of a 100-page self-drive booklet produced in partnership with Northern Territory News;
- exposure at key caravan and camping shows in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane; and
- editorial, advertising and online features in key publications <sup>121</sup>.

Complementing these methods, Barkly Tourism—overseen by the Tennant Creek Visitor Information Centre and Nyinkka Nyunyu Arts and Culture Centre—developed a new set of promotional tools for the region including:

- the Barkly tourism web site;
- a series of television advertisements aimed at the domestic drive market; and
- interactive kiosks, DVDs and a visitor guide with detailed maps of the area <sup>121</sup>.

The ‘Share Our Story’ strategy enabled Tourism NT to deliver the Territory’s marketing message in a consistent way that was focused on regional, multi-destination tourism <sup>26</sup>. This approach ensured promotion of the entire Barkly Region, incorporated Tennant Creek, and brought the regions together in a spirit of collaboration.

## **Best Practice Principle Five**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations develop innovative advertising, sales and promotion strategies to support the destination brand and image**

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As part of the strategic planning process for destination marketing, consideration must be given to how the destination and its various attractions and facilities are going to be promoted, the distribution channels needed to access and reach potential visitors; and a general assessment of the overall price strategy that may be used to signal the type of destination it is and the type of visitor it wants to attract.

Pricing is no doubt the most contentious issue as individual stakeholders each control the price offered to visitors for their respective products and services. While there is no such thing as a singular price strategy for a tourist destination, tourists still form perceptions of the relative expense or affordability of a given destination based on the various price cues sent to them by individual operators within the region <sup>126</sup>. Those responsible for marketing the destination, however, rarely have more than a very limited influence on prices offered to visitors <sup>122</sup>, but they do have a role to play in attempting to promote a price strategy that fits well with the desired destination image. For example, avoiding offering attraction and accommodation prices that are so cheap that a low yield market flecks to a destination that wants to target only high yield customers in smaller numbers.

Destination marketers should also not rely so heavily on traditional distribution channels (e.g. tour wholesalers, travel agents etc), but to connect with the potential visitor directly <sup>114</sup>. Achieving this can, however, be difficult for small regional destinations, particularly if they are of emerging destination status and need to rely on integration into popular travel itineraries.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To develop innovative advertising, sales and promotion strategies to support the destination brand and image best practice regional tourism destinations:

- promote the unique attributes of the destination and link to the diversity of visitor attractions and experiences within the destination/region;
- develop creative promotional and advertising images that are used consistently across all media and web collateral;
- develop tactical campaigns to even out seasonality or raise awareness of destination product and experiences;
- leverage public relations and media exposure that is linked to tactical campaigns or events;

- develop opportunities for public relations events (e.g. an opening of new infrastructure development, create competitions to attract attention);
- host regular famils for media and industry;
- encourage the support of leading tourism operators that act as ambassadors to showcase the destination;
- leverage from exposure of destination on movies and television programs;
- develop e-marketing strategies;
- participate in relevant tradeshowes;
- develop promotional strategies for international visitor markets; and
- provide realistic messages and deliver the marketing promise.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice principles outlined above:

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Established ‘Snowy Mountains’ brand supported by tactical marketing campaigns to promote region as a year-round destination**

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Tourism Snowy Mountains (TSM) and Tourism New South Wales operate cooperatively to promote the region as a year-round destination. The aim is to create higher destination awareness and influence intentions to visit to the region. Marketing efforts by large ski resorts and local operators help to build interest in the Snowy Mountains region and complement existing marketing activities. By taking a unified approach, individual efforts are strengthened and cooperation is encouraged with a range of stakeholders.

The Snowy Mountain’s well-established image is a result of Banjo Patterson’s poem ‘Man from Snowy River’ published in 1890 and reinforced in the film of the same name. This image is a successful component of the Snowy Mountains branding strategy. The region is further known as a clean, healthy, mountain destination that offers a range of winter and summer activities. The ‘Snowy Mountains experience’ is an important element in the overall marketing strategy for the region.

Tactical campaigns have been developed to attract visitors from the key target markets of Sydney, regional NSW and Canberra during summer months when visitor numbers are low<sup>127</sup>. One of the most recent campaigns, implemented from February to March 2008, involved print advertising in key Sydney media, including the *Sydney Morning Herald* ‘Traveller’ section, The *Sun Herald* ‘Sunday’ magazine, and ‘Better Homes and Gardens’ magazine. Print advertising was supported by a ‘Snowy Mountains’ segment that featured on the ‘Better Homes and Gardens’ television program<sup>127</sup>. A similar campaign utilising prominent print advertising was targeted to Brisbane, Gold Coast, and South East Queensland markets<sup>128</sup>. Targeted campaigns have also been developed for niche markets, including motorcyclists.

A web site was developed as part of the region’s overall marketing strategy and to support traditional advertising mediums. The site has increased tourism operator presence and consumer traffic. Public relations has played a key role in attracting potential tourists and educating visitors to the region. Tourism Snowy Mountains employs a public relations expert to stimulate awareness and promote special offers linked to cooperative marketing campaigns.

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Commercial operators play key role in promoting Wilpena Pound and Flinders Ranges**

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In Wilpena Pound, marketing activities have been largely driven by key commercial accommodation properties including Wilpena Pound Resort, Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary and Rawnsley Park. These tourism operators have initiated marketing and advertising campaigns that promote their own business while raising awareness of key iconic attractions and features of Wilpena Pound and the broader Flinders Ranges. They have demonstrated their support for broader tourism initiatives by participating in trade shows alongside the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC).

In the past decade most accommodation providers in the Flinders Ranges have developed new tourism products and experiences that showcase South Australia’s unique outback way of life. They have participated in

cooperative activities with Flinders Ranges Tourism Operators Association (FRTOA) aimed at promoting the wider region to national and international markets.

More recently, tourism operators joined forces with FRTOA and the SATC to deliver ‘Tastes of the Outback’ and ‘A Bush With Art’. These events aim to promote the region’s quality food and arts experiences, and have been supported by local councils and Food South Australia.

Developing and improving product and infrastructure in the Flinders Ranges is still a major priority for tourism stakeholders in the Flinders Ranges. The Rawnsley Park Eco-villas, on the southern tip of Wilpena Pound, were developed with the assistance of the SATC Tourism Development Unit to help create ‘hero’ products for the state and strengthen the ‘desert tourism’ experience.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Promotional strategies reinforce Shark Bay as significant nature-based World Heritage destination**

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Key strategies to promote the World Heritage attractions and unique ecological values of the Shark Bay region have been identified by the Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation. The strategies include:

- production of a style manual and Shark Bay World Heritage logo to reinforce consistent branding and ensure a uniform approach to marketing initiatives by local businesses;
- production of a tourism operators manual to ensure visitor information is communicated in an accurate and consistent manner;
- activities aimed at promoting interactive dolphin experience at Monkey Mia Resort to international markets;
- use of the Monkey Mia Resort logo in marketing materials for the Shark Bay region;
- strategies to profile the natural heritage values, camping and water-based holidays of the region; and
- educating the local community about Monkey Mia’s contributions to Shark Bay and its sustainable practices.

The Shark Bay Holiday Planner and the Coral Coast Holiday Planner are also effective marketing tools to promote the region’s attractions to domestic and international markets.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Tourism organisations join forces to develop diverse marketing initiatives that promote Esperance to local and international markets**

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Tourism networks play a key role in the promotion of Esperance to state, national and international markets. Individual operators and regional operators have teamed up with the lead tourism agencies to position Esperance as a key destination offering visitors access to a pristine coastline and unspoiled environment. This has been achieved through on-going collaboration between lead tourism agencies including Tourism Australia, Tourism Western Australia, Australia’s Golden Outback and the Department of Environment and Conservation.

At state and national levels, Tourism Australia and Tourism Western Australia have increased regional exposure through an online tourism booking service.

At a regional level, the Australian Golden Outback regional tourism organisation plays a key role in marketing Esperance through television and print advertising, as well as promotional materials. The Australian Golden Outback marketing strategy for the region’s National Parks—which emphasises walking trails, camping and protection of eco-systems—has successfully increased tourist demand for nature-based experiences in the region.

Esperance is also promoted in the Golden Outback Holiday Planner, circulated nationally and overseas, and the ‘Discover Esperance’ holiday planner which is produced by the Esperance Regional Tourism Association (ERTA). Local tourism stakeholders, including ERTA, regularly join with individual operators to showcase Esperance products at tourism industry trade shows. Tourism operators from Woody Island also work with the local Chamber of Commerce and ERTA to promote their products and attractions to a range of visitor markets.

**Best Practice Snapshot 5: Promotion of historic and natural attractions in Port Arthur fosters experiential tourism**

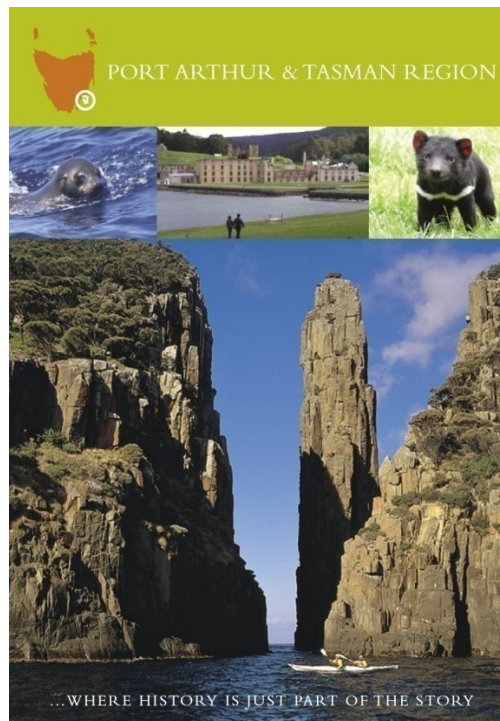
The Port Arthur and Tasman Tourism Association is committed to improving communication with potential visitors about key attractions in the region. Although a rebranding campaign was not completed at the time of this research, it has been earmarked as a future initiative within the *Tasman Tourism Development Strategy*. An integrated approach to developing promotional materials is, however, considered essential to educate visitors about the range of experiences on offer.

To showcase the area and position it in the marketplace as an experiential holiday destination, a brochure was developed for tourists. The message speaks for itself: ‘Where history is just part of the story’ (see Figure 11). The promotional tag line is used consistently in the region’s marketing collateral and the Convict Trail itinerary.

The Port Arthur region is marketed through various channels, including the Historic Site’s promotional materials and visitor information centre which showcases tourism operators from the region. Individual tourism operators also promote the region via their web sites. Participation in Tasmania’s state-wide Visiting Journalists Program, organised by Tourism Tasmania, has also been effective in exposing journalists to the region and generating considerable media coverage. Staging key events at the Historic Site, such as the Tasmania Symphony Orchestra performance, has also provided the area with additional marketing exposure and encourages visitors to travel to the region.

The importance of backing up these promotional tools with a real ‘experience’ when visitors arrive in the region has been recognised by the Historic Site Management. A substantial effort and resources has been undertaken to develop strong interpretive services and programs for its visitors. This is seen as critical to providing a unique experience.

**Figure 11: Port Arthur and Tasman Region brochure**



### **Best Practice Snapshot 6: Tactical marketing, strong branding and development of ‘positioning pillars’ strengthen Alice Springs’ profile**

Through industry and community consultation, Alice Springs has developed four ‘positioning pillars’ which underpin tourism activities for the region. These pillars, which establish clear and consistent messages about tourism initiatives and brand development, are defined as:

- developing Indigenous tourism;
- developing Aboriginal art and culture;
- ensuring consistent brand and image; and
- leveraging marketing activities of Uluru.

Alice Springs tourism stakeholders also take an active role in promoting the benefits of tourism to the local community, to secure support for collaborative marketing initiatives and help ensure a positive visitor experience. Alice Springs has initiated a range of successful and memorable marketing campaigns, including ‘*You Will Never Never Know If You Never Never Go*’, ‘*Amazing Alice*’ and ‘*Territory Discoveries*’.

More recently, in 2007, the ‘*Share our Story*’ brand was launched. Six media personalities participated in a photographic journey through the Red Centre which incorporated the Larapinta Trail, MacDonnell Ranges and the Red Centre Way between Alice Springs and Uluru<sup>121</sup>. The campaign aimed to promote Indigenous cultural experiences around Alice Springs.

To support publicity for the campaign, a Lonely Planet competition and promotion with local tourism operators was introduced<sup>121</sup>. Japanese versions of key promotional materials and maps were also produced to reach international markets<sup>26</sup>.

## **Best Practice Principle Six**

### **Best practice regional tourism destinations provide quality visitor information and interpretation services**

A key element of destination marketing is how to continue to connect with visitors once they have already arrived in the destination. Visitors need to be engaged by the destination as they are increasingly seeking real experiences and requiring more specific information about what a destination has on offer<sup>v</sup>.

