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ABSTRACT

This report explores the broad issues involved in making and maintaining sustainable tourism in rural and regional areas. It has three parts, each of which comprises a discussion of the topic in general, lessons about the topic from the four case studies, and recommended future action. After the four regional tourism precincts are introduced, the first part explores the concept of a precinct and working understandings of a tourism precinct. It concludes with a definition of a tourism precinct in a rural or regional area. The four regional tourism precincts are cited as exemplars throughout this report.

The second part concentrates on the three key areas of sustainability: the community, the environment and the economy, and their relationship with tourism precincts in rural and regional areas. The section on community addresses community structure, participation and relationships on a personal, community and regional level. After outlining the different concepts included in the term environment, the environment section explores the intangible attributes of the natural and built components of a place, and the tangible infrastructure necessary to maintain human society in that place. The economy section looks at the difference between profitability and sustainability, triple bottom line accounting, marketing and advertising.

The third part concludes the report.

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Unless otherwise cited all images, diagrams and tables have been generated by the School of Architecture & Design, University of Tasmania.
SUMMARY

Objectives and Method

This report focuses on the concept and operation of sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas. The successful development of new precincts and efficient maintenance of existing ones require the appreciation and implementation of a complex range of skills applied to a wide variety of interconnected issues. These include community dynamics, tangible physical infrastructure, the intangible characteristics and values of place, and understandings of sustainability. The study aims to improve understanding of rural and regional tourism precincts by:

- providing a useful working definition of a precinct;
- identifying the major issues of precinct development and maintenance;
- summarising the theoretical and practical state of knowledge of these issues and identify ‘gaps’ in both knowledge and practice; and
- recommending areas of future action on precincts and precinct planning.

The issues related to tourism developments are complex and fluctuating. They are discussed by academics and researchers working in the discipline, used by professional practitioners working to provide and manage tourism infrastructure, and experienced by tourism operators as they address the day-to-day needs of their businesses and clients. Therefore, assessing the state of expert knowledge and practical understanding of sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas required input from each of these three key sources. To achieve this, the research approach comprises a review of available literature, including academic texts, precinct development reports and case studies, tourism strategy documents and other documents from Australia and overseas.

An assessment of current practice knowledge was undertaken by initially conducting interviews with Australian precinct managers. This provided a means by which to assess appropriate terminology and gaps in the knowledge base, and confirmed the direction of research. An examination of the literature and practice information provided data for an interim technical report. This was distributed to industry for comment and followed up with interviews with industry representatives. Focused interviews were also held with tourism precinct managers and planners to test the interim findings and to corroborate the perceived gaps in knowledge and practice. Finally, documentation of the results is provided in this report.

To provide a practical foundation to the report, four regional tourism precincts in Australia and New Zealand were selected and are presented as case studies. These are introduced briefly, and then used though the report as examples to highlight specific key issues, as appropriate.

Key Findings

Tourism precincts generally possess a distinctive character by virtue of their activities and land uses, their physical or architectural fabric, or their connection to a particular cultural or ethnic group within the city. Such characteristics also exist in combination. Tourism precincts are an important part of the nation’s tourism infrastructure. They are critical to a visitor’s sense of attraction and expectation, and their perceptions of destination and place. As such, recognised precincts such as Sydney’s Rocks area and Ballarat’s historic zone form a focus of tourism marketing, promotion and development.

To understand how this success can be replicated in other places, the phrase sustainable tourism precinct needs to be broken into in its constituent parts for better understanding of its implications for management: the meaning of the term precinct in general; the major characteristics of a tourism precinct; and the potential for a tourism precinct to be sustainable, in the broad sense of that concept. The issues that appear to be critical to making and maintaining sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas focus on the community, the environment (intangible and tangible attributes) and the economy.

In the literature and case studies examined, the term precinct seems to be particularly misunderstood, misapplied (either deliberately or accidentally) and used alternately with terms such as cluster, region, area, zone and hub. It is recommended that these terms should be applied to specific situations, but as to how these applications and specific definitions are allocated is undetermined.

Recognising and developing new precincts successfully and maintaining existing ones efficiently is a complex task that requires skills in:

- intuitive and analytical problem recognition;
- strategic and physical planning;
- architectural and urban design;
- environmental assessment and planning;
Case Studies in Australia and New Zealand

- statutory control;
- strategic and day-to-day management and financial processes; and
- community liaison and participation.

To establish sustainable tourism, a workable balance must be struck between the welfare of the community, the environment and a viable local economy. In many ways, this is intrinsically more difficult to do in rural and regional precincts than in compact urban ones as:

- tourism is generally only one of many land uses;
- they are harder to characterise. There are more combination of forms and arrangement for rural and regional precincts. A workable solution in one location may not be relevant in another;
- the community is more directly influenced and closer to the process;
- the skill and resource base may be constrained; and
- the cost of providing that skill and resource base is higher.

Active discussion about sustainable precincts in rural and regional areas by tourism and other consulting professions centred on three key areas: enabling community participation; the usefulness of the concept of a precinct in rural and regional areas; and sustainable development in general and particularly in a rural or regional precinct. Planning and developing successful sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas is most likely to comprise any or all of the following activities or processes:

- Good community consultation and partnership arrangements between local and state authorities.
- ‘Ownership’ by local residents.
- Commissioning, dissemination and implementation of strategy and planning documents, prepared by experienced consultants.
- The employment of recognised tools such as Agenda 21, in the preparation of these documents.
- The auditing of these documents, and their implementation, by recognised methods such as Green Globe 21.
- An awareness of the need for a long-term vision in these documents, rather than short-term financial gain.
- Identification of key historical, heritage, cultural and natural attractions within the district.
- Identification of the types of tourists and their motivations for visiting the precinct, and an understanding of the impacts tourists have on the leisure experience, spaces and places of the local community.
- An understanding of the type and needs of the community located within and near the tourism precinct, and of skills, assets and resources already located in the region.
- The need to review current auditing tools such as the Triple Bottom Line.

Future Action

Many of the major aspects of sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas are discussed in the body of this report. However, almost all areas deserve additional research. The main areas of future action include:

- the profile and actions of tourists in rural and regional areas;
- the usefulness of the concept of a tourism precinct;
- matching this concept of a tourism precinct to practice on the ground;
- understanding the importance of community structure to precinct development;
- the effects tourists have on community structure;
- the interrelationship of tourist precincts with other land uses in the precinct and in the region;
- more detailed understanding of the physical, social, sensual and spiritual attributes and authenticity of a precinct;
- the provision, capacity and arrangement of physical infrastructure systems;
- the provision, capability and structure of organisational infrastructure;
- the pressures of success or failure on the infrastructure of a precinct;
- assessing the economic value, benefits and costs of regional and rural tourism to communities;
- determining ways in which rural and regional tourism destinations can optimise visitor expenditure;
- developing models for economic potential in different types of rural and regional tourism precincts;
- exploring which of the differences between rural and regional and urban precincts are critical to their operation; and
- finding how major external influences are recognised and managed.
Chapter 1

CASE STUDIES OF FOUR REGIONAL TOURISM PRECINCTS

Tourism precincts exist in regional and rural areas of Australia and other countries. Some are well planned and provide significant benefits to their local communities while others are under such stress that they threaten to erode the values of place and society that originally made them attractive. All are changing as the pressures of fluctuations in trends and the varying demands of services and technology force them to adapt.