Establishing effective visitor information centres (VICs) in prominent locations within regional tourism areas is critical to promoting the destination region<sup>129</sup>. VICs serve not only to promote the region’s tourist attractions and facilities, but also take on the role of orientating visitors to the region and controlling the flow of tourists within an area. Essentially, they should act not only as promoters of tourism, but also protectors of key natural assets that require visitor numbers and flows to be controlled to avoid serious detrimental effects of tourism<sup>xiii</sup>.

Research also indicates the importance of visitor information centres (VICs) in increasing length of stay and ensuring quality visitor experiences. In addition, quality interpretation programs can enhance visitor experiences, strengthen public relations, protect sites from visitor impacts, and protect visitors from on-site hazards.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To provide quality visitor information and interpretation services best practice regional tourism destinations:

- provide effective visitor information centres that are well managed and resourced (human and financial);
- ensure a coordinated approach to visitor information services (e.g. link/network VICs within the destination/region);
- provide consistent and quality visitor information (e.g. web site, visitor guide, signage);
- provide quality central accommodation and tour booking services;

- provide interactive interpretation experiences to give an opportunity for visitors to be involved;
- provide good directional and interpretative signage;
- develop opportunities for visitors to experience local product and experiences (e.g. food and wine trails, touring maps); and
- provide training for VIC staff and tourism operators to ensure consistent communication of visitor information.

### Best Practice Snapshots

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice principles outlined above:

#### Best Practice Snapshot 1: Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism delivers quality visitor information

The Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism Inc (HVWCT) is an incorporated local tourism organisation with a membership base of more than 550 businesses. The organisation hosts the accredited Tourism and Visitors Information Centre located just outside of Cessnock in the Hunter Valley and administers a web site [www.winecountry.com.au](http://www.winecountry.com.au) promoting the tourism products and services of HVWCT financial members. The Centre's mission is to 'provide the very best Visitor Information Services, Marketing and Promotional Services, Business Tourism Support and Membership Services'.

HVWCT also produces a range of publications including:

- a comprehensive visitor guide to accommodation, tours, attractions, dining, services, wineries and cellar doors within the wine area;
- a specialised *Conference Facilities Guide*, with seating grids and detailed information on all conference and incentive products in the Hunter Valley;
- a *Hunter Valley Weddings Guide*, showcasing wedding venues and services in Hunter Valley Wine Country;
- an *International Planner* featuring sample itineraries and travel times;
- media CD and DVD, with images and story angles; and
- online booking engine.

#### Best Practice Snapshot 2: Establishment of a Visitor Information Centre Network to promote Wilpena Pound and Flinders Ranges

Visitors travelling north to Wilpena Pound generally pass through the southern towns of Quorn, Hawker and Port Augusta. visitor information centres have been established in each of these towns to provide tourist information about the Flinders Ranges region, and assist visitors in planning their South Australian outback experience.

A visitor centre has also been established at Wilpena Pound, under management of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). It is staffed by employees of Wilpena Pound Resort and NPWS. While resort staff focus on promoting the products and services available through the resort as part of broader regional tourism experience, NPWS staff are required to promote tourism under the 'Flinders Ranges and Outback' banner.

As part of the South Australian Visitor Information Network, the centres provide tourism operators in each town with an opportunity to showcase their businesses and display marketing materials.

#### Best Practice Snapshot 3: Planning for interpretation in Shark Bay and development of the World Heritage Discovery Centre

Shark Bay is one of only 16 sites worldwide that satisfy all four criteria for World Heritage listing. It is home to dugongs, dolphins, whales, manta rays, turtles, sharks, fish species and rare marsupials. The \$7.7 million Shark Bay World Heritage Discovery Centre was opened in Denham in 2006, and partially funded by Tourism Western Australia as part of its accredited Visitor Centre Network.

The Centre celebrates Shark Bay's bio-diversity of eco-systems, and explores the area's World Heritage listing, natural landscape, bays, islands, lagoons, marine and terrestrial landforms and animals. The centre is arranged into the following three educational galleries:

- Living Place explores the unique fauna and flora of Shark Bay;
- Mapping Place follows the cartographic evolution of the area; and
- Experiencing Place reveals interesting facts about the Shire's lesser-known historical and infrastructural features.

The Centre incorporates artefacts, specimens, models, photo galleries, illustrations, dioramas and electronic media to introduce visitors to all the major features of Shark Bay. It provides space for local and travelling displays and art exhibitions which attract visitors to Denham, and provide a focal point for local cultural development.

An interpretative visitor centre is also located at Monkey Mia. Funded and managed through the West Australian Department of Environment and Conservation, it incorporates the 'DolphinCam'; a live web camera that captures images of the foreshore, dolphins and dolphin interactions<sup>100</sup>.

The *Shark Bay World Heritage Interpretive Action Plan 2002*, included prescriptions for over 200 interpretive products that promote awareness of the natural and cultural values to the World Heritage Area. High priorities noted in the plan include branding for the region and development of a web site and tourism manual<sup>64</sup>. The action plan focused on the World Heritage themes and values that culminated in the World Heritage Discovery Centre in Denham.

Key strategies to improve interpretative experiences for visitors in the area have included:

- improvement and expansion of walking trails at Monkey Mia;
- design and development of day visitor facilities at five sites at Eagle Bluff;
- planning and development of facilities at Tamala and Carrarang coastal camp sites;
- redevelopment of recreation sites at Steep Point;
- development of a major day-use attraction at the Point Peron homestead;
- development of the 'Old Shark Bay' historic township;
- an Oceanarium;
- historic Cape Conscription site at Dirk Hartog Island;
- provision of an Aboriginal interpretive display and eco-tours; and
- interpretation panels at lookouts and walking trails.

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 4: Visitor Information Centre at 'Three Ways Roadhouse' supports tourism in the Barkly region**

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The Threeways Roadhouse—located 25 kilometres north of Tennant Creek on the main road from Alice Springs to Darwin—has provided a convenient stop for travellers heading north, south or east since the 1960s. A dedicated visitor information centre (VIC) has recently been established at Three Ways to:

- 'feed' visitors into Tennant Creek;
- provide information about the attractions and experiences in the Barkly region; and
- encourage cross-regional promotion.

The centre has implemented codes of practice, training and accreditation to ensure that tourism officers are able to deliver well-informed advice and up-to-date information about local tourism products and services.

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#### **Best Practice Snapshot 5: Sheffield Visitor Information Centre established to support tourism development in Cradle Mountain region**

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The Sheffield Visitor Information Centre was established in 1995 to service visitors en route to nearby Cradle Mountain. The centre provides essential information about the area including activities, attractions and nature-based experiences. It promotes Cradle Mountain and the surrounding region under the 'Cradle Country' banner.

Operating as part of the Tasmanian Visitor Information Network, the centre provides Cradle Mountain tourism operators with an opportunity to promote their businesses and display their marketing and promotional materials. The centre is predominantly staffed by local residents who are familiar with the region and its tourism products and services. As well as promoting the region's attractions and tour operators, they provide valuable information about Cradle Mountain's history and iconic features.

The centre is supported by a dedicated web site ([www.cradleinfo.com.au](http://www.cradleinfo.com.au)) that promotes local tourist operations and incorporates an online accommodation booking service. Visitors to Cradle Mountain can access more specific information about the World Heritage National Park at the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 6: Visitors targeted prior to arriving at Launceston and the Tamar Valley region**

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Tasmania relies largely on the drive touring market to feed visitors from one destination to another. As such, tourism stakeholders in the Launceston Tamar Valley region undertake tourism marketing activities aimed at encouraging prospective visitors to plan their stay in advance.

The Visitor Information Centre Network has been established to provide information about regional attractions, experiences and tourism services to travellers en route to Launceston Tamar Valley. Brochures have been developed to assist visitors in planning their travel itineraries. These are distributed by visitor centres around Tasmania as well as interstate travel agents.

A Launceston Tamar Valley web site has also recently been established (<http://www.lvtasmania.com.au>) to attract and inform prospective visitors to the region. Tourism Tasmania's 'Discover Tasmania' web site ([www.discovertasmania.com.au](http://www.discovertasmania.com.au)) provides visitors to Tasmania with valuable pre-arrival information about the region.

## **Best Practice Principle Seven**

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### **Best practice regional tourism destinations develop festivals and events that support the destination image**

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Events and festivals have an important role in contributing to the promotion of a destination image, enhancing the visitor experience, extending length of stay and overcoming seasonal visitation troughs. Best practice in regional destinations demonstrates the development of a special event or festival that is linked to an iconic attraction, and celebrates community values, can help shape a destination image, attract like-minded visitors and provide entertainment and recreation opportunities for residents.

### **Best Practice Strategies**

To develop festivals and events that support the destination image best practice regional tourism destinations:

- develop an events strategy to better coordinate, manage and promote a destinations region's festivals and events;
- develop festivals and events that align with the destination brand and image and appeal to local community and visitor markets; and
- develop a research program to assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of festivals and events and the visitor profile and satisfaction data.

### **Best Practice Snapshots**

The following best practice snapshots reflect many of the best practice principles outlined above:

#### **Best Practice Snapshot 1: Annual program of events and festivals attracts to the Hunter Valley**

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Events in the Hunter Valley are held year-round, attracting visitors with high spend and contributing significantly to the regional economy. The region hosts events that showcase the skills, passion and creativity of locals—while complementing the wine experience for which the Hunter Valley is famous (see Table 15). These events assist with boosting visitor numbers during traditional tourist 'troughs', and introduce the Hunter and its wine and products to a broader audience.

**Table 15: Prominent events and festivals staged in the Hunter Valley region include:**

Event	Description	Timing
<b>Bimbadgen Blues—Reds Whites Blues</b>	Music festival/event	September
<b>Hunter Valley Harvest Festival</b>	Concerts, art exhibitions, street parties, wine tastings and gourmet food	March to April
<b>Jazz in the Vines</b>	Jazz festival in the vineyards	October
<b>Opera in the Vineyards (Tyrrells Wines)</b>	Annual Opera staged in the vineyards	October
<b>Lovedale Long Lunch</b>	A progressive lunch where visitors wine and dine their way around seven participating wineries over the weekend	May
<b>The Feast of the Olive</b>	Celebrates all things olive including oil appreciation classes, cooking demonstrations, market stalls	September
<b>Bitter and Twisted International Boutique Beer Festival</b>	International beer and food festival	November
<b>Maitland Markets</b>	The largest country markets showcasing over 600 stalls	14 times per year
<b>Scone Horse Festival</b>	Exhibitions, showcases and sporting events	May
<b>Hunter Semillon and Seafood</b>	Over 60 local producers showcasing wine and seafood	April
<b>Murrurundi King of the Ranges</b>	Incorporating a range of events such as camp-drafts and horse events	May
<b>Waterfest</b>	A biannual festival that celebrates all things aquatic, including wakeboarding, barefoot waterskiing and dragon-boat racing	March
<b>Hunter Valley Steamfest</b>	Australia’s premier festival of steam	April
<b>Hunter Semillon and Seafood Festival</b>	Held at Tyrrell’s Winery. Celebrates the Hunter’s semillons matched to fresh seafood	April
<b>Treasures of the Orient—Hunter Valley Gardens</b>	Celebrates everything Asian, from bonsai, origami and lotus-lantern making, to tea ceremonies and Asian-cooking demonstrations.	May

The broader Hunter Region hosts some 95 events each year; ten of them hallmark events with more than 6,000 visitors<sup>12</sup>. It has been suggested that the region is now at the stage where it needs to develop an ‘Events and Festivals Strategy’ to maximise return on the region’s considerable investment in these activities.

### **Best Practice Snapshot 2: Key events and live music put Byron Bay on international map**

Byron Bay’s reputation as a cultural destination has been cemented by key events and festivals such as the East Coast Blues and Roots Festival (since 1990, A Taste of Byron food festival (since 1997), the Byron Bay Writers Festival (since 2001), Splendour in the Grass music festival (since 2001), annually planned New Years Eve Celebrations (since 1994), and the monthly Byron Bay Markets.

<sup>12</sup> The Hunter Valley Tourism Plan 2005–08

There are definite links between the marketing of music events and tourism in Byron Bay<sup>130</sup>. Byron Bay is well established as a live music and entertainment destination and a popular node in a global backpacker traveller network that includes other destinations such as Ibiza, Bali and Goa<sup>130</sup>. Byron Bay's main street is home to a number of unique entertainment and leisure venues such as the Railway Friendly Bar (situated on the Byron Bay railway platform), the Backroom at the Great Northern Hotel and the iconic Beach Hotel. These venues regularly attract national and international bands and artists.

Byron Bay has also become an important coastal destination for domestic students from capital cities because it offers good beaches, reliable surf-breaks for daytime activities, and numerous pubs, clubs and night parties. Byron Bay's 'nocturnal economy' has further enhanced the town's already 'hip' reputation. The town has also gained a reputation as a centre of 'world music' production. In 2003, an international audio and film production school was established on the town fringe, further cementing Byron Bay's music and entertainment reputation.