An effective way of assessing the performance and processes of change in individual tourist precincts and other tourist areas is to collect and analyse documents about their development and operation, and report the findings as case studies. Following the dissemination of the Interim Technical Paper, industry partners and representatives proposed many tourist areas as potential case studies and provided guidance on the criteria for assessing the suitability of these areas for inclusion in this scoping study. After this discussion, the agreed criteria for selecting case studies were:

- the region contained a recognised tourism precinct in a regional or rural location;
- the planning documentation or independent reviews of the precinct identified sustainability as a major focus; and
- the planning documentation included directives associated with tourism development.

Literature on suggested and other tourism areas was collected and their contents and recommendations analysed. Geographical information on each area was also assessed. Initial research indicated that few areas satisfied the three criteria listed above. Therefore, the first criterion was modified to include areas that could potentially be defined as tourism precincts. Many areas were found to be unsuitable for study. There was either too little available information, an absence of any formal reporting on the area or insufficient accent on sustainability. Other areas did not satisfy the developing definition for a tourism precinct. For example, several were single tourism operations rather than precincts. Other areas were considered appropriate for study but their detailed assessment was beyond the resources of this study. A list of precincts deemed inappropriate for this study is provided in Appendix A.

Four precincts were selected for presentation as case studies: three from Australia and one from New Zealand. These are introduced in the following sections, and are subsequently employed as exemplars as the major themes of sustainable tourism precincts are further investigated. They are:

1. Freycinet Tourism Precinct, Tasmania
2. Kaikoura, New Zealand
3. Byron Bay Shire, New South Wales
4. Peel Region Heritage and Tourism Precinct, Western Australia

Case Study 1: Freycinet Tourism Precinct, East Tasmania

The Freycinet Peninsula is on the mid-east coast of Tasmania (Figure 1). Only a few hours’ drive from the state’s capital, its features include a mild climate, dramatic coastal landforms, protected bays, empty and largely unspoilt white-sanded beaches, red granite outcrops, astoundingly clear views of ocean, bay and bush, small settlements and vineyards. With a range of associated recreational activities, it is a destination for those wanting to escape, whether to a five star resort or a family shack.

Freycinet Peninsula, and specifically Coles, Hazards and Wineglass bays (Figure 2) are attracting an increasing number of visitors. The peak season is summer, with over 40% of all visitors arriving between December and February. Only about 30% of visitors to Freycinet National Park are Tasmanians but the age group distribution of tourists to the area is even. Bushwalking is by far the most popular activity. In recognition of the positive and negative impacts of this tourism activity, a comprehensive framework for tourism infrastructure in the region was developed and reported in the Freycinet Tourism Development Plan (Inspiring Place 2004, hereafter referred to as FTDP), prepared for the Coles Bay Steering Committee by Inspiring Place Pty Ltd.

Under the auspices of the Partnership Agreement between Glamorgan Spring Bay Council and the State Government, the Tourism Development Steering Committee (TDSC) has established the Coles Bay Steering Committee (CBSC) to oversee a holistic approach to the planning and development of the Freycinet Tourism Precinct. The aim is to develop a Tourism Development Plan for the Freycinet Precinct that identifies a vision, priorities for tourism and infrastructure development … It is crucial that a comprehensive framework be undertaken with the involvement of all key stakeholders to ensure that the tourism use is sustainable (Inspiring Place 2004: v).
The included vision statement says Freycinet is a place with internationally recognised natural and cultural values where a quality tourism, recreation and residential experience is promoted, provided and managed within a framework of ecological, social and economic sustainability (Inspiring Place 2004: vi).

The Freycinet Peninsula contains an area that could be potentially defined as a tourism precinct while the planning documentation has a focus on sustainability and includes directives associated with tourism development. In fact, the documentation was so well structured, clear in its aims and genuine in its attempt to address both community and sustainability aspects, it was used as a benchmark against which the other three case studies are compared. Specific activities were identified on being critical for a successful tourism precinct. Broadly guided by Tourism Tasmania’s ‘key layers and experience’, these activities included connection with place, quality of infrastructure, personalised service and engagement by interpretation.

Actions identified as necessary to achieve this were included:

- upgrading sewage treatment and water supply;
- limiting the scale of development and retaining the ‘unhectic’ lifestyle;
- protecting and restoring fragile or threatened plant communities; and
- reducing the volume and speed of current road traffic, and increasing family walking and cycling opportunities through the development of dedicated trails.
Case Study 2: Kaikoura, New Zealand

The Kaikoura District is on the main road between Christchurch and Picton, on New Zealand’s South Island (Figure 3). The district roughly comprises Kaikoura Peninsula, Kaikoura Township, South Bay and the Kowhai River. It is an ideal stopover point between the two major towns for either short or long term stays. The main attractions of the areas are marine mammals (mainly whales, dolphins and seals) the proximity to both mountains and sea, and the coastal village character of Kaikoura and other townships (Figure 4).

The area’s resource base is small and fragile. Due to downturns in traditional industries such as the railway, and the agricultural and communication sectors, the local economy relies heavily on tourism (Figures 5 and 6). The community understood that increasing tourism could result in unmanageable growth, pressures on natural resources and subsequent loss of tourist income, as the ‘quaintness’ that attracts people to the place disappears.

It recognised too that because of the small scale of activities in relation to the increasing numbers of visitors, a very finely tuned balance must be sought between the welfare of the community’s residents, the environment and the local tourism economy. Residents and local businesses had expressed a frustrated concern that tourism planning was not occurring, although nearly one million people visited the district each year (seemingly without a marketing or development strategy). A community survey later supported this perception. Finally, the Kaikoura District Council devised a working document as a means of establishing common ground between residents, the council and Kaikoura Information and Tourism Incorporated. Titled the Kaikoura District Council Tourism Strategy for the Kaikoura District (2002), this document expressed a shared leadership model. The included
vision statement says Kaikoura is a proud and self-reliant community presenting its visitors with a quality experience in a unique and well cared for environment. Other relevant documents include:

- “Towards a Tourism Plan for Kaikoura: Kaikoura Case Study Report No. 10 /1998” (1998) by David G Simmons and John R Fairweather, of the Tourism Recreation Research and Education Centre, Lincoln University. This was one of a series of ten case study reports on aspects of tourism in Kaikoura. (See http://www.lincoln.ac.nz /trec/trecpub.htm for more information).

Figure 5: Looking from the town to snow-capped peaks, Kaikoura

Source: mKiwi (2008)

Figure 6: Beaches and fields support an abundance of wildlife at Kaikoura

Source: Ginsberg (2008)
Case Study 3: Byron Bay Shire, New South Wales

Byron Bay is a coastal town in northern New South Wales (Figure 7). With a warm climate, long sweeping beaches, handsome headlands and hinterland rainforests, Byron Bay and its surrounds have avoided the congestion found to the north in Queensland’s Gold Coast and maintained a more relaxed hippy, coffee culture. As a result, it has achieved ‘tourism icon status’. The area is a significant drawcard for Australian and international tourists and is particularly popular with backpackers, who avail themselves of many well-maintained hostels, an active nightlife and the lure of the surf. The Byron Shire also contains many small hinterland towns, such as Bangalow, Tyagarah and Mullumbimby. These towns offer an ‘alternative’ and laid-back lifestyle, perhaps too well popularised in the 1960s and 1970s by nearby Nimbin.

With an estimated 1.75 million visitors arriving in Byron Shire in 2001, the communities of Byron Bay township and the adjoining areas of Suffolk Park and Belongil felt they were at crisis point. A process began that resulted in Tourism New South Wales and Byron Shire Council commissioning a report titled Byron Shire Tourism Management: An Options Paper for Consideration (Rob Tonge & Associates, Stephen Fletcher & Associates and Concept Tourism Consultants 2002, hereafter referred to as BSTM). This document was to provide guidance to the Byron Shire Council ‘in balancing the management of tourism and its impact on the community in Byron Shire, in the face of rapidly increasing visitation pressures on infrastructure and the community’ (Rob Tonge & Associates, Stephen Fletcher & Associates and Concept Tourism Consultants 2002:1). However, it was noted in the scope and limitations of the document that the report should be regarded only as an initial examination of the key issues, and recommended that an in-depth shire-wide tourism planning study be undertaken.

Other relevant documents include Sustainable Tourism Management: Lessons from The Edge of Australia (Brown & Essex 1997). This paper specifically addressed issues with Cape Byron Reserve.

The BSTM (Rob Tonge & Associates, Stephen Fletcher & Associates and Concept Tourism Consultants 2002) noted several concerns identified through the preliminary consultation process (Figure 8). Local needs were determined to include:

- strong tourism industry leadership and management of tourism impacts;
- better communication between council, the communities and the tourism industry;
- clear council and inter-sectoral regional tourism policies;
- licensing of all tourist accommodation;
- identifying and protecting environmental assets, such as Cape Byron Reserve;
- encouraging appropriate alfresco dining and street entertainment;
- educating the community on the benefits of tourism;
- researching the economic and community values of tourism to Byron Bay; and
- setting up a staffed and financially self sufficient visitor information centre operated within the state network and accreditation system.
Case Study 4: Peel Region Heritage and Tourism Precinct, Western Australia

The Peel Region in southern Western Australia (Figure 9) includes the following communities or areas:

- **Boddington,** comprising Boddington, Ranford and Quindanning
- **Mandurah,** comprising Mandurah, Madora Bay, San Remo, Meadow Springs, Greenfields, Halls Head, Falcon, Dawesville, Ocean Marina, Silver Sands, Bouvard and Erskine
- **Murray,** comprising Pinjarra, Dwellingup, North Dandalup, Furnissdale, Coolup, North Pinjarra, Ravenswood, North and South Yunderup and Barragup
- **Serpentine-Jarrahdale,** comprising Mundijong, Byford, Serpentine and Jarrahdale
- **Waroona**

In addition to an increasing tourism sector, existing industries in the precinct include mining (60% of the region’s economic activity), agriculture (beef, dairy, orchards and wine), timber processing, plantation forestry and building. The majority of visitors are from other parts of Western Australia but the number of interstate and international visitor numbers is increasing. Attractions include the Peel Region Railway, which connects major communities, the Boddington Open Range Zoo, and natural features such as inland waterways, coastal wetlands, ocean beaches and national parks (see Figure 10).
Mandurah’s Local Agenda 21 program is still running successfully after *A Sustainable City Plan* was launched in 1999 (City of Mandurah 1999). Other councils in Western Australia are closely monitoring its progress. The plan states that it aims to ensure the council remains committed to sustainable principles and goals.

Other relevant documents include *Tourism on the Carnarvon-Ningaloo Coast Between Quobba Station and Exmouth and its Implications for Sustainability of the Coast* (Wood 2003). This was prepared for the Western Australia Planning Commission, as part of the public consultation process for the Carnavon-Ningaloo Coast Regional Strategy.
Chapter 2

WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRECINCT?

One aim of this study is to provide a useful working definition of a sustainable tourism precinct, especially one in a rural and regional context. To do this, the phrase needs to be broken into in its constituent parts to explore:

- the meaning of the term *precinct* in general;
- the major characteristics of a tourism precinct; and
- the potential for a tourism precinct to be sustainable, in the broad sense of that concept.

The first two of these points are discussed in this chapter while the third is discussed in Chapter 3.

Traditional Definitions of a Precinct

The term *precinct* is derived from the Latin *praecingere*, meaning *encircle*. The concept of a precinct has been used since ancient times as a way of identifying areas allied to a particular function, particularly within cities. A precinct in an ancient Mesopotamian city was typically sacred or stately in nature, and the term referred to the ground immediately surrounding a place of worship. Precincts characteristically had a distinctive character which set them apart from the surrounding areas, were distinguished by different built structures, form and materials, and were often enclosed by a wall. In a mediaeval city, a precinct was an area known for a particular vocational or interest group, for example, a merchant or clerical precinct (Mumford 1966). Oxford University is an example of a precinct within the contemporary city of Oxford.

In a contemporary and public context, precincts are also administrative boundaries, similar to districts but more formalised. These boundaries are used for polling and policing purposes and the term *precinct* can refer specifically to a police headquarters or the limit of jurisdiction or authority. The term is still used to distinguish areas known for a particular vocational or interest group, such as fashion or entertainment precincts.

The term *precinct* was used specifically in relation to areas in towns or cities, but the contemporary use of the word also extends to regional, rural and natural areas where there is a space or place of definite or understood limits. Different types of precincts commonly identified in Australia include tourism, natural, cultural, scientific, sport, sacred, marine, educational, parliamentary, historical and economic precincts.

Tourism Precincts

For this study, tourists are defined as a subset of visitors to a region, visitors that engage in tourism activities, visiting attractions and using associated services (Richardson 1996). The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines a visitor as

any person travelling to a place other than that of his/her usual environment for less than twelve months and whose main purpose of trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (ABS 1999).

The term *tourism precinct* is occurring more frequently in tourism planning and policy documents. However, the precise meaning is not clearly defined, and the term has not been widely discussed or used by tourism scholars (McDonnell 1997). *The Dictionary of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Terms* (Harris & Howard 1996) defines a tourism precinct as ‘an area characterised by the clustering of a number of tourist attractions’. However, this definition does not include important characteristics of tourism precincts, such as the grouping of individual attractions into a cohesive and recognised unit or the sense of scale of a precinct. It also does not identify relationships of attractions within precincts, of precincts themselves to greater areas, or of the importance of other facilities such as services.

An examination of ways the term *tourism precinct* is used in both tourism literature and in practice follows, including a discussion of synonym and interchangeable terms and how a precinct relates to other common industry concepts.

Tourism precincts in research literature

Hayllar and Griffin (2005) expand the definition of a tourism precinct for urban areas:

A tourism precinct represents a distinctive geographic area within a larger urban area, characterised by a concentration of tourist-related land uses, activities and visitation, with fairly definable boundaries. Such precincts generally possess a distinctive character by virtue of their mixture of activities and land uses, such as restaurants, attractions and nightlife, their physical or architectural fabric, especially the dominance of historic buildings, or their
connection to a particular cultural or ethnic group within the city. Such characteristics also exist in combination (517).

McDonnell (1997) makes no such distinction between the urban and rural, stating that a tourism precinct is an ‘area in which various attractions such as bars, restaurants, places of entertainment, accommodation and other facilities designed to be used by tourists are clustered’ (191). Travis (in McDonnell 1997) lists other features including thematic marketing, set of services and facilities for both residents and visitors, transport and communications and tourist specific and related infrastructure), as well as a tourism precinct being a facilitator of opportunities for tourist-resident social interaction. Rojek and Urry (1997) note that the image of a precinct is partly defined by the signs, symbols and images with which it is associated in contemporary culture. Venice’s gondolas, New York’s apple symbol or the Sydney Harbour Bridge would exemplify this notion.