Major influxes of tourists for events and festivals have, however, put intense pressure on urban infrastructure. The Blues and Roots Festival at Easter and Splendour in the Grass Festival in July are held at peak tourist times, near the town centre, causing traffic congestion and related problems for tourist and locals.

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### **Best Practice Snapshot 3: Promotion of the Launceston Tamar Valley region through special events**

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The pursuit, hosting and promotion of major sporting and cultural events is emerging as a key tourism driver for Launceston Tamar Valley. Local, state and national media coverage associated with events have boosted awareness of the destination and attracted new visitors. Launceston is home to at least five key, national and state events including:

- V8 Supercars;
- Australian Football League (AFL);
- Festivale (a 3 day gourmet food, wine and cultural festival);
- TARGA Tasmania (tarmac rally event); and
- AgFest (agricultural festival).

These events were first secured in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and continue to be staged as part of the city's events calendar. AgFest, the biggest agricultural festival in the state, attracts up to 70,000 people from across Australia over four days. Similarly the Masters Hockey attracted about 1,200 people to the region, with each person staying approximately 10 nights on average

The region's success in hosting major events triggered bids for numerous other events that have since been secured. These events are generally held during lower occupancy periods as a tool to offset seasonal tourism troughs. The events have also strengthened the reputation of Launceston Tamar Valley as a destination with facilities and support to host such events.

Events are a critical marketing tool for Launceston Tamar Valley—both in their ability to directly attract visitors to the region and to provide on-going media exposure which raises awareness of the area as a tourist destination.



*Chapter 7*

## **CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITES AND IMPLICATIONS**

The aim of this research has been to identify best practice initiatives for the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations in Australia. This research is considered to be the most comprehensive study of regional tourism destinations undertaken in Australia to date. Given the significance of tourism to Australia's regional economies, it is imperative that tourism is maintained as an economic driver for local communities, but planned and managed in a sustainable way to enhance and conserve the natural environment, protect the well-being of residents and attract visitors with shared values. This final chapter reviews significant challenges and opportunities for regional tourism destinations in Australia. From this, important implications and recommendations derived from this research project are derived to inform the future policy direction and the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations.

### **Challenges and Opportunities Facing Regional Tourism in Australia**

Tourism is one of Australia's more important industry sectors, contributing \$68 billion to GDP, employing 853,000 Australians (directly and indirectly) or 8.3 percent of total employment. Tourism is the country's largest services export estimated at \$23.6 billion per year (DRET, 2009). Importantly domestic and international visitors respectively spend 70 percent and 23 percent of their holiday nights in regional and rural Australia and tourism is used explicitly as a tool for regional economic development (White Paper 2004).

Against this backdrop the industry has not, however, performed well in the Australian economy. Set in the wider economic context of Australia's mining resources boom, and the growing strength of the Australian dollar, the tourism sector has achieved mixed results, at best. While international tourist arrivals have achieved an average 2.6 percent per annum growth over the past decade, outbound tourism has increased at an annual rate of 6.2 percent per annum over the same period.

Domestic tourism in Australia accounts for around 75 percent of industry volume and is fiercely competitive. Australia's domestic tourism performance has, however, flat-lined over the past ten years, while outbound travel has grown<sup>145</sup>. In the short-term, it was expected that Australians would substitute international travel to domestic travel due to an unstable economy during the global financial crisis. However, the opposite occurred and domestic tourism experienced poor performance due to strong outbound travel as a result of heavy discounting of international airfares, and a strong Australian dollar. From January to October 2009, Australian outbound travel rose 6.4 percent, similar to growth of 6.3 percent for 2008<sup>143</sup>. In contrast, the Tourism Forecasting Committee forecasts that domestic visitor nights are expected to rise by 2.3 percent.

Notwithstanding the above at the end of the current decade domestic tourism activity, which contributes 74 percent of the industry's GDP has contracted at an average rate of 1.2 percent each year for the same time period.

In drawing out the challenges to inform a *National Long-Term Tourism Strategy*, The Jackson Report<sup>144</sup> notes significant challenges for Australian tourism including redressing a slow growth in international arrivals resulting in a 14 percent decrease in global share of arrivals (1995–2008). Other key findings report that:

- Since the Olympics boom the growth rate of international arrivals to Australia has been 1.6 percent a year compared with 3.0 percent a year globally and 7 percent per year for the Asia-Pacific region;
- Leisure tourism is declining in importance;

*While on the positive side of the ledger:*

- Education and business tourism continued to grow in importance;
- China and India were emerging as major new markets with different consumer preferences;
- A greater proportion of tomorrow's tourists will be over 60 years old, reliant upon the Internet for information, advice and bookings<sup>144</sup>.

The net result, however, has been a declining share of tourism's contribution to national GDP since 2001. The Sydney Olympics (2000) were a significant stimulus to Australian inbound tourism, from a high of 4.7 percent to its current 3.6 percent.

The challenge of growth, and indeed which *dimensions of growth* and report, are pressing challenges for the sector, even more so when set against the 'tyranny of distance' of Australia from major northern hemisphere source markets, its sheer physical size, and the high levels of exposure of the Australian continent to climate change outcomes (Jackson, 2009<sup>144</sup>; Garnaut, 2009). In this regard, the Jackson committee has added its voice to the growing call for a national sector scorecard to determine and report:

*Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for economic impact, environmental impact, social impact and product quality. (p. 6)*

In terms of strategy implementation Jackson noted that destination development plans (need to be) linked to metrics identified in the scorecard (p. 6) as these provide an essential tool to understand the quality and performance of national tourism products and our national tourism performance. The overarching goal appears not so much to increase activity within the sector but to increase its contributions to Australia's economic, environmental and social well-being.

As highlighted at the beginning of this report, the domestic and international tourism environment is predicted to remain dynamic, aggressively competitive and increasingly volatile over the next decade. As an example, in the immediate past a global financial crisis has created turmoil within world financial markets and has led to falls in consumer and investor confidence. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), estimated that international tourist arrivals for business, leisure and other purposes declined worldwide by 4 percent in 2009 to 880 million. This represents a slight improvement on the previous estimate as a result of a 2 percent upswing in the last quarter of 2009 following declining global arrivals of 10 percent, 7 percent and 2 percent in the first three quarters respectively. The Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East regions, however, experienced recovery with positive growth in arrivals in the second half of 2009. As stated by UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, *'The global economic crisis aggravated by the uncertainty around the A(H1N1) pandemic turned 2009 into one of the toughest years for the tourism sector. However, the results from recent months suggest that recovery is underway and at a stronger pace than initially expected.'*<sup>142</sup>

A positive outcome for regional tourism destinations is that due to the global economic crisis travellers have tended to travel closer to home during 2009. The UNWTO advise that several destinations have seen domestic tourism endure the crisis better and even grow visitor volumes, often with the support of specific government measures aimed at supporting this trend. For example, in China, Brazil and Spain, where the domestic market represents a large share of total demand, such domestic growth contributed to partially offset the decline in international tourism<sup>142</sup>.

Despite the Australian tourism industry being negatively affected by the global financial crisis (-3.5 percent decrease in tourist consumption for 2009), Australia has been one of the better performing international tourism destinations which in turn has been supported by an increase in international aviation capacity and a favourable exchange rate in early 2009<sup>143</sup>. According to the Australian Tourism Forecasting Committee, growth in 2010 and over the medium-term is predicted to be moderate as some of the competitive advantages enjoyed by Australia in 2009 are expected to diminish in 2010 due to:

- a stronger Australian currency in later 2009 through 2010 that will reduce Australia's price competitiveness for inbound tourism, while promoting further outbound activity;
- the level of price discounting on Australian international routes is expected to subside in 2010 as airlines seek to restore profitability; and
- higher oil prices may cause fuel surcharges to be re-imposed by international carriers<sup>143</sup>.

Inbound travel to Australia is forecast to increase by 4.3 percent in 2010. The average annual growth rate of visitors to Australia is forecast to be 3.5 percent over the period 2008 to 2018, to reach 7.9 million visitors in 2018 and reflects conservative annual growth projections from the key source markets of China (7.9 percent) and India (10.8 percent)<sup>143</sup>.

*From a regional tourism perspective*, a submission prepared by the Australian Regional Tourism Network to inform the Australian Government’s National Long Term Tourism Strategy during 2009 identified eight significant issues and opportunities facing regional tourism in Australia (see Table 17).

**Table 17: Issues and Opportunities Facing Regional Tourism in Australia**

Theme	Key Issues and Opportunities
Transport and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air travel is critical to accessing most regional destinations for both domestic and international markets.</li> <li>• As an international destination Australia will not be able to compete on price and will therefore lose market share.</li> <li>• Regional transport infrastructure and particularly regional airports require investment and support.</li> <li>• Regional airports have moved from federal to local government responsibility and no longer enjoy financial support. Maintaining these facilities is critical. The cost of airport fees and passenger charges required to cover operating costs makes regional airfares very expensive.</li> <li>• The economic benefit of regional airports to the broader business community is significant. Air access facilitates investment, the dispersal of business to regional communities, and encourages interregional trade.</li> <li>• Regional tourism is totally dependant on transport and access. As a result a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), if introduced, will have significant impact upon the sector in terms of increasing prices. At a time when domestic tourism is close to static, CPRS could further exacerbate this situation.</li> <li>• Signage is confusing, complicated and inconsistent for the traveller, and difficult for the industry to obtain.</li> <li>• Cruise shipping is a growing sector and has potential for regional coastal communities.</li> </ul>
Product and Experience Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditionally tourism organisations have had a marketing focus, whereas inclusive destination management (as advocated here) requires the integration of planning, management and marketing activities.</li> <li>• There is disconnection between tourism planning, marketing and development and land use, community and economic planning</li> <li>• No one currently owns the issue, or takes responsibility for product and experience development, as development is traditionally led by the private sector.</li> <li>• There has been a ‘dumbing down’ of product and experience; now considered homogenous and repetitive. There is potential to combat this through the development of themed experiences which can reinvigorate tired product.</li> <li>• Broadly Australia is becoming an homogenised experience because experiences are not necessarily based on the unique qualities and attributes of the people, place and landscape.</li> <li>• There is limited investment in the development of authentic products and experiences which enable visitors to immerse themselves in regional destinations, in order to learn and experience the way of life of people, produce and landscape.</li> <li>• There is a need to ensure that Indigenous experiences are authentic to the Indigenous community and that there is differentiation of product. Queensland Regional Tourism Investment and Infrastructure Plans provide an excellent model for the development of Indigenous product. There is a need to ensure economic benefits are delivered back to Indigenous communities.</li> <li>• Catalyst developments can change a destination; however no one is taking the lead in assessing the feasibility of such ventures to attract investment. Conversely, popular coastal destinations are not being developed viably by tourism operators. Strata title</li> </ul>

Theme	Key Issues and Opportunities
	<p>regulations encourage an oversupply of inventory to be developed by residential developers. Local government land use planning for tourism should include a strategy for sustainable development to ensure regional industry remains viable with good occupancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most STOs cannot market eclectic, authentic product effectively.</li> </ul>
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change mitigation or adaptation policies will have significant negative impact on the regional tourism industry.</li> <li>• Tourism has not been successful in securing Carbon Offset Rebates.</li> <li>• No support has been offered to date to assist small to medium sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs) to develop adaptation or mitigation strategies in order to reduce their Carbon Footprints.</li> <li>• Regional tourism is well placed to become a leading industry in terms of applying pioneering solutions to adapt to climate change. Examples already abound where innovative operators are seeing opportunities arising from the greening of their product. Hidden Valley Cabins, Qld; the Solar City Program, Alice Springs Northern Territory; the Byron @ Byron, Byron Bay NSW; and the Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island SA, are a few examples. Great opportunity exists to support and encourage greater developments in this area.</li> </ul>
Destination Management and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need for Destination Management Planning (DMP) policies to be established and implemented in all states and territories.</li> <li>• There are significant variations between regions in their understanding and progress of DMPs.</li> <li>• There are significant variations in the standard, quality and application of DMPs. This is a particular issue when destinations and projects are competing for government grants and funding.</li> <li>• DMPs would allow destinations to identify priority projects within their own region. State level planning could then align with destination level plans, enabling states/territories to prioritise projects at a state level.</li> <li>• DMP needs to occur in a broader community and regional economic development context to ensure tourism is seen as a priority in relation to other sectors and planning policies.</li> </ul>
Tourism Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure of RTOs are critical to the effective management of regional tourism; however it is inconsistent across the states and territories.</li> <li>• Small, under-resourced RTOs, many of them volunteer organisations, do not have the capacity to undertake successfully the administration and marketing of their regions. In increasingly tightened economic circumstances, under-resourced organisations undermine the ability of RTOs to respond to the workload required to compete in external markets both at domestic and international levels.</li> </ul>
Workforce development and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism is not a high status profession.</li> <li>• Tourism incomes are comparatively low and therefore do not compete with other sectors in a tight labour market.</li> <li>• Career paths are limited.</li> <li>• Seasonality limits employment and on-going employment opportunities</li> <li>• Perceptions exist that it is a young persons' industry or something people do while going to University.</li> <li>• It is difficult to find affordable accommodation for workers during high season.</li> </ul>
Changing Consumer Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current economic downturn is a great challenge for the tourism industry, which is dependent on discretionary spending.</li> <li>• Employees are accumulating leave due to job insecurity and work load upon return and in so doing refraining from undertaking travel during their leave.</li> <li>• Employers do not replace staff whilst on leave and therefore longer holidays result in accumulated workloads upon employees' return—therefore a view exists that it is not worth taking leave.</li> <li>• Disincentives such as loss of leave loading for employees who continue to accrue annual leave.</li> <li>• Competing demands for discretionary income—regional tourism in particular is incapable of competing with marketing power of consumer items (e.g. electronics etc.</li> <li>• Regional product is tired and requires investment and development. There is little</li> </ul>