Another key consideration is the patterns of use that develop within a precinct’s geographical layout at different times with different types of tourists. Elements of both these factors are that a tourism precinct:

- is used by a variety of tourist types at one time;
- offers a diverse range of activities for each tourist type and user group; and
- will be used differently by different user groups (Ashworth & Dietvorst 1995).

McDonnell (1997) suggests other terms that can be interchanged with tourism precinct including peripheral tourism area and tourism destination zone. The former is the concept of a tourism precinct as related to a hotel or resort operation that provides accommodation. It is the businesses and services used by both tourists and residents in a condensed area; this permits social interaction between tourists and residents and allows the ongoing opportunity to profit economically from tourism.

The concepts of interaction and opportunity for profit introduce another component of the definition of tourism precincts: ownership. The area of a tourism precinct belongs psychologically as much, if not more, to the residents than to tourists, and the economic profits from tourism flow to local businesses as much, if not more, to the attraction or resort operators. In short, there is a variety of land and business ownership overseen by a public body such as a local council, and the precinct is therefore considered communally accessible. In this sense, sites that have many of the components of a precinct, such as Warner Bros.’ Movie World in Queensland or Yulara in the Northern Territory, cannot be classed as precincts because they are privately owned entities.

A peripheral tourism area differs from a tourism precinct as it does not include accommodation. The term could be considered a potential subset of a tourism precinct, as a precinct would include the resort or hotel itself within its definitional boundaries.

The arrangement described by the term tourism destination zone comprises:

- Attraction clusters—a series of attractions in close proximity;
- Service community—an associated or nearby town or city which supports tourism functions for the above attractions. The community itself can also be an attraction;
- Transportation and access—the circulation corridors to outside the destination zone; and
- Linkage corridors—the circulation between attractions (Gunn 1997).

Tourism precincts in tourism industry literature

The term tourism precinct appears to be used in three different categories in tourism planning documents, namely:

1. A wide geographic area containing several distinct attractions and at least one host community with associated infrastructure. This model is predominant in areas with low population densities. Examples include Freycinet Tourism Precinct and Peel Region Heritage and Tourism Precinct (Case Studies 1 and 4).
2. A small geographic area containing part of a single host community, not necessarily any distinct attraction other than the precinct itself, and predominantly constituted of tourism infrastructure such as accommodation, retail outlets and restaurants. This model is predominant in larger population centres or in places that experience mass tourism. Examples include The Rocks in Sydney and Todd Street Tourism Precinct, Alice Springs, Northern Territory.
3. A grouping of fee-charging attractions, such as museums, art galleries and cultural centres that may be near to one another or have a linked ticketing system. Examples include Outback at Isa Explorers’ Park, Mt Isa, Queensland.

The tourism precincts described in this study comply with the first category. The second category is more akin to an urban application, and the third category is covered by the term attraction. Categories 1 and 2 do have common traits and industry documents addressing both categories were reviewed to develop the characteristics of the definition uses in this study.

The Alice Springs Central Area Urban Design Guidelines outlined both general and specific approaches and strategies for the Todd Street Tourism Precinct and adjacent areas:

While the Guidelines in general apply to all precincts, there has developed within each a character and form that requires a more specific approach, in order to further enhance the qualities of each precinct. A precinct approach will encourage discrete theme-ing within each area, through the responsive application of built form, landscaping,
street furniture, pedestrian access, signage guidelines etc. This will aim to improve consistency and compatibility in designing the Alice Springs Central Area (Connell Wagner 2002:4).

This inclusion supports Hayllar and Griffin’s (2005) view that tourism precincts may have distinctive character and form, achieved through responsive application of built form, landscaping, street furniture, pedestrian access and signage guidelines. It also suggests that tourism precincts:

- are actively distinguished through discrete theming; and
- have a consistent and compatible relationship with other regions whereby they are recognisable entities within a whole.

The Tasmanian Roadside Signs Manual suggests that an area can be signed as a tourism precinct if it has:

- evidence of a critical mass of attractions providing a substantive tourism experience;
- an integrated tourism development and promotional strategy by the local tourism association or local council focusing on the precinct experience; and
- ongoing commitment by the local operators to the strategy (Tourism Tasmania 2002:28).

This reinforces the use of thematic marketing of tourism precincts, introduced by McDonnell (1997), through planning and promotion as a discrete unit. This definition also introduces local community recognition and support as a factor of tourism precincts.

The term tourism precinct can be seen as distinct from other industry terms, such as:

- **Attraction** – a natural or cultural feature or a single tourist operation.
- **Cluster** – a critical mass of competitive tourism product including one or more major attractions in a concentrated geographical area. Clusters can be connected by touring routes and themed trails (Tourism Tasmania 2004). A tourism precinct is smaller than a cluster and often also has a critical mass of competitive tourism product; however, this does not have to include major attractions. Often, but not necessarily, precincts are contained within clusters.
- **Hub** – a concentration of visitor services or attractions (Tourism Tasmania 2004). A tourism precinct has services and attractions as well as a defining character.

**Tourism precincts in rural and regional areas**

The term regional refers to part of an area with common geographic, economic, statistical, social or cultural identifiers. It may include a regional centre, town or rural area crossing one or more local government areas. It excludes areas that are dormitory catchments of major capital cities or population centres. The term rural is generally understood to be that which relates to, or is characteristic of, the country and to people who live in the country. It is both a quantitative and qualitative term being related to distance from major centres, as well as to aspects of community relationships, environmental attributes and attitudes and characteristics of individuals such as stoicism, independence, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness (Figure 11).

Rural tourism is a complex multi-faceted activity: it is not just farm-based tourism. It includes farm-based holidays but also comprises special interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and, in some areas, ethnic tourism … There is also a large general interest market for less specialised forms of rural tourism … where a major requirement of the main holiday is the ability to provide peace, quiet and relaxation in rural surroundings (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 1994).

![Common Rural and Regional Pattern](#) ![Common Urban Pattern](#)

**Figure 11: Common relationship patterns between tourism precincts and the host community centre**
While a tourism precinct was traditionally defined as an urban phenomenon, such as Sydney’s The Rocks or Fremantle’s Victoria Quay, the definition has grown and it is now accepted as occurring in both urban and regional areas. Tourism precincts in urban and regional applications have many of the same essential characteristics. However, they have subtle differences, which are highlighted by a definition of rurality. The three criteria in defining rurality are:

- population density and size of settlements;
- land use that is predominantly agriculture and forestry; and
- ‘traditional’ social structures and issues of community identity and heritage (OECD 1994).

**Population density**

Rural and regional areas are characteristically low in population density with small settlements (OECD 1994:10). This has an impact on the definition of the term *tourism precinct* in several ways. Tourism precincts in rural and regional areas differ from Hayllar and Griffin’s (2005) definition for urban tourism precincts (Figure 12). As rural communities are smaller in size and generally do not support such diverse cultural or ethnic groups, a precinct may not be aligned to any particular group but may encompass the values of the whole community. A tourism precinct may surround a host community, as the area used and perceived by tourists as part of that place may be greater than the built area of the township. In urban areas, it is common for the urban form to surround the precinct.