Theme	Key Issues and Opportunities
	<p>assistance or advice available to assist SMTEs to reassess their tourism business, product or experience in the current context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing tourism research provides input into an evidence-based approach contributing toward a long-term strategic approach to resolving these issues.</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The regional tourism industry and regional tourism organisations are unable to generate sufficient funds to compete with other destinations and competitors for discretionary income.</li> <li>• This represents a market failure and requires collective action interventions to address these issues.</li> <li>• Regional industry leaders and practitioners require ‘up-skilling’ to facilitate better planning and utilisation of limited marketing resources.</li> <li>• Investment in a national accreditation program is wasted if consumers do not recognise or value it.</li> <li>• Current marketing programs are reactionary and short term.</li> <li>• Collaboration between TA and the STOs is not close enough for STOs to effectively leverage from TA’s investment.</li> <li>• Current focus is on mass marketing—should we move toward higher yield, more sophisticated premium markets?</li> <li>• There is not enough emphasis on market identification and product matching.</li> <li>• New technology presents both opportunities and challenges for domestic and inbound tourism.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from the Australian Regional Tourism Network Submission into the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy 2009

From a national policy perspective, the *Jackson Report* has been influential in informing the development of a *National Long-Term Tourism Strategy* that aims to re-shape the policy framework for tourism within Australia. The Report determined ten recommendations to build a strong and sustainable tourism future:

1. *Research*—Develop a high-powered national research capability focused on tourism industry development, to complement the existing capability in demand-side research and statistics;
2. *Digital Distribution*—Urgently support the acceleration of the online capability of Australian tourism product, working with state and territory tourism organisations to fund programs that expand cost-effective digital platforms for distribution and bookings and accelerate SMEs’ uptake;
3. *People*—Ensure tourism has equitable and adequate access to skills programs at national and state level, and focus tourism skills programs and labour policies in two areas: the recruitment, development and retention of career tourism employees; and the facilitation of sufficient part-time and casual employees;
4. *National Scorecard* Establish a comprehensive national tourism scorecard with targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) for economic impact ,environmental impact, social impact and product quality;
5. *Investment*—Improve the case for tourism investment through developing *integrated destination development plans* (*emphasis added*) and creating a national visitation priorities list;
6. *Investment*—Incorporate a stronger recognition of tourism in government planning and approval process, taxation and infrastructure investment planning. The Steering Committee recommends that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) undertake an urgent systemic review of planning and regulatory regimes and that the Henry Tax Review takes account of issues that impact tourism investment;
7. *Product Development and Innovation*—Renew and rebuild Australia’s competitiveness by developing and maintaining long-term product strategies for Australia.
8. *Leadership and Industry Coordination*—The Prime Minister to establish a federal ministerial taskforce to periodically review tourism issues and opportunities that are shared with key non-tourism portfolios;
9. *Leadership and Industry Coordination*—Industry associations to lead industry participants to work with the government to make these recommendations successful;
10. *Leadership and Industry Coordination*—Restructure Tourism Australia to enable it to implement these recommendations <sup>144</sup>.

From this, the *National Long-Term Tourism Strategy* comprises strategies and accompanying actions organised under the following nine platforms:

1. *Positioning for long-term growth*: stimulating consumer demand and securing jobs;
2. *Leadership*: Strategic and coordinated leadership that will drive the national tourism agenda
3. *Informing industry and government*: a research and development agenda that will inform industry and government;
4. *Facilitating investment and regulatory reform*: investment that will ensure Australian tourism product remains competitive in a global marketplace;
5. *Labour and skills*: labour and skills development that will support tourism industry needs;
6. *Responding to challenges*: tourism businesses that will adapt to the impact of various changes, including climate change and other external shocks;
7. *Excellence in product and service delivery*: product quality and service delivery that will ensure Australia is a high-value destination;
8. *Strengthening our competitiveness with industry and product development*: Destinations and tourism product that will make the most of our unique attributes; and
9. *Measuring our performance*: performance indicators that will track progress and support strategic priorities<sup>145</sup>.

To the present it stops short of defining a clear vision for the sector or direct pathways by which the sector can contribute to Australia's broader social and environmental agenda.

## **Implications of this Research**

In addition to best principles and strategies identified in this report, the following outlines important implications and recommendations derived from this research project that underpin the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of regional tourism destinations in Australia.

### *Recognise that no two destinations are the same*

Regional tourism destinations are dynamic places characterised by complex sets of relations between community members, business interests and government. They are also characterised by different combinations of natural, built and human resources and assets, receive different levels of support from governments, and have different capacities to innovate, compete and differentiate. Furthermore, understanding the ways in which destinations have developed over time is an important initial step in understanding the dynamics and complexity of tourism at a destination and regional level<sup>146</sup>. As such, no two destinations are the same and as a consequence 'one size fits all' strategy for effective planning and management of tourism destinations is not appropriate for the spectrum and diversity of regional tourism destinations in Australia.

### **Recommendation**

Destination planners need to develop an understanding of the dynamics and complexities of tourism systems for specific destination contexts by undertaking a comprehensive situational analysis process.

### *Undertake strategic planning at a destination level that integrates strategies for sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism*

Successful destinations are founded on effective and sustainable planning and management. Good destination planning and management must adopt an approach whereby sustainable destination management, development, marketing practices are regarded as being inter-related and equally valued. In the past, at all levels of government in Australia, policy has given significant weight to marketing activities, sometimes to the detriment of an approach which balances marketing with development and management concerns<sup>4</sup>. More recently, with increasing realisation of the vulnerability of many destinations to environmental crises, market downturns and increased international competition, there has been a strengthening commitment to a balanced approach to destination planning and management. Good tourism destination planning and management should therefore be underpinned by sustainable tourism development, good governance and good marketing. Furthermore, best practice case studies and strategic tourism planning processes undertaken for Daylesford and Byron Shire that served as pilot cases for this project demonstrated the need for tourism planners:

- with considerable tourism expertise and knowledge to work with governments, business and community interests across local, regional and state/territory levels to develop strategic tourism plans for specific destination contexts;

- to develop a shared vision for tourism across government, business and community sectors that integrates best practice principles for the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism;
- to develop strategic plans that protect and conserve natural, built and socio-cultural environments; and
- to develop flexible plans that can be adapted to changing environmental (economic, social, cultural, physical, political and technological) circumstances.

### **Recommendation**

Long-term strategic tourism planning processes need to be undertaken for destinations across regional Australia that integrate best practice principles, strategies and identify appropriate actions for the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism. These plans should be developed to be flexible to adapt to changing environmental circumstances.

### *Foster leadership and coordination*

It is evident that regional destinations that have: a strong level of support from their state or territory governments, well-established regional and/or local tourism organisations, supportive local governments and Parks authorities, and local leaders that foster and implement a shared vision for tourism, are well-placed to continue to innovate, compete and implement sustainable tourism best practice into the future. Cooperation across government, business and community stakeholders with an interest in tourism is imperative to achieve sustainable tourism outcomes. Rather than adopting a top-down tourism planning and management approach, local governments are often well-positioned to assume the 'locus of control' in relation to decision-making for planning and management of tourism activity and development within a destination region. However, local governments may not have the tourism expertise and knowledge to foster effective leadership and coordination for this specific multi-sectoral activity. State and territory tourism organisations have an important role in providing expertise and leadership to foster leadership and coordination amongst tourism stakeholders in regional tourism destinations.

### **Recommendation**

State/territory tourism organisations should ensure they provide on-going leadership, expertise and support to assist regional tourism destinations that lack this capacity.

### *Establish an effective destination management structure*

Careful consideration is required to develop an effective destination management structure to guide and inform the sustainable planning, management, development of tourism from the short-term to longer-term. This destination management structure should be a partnership of local government and tourism businesses that work cooperatively to represent the interests of governments, businesses and community stakeholders. In addition, consideration should be given to invite balanced ('VICE')<sup>13</sup> stakeholder representatives with considerable tourism expertise and knowledge to participate in 'expert panels' at a destination level. A formal tourism advisory committee to local government and/or regional and local tourism organisations may be one method to facilitate this process.

### **Recommendation**

Careful consideration is required to establish balanced destination management structures to guide and inform the sustainable planning, management, development and marketing of tourism for specific destination contexts that foster the cooperation of government, business and community stakeholders with an interest in tourism. A 'one-size' fits all destination management structure is not appropriate.

### *Integrate strategic tourism plans with policy frameworks and annual work plans*

Development of a strategic tourism plans need to be linked to statutory policy frameworks to ensure that the vision is transferred across successive governments and administrations (local and state/territory). Although there are limited statutory requirements that provide specifically for tourism planning and management, local government land use planning and development control mechanisms currently provide local governments with statutory control and regulatory mechanisms that may be used to achieve sustainable tourism development

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<sup>13</sup> VICE = Visitor, Industry, Community, Environment stakeholders.

including: preservation of low-scale development; planning and regulation of zones for tourism activity and development; and protection of environmentally significant sites.

**Recommendation**

State/territory government authorities and agencies (representing local government, tourism, regional development, planning and environment) need to liaise to facilitate how strategic tourism plans can be incorporated into statutory policy frameworks and (annual) work plans across state/territory, regional and local levels.

*Establish research programs at a destination level*

There is a need for on-going consistent, reliable research at a destination level to inform tourism planning initiatives including: visitation patterns and visitor profiles; accommodation occupancy rates; characteristics and operation of tourism industries, infrastructure needs and priorities; and social, economic and environmental impacts. Although, Tourism Research Australia provides data for many established destinations, there is a need for many regional tourism destinations to plan research programs to gather on-going and consistent data that are applicable to their own destination contexts.

**Recommendation**

Tourism Research Australia and state/territory organisations develop/retain the expertise to assist regional tourism destinations develop research programs to begin to gather on-going and consistent data. There is also considerable expertise in the University sector to assist with the development of such programs. The Australian Regional Tourism Network could investigate ways to foster and establish a regional tourism research agenda.

*Plan for investment and infrastructure*

Many of the destinations examined in this research have demonstrated the importance of transport infrastructure, tourism attractions (natural and built), tourism product diversity, entrepreneurial spirit and innovation, public infrastructure and facilities, and service excellence all combine to create exceptional tourism experiences for visitors. Infrastructure, product and experience audits provide a mechanism to identify gaps and opportunities in public and private infrastructure and facilities for tourism. Furthermore, consideration of ways to improve funding for tourism at a destination level should be considered.

**Recommendation**

Infrastructure, product and experience audits for regional tourism destinations are required as an initial way to identify gaps and opportunities in public and private infrastructure and facilities for tourism. From this a destination specific Investment and Infrastructure Plan should be developed to stimulate suitable investment and infrastructure development to encourage appropriate visitor markets, enhance destinations for the well-being of residents, and provide guidelines for investors. State/territory organisations have the expertise and political networks to assist regional tourism destinations with the development of such plans. There is also a need for the development of a funding framework to be developed as part of state/territory policy that could be applied by local government to help fund tourism initiatives in regional tourism destinations (e.g. business and levy schemes that are developed in consultation with business communities).

*Develop strategic marketing plans*

Strategic marketing plans are needed to foster a cooperative and consistent approach to marketing of regional tourism destinations. Furthermore, there is a need to establish a consistent destination brand and image to position and promote the destination to attract appropriate visitor markets and guide the development of appropriate tourism product. Consideration should also be given to an effective destination marketing structure that integrates national, state, regional and local tourism stakeholders to guide cooperative marketing strategies and actions for specific regional tourism destinations.

**Recommendation**

Develop strategic marketing plans for tourism and a destination marketing structure to guide cooperative marketing efforts.

## **Further Research Directions**

This research has contributed to a developing body of knowledge of regional tourism and sustainable destination planning, management development and marketing. Further case study research could be undertaken for other destination contexts using the framework used in this study to further investigate: the factors that have shaped the development of regional destinations; the institutional and political contexts that frame the planning and management of tourism activity for particular destinations; and the dynamics and influence of local tourism networks. Such studies would contribute to our understanding of tourism policy formulation and the critical conditions for best practice for regional tourism.

## **Concluding Comment**

Planning and implementing best practice for sustainable regional tourism destinations can contribute to regional economic development, conservation of natural, built and socio-cultural environments, community well-being, and exceptional visitor experiences.

Robust, systematic tourism management at the destination level is vital if Australia is to achieve its goal of a productive and profitable tourism sector that makes a valued and sustainable contribution to Australia's social and economic goals. While these are increasingly acknowledged at the strategic level (e.g. *Jackson Report*, NLTTTS) to be effective they must commence and be enacted at the community level.

This analysis of regional tourism cases, drawing on a variety of development and geographical contexts have allowed us to distil a concise set of principles to guide such activity. When seen as a whole it is evident that regional destinations that have: a strong level of support from their state or territory governments, well-established regional and/or local tourism organisations, supportive local governments, and local leaders that foster and implement a shared vision for tourism, are well-placed to continue to innovate, compete and implement sustainable tourism best practice into the future.



## **APPENDIX 1: PROJECT RESEARCH TEAM**

<b>Researcher</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Destinations</b>
<b>Dr Meredith Wray</b>	Southern Cross University	Project Leader and Editor-In-Chief Lead Researcher  Lead Researcher	Byron Bay Hunter Valley Snowy Mountains Murray River Daylesford and Byron Shire Tourism Management Plans
<b>Associate Professor Jeremy Buultjens</b>	Southern Cross University	Lead Researcher	Alice Springs Katherine Tennant Creek/Barkly
<b>Dr Carmen Cox</b>	Bond University, formerly Southern Cross University	Lead Researcher	Cradle Mountain Launceston/Tamar Valley Port Arthur
<b>Associate Professor Dianne Dredge</b>	Southern Cross University, formerly Griffith University	Lead Researcher	Agnes Water/1770 Noosa
<b>Dr Mary Hollick</b>	Ballarat University	Lead Researcher	Daylesford Grampians Wilpena Pound
<b>Dr Diane Lee and Carol Lacroix</b>	Murdoch University	Lead Researchers	Esperance Shark Bay Tapestry
<b>Michael Pearlman</b>	Victoria University	Lead Researcher	Barossa Valley Great Ocean Road Kangaroo Island
<b>Andrew Sivijs</b>	Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre	Co-Researcher	Hunter Valley Murray River

The following Research Associates also contributed to this research:

Rebecca Brown	Southern Cross University
Kylie Causley	Southern Cross University
Vanessa Eden	Southern Cross University
Dr Kath Fisher	Southern Cross University
Pazit Taygfeld	Griffith University
Simon Wilde	Southern Cross University

## **APPENDIX 2: SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DESTINATIONS PROJECT: INDUSTRY REFERENCE GROUP**

The following lists representatives of state and national tourism organisations that participated in the Industry Reference Group developed to assist with the destination selection process (February to May 2006) and identification of participants from tourism stakeholder organisations for the Destination Workshops (held July 2006 to February 2007).

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Australian Regional Tourism Network	Wayne Kayler-Thomson
Tourism Australia	Katherine Droga
Australian Capital Territory	Nick Slater
Tourism New South Wales	Colin Mclean
Tourism Northern Territory	Maria Purvis/John Coleman
Tourism Queensland	Craig Shim
Tourism Tasmania	Bridget Walch
Tourism Victoria	Paul Albone
Tourism Western Australia	Ross Mac Culloch/Jarrad Dunning
Tourism South Australia	Nick Drivas

## **APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF DESTINATIONS SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS**

The following provides an overview of the characteristics of the destinations selected for analysis for this research. Visitation data has been derived from the National Visitor Survey and International Visitor Survey for the year ending December 2008<sup>2</sup>. Population data has been derived from the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics census<sup>131</sup>.

### **New South Wales**

#### ***Byron Bay***

<b>Population:</b>	4,981
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	416,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	181,640
<b>Day-trip visitors:</b>	812,000

Located 180 kilometres south of the Australian city of Brisbane and 800 kilometres north of Sydney, Byron Bay is well-established as a popular and fashionable tourist destination that attracts significant numbers of domestic and day-trip visitors. Byron Bay is also well-established as a popular destination for surfers and international backpackers. The destination hosts a wealth of natural assets including the Cape Byron Marine Park that offers a high standard scuba diving environment. The Cape Byron Headland Reserve, located five kilometres east of the Byron Bay township and situated on the most eastern point of the Australian mainland, offers visitors and residents a diversity of recreation opportunities including natural experiences provided by its rainforests and beaches and more adventurous recreation activities of hang-gliding and surfing. The Cape Byron Lighthouse is listed on the register of National Estate and is considered to be one of the best land-based whale-watching sites on the east coast of Australia.

In addition to its natural assets, Byron Bay is also known for its artistic and cultural diversity and creative industries. A dedicated 'Arts and Industry' estate was established in the 1980s that offers a diverse range of businesses with many actively pursuing tourists. Events and festivals also contribute to the national and international reputation of the region. Byron Bay is also known for its abundance of health and wellness operations that includes an eclectic mix of 'alternate' services and businesses and services that provide health and well-being experiences including alternative 'new age' shops, 'spiritual' services such as meditation and yoga classes, alternative medicine and healing centres. In addition, a number of innovative retail and hospitality based entrepreneurial ventures have been established including a well-established café culture, award-winning restaurants, pubs and nightlife, and unique retail shopping experiences. The destination hosts a range of accommodation types including backpacker hostels, camping and caravan parks, guesthouses, motels, holiday houses and apartments and luxury accommodation making the destination region attractive to many visitor markets.

The increased popularity of Byron Bay as a domestic and international tourist destination over the past decade, coupled with its attractiveness as a sea change locality has, however placed strains on the town's infrastructure and service facilities. There has been increased concern from residents about the impacts of tourism activity on residential amenity, including lack of planning for infrastructure, traffic congestion, and insufficient parking facilities within the Byron Bay central business district.

### *The Hunter Valley*

<b>Population:</b>	589,239 (Hunter Statistical Region)
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	459,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	17,079
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	978,000

The Hunter Valley region is located on the east Australian coast of New South Wales, includes the regional centre of Newcastle and is around 160 kilometres from Sydney; it comprises the local government areas of Cessnock and Maitland. The Hunter Valley is best known for its wine production and is acknowledged as Australia's premier wine growing region. It has approximately 4,600 acres under vine and 120 wineries. In addition to 'cellar door' visitor experiences provided by prestigious wineries, the region offers a diverse portfolio of tourism experiences including: dolphin and whale watching in Port Stephens, bush walking in the World Heritage listed Barrington Tops National Park, recreation opportunities provided by extensive waterways, Hunter Valley Gardens, art galleries, antiques and specialty stores. The broader Hunter region hosts some 95 events each year; ten of them hallmark events.

The broader Hunter Region is the sixth most visited place in Australia attracting more than 2.3 million people annually. Tourism Research Australia<sup>14</sup> estimates that the Hunter Valley wineries account for 30 percent of the state's 'cellar doors' and that the region attracted 266,000 'wine visitors' annually. It is also estimated that the region attracted the largest number of day wine visitors in Australia on an annual basis of around 322,000 with the Barossa receiving 260,000.

### *The Snowy Mountains*

<b>Population:</b>	33,787
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	622,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	20,873
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	386,000

The Snowy Mountains region is located midway between Melbourne and Sydney in South East New South Wales (NSW) and shares common borders with NSW, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). It is close to the three major population centres of Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra and is also known as the NSW Alpine Region. The region consists of forests, grasslands, alpine and subalpine mountains. The majority of the region is incorporated into Kosciuszko National Park incorporating Mount Kosciuszko, which at 2,228 metres is the highest peak on the Australian mainland. In 1977 the National Park was given international significance by being declared a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO<sup>56</sup>.

The Kosciuszko National Park has the only snow fields in NSW that can support a winter sports industry even though only 1200 kilometres<sup>2</sup> of the Snowy Mountains receives more than 60 days of snow cover<sup>56</sup>. There are four major ski resort complexes which are Perisher Range Resorts, Thredbo Village, Selwyn Snowfields and Charlotte Pass Village. These resorts cover 4,099 hectares of the National Park and have assets valued at \$700 million. The region has, however, further developed and is promoted as a year-round destination due to the development a diverse range of summer recreation activities including: horse back riding, bush walking, camping, mountain bike riding, wildflower viewing, abseiling, fishing, four-wheel driving, quad biking, white-water rafting and canoeing. Other significant attractions include the high country huts, Snowy Hydro, the mountain brumbies and the Snowy River itself, made famous through legends and films. Quality food and wine experiences, art galleries and a range of festivals complement these attractions. Other popular local attractions include the Snowy Hydro power station, Tumut 3, which is the largest hydroelectric power station in Australia.

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<sup>14</sup> A Profile of Wine Visitors in Australia 2003 – Niche Market Report No. 5

## **Victoria**

### ***Daylesford***

<b>Population:</b>	15,000
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	234,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	4,651
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	510,000

Daylesford is located in the Central Highlands of Victoria, just over an hour from Melbourne and adjacent to Mount Macedon and the cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. The region is known as ‘Spa Country’ and contains over 80 percent of Australia’s mineral water reserves. The region’s history is based on gold-mining, forestry, agriculture and tourism. The twin towns of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs have been popular day-trip and short-break tourism destinations for over 130 years and retain the character of their early Victorian heritage when people travelled to ‘take the waters’ and Swiss and Italian and other immigrants settled there.

The Hepburn Mineral Springs Bathhouse was established as Australia’s original spa experience in 1895. From the 1980s, the area has developed as a popular and fashionable destination bolstered by the influence of innovative and quality entrepreneurs and operators that have developed iconic tourism and hospitality operations. The area is also renowned for its natural beauty, dynamic creative industries and diverse communities which have a strong involvement and pride in guiding their future. Other unique village townships within the area include Creswick, Clunes and Trentham, which provide authentic, historic and natural and built visitor experiences related to the gold-rush and forestry eras.

Tourism is one of the most important contributors to the growth and character of the region. The annual economic contribution of tourism to the region is valued at approximately \$96 million annually. The region has been identified as a level 1 destination region by Tourism Victoria who, along with the Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Campaign Committee, provide considerable marketing and professional support to achieve this status.

### ***Great Ocean Road***

<b>Population:</b>	334,960
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	1,407,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	128,682
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	2,218,000

The Great Ocean Road is located west of Melbourne and stretches approximately 243 kilometres between the main towns of Geelong and Warrnambool. Its diverse coastal and hinterland region incorporates the world-famous Twelve Apostles, Otways rainforest and Bells Beach surf beach. Regional destinations along the Great Ocean Road include the resort towns of Torquay, Anglesea, Lorne and Apollo Bay, the coastal centres of Geelong, Warrnambool and Portland, and the historic villages of Queenscliff, Port Campbell and Port Fairy. The region’s primary appeal is its diverse range of natural assets, including rugged cliffs, raging surf, spectacular bays, coves and beaches, lush rainforests, abundant wildlife, and its maritime and shipwreck history. The region offers a wide variety of quality nature-based and soft adventure activities and experiences for independent and small group tourists, notably bush walking along the Great South West Walk and the Great Ocean Walk, cycling, whale watching at the western end of the region, surfing, canoeing and mountain-biking. Man made attractions include the Otway Fly and the historic Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village and its spectacular ‘Shipwrecked’ night time sound and laser show. Geelong’s waterfront has also been redeveloped to provide visitors with diverse eating and entertainment venues.

The Great Ocean Road is internationally recognised by travel magazines and guides as one of the most spectacular coastal journeys in the world, and is Victoria’s premier regional destination for domestic and international tourists.

Listed as one of the top 10 regional areas visited in Australia, the Great Ocean Road attracts more than 50 percent of all international tourists to regional Victoria each year and is one of the top 20 most visited regions in

Australia. The major growth in domestic tourism to the region took place in the 1990s following the implementation of Tourism Victoria's highly successful Jigsaw campaign. The highly successful 'Great Southern Touring Route' cooperative marketing campaign with two other Victorian regions (Grampians and Goldfields) has been partly responsible for sustaining the growth of international tourism to the region.

### *Grampians*

<b>Population:</b>	13,115 <sup>124</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	571,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	36,891
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	572,000

Situated in the central-western part of Victoria, 250 kilometres from Melbourne, and 460 kilometres from Adelaide, the Grampians region has been a tourist destination for over 140 years. The region contains the one of Victoria's most well known natural attractions, the Grampians National Park (GNP), the fourth largest (167,219 ha) and one of the highest profile and important botanical reserves in Victoria<sup>132</sup>. The Park protects a diverse range of ecosystems and almost one third of the state's indigenous flora that draws thousands of tourists each spring for spectacular wildflower displays. The Park also contains highly significant Aboriginal cultural sites, including the largest concentration of rock art sites in Victoria. Located on a small strip of Crown land within the Park is the tourist destination town, Halls Gap, that was reserved in 1978 to provide accommodation and visitor services.