**Land use**

Precincts in rural areas cross many different land use zones. Rural and regional areas have relatively simple economies with less segregation between different land uses (OECD 1994:11). The same area may be used by many vocational groups and therefore a tourism precinct may overlap with many other precincts or land use zones (Figure 13). The infrastructure and services used by tourists in rural and regional tourism precincts are more likely to be the same as those used by residents and other industries. This is unlike urban tourism precincts where tourist-specific infrastructure is often viable. Shared use in rural and regional areas is ecologically desirable and often unavoidable. This has implications for those responsible for providing and maintaining the infrastructure.
Social structure, community identity and heritage

Rural and regional tourism precincts have different social structures, community identity and heritage values than urban tourism precincts. Frankenberg (1966, cited in OECD 1994:11) suggests that rural and regional areas have social structures that exhibit:

- a sense of community with others over a sense of association with others;
- social fields involving few people but multiple role relationships;
- different social roles played by the same person;
- simple economies;
- division of labour gender not class based;
- ascribed status, not achieved status;
- education according to social status;
- role embracement over role commitment;
- close-knit networks;
- local rather than itinerant populations;
- economic class as one of several divisions;
- conjunction rather than segregation; and
- integration with the work environment.

These attributes can affect a visitor’s perceptions of a tourism precinct as they can provide friendly and more open social relationships, a different ‘sense of time’, a strong sense of community and a more integrated community structure. For example, the local councillor might also be the butcher.

A rural and regional tourism precinct may also differ from Hayllar and Griffin’s (2005) definition in that the physical fabric in rural areas often includes natural features and is not always related to historic built form. Appeal can also be derived from a built fabric that is not notably ‘of historic value’ but is nevertheless a characteristic of the area and attractive to a visitor (Figure 14).

![Figure 14: Cottages in Tilba, New South Wales](image)

Further, if a heritage built fabric exists, it may no longer be complete, with sections lost or destroyed between the time when the fabric was established and when it was recovered or restored as a tourist attraction. As a result, the visual characteristics of a rural precinct may be quite different to that of an urban precinct of similar vintage.

Defining a tourism precinct in a rural and regional area

It is possible to derive from the preceding discussion on precincts, tourism precincts and rural and regional tourism eight key characteristics of a tourism precinct in rural and regional areas. These are:

1. **Concentration of tourism uses.** A tourism precinct has a concentration of tourism services and attractions where there is a dependent relationship between infrastructure and attractions. There is high visitation by tourists to the area and a main interest, trade or vocation is known to be tourism related.

2. **Synergistic relationship to other land/marine uses.** The areas considered inside the tourism precinct are not exclusively given over to tourism and may be shared with other land uses. Shared use is seen as desirable if not essential. Land and business ownership is varied and includes both the public and private sectors.

3. **Diversity of activities and users.** Within the services and attractions offered there is a diverse range of activities, supporting and attracting a wide range of tourist types.

4. **Local community interaction and facilitation.** The diversity of uses facilitates social interaction between the tourist and residents and the area of the tourism precinct is considered communally accessible. The local population endorses the use of the precinct by tourists and use of the term tourism precinct.
5. **Characteristic distinction.** The precinct exists in a locality marked by a distinguishing feature or distinctive character making a recognised place, where character components, such as texture, space, form, detail, symbol, building type, use, activity, inhabitants, topography and degree of maintenance establish and display patterns or themes producing a strong image. The area then has a consistent and compatible relationship with other areas of a region whereby they are recognisable entities within a whole (Figure 15).

6. **Geographically distinct and limited.** A space of definite or understood parameters within a larger area with fairly definable boundaries in which a place is situated. A geographical area, sometimes broad in scale with the possibility of encompassing smaller precincts within these bounds or possibly overlapping with other precincts, capable of coherent management.

7. **Clear thematic marketing.** The precinct has the capacity to be demonstrated in an integrated tourism development and promotional strategy that has a synergistic relationship between tourism product and promotional material. A tourism precinct may in part be characterised by the signs, images and symbols associated with it in contemporary culture as distributed through promotional material.

8. **Representative management.** With shared land and facilities use, the precinct’s management is representative, usually as part of the structure of broader local government.

Figure 15: Oatlands in Tasmania’s Midlands is an incomplete historic ‘strip’ development

**Physical arrangements of rural and regional tourism precincts**

Urban tourism precincts generally have a single physical arrangement: the precinct exists as a compact entity surrounded by its host community. Rural and regional tourism precincts are more diverse and the relationship between the host community, the tourist and the included attraction are more complex. Five general physical configurations, or models, can be derived from urban design theory, namely:

1. Host community / satellite attraction model
2. Host community / multiple satellite attraction model
3. Host community / linked attraction model
4. Contained host community / attraction model
5. Combination host community / attraction and shared attractions model

An attraction is a natural or cultural feature or a tourist operation that draws tourists to a precinct. The host community refers to the place where the majority of infrastructure that supports access to these attractions is based. Commonly, the host community is associated with a resident community. In this case, the major infrastructure will be in the geographical centre of the local community. This is often, but not always, the place for tourist overnight stays within a precinct. Many tourism precincts exhibit a combination of relationships.

The physical configuration in a tourism precinct can impact on the economic and environmental cost of its operation and maintenance, and on the type of tourist likely to visit it. For example, if the host community is significantly removed from its satellite attractions, a car is essential.

**Host community / satellite attraction**

In the host community / satellite attraction model (Figure 16) the attraction is separated geographically from the host community. This model is common where attractions are natural features such as Cradle Mountain and Dove Lake in Tasmania. There, the visitor information centre and accommodation facilities are set apart from the main attractions to prevent further damage to the fragile ecology of the area. Issues that arise from this model include maintenance of roads and transport into the attraction, the provision of services to and removal of waste from the attraction, and provision of information about the attraction to the visitor.
The host community / multiple satellite attraction model (Figure 17) is similar to a host community / satellite model (Figure 16) except there is more than one attraction and these are not necessarily accessible from each other and may only be accessed through the host community (a radial model).

Freycinet clearly conforms to the host community / multiple satellite attraction model, with Coles Bay as the host community and the satellite attractions including the various bays, the peninsular and islands, Friendly Beaches, Nine Mile Beach, Cranbrook (an inland town) and Moulting Lagoon. If tourists visit multiple attractions, they must return each time to Coles Bay to drive to another destination. This takes pressure off the individual attractions, as they do not have to contain accommodation and other facilities. However, it places pressure on Coles Bay Township and the local road network. This may increase wear and tear on roads and engender some frustration with visitors; conversely it may create a greater sense of self-contained place, or precinct, in visitors’ minds. However, if the visitor expectation is for peace, quiet and a chance to see abundant wildlife, this may lead to dissatisfaction.

Kaikoura is not termed a tourism precinct in the planning documents. However, as with Freycinet, it is a mass tourism destination and a recognised district and it has many commonalities with tourism precincts. Kaikoura Township is the service community, and the multiple satellite attractions include beachside viewing of marine mammals and marine life, offshore whale watching, seal spotting, mountaineering, rock climbing, wilderness experiences and farm stays.

The host community / linked attraction model (Figure 18) occurs where the attraction and associated infrastructure are adjacent. Coffs Harbour and Byron Bay in New South Wales are good examples of this kind of relationship, as both are holiday towns that are inseparably linked with the beaches on which they are located.
This model is common where the attraction is natural, urban or artificial. Issues that this model may raise include the appropriate protection of attractions from degradation due to frequent unregulated access. This is particularly difficult in areas with natural features, such as the dunes and headlands along beaches. Byron Bay conforms largely to this model, but there are also satellite attractions in this precinct. With the increasing numbers of tourists visiting and staying in Byron Bay township, many are choosing to stay in quieter hinterland towns, such as Bangalow, and may take quick trips to the Byron Bay beaches or to go shopping.