Visitors are attracted to the region for its spectacular, unspoilt landscape and range of recreational activities such as scenic driving, camping, bush walking and rock climbing. Parks Victoria monitoring indicates that the number of site visits to the GNP fluctuates at around 1.4 million per annum. Over 90 percent of visitors are currently from Victoria and South Australia, with high repeat visitation, particularly from Melbourne<sup>132</sup>. The region experienced significant declines in 2006 because of summer bushfires that occurred during the peak holiday season.

### *Murray River (NSW, Vic, SA)*

<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	738,000 (NSW:600,000) (VIC:299,000) (SA:433,000)
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	35,378 (NSW:17079) (VIC:8,492) (SA:10,626)
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	1,911,000 (NSW:740,000) (VIC:370,000) (SA:801,000)

The Murray River is one of the longest navigable rivers in the world, stretching 2,700 kilometres from the mountains of the Great Dividing Range in north-eastern Victoria to journey's end near Adelaide in South Australia. The Murray River, sometimes informally referred to as the 'Mighty Murray', is Australia's largest river. The Murray rises in the Australian Alps draining the western side of Australia's highest mountains and, for most of its length, meanders across Australia's inland plains, forming the border between Victoria and New South Wales (NSW) as it flows to the northwest, before turning south for its final 500 kilometres into South Australia concluding at the mouth at Lake Alexandrina.

The Murray region is special to Australians. There are magnificent landscapes, outstanding remnant vegetation and an abundance of fish, birds, native vegetation and wildlife. Thousands escape the city to enjoy the region on holidays and weekends. The region provides a variety of recreational opportunities which cater for a

wide range of people, whether it be the adventurous seeking the thrill of water skiing or jet skiing or those simply relaxing on a house boat. The diverse environment of the Murray region and the range of wildlife and vegetation provide year-round enjoyment for many visitors.

The Murray region traditionally supports strong primary industries such as horticulture and viticulture sectors while cereal, cattle and wool are productive in the dry land areas. Growing tourism, wine, agro forestry and olive oil industries complement the region's reputation for quality food and wine. The success of the tourism industry development in the Murray region requires strong partnerships between the public and private sectors and for tourism organisations in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia work together cooperatively, including the campaign committee, regional tourism associations (RTA) and local tourism associations (LTA). Local support for tourism industry development is critical. Key destinations along the Murray include Mildura, Swan Hill, Echuca, and Albury/Wodonga.

## **Queensland**

### ***Agnes Water/1770***

<b>Population:</b>	1,878
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	573,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	68,782
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	694,000

The townships of Agnes Water and 1770 are located on Australia's east coast, equidistant from the regional centres of Bundaberg and Gladstone. The sister towns are located within the boundaries of the former Miriam Vale Shire Council (MVSC) which was amalgamated with Calliope and Gladstone local government areas to form the Gladstone Regional Council in 2008.

Both Agnes Water and 1770 consist of a pristine coastal strip fronting the Coral Sea and are surrounded by a number of conservation areas and National Parks including: Deepwater, Eurimbula, Round Hill and Lady Musgrave Island National Parks and Joseph Banks Conservation Park<sup>133</sup>. The area offers a variety of tourist attractions and activities that range from coastal camping in secluded beaches to holidaying in luxury beachside resorts, heritage and nature explorations, estuary fishing and crabbing, boating, diving and surfing.

Agnes Water and 1770 can be accessed by road only, as there is currently no local airport or train station. Alternatively visitors can fly to Gladstone, Bundaberg or Rockhampton from any capital city in Australia and hire a car, or catch the tilt train from Brisbane or Rockhampton to Miriam Vale. There are currently no transfers available from Miriam Vale, so visitors rely on private transport to get to Agnes Water and 1770.

Agnes Water and 1770 are becoming increasingly popular tourist destinations within the Central Coast of Queensland, with figures showing that tourism growth in the Miriam Vale shire area<sup>15</sup> increased by 57 percent between 2001 and 2005<sup>134 p. 6</sup>. Further increase in visitor's numbers is also reflected in figures obtained by Agnes Water Visitor Centre, which recorded 12,500 visitors in 2005 and 21,000 in 2006<sup>135</sup>.

### ***Noosa***

<b>Population:</b>	48,660
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	456,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	96,743
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	556,000

Noosa is located on the northern end of the Sunshine Coast in South East Queensland, approximately 140 kilometres north of Brisbane. It covers a total area of 869 square kilometres of coastal lowlands, coastal dunes and hinterlands. Noosa is bounded by Maroochy Shire in the south and Cooloola Shire the North. The Noosa River forms a natural boundary between the coastal urban development in the south and the Great Sandy National Park in the north.

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<sup>15</sup> Miriam Vale Shire Council now forms part of the Gladstone Regional Council.

Noosa is a popular tourist destination offering a blend of relatively unspoiled natural environments together with modern and sophisticated infrastructure and visitor services. Noosa visitors may engage in a range of activities from ‘action and adventure to nature, culture, indulgence and cuisine’<sup>37</sup>. The main tourist area is located in Noosa Heads (Hastings Street) and Noosaville where restaurants, shopping and accommodation establishments are concentrated. Noosa National Park and Noosa Spit are located walking distance from Hastings Street. Other attractions around Noosa include Sunshine Beach, which is a popular destination amongst surfers, Lake Cootharabara, known for its sailing, windsurfing and swimming opportunities, and the scenic hinterlands. With no traffic lights, no parking meters and strict building height restrictions, Noosa’s built environment reflects the desire of the community and Council to protect the Shire’s natural attributes and ‘laid-back’ atmosphere. This is achieved by a range of planning approaches including restrictions on building heights, and the absence of traffic lights and parking meters.

Road access is available via the Bruce Highway and the Sunshine Coast Motorway, while railway stations, with bus connection to Noosa, are located in Nambour and Cooroy. Regular flights are operating to and from Maroochy airport, which is located 20 minutes south of Noosa. A bus service between Brisbane and Noosa is also available on a regular basis.

A large proportion of Noosa’s visitors belong to a higher yielding demographic segment, earning at least \$100,000 a year. This segment, which is also known as the *re-energise in style* segment, have a very high average trip expenditure, tending to stay in 4&5 star accommodation, eat out and shop.

## **South Australia**

### *The Barossa Valley*

<b>Population:</b>	21,587
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	199,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	14,000
<b>Day-trip visitors:</b>	761,000

The Barossa Valley is located around 70 kilometres north east of Adelaide, being easily accessible by road and is popular as a scenic touring destination with its winding country roads weaving through vineyards and villages. It has a long and distinguished history as a wine producing region dating back to its early English and German settlers. It is the combination of the Barossa region’s reputation for quality wines and wineries, coupled with its strong cultural traditions and European heritage, which give it a unique appeal in the Australian context. This is demonstrated by the Barossa achieving consistently high levels of visitation and awareness as a wine region in surveys of domestic and international tourists. Studies have found that visiting family owned cellar doors, eating locally grown and prepared food, visiting iconic wineries and welcoming country pubs and enjoying the heritage of the area are the main drivers for tourists to visit the Barossa Valley.

The Barossa Valley’s core appeal is reinforced by its festivals and events such as the Barossa Vintage Festival, which celebrates local wine, food and culture (art and music). The growing food culture in the region complements the wine experience and is demonstrated by the range and diversity of food outlets, which has expanded significantly beyond the traditional bakeries, particularly quality cafés, delicatessens and restaurants. The addition of other quality complementary products and experiences such as boutique accommodation, galleries and retail outlets selling art, crafts and antiques, have all strengthened the region’s appeal to visitors. Natural attractions in the Barossa Valley include the Mount Crawford Forest and Kaiser Stuhl Conservation Park, and the generally rolling and green nature of the countryside, which offers a range of nature and soft adventure activities (e.g. cycling, bush walking).

The Barossa attracts a higher proportion of overnight interstate visitors than any other region in South Australia. It also has high appeal as a day-trip destination for international visitors staying elsewhere in South Australia, many of whom visit the region with their local friends and relatives.

***Kangaroo Island***

<b>Population:</b>	4259
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	117,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	36,641
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	22,000

Kangaroo Island is renowned as a world-class, nature-based and eco-tourism destination. The island is located 126 kilometres south of Adelaide (a 110 kilometre road trip and a 16 kilometre ferry trip from Cape Jervis). The island offers spectacular coastal scenery, native bushland and pristine beaches, largely unspoiled by development. Approximately one-third of the island is located in protected areas, allowing opportunities for visitors to interact with, and learn about, native animals, get close to nature and experience wilderness. These are the dominant attributes that appeal to visitors <sup>136</sup>.

A commitment to nature and wildlife conservation and preservation by state and local governments, the island community and the tourism industry has been crucial to Kangaroo Island’s development and growth as a tourism destination. There are now 26 protected areas (i.e. national and conservation parks, wilderness protection areas) on the island managed by the State Department of Environment and Heritage. Major tourist attractions and experiences include Flinders Chase National Park, Seal Bay Conservation Park, Kelly Hill Caves and nightly penguin processions, providing a range of nature-based experiences. Water-based recreation activities such as fishing, boating, swimming and scuba diving are also popular activities on the island. Kangaroo Island has also developed niche local agricultural products such as wine, cheeses, honey, marron and olive oil.

Comprehensive data on visitors to Kangaroo Island is available not only through Tourism Research Australia (TRA) but also through an annual visitor exit survey undertaken since 2001. Kangaroo Island has a typical seasonal trend for its climate—the majority of tourists visit in the warmer months of October to April. Based on 2006 data, approximately 70 percent of overnight visitors are domestic (40 percent intrastate, 30 percent interstate) and 30 percent are international<sup>137</sup>. Compared with other South Australian regions, Kangaroo Island has the highest proportion of visitors from overseas, predominantly from Europe and North America.

***Wilpena Pound***

<b>Population:</b>	31,248 <sup>138</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	57,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	7,454
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	N/A

Located 450 kilometres north of Adelaide, Wilpena Pound is the centrepiece of the ancient Flinders Ranges National Park. A natural amphitheatre covering 83 square kilometres, it rises sharply from the surrounding flat plains and is one of South Australia’s most renowned natural attractions. Located just 4.5 hours drive from Adelaide, it is an accessible outback experience for domestic and international tourists. Wilpena Pound and the Flinders Ranges represent one of the oldest landscapes on earth—and one of Australia’s most significant geological sites. Believed to have been higher than the Himalaya, the ranges are more than 600 million years old. The product of natural erosion, Wilpena Pound forms a natural enclosure with its rim representing the stumps of massive mountains. Its wooded interior—accessible through just one gorge—is 11 kilometres long and 8 kilometres wide. Famous for its Aboriginal rock art and abundant native flora and fauna, the Pound is a popular destination for bush walking, camping, cycling and scenic driving. Major attractions include St Mary Peak, Malloga Falls, the Hill Family Homestead and old Wilpena Station.

Attempts at farming around the Pound failed during the early 20th century, and its tourism potential was recognised from 1945. Wilpena Pound is now one of the most popular sites in the Flinders Ranges for international tourists visiting the outback. The award-winning Wilpena Pound Resort is built on the banks of Wilpena Creek. Set in natural bush setting, it offers 60 rooms for visitors exploring the Flinders Ranges. Rawnsley Park Station, located to the west, provides a range of accommodation options including luxury

eco-villas, holiday units, a caravan park and campsites—as well as a licensed restaurant and general store. Scenic flights over the Pound operate from unsealed airstrips at Wilpena Pound Resort and Rawnsley Park Station.

Domestic markets sustain tourism in the Flinders Ranges. A popular family holiday destination, the region was a frontier for the adventurous prior to the emergence of four-wheel drive vehicles at the end of the 20th century. The independent self-drive market, comprising older empty nesters aged between 45 and 64, represents the highest yielding segment. Nearly 16 percent of all overnight visits in regional South Australia (excluding Adelaide) include visits to the Flinders Ranges and Outback, and the region accounts for 16.5 percent of all visitor nights in regional South Australia.

## **Western Australia**

### *Esperance*

<b>Population:</b>	13,089 <sup>139</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	146,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	14,653
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	38,000

Esperance is a busy port town remotely located on Western Australia's southeast coast, approximately 725 kilometres from Perth. The Esperance region incorporates the busy port town of Esperance as well as the Esperance coastline that extends for more than 400 kilometres. This coastline incorporates the Great Australian Bight and Recherche Archipelago with approximately 105 coastal islands and 1500 islets. It is the largest group of islands in southern Australia. Esperance is considered an 'emerging' destination where tourism is increasing rapidly. This is due, in part, to the development of the mining sector that has attracted workers to the region.