**Contained host community / attraction**

The contained host community / attraction model (Figure 19) occurs where the attraction surrounds or is the associated infrastructure. Examples of this type of relationship are The Rocks in Sydney, Ballarat in Victoria and Kangaroo Island in South Australia. This model is common where the attraction is urban or artificial, and is heritage, history, or culturally based. In some circumstances, such as Cataract Gorge in Launceston, the attraction may be natural. Issues that this model may raise include breakdown of social relationships between the residents and tourists because of oversaturated interaction.

In the case of The Rocks, local residents have been almost driven out of the precinct by intense tourism activity. Authenticity of the precinct may also be under pressure from this physical relationship as local services such as the corner store and local markets are being replaced by tourism operations, such as opal stores and markets that contain goods that are no longer locally produced.

**Combination host community / attraction and shared attractions**

Many tourism precincts exhibit a combination of the above models and can share attractions with other precincts or regions (Figure 20). Remote or shared attractions are attractions located between and shared by two potential host communities. In terms of time spent at an attraction or precincts, communities have the best tourism economy when serving both the tourism circuit and longer-stay travellers (Gunn 1997).
Areas of future action

As discussed previously, it is possible to provide a workable definition for a tourism precinct in a rural and regional area, distinguish the major physical differences between rural and regional tourism precincts and urban ones and begin to categorise the likely physical arrangements of rural and regional tourism precincts. The areas of future action that will test these findings include the profile and actions of tourists in rural and regional areas; the usefulness of the concept of a tourism precinct; and matching this concept to practice on the ground.

Tourists in rural and regional areas

The research for this report did not attempt to establish a profile of tourists and their activities in rural and regional areas. However, there is considerable value in establishing understandings of the tourist types, their behaviour, requirements and preferences and trends in each. Relevant research questions include:

- How do tourists use rural and regional areas? What are their patterns of behaviour?
- How do these patterns vary to those observed in urban areas?
- What do these tourists regard as an attraction or attractive in these areas?
- What is the relationship between rural and regional space and tourist engagement?

The usefulness of the concept of a tourism precinct

There is a need for a concept that applies to a rural and regional area that tourists recognise as a particular place with an identifiable community and a group of associated activities that are attractive. Further, this place is such that tourists want to and can stay in and conduct their day-to-day operations there as they recognise an actual or implicit boundary to this place. As tourists recognise these boundaries, it is likely that the community shares similar recognitions, and that the place both groups identify as the core of the area is the centre of the community. Given that this does occur and that the place can be called a rural and regional precinct, relevant research questions include:

- How do rural and regional places evolve into what tourists recognise as a precinct?
- What characteristics are critical for them to do so?
- Can rural and regional precincts be sustainably developed and maintained for tourists, locals or both?
- What is the relationship of tourist precincts to each other and to other areas within a region?

During this study, it was found that precincts with tourism plans are generally those that currently experience or anticipate mass tourism. So, is the concept of a tourism precinct valid for smaller or less visited destinations? If it isn’t, what area, density or size of community or tourist industry is needed for it to be valid? If the concept of a tourism precinct is not useful from smaller destinations, what other concept is useful? Relevant questions include:

- Is there a set of clear and cogent definitions for grouping tourist destinations of different scales and intensities in rural and regional areas?
- How do these definitions vary to those applied in urban areas?
- While the identification of a precinct can assist with planning and marketing that place, is the experience of one precinct transferable to others?
- If it is, what level of similarity between the precincts is critical for this to apply?
- Is there value in categorising the configuration of rural and regional tourism precincts? Do precincts of similar configuration have similar experiences and can they be shared more readily than precincts of different categories?
• What are the site and situation factors of each category that contribute to the development of rural and regional tourism precincts?

Matching the concept to practice
There are obvious problems in applying over-rigorous categories to potential precincts in rural and regional areas, especially as tourism may be only one of several co-dominant land uses. Where does the boundary of the one tourism precinct start and end? What should be included in the precinct and how do the component parts relate to each other. Relevant research questions include:

• What types of relationships exist between different kinds of attractions in rural and regional environments and how do they disperse tourists within rural and regional tourism destinations?
• What types of relationships exist between attractions and the host community and other economic activity in the precinct?
• What is the requisite mix of tourist activities and attraction clusters within rural and regional precincts and cities?
Chapter 3

ISSUES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRECINCTS

Introduction

The World Commission on Environment and Development’s *Our common future* (the Brundtland Report) (1987) established sustainability as an important issue in contemporary society. Since that time, there has been broad discussion on definitions of sustainable development itself, and definitions that make reference to individual, often economic, sectors of activity (Hunter 2002). One of these key sectors is tourism, the world’s largest legitimate industry (World Wildlife Fund (WWF) 2001:1). Most accepted definitions of sustainability stress three key areas: the Community, the Environment and the Economy (United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2004; World Conference on Sustainable Tourism Committee (WCSTC) 1995; Australian Tourist Commission 2004; World Travel & Tourism Council, World Tourism Organisation & Earth Council 1996). To achieve sustainability is to achieve a particular balance between these three key areas over a significant time span. These definitions are necessarily broad but can gloss over the realities of implementation (Hunter 2002). In business, the consideration of these three is referred to as accounting for the Triple Bottom Line.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization taskforce recommends that sustainability become a concept determined on a case-by-case basis (Manning 1999), recognising that the balance of Community, Environment and Economy may be weighted very differently in different circumstances. Professions associated with land use planning and the infrastructure design such as architecture and engineering are struggling with the concept and the implementation of sustainable practices. Besides trying to eliminate previous bad practice, they are grappling with ways of addressing intergenerational equity when many of today’s decisions are based on short-term economic or functional drivers.

The Australian Tourism Commission defines sustainable tourism as that which provides ‘economic and social benefits to local communities while protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural attributes’ (2004). Milne (in Hall & Lew 1998) believes that truly sustainable tourism is an unachievable objective. This is because tourism is a discretionary and arguably unproductive use of valuable resources. As such, it cannot be sustainable. Nevertheless, tourism exists and even the act of striving for sustainability can be worthy and produce positive results. An examination of sustainability and tourism is timely as the implications of increased and intense tourism activity are becoming better understood and their impacts documented. Environmental sustainability has not only been recognised as a key marketing factor, but deserving of a more earnest consideration in the development of tourism ventures. Similarly, the societal impacts of tourism’s intensification are being more widely appreciated. Both aspects are particularly pertinent in rural and regional areas, which may be in or near fragile ecosystems, such as coastal wetlands, or part of important cultural and community networks (Figure 21).

![Figure 21: Boardwalks at Sarah Island in Western Tasmania protect sensitive ecosystems](image-url)
Most precincts in rural and regional areas develop and are used by a community of people who live in and relate to the precinct as part of their day-to-day lives. The members of that community will have personal views on sustainability and the actions needed to achieve it. These views will be shaped by their own culture, experience and understandings of the place, and moderated by the community’s broad consensus view on sustainability. They will act accordingly. The introduction of tourists to a precinct makes achieving or addressing sustainability more complex. Tourists are a subset of all users, and tourists and residents may have markedly different understandings on sustainability and display different behaviours in a precinct. Tourists may think locals do not respect their environment because they use it for economic gain through agriculture, fishing or forestry. Locals may think tourists, especially those living in cities, don’t understand their needs or respect the broader economic and environmental drivers of providing the resources for modern society.