Key attractions to the region include pristine beaches, coastline and wilderness areas. National Parks and protected areas in the region represent some of the largest remaining wilderness areas in Western Australia's southwest including: Cape Le Grand, Cape Arid and Stokes Inlet National Park, Peak Charles, Frank Hann, Fitzgerald River National Parks and the Recherche Archipelago. The region is also home to the Fitzgerald World Biosphere Reserve, located between Bremer Bay and Hopetoun, which is endorsed by the United Nations as the most important Mediterranean ecosystem reserve in the world. Pink Lake is another popular natural attraction. Just a short drive from the town of Esperance, it is a salt plain which, in the right weather conditions, appears pink. The colour of the lake is due to the high concentration of salt tolerant algae. National Parks and protected areas in the region represent some of the largest remaining wilderness areas in the Western Australia's southwest. The region is home to marine wildlife life including seals, dolphins, whales, emus and sea eagles.

Tourism in Esperance has been primarily built on these natural attractions. Key tourism activities include bush walking and camping and viewing wildlife, especially marine wildlife. There are a number of established bush walking trails, including a 15 kilometre walk trail between Le Grand Beach and Rossiter Bay and a 38 kilometre ocean drive trail. Tourism experiences include cruises around the bay and islands of the archipelago and an eco-tourism resort on one of these islands. Cultural attractions in the region include Indigenous rock art and a series of wind farms. Events such as Festival of the Wind and the Esperance and District Agricultural Show are held annually in the town of Esperance. Access to the region is generally by air or road. An airport is located 26 kilometres north of the town of Esperance and daily flights to and from Perth is available. Bus transport to the region is available through TransWA.

***Shark Bay***

<b>Population:</b>	966 <sup>66</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	68,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	39,740
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	6,000

Shark Bay is part of the Coral Coast in Western Australia. It is made up of two peninsulas on the western most point of Australia and covers an area of 25,000 square kilometres. The town of Denham is the Shire’s administrative centre while surrounding communities include Nanga, Hamelin Pool, the former mining site of Useless Loop and world-renowned dolphin sanctuary, Monkey Mia.

More importantly, the Shark Bay region is one of only 14 places in the world to meet all four natural criteria for World Heritage listing. Shark Bay is famous for its natural beauty and tourists are attracted by its water-based experiences, such as swimming, snorkelling, diving, fishing, boating and interaction with marine life such as the dolphins and dugongs. Countless tiny white shells of the burrowing Bivalve *Fragum erugatum* have formed beautiful white shell beaches, which stretch for 60 kilometres.

***Tapestry***

<b>Population:</b>	83,000 <sup>139</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	358,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	22,266
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	969,000

The Tapestry region is located in the southwest of Western Australia, approximately two hours drive from Perth. The Tapestry region is an important tourism destination given its close proximity to Perth in Western Australia. It incorporates six local government areas; the City of Bunbury and the Shires of Capel, Collie, Dardanup, Donnybrook-Balingup and Harvey. The region’s major centre is Bunbury.

The region effectively incorporates a diverse ‘tapestry’ of resources and tourism opportunities rather than a single focus. On its western edge, the Tapestry region is constituted by coastline, beaches and inland waters and the major regional centre of Bunbury. Further inland, the region is recognised as the ‘food bowl’ of Western Australia that centres on the dairy, beef, orange juice and wine industries. The region is part of the well-established Geopraphe Wine Region. Natural attractions include the mangroves of the Leschenault Inlet, the Wellington Forest and National Park in the Collie region covers that approximately 4000 hectares of jarrah forest.

At the Dolphin Discovery Centre (Bunbury), visitors have the opportunity to view and interact with wild dolphins and attracts around 70,000 visitors per year. Other tourism opportunities include water-based activities, eco-tourism, and experiencing rural and farm life are provided within the region, and fishing and crabbing are popular activities. The Tapestry region has a substantial accommodation infrastructure with a wide variety of accommodation types ranging from hotel/motel facilities to caravan and camping sites. Accommodation is available in varying degrees throughout the region. The majority of people who visit the Tapestry region are return visitors, with approximately three-quarters of those being intrastate visitors.

## Tasmania

### *Cradle Mountain*

<b>Population:</b>	5,900 <sup>139</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	104,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	21,779
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	120,000

Cradle Mountain is one of the best known and most important tourism destinations in Tasmania. Forming part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, it is a two-hour drive (180 kilometres) from Launceston and 1.5 hours (85 kilometres) from Devonport. Cradle Mountain and its National Park cover an area of 161,000 hectares.

As a tourist destination, visitors experience diverse natural experiences provided by rugged mountains, temperate rainforests, glacial lakes, tall forests and native wildlife. Mountain walks range from gentle strolls to five-day treks on the Overland Track. Visitor highlights include the peak of Cradle Mountain, Dove Lake, the Overland Track and the World Heritage Area. Other recreational activities include picnicking, photography, wildlife observation, cycling, fly fishing, kayaking, rock climbing, scenic flights, four-wheel driving and horse riding. Many accommodation operators offer ancillary tourism experiences such as day spas, wilderness galleries and mountain tours.

Cradle Mountain sits within a region known as the ‘Cradle Country’ which encompasses the townships of Sheffield, Railton, Wilmot and city of Devonport. While Cradle Mountain is usually the key ‘destination’ for visitors, the overall tourism experience often involves a drive through surrounding townships.

The majority of visitors to the area tend to be day-trip visitors who spend the day walking around the key areas, but choose not to stay overnight on the Mountain. Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service visitor surveys suggest that 60 percent of visitors to Cradle Mountain are ‘comfort seekers’ seeking standard facilities to exist. They are not prepared to ‘rough it’ and tend to be accompanied by children. Comfort seekers spend an average of 3.5 hours in the area. With its cold winter climate, most tourists visit Cradle Mountain between the warmer months of October to April.

### *Launceston/Tamar Valley*

<b>Population:</b>	95,000 <sup>139, 119</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	493,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	49,126
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	919,000

The Launceston Tamar Valley region is situated in Tasmania’s North. Launceston is Tasmania’s second most populated city, covering an area of 1,415 square kilometres next to the Tamar River and including a 20 kilometre stretch to the north. The city and its surrounding area is bordered by the area commonly known as the ‘Tamar Valley’, which encompasses the western side of the Georgetown district to Launceston’s East and West Tamar region which includes townships such as Beaconsfield and Exeter. The proximity of Launceston to the Tamar Valley means that visitors who choose to stay in Launceston itself can easily incorporate Tamar Valley into their itinerary within a comfortable day-trip. Being a 45-minute flight from Melbourne, and 95-minute flight from Sydney, the Launceston Tamar Valley is one of the key entry points to Tasmania for interstate and international visitors.

Launceston is renowned for its dining experiences and upmarket accommodation along with key attractions such as the Cataract Gorge scenic wilderness reserve, Tamar River Cruises, Boags Brewery and heritage walks. Tamar Valley offers a wealth of touring options. Historic attractions include Low Head Pilot Station, SeaHorse World, Grindelwald Swiss Village and visits to the nearby townships of Exter, Beaconsfield, Beauty Point, Narawntapu National Park, Hillwood, Georgetown and Low Head. Many visitors follow the ‘Tamar Valley Wine Route’ in search of the state’s best wineries and local produce.

The region’s tourism success can be largely attributed to marketing campaigns which promote three local government areas within Launceston and Tamar Valley as one destination—offering a unique and diverse tourism experience for domestic and international travellers. About 80 percent of visitors to Launceston and Tamar Valley region stay overnight in Launceston and make day-trips to other parts of the region. The region also attracts day-trippers who are passing through as part of a broader tour of Tasmania.

***Port Arthur***

<b>Population:</b>	2,300 <sup>140</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	102,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	16,773
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	120,000

Located on the Tasman Peninsula in the South Eastern part of the state, Port Arthur itself is located approximately 100 kilometres or a one and a half hour drive from Hobart. Port Arthur is the ‘icon’ of Tasmania’s South, steeped in history and renowned for its former penal colony now referred to as the Port Arthur Historic Site. The award-winning Port Arthur Historic Site attracts more than 250,000 visitors each year—many of whom are day-trippers to the region. The site contributes more than \$25 million per annum to Tasmania’s Gross State Product (GSP). The relatively low number of overnight visitors has been identified as a major challenge for tourism growth in the region.

While the Historic Site is a primary attraction in the region, a range of other attractions and facilities exist, many of which revolve around the region’s natural attractions, wildlife and aquatic activities. The Tasman National Park offers stunning coastal scenery, coastal walks and as adventure activities such as camping, bush walking, swimming, fishing, diving and rock climbing. The park is also home to wildlife including whales, dolphins, penguins, seals, sea dragons and sea birds.

**Northern Territory**

***Alice Springs***

<b>Population:</b>	23,892
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	227,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	165,345
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	29,000

Alice Springs is located in the Northern Territory in an area called the Central Region. The Central Region constitutes 40 percent of the Northern Territory and covers 546,046 square kilometres of predominantly desert lands. The town of Alice Springs covers an area of 149 square kilometres and is the largest service and population centre in the Central Region catering for outlying communities and stations.

Alice Springs is renowned as a famous outback town and an ‘oasis in the desert’. The township is located on the mostly dry river bed of the Todd River. It is bordered by the MacDonnell ranges to the east and west, the Simpson Desert to the south, and the vast Tanami Desert which stretches north to the Kimberley region in Western Australia. Natural attractions are a highlight of the Alice Springs tourism experience. Many domestic and international visitors use the township as a base for exploring the chasms and gorges of the MacDonnell Ranges—and a gateway to Uluru. The Alice Springs Telegraph Station also marks the start of a 223 kilometre trek along the Larapinta Trail which incorporates easy day walks and challenging overnight walks.

The 1300 hectare Alice Springs Desert Park showcases Central Australia’s natural and cultural environment, offering self-guided walks through different habitats. Attractions within the Alice Springs Township include the Overland Telegraph Station and Alice Springs Cultural Precinct, Alice Springs School of the Air, Flying Doctor Service, art galleries and privately owned outback properties.

The town also has an energetic nightlife and hosts a calendar of ‘quirky’ annual events including the Henley-On-Todd Regatta, Beanie Festival, Camel Cup and ‘Camel to Dinner and Breakfast’ tours.

The Alice Desert Festival and Tattersall's Finke Desert Race showcase Alice Springs' unique culture and desert location. Accommodation ranges from backpacker hostels and caravan parks to bed and breakfast, motels and international hotel chains.

### ***Katherine***

<b>Population:</b>	18,000
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	178,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	50,200
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	87,000

The third largest town in the Northern Territory, Katherine is a modern and thriving regional centre located approximately 312 kilometres south-east of Darwin. The region supports the cattle, horticulture, agriculture and tourism industries. Located at the junction of major tourism drives—Central Arnhem Road, the Savannah Way and the Explorers Way—Katherine is an important visitor gateway for the Northern Territory.

The region's major tourist icon is Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge in the Nitmiluk National Park, which attracts 200,000 visitors each year and can be explored by canoe, boat, hiking or helicopter. Nitmiluk is home to Jatbula Trail; the country's ultimate bush walking experience winding 46 kilometres over stunning landscapes. Other tourist attractions within the region include the Flora River Nature Park, Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park, Katherine Hot Springs and Leliyn (Edith Falls).

The township of Katherine is the southern gateway to Kakadu National Park and Arnhem Land, and is located a short distance from the historic town of Mataranka and Elsey National Park thermal springs.

### ***Tennant Creek/Barkly Region***

<b>Population:</b>	5,390 <sup>141</sup>
<b>Domestic overnight visitors:</b>	67,000
<b>International overnight visitors:</b>	21,610
<b>Daytrip visitors:</b>	3,000

The Barkly Region covers 283,606 square kilometres or 21 percent of the Northern Territory including the Tablelands, Alpururulam, Elliott District, Tennant Creek Town and Tennant Creek Balance statistical areas. Tennant Creek is the major settlement of the region. It is the service centre for a rural population more than half the size of the town itself, and for tourists passing through the area.

Mining is a key economic driver for the region which, along with cattle farming and Aboriginal culture, has shaped the character of the town. The rich grassland of the Barkly Tableland has seen the rise of many of Australia's premier cattle stations, and the characters that work them are an integral part of the Barkly community. The traditional owners of the area surrounding Tennant Creek are the Warumungu people and their stories are showcased in the Nyinkka Nyunyu cultural centre.

The township of Tennant Creek is a developing tourist centre, providing a gateway to the Devil's Marbles, May Anne Dam, National Parks and four-wheel drive tracks.

The Alice Springs to Darwin railway connects the Top End of the Territory to the rest of Australia through the Barkly Region, and is expected to further enhance the region's economy.

## **APPENDIX 4: 2006 AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL TOURISM CONVENTION**

Three workshops were conducted at the Convention under the themes of destination development, marketing and management, to tap into the knowledge and expertise of participants who are actively engaged in regional tourism across destination, regional, state and national levels. Delegates were asked to participate in one of the three themed workshops. The following table outlines the number of participants involved in each of the workshops and indicates the stakeholder organisation they represented.