The arrival of a tourist generates a series of effects on the precinct and the surrounding community. These can be positive and negative (Goeldner & Ritchie 2000). Negative impacts result from a tourist not having the same knowledge and understanding of the precinct as the resident. Effects include:

- Increased economic activity through a greater demand for services (both direct and indirect). This creates wealth in the precinct but also problems. Wealth creation can centre on those who provide direct services such as food, entertainment and accommodation. These are usually private individuals or companies. The benefits to the rest of the community may be hard to measure. The provision of indirect services, such as parking, water and sewerage, can increase capital costs to the community as these are usually funded from the public purse. Expanding services to supply seasonal or cyclical tourism demands can also create a long-term operation cost burden for the community, as larger facilities are more expensive for the base population to maintain.

- Altered amenity for the community and the tourist. This can be both positive (new restaurants, better roads or more employment) and negative (all the best spots taken, overcrowding or increased rates).

- Increased awareness of the delights that a precinct can offer. Generally, a tourist brings an openness to discover the attractions of a place, taking delight in things that members of the community might think are everyday (Hough 1990). This presents an economic opportunity for developing facilities that cater for fee-paying experiences but also provides an opportunity for cultural self-awareness and empowerment.

- Increased pressure on the built and natural environment. This can range from increased waste and run-off, the pressure of more building, demands to alter buildings and possibly an eventual breakdown of the character of a precinct.

Effects such as these lead to a series of questions about the things that support and facilitate the tourism industry: service provision, infrastructure, community relationships, character and attributes of a place, environment and so on. Making and maintaining a sustainable tourism precinct relies on a consideration and balance of all these issues.

**Issues Affecting the Sustainability of Tourism Precincts in Australia**

The issues that appear to be critical to making and maintaining sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas are listed in Table 1. They are grouped in the areas of sustainability—Community, Environment or Economy—with which they primarily relate. While treated individually in the following discussion, the issues are generally closely interrelated in practice.

The term *environment* can be associated with at least four different physical concepts in the following discussion, namely:

- the environment as the combination of natural or man-made features that people perceive as the character or qualities of a place;
- the environment as the natural, ecological world that seems to exist independent of human intervention and has intrinsic attraction, such as Queensland’s Daintree Rainforest or the Franklin River in Western;  
- the environment as the natural and ecological world that surrounds us and is continually affected by human intervention; and
- the environment as the functional built form, including buildings, roads, parks and other facilities.

While it is useful to maintain these as separate concepts in marketing; such a separation does not exist in reality and can be deceptive or unproductive if maintained while planning for sustainability. Humans are part of the natural world and human actions impact upon the built and natural environment continually. Similarly, actions of the natural world affect human behaviour and infrastructure continually, especially as the natural world can provide a large part of that infrastructure.
Table 1: Key issues in making and maintaining sustainable tourism precincts

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<td>• Social relationships—interpersonal tourist/resident dialogue</td>
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<td>• Intra- and inter-sectorial and regional integration</td>
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<td>• Natural attributes (perceptions of natural features such as landscape, climate and biodiversity)</td>
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<td>• Sensual attributes (sensory and behavioural parameters)</td>
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<td>• Spiritual attributes (emotion, time and memory; psychological parameters).</td>
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<td>• Natural resource base</td>
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Community and Sustainable Tourism Development

As the part of society with the most to gain or lose from the process, the local community’s participation in the development and maintenance of a sustainable tourism precinct is essential. This implies that the community can act as a joint and effective unit. Communities, except in rare circumstances, are not homogenous (Richards & Hall 2000). They contain individuals of varying ages, backgrounds, cultures and beliefs who operate on their own, in families and in social or economic groups.

Rogers and Ryan (2001), however, believe that communities seeking to secure a sustainable future can create something new and need to:

- take stock of the human, environmental and economic resources available to them;
- develop a shared vision about the way in which these resources are utilised; and
- develop a means to evaluate progress toward identified goals.

This implies that the community can act in a joint and effective unit. In recognition of these aims, a sustainable tourism development should:

- respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. … [It should also] ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation (WTO 2004).

Every community is different and there are a number of factors that will affect how the above objectives are made possible through tourism. These can be grouped into the following categories:

- Community structure
- Community participation
- Social relationships—interpersonal tourist/resident relationships
- Intra- and inter-sectorial and regional relationships
- Environmental attitudes—community attitudes towards the environment

Community structure

In Australia, governance is in three general tiers. The federal government deals with laws, policies and systems in line with the constraints of the Australian Constitution. State governments have the constitutional responsibility for land use and the built environment and establish policy and guidelines for the economic development of regions and for activities such as tourism. Local government administers policies established by the state, such as building regulations, as well as making decisions on a wide range of local issues, such as detailed land use planning and general services management. Community groups, such as local tourism
associations, chambers of commerce, and residents’ groups have no regulatory capability but can have significant influence in decision-making through their connection with the broader community, participation in committees and their activity with local and state government representatives.

Non-government organisations, such as the World Wildlife Fund or state representative organisations, can be either allied to local community groups or act independently of local interests. They also have significant influence in decision-making through their influence on high level policy developments and their activity in lobbying local and state government representatives.

While state governments establish broad tourism policy and strategy, local government and community groups generally are most active in the development of precincts, especially in rural and regional areas. However, the development and skills base of local government authorities (LGAs) and community groups is not consistent between areas and states and is dependant on a range of factors, including the profile of the local population and the size of the LGA. In some areas, viable community groups may not exist.

Historically, tourism has been driven by private enterprise and the respective local government has stepped in later to regulate potentially damaging or enhancing practices. Many communities are now realising that to ensure the sustainability of the place they love it is helpful to anticipate future development and plan for it. A broadly representative structure, with a strong presence by community groups involved in the planning process can ensure that the heritage and traditional values of a community are identified and conserved. An example of this is the joint management approach of the Dhimurru Land Management Corporation in north-east Arnhem Land. Community values and attitudes towards the environment also affect the degree to which a precinct can be sustainable.

The Kaikoura case study demonstrates recognition of its community structure and the relationships existing within its various government and community based bodies. The Kaikoura District Council Tourism Strategy for the Kaikoura District (2002) is clear about including all stakeholders in decision-making processes. Because this can often be fraught with organisational complication as too many individual voices can have individual agendas, the document recommends the establishment of a body of representative stakeholders. This achieves several other aims:

- it ensures the longevity of stakeholder participation;
- it involves an effective range of government support and management services;
- it means that there are mutual benefits from limited reserves;
- coordination, integration and cooperation between stakeholders occurs more willingly;
- leadership development programs are more likely to be successful; and
- in the long term, its leadership is determined by consensus.

Community participation

Community involvement is important in the development of sustainability in tourism. It increases the likelihood that a major proportion of benefits remain in the host community (WWF 2001:2) and contributes to the fair distribution of those benefits within that community (Tosun & Timothy 2003). A decision driven by community initiative or supported by broad community consensus rather than taken by private enterprise alone is more likely to reflect the values of that community and will generally be more concerned with achieving sustainable outcomes over short-term financial ones.

Participation in decision-making will necessarily depend on the power structures within a community (Reed 1997). Richards and Hall (2000:7) state that community participation and empowerment is based on generative rather than distributive power where decisions are made from the grass roots up, not handed down. However, effective community engagement in planning and developing a precinct requires social capacity that may not exist in some areas. Freycinet, for example, is regarded as a successful tourism precinct venture. However, as is discussed below, the planning process here was driven from the top down, but structured to allow the community to make decisions.

Tourism can also generate conflict between stakeholders, between user groups, between stakeholders and user groups, between passive and active groups or between conservationists and resource users. The sustainability of a tourism precinct will depend on how the resources of a community are planned and managed to promote the values of the community and minimise potential conflicts between different community members or between the community and tourists. Community participation in the decision-making process may facilitate both.

Stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism precinct planning are necessarily from all levels of government and society, from federal departments to local individuals. Representation tends to be diverse so that the various resource and community issues can be addressed effectively. Communities that desire their tourism activities to conform to the notion of a sustainable tourism precinct generally prepare planning documents that:

- facilitate the structure, planning and identification of long-term aims; and
- serve to unite disparate elements within a community—they acknowledge individual voices and provide an opportunity to state the wants, roles and needs of local residents in the tourism development.
The process of preparing a planning document allows community members to discuss their aspirations for a precinct, their knowledge of its history and its resource base.

Community involvement in planning ensures that opportunities for economic and social development stay within the community, opens dialogue between stakeholders and empowers different levels of society. The results of these effects can be diverse and include improved relationships between residents and tourists, reducing long-term unemployment and developing broad community skill in decision-making.

The Freycinet Tourism Development Plan (Inspiring Place 2004) acknowledges that community involvement is lacking in Freycinet. At the time of writing, the steering committee established to manage the completion of the FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) consisted of representatives from various state government agencies, local operators and local government. Whilst the steering committee may be a promising initiative it does lack representation of local community groups and special interest groups that have an important stake in the future of the area and whose input is necessary if the FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) is to receive widespread support.

In Kaikoura, as noted in the Kaikoura District Council Tourism Strategy for the Kaikoura District (2002), a series of steering committees was found to make best use of specific expertise and local skill. The district council in Kaikoura established the Kaikoura Tourism and Development Committee to represent all community stakeholders in the tourism planning process. They appointed representatives on a sectorial basis from social welfare and Maori groups, the environmental sectors, the attractions and service industries and the business community. Peel Region documents cite the valuable role that different tiers of the local community, such as community youth groups through to conservation and environmental groups, played in effective community action.

Social relationships

Friendliness and relaxed, social relationships are desirable attributes of rural and regional tourism precincts. Ideally, social relationships occur between tourists, local residents and members of the tourism industry who may also be local residents. In practice this relationship can be positive or negative, fitting in a range between embrace and withdrawal (Page & Dowling 2002). Often the experiences of residents with tourists or vice versa will affect the continuing interaction between the two parties. If an experience has been negative then a resident may treat tourists with indifference or even hostility. This affects the amenity of the resident, the experience of a tourist and the appeal of the precinct. At a community level, it may also affect the way infrastructure is maintained, made accessible or withdrawn. While residents often act to attract and welcome tourists to their precinct, disgruntled residents can deter them by removing direction signs to attractions and making amenities unavailable.

It is important for tourists to respect local residents and customs. This encourages sharing and educational interaction between the parties, a well-documented benefit of tourism (Goeldner & Ritchie 2000:33). It also ensures that tourists feel welcome to return to the precinct in the future, and that the locals support this activity in their region.

Precincts can have a general perception of friendliness and openness. Rural and regional areas are often chosen as destinations particularly for such perceptions and for the distinct patterns of living that are associated with rural life. Attitudes towards tourists may differ within the community but a generally healthy social relationship is an integral part of the sustainability of community and economy.

At Coles Bay, on the Freycinet Peninsula, local ownership of business ensures the employment of residents. This has three noted effects: it generates pride in local attributes, provides training which may lead to improved employment elsewhere, and makes local knowledge readily available to visitors. All three contribute to the community’s social cohesion and tourists’ perceptions of it.

The value of morale is also addressed in the case study planning documents cited in this study; interestingly, at Kaikoura it is referred to as ‘optimism’. This was achieved through a comprehensive community participation and awareness program, public meetings, small group consultation, media coverage, and seminars or talks on tourism-related topics. These all encourage local morale and optimism in the future.

The busiest times in Byron Bay are school leavers’ fortnight in November, the Christmas-New Year period, Easter and when three large annual music festivals are held. There is evidence from locals that some residents leave the region at these times to escape the noise, traffic congestion, violence associated with alcohol abuse, the increasing trade in and abuse of drugs, and pressures put on services such as waste removal, street cleaning and general maintenance of infrastructure. There is considerable enmity generated in residents who resent their space being ‘invaded’ and ‘despoiled’. In an attempt to boost the sense of community and support for tourism in the region, the Byron Bay planning document sought to address these issues.

Intra- and inter-sectorial and regional relationships

As noted earlier, tourism may be only one of several major industries operating in a rural and regional precinct. Others often include education, agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry, information and communications, food and health services, and transport. Just as establishing a tourist precinct will influence the operations of these industries, their operations will significantly influence the success of the precinct. Therefore, collaboration
between tourism bodies and other industry groups can be vital for the successful integration of sustainable strategies in a community or a tourism precinct. This collaboration may be between individuals, companies or representative groups and be established for direct financial reasons, for general community benefit or through necessity. Direct financial relationships can occur between an accommodation provider and a guiding service or a transport provider, or between a restaurant owner and local food producers. As they can provide mutual economic well-being, these relationships can be quite robust. Major companies and groups in industries outside tourism now tend to recognise that it is in their interests to support broad community development and that collaboration between industries and between industry and the community is part of this. These collaborations can promote the sustainable use of resources, integrating interpretation, infrastructure, services and other resources into precinct-wide tourism industry networks that include other industries. Often tourist sites are in the same place or adjacent to another industry sector’s operation, as in Kalgoorlie (Figure 22) where the working mine site is also a tourist attraction. In Tasmania, a collective of forest industries has established a tourism charter and is committed to limiting the visual impact of forest operations on tourism sites and major tourist routes.

Figure 22: Kalgoorlie Mine—left: the Old Ivanhoe Mine Head and right: Mullock Heaps

Source: Nullarbor Net (2008)

In some instances, collaboration between industry sectors is essential. This often occurs when tourists have to drive on private, forestry or park roads. The cost of providing this infrastructure is not borne by tourism operators but they often benefit from it.

Conflicts between industries can occur when the demands of one are regarded as unreasonably curtailing the operations of the other. Examples of this include when agricultural or industrial operations have to be curtailed to reduce noise at some times of the day or when forestry operations are moderated to maintain visual amenity.

Regional actions and relationships also affect the sustainability of a rural and regional precinct. Any tourism precinct will exist within a regional context and relationships with other areas in the region or with other regions are essential. Economically, these relationships can be mutually beneficial. Touring routes can be established and promoted to capitalise on increased domestic and single car tourism. These also help to establish a region or regions thematically in tourists’ minds. However, regional relationships are also important environmentally. Inappropriate tourism development can compromise or pollute water catchments and affect geographically large areas. These require region-wide approaches to resolve or avoid.

In terms of intra-sectoral relationships, the FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) advocates the integration and close location of all supporting facilities for ‘synergistic benefit’. Methods to achieve this include the integration of communications and marketing with existing and future strategies. At an inter-sectoral level, the FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) highlights Green Globe 21 (the international certification programme for sustainable travel and tourism) as being vital and to be adopted across all tourism industries and communities in the precinct. It is possible this also refers to an adoption of Green Globe 21 state wide, in order to bring all tourism operation and precincts under the same auditing and management structure. Further strategies include the development of complementary activities such as environmental science research to complement tourism interpretation. The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) advocates the parallel development of regional and precinct planning documents for ‘seamless integration and delivery’. The other case studies include similar provisions, promoting interregional familiarisation and funding, and supporting integrating signage