**Table 16: Profile of participants involved in destination workshops**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>Marketing</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>National</b>	1	1	0	2	3
<b>State Tourism Organisation</b>	3	4	3	10	16
<b>Regional Tourism Organisation</b>	1	4	1	6	10
<b>Local Tourism Organisation</b>	1	0	0	1	2
<b>Local Government</b>	2	1	3	6	10
<b>Visitor Information Centre</b>	0	0	2	2	3
<b>Operator</b>	2	11	2	15	25
<b>Education</b>	1	0	2	3	5
<b>Other/ not specified</b>	7	1	8	16	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100</b>

The workshop process involved delegates completing hand out sheets related to the workshop theme on which they were given the opportunity to identify five good or best practices and five lessons learnt from practice for regional tourism destinations in Australia. Delegates were asked to indicate the importance of these practices using a Likert-scale of 1 to 5 (1= very important, 5 = not so important). Following this written stage of the research process, participants then engaged in a discussion relating to these practices.

Analysis involved collating the practices identified by the delegates from the completed hand-out sheets and consideration of the main practices identified in the discussion. These practices were then organised under the significant themes that emerged.

## **APPENDIX 5: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION—A CITIZEN JURY APPROACH**

*Prepared by Dr Kath Fisher*

An important aspect of managing tourism in a destination is working with and empowering local people that are not directly involved in tourism, to build their capacity to reflect on tourism decision-making process and to participate constructively in decisions about tourism. Decision-making about important planning issues is often dominated by experts and special interest groups, with processes that don't encourage the participation of the general public. Public meetings can, however, become dominated by well-organised interest groups or by more articulate and highly motivated individuals. In such situations, the voice of the average citizen is either not heard or excluded or they themselves do not believe they can add value to public participation processes. In a highly polarised planning context, such as decisions that need to be made about tourism in the region, it is essential that the voice of ordinary citizens can be heard in an environment not dominated by those who already have a disproportionate say in decisions. It is important that elected representatives gain an accurate assessment of citizens' views across the spectrum of the community.

Democratic deliberative processes (known as DPPs) such as citizens' juries provide a transparent and interactive environment that meets these requirements. Citizens' juries have been so named because of their organisational similarity with legal juries, where a randomly-selected group of citizens reflecting a cross-section of the public comes to a decision. However, in many ways they are distinctly different from legal juries. They are not adversarial, do not rely on a consensus among jury members, and rather than a guilty or not guilty finding, the jury proposes a series of recommendations after a period of deliberation. One interesting feature of citizens' juries is that they have typically resulted in considered and moderate recommendations that successfully blend competing claims and help reconcile antagonistic groups.

Citizens' juries were first used in the 1970s in the United States and in Germany (where they have been called planning cells), to overcome the limitations of standard consultation processes for complex scientific issues. They are now used routinely in Denmark, Germany, the UK and the US and since the 1990s have been employed more extensively in Australia, with most (52 percent) being conducted in Western Australia alone, primarily in planning and infrastructure decisions at the state government level.

The main characteristics of a citizens' jury are that:

- participants are randomly selected and structured so as to provide a representative sample of the whole group being consulted;
- it involves relatively small numbers of participants (usually 12–25) who meet over 2 to 5 days;
- participants are provided with written evidence before they meet;
- participants hear a wide range of views from expert presenters (or 'witnesses') and are able to question the presenters as well as seek out any additional information they might want;
- it is usually organised in consultation with an advisory committee, (and sometimes an additional stakeholder reference group), which is responsible for ensuring the integrity and credibility of the project and the high quality of witnesses;
- it has a neutral facilitator who supports the jury by managing group dynamics to ensure that everyone has a fair say, that participants get the information they need and that the jury fulfils its terms of reference;
- it has a chair who oversees contributions from the presenters and makes sure they respond to the jury's questions appropriately;
- the jury deliberates through a variety of processes such as small group discussion, brainstorming and full panel discussion;
- recommendations are published in a formal report which records the jury's recommendations and any dissenting points of view; and
- either the recommendations are implemented, or sufficient grounds must be provided publicly to explain why they will not be implemented.

A citizens' jury is useful when the questions to be deliberated over are relatively clear in advance. It is ideally suited to situations that involve complex issues, where expert involvement is required for participants to fully understand the process. Other indications that a citizens' jury will be useful are when there are competing vested

interests, high stakes in the outcome, where decisions made will have an impact on the broader community, where there is scientific uncertainty (i.e. not a single generally accepted scientific opinion) and there are high levels of risk involved.

Given the competing vested interests and high stakes involved in the future of tourism to the area, a citizens' jury may be used as an appropriate avenue for the community consultation for the Destination Daylesford and Byron Shire Tourism Management planning processes.



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## Project Coordinator and Principal Author

### Meredith Wray (nee Lawrence)

Dr Meredith Wray is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Southern Cross University. She is Unit Assessor on two foundation undergraduate units, Tourism Theories and Practices and Tourism and Hospitality Research and Analysis. Meredith completed a Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre PhD in 2006 which examined the Byron Bay tourism policy, planning and destination management system. She was awarded the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre Award for Excellence in PhD research in 2007. Meredith has led a team of seven researchers undertaking a three year STRC research project titled 'Sustainable Regional Tourism Destinations Project' that examines best practice principles for destination development, marketing and management involving 21 regional tourism destinations across Australia. In 2008, Meredith also completed work on ten-year strategic tourism management plans for two of Australia's leading regional tourism destinations, Byron Bay (NSW) and Daylesford (Victoria). She is currently working on an STCRC project with colleagues from University of South Australia and Monash University that investigates health, wellness and medical tourism in Australia.

Email: [meredith.wray@scu.edu.au](mailto:meredith.wray@scu.edu.au)

## Contributing Authors

### Dianne Dredge

Dr Dianne Dredge was appointed to the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at the Tweed Gold Coast campus of Southern Cross University in July 2008. Previously, Dianne taught in the School of Urban and Environmental Planning at Griffith University 2002–08. She has 20 years' experience as a tourism planner in Queensland, New South Wales, Canada, Mexico and China. Her work has included conceptual design and site analysis of large-scale integrated resort proposals; integration of tourism considerations in strategic and local area plans; comparative analyses of competitive destinations; studies into the re-imaging of destinations in crisis; and the assessment of the environmental impacts of tourism. She has also been involved in tourism capacity building activities in local governments and tourism organisations, including stakeholder audits and community consultation. Dianne has an active research agenda exploring and publishing in local government tourism management, place-based planning and management of tourism places, tourism organisations, tourism planning and policy. She has co-authored a book with Professor John Jenkins, *Tourism Policy and Planning* (John Wiley & Sons, 2007) and is author and facilitator of the *Managing Local Tourism* Master Class, a professional development program aimed at integrating tourism issues into broader activities of local government.

Email: [dianne.dredge@scu.edu.au](mailto:dianne.dredge@scu.edu.au)

### Carmen Cox

Carmen is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing in the Graduate College of Management at Southern Cross University's Tweed Gold Coast Campus. Carmen completed her PhD in tourism marketing in 2001 through Griffith University's then School of Tourism and Hotel Management. Her PhD thesis investigated the ways that international visitors to Australia planned and structured their travel itineraries, covering marketing issues related to tourist information search, destination decision-making processes and cooperative marketing. Her industry experience is in the hospitality sector where she has worked as Marketing and Research Manager for a 5-star integrated resort. Carmen's current research interests focus on marketing and consumer behaviour issues primarily in the fields of tourism and hospitality. Carmen has also previously worked on various tourism research projects through her employment in the Centre for Tourism and Hotel Management Research (Griffith University). She has worked with clients on projects including forecasting tourism arrivals to Australia; assessing the performance of tourism destinations; sustainable development; social impacts of tourism and other destination marketing issues.

Email: [Carmen.cox@scu.edu.au](mailto:Carmen.cox@scu.edu.au)

### Jeremy Buultjens

Associate Professor Jeremy Buultjens is the Director of the Regional Futures Institute, located in the School of Commerce and Management at Southern Cross University. He is also the Managing Editor of the *Journal of Economic and Social Policy*. Jeremy's research interests include Indigenous entrepreneurship, regional

development and tourism, tourism in protected areas, and employment relations. His publications have appeared in *Tourism Management*, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *International Journal of Employment Studies*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *Labour and Industry* and the *Australasian Journal of Business and Social Enquiry*. He has also presented widely at national and international conferences. Jeremy has conducted numerous consultancies. His clients have included the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the NSW Crown Solicitor's Office, W.A. Department of Conservation and Land Management, and the Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee.

Email: [jeremy.buultjens@scu.edu.au](mailto:jeremy.buultjens@scu.edu.au)

### **Mary Hollick**

Mary Hollick is a lecturer in tourism and marketing in the School of Business, University of Ballarat, Victoria and has considerable experience as an educator, commentator and consultant in tourism policy and planning. She has a strong background in museum services combined with extensive experience in the fields of staff development, training and visitor services, specialising in social history and Australian heritage management. Mary has provided consultant services in attractions management and areas of social and built history conservation and presentation. Mary's areas of interest and expertise include: tourism attraction management; pathology of tourism business failure; sustainable heritage management; micro tourism enterprise skills development; community capacity building and service quality measurement. Mary has recently completed doctoral studies with the University of Queensland, focusing on the role of attractions in destination development.

Email: [m.hollick@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:m.hollick@ballarat.edu.au)

### **Diane Lee**

The concept of sustainable tourism development, incorporating the environment in all its aspects, underpins all areas of Diane's research interests. This covers the areas of host community attitudes and the social representations of tourism. Sustainable tourism development includes research of cultural tourism, nature based tourism and resource economics where tourism resources are valued in the same manner as the resources of other industries. Tourism marketing using the societal approach to marketing research is viewed as a tool that enables effective tourism development. Dr Diane Lee teaches in: Cultural Tourism; Indigenous Tourism Issues; Sustainable Tourism; Tourism Policy and Planning; and Introduction to Tourism Systems at Murdoch University.

Email: [D.Lee@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:D.Lee@murdoch.edu.au)

### **Michael Pearlman**

Mr Michael Pearlman is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing at Victoria University. His research interests include: Tourism planning and development; Regional tourism planning; Integrated tourism planning; Sustainable tourism; Tourism policy; Community consultation; Seniors tourism; Market research and analysis; and the Economic impacts of tourism. His professional experience encompasses: Project consultant and management of variety of tourism and leisure assignments; Specialist input in the areas of marketing research and analysis, marketing planning and economic impact assessment; lecturing, research and consultancy in tourism plus responsibility for industry liaison and student placement; coordinator of undergraduate and postgraduate tourism courses plus responsibility for the activities of the Centre for Tourism, including the delivery of education travel programs.

Email: [Michael.Pearlman@vu.edu.au](mailto:Michael.Pearlman@vu.edu.au)

### **Carol Lacroix**

Dr Carol Lacroix Dr Carol Lacroix is an interdisciplinary academic with a background in social science and humanities. She has been involved in tourism in a research and teaching capacity with STCRC and Murdoch University since 2008, and now lectures in environmental science. Her current interests include integrating knowledge across the natural and social sciences, environmental policy and law, and tourism in protected areas.

Email: [C.Lacroix@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:C.Lacroix@murdoch.edu.au)



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Chief Executive: Ian Kean  
Director of Research: Prof. David Simmons

CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd  
Gold Coast Campus Griffith University  
Queensland 4222 Australia ABN 53 077 407 286

Telephone: +61 7 5552 8172 Facsimile: +61 7 5552 8171  
Website: [www.crctourism.com.au](http://www.crctourism.com.au)  
Bookshop: [www.crctourism.com.au/bookshop](http://www.crctourism.com.au/bookshop)  
Email: [info@crctourism.com.au](mailto:info@crctourism.com.au)



Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) is established under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program.

STCRC is the world's leading scientific institution delivering research to support the sustainability of travel and tourism—one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries.

### **Introduction**

STCRC has grown to be the largest dedicated tourism research organisation in the world, with \$187 million invested in tourism research programs, commercialisation and education since 1997.

STCRC was established in July 2003 under the Commonwealth Government's CRC program and is an extension of the previous Tourism CRC, which operated from 1997 to 2003.

### **Role and responsibilities**

The Commonwealth CRC program aims to turn research outcomes into successful new products, services and technologies. This enables Australian industries to be more efficient, productive and competitive.

The program emphasises collaboration between businesses and researchers to maximise the benefits of research through utilisation, commercialisation and technology transfer.

An education component focuses on producing graduates with skills relevant to industry needs.

### **STCRC's objectives are to enhance:**

- the contribution of long-term scientific and technological research and innovation to Australia's sustainable economic and social development;
- the transfer of research outputs into outcomes of economic, environmental or social benefit to Australia;
- the value of graduate researchers to Australia;
- collaboration among researchers, between researchers and industry or other users; and
- efficiency in the use of intellectual and other research outcomes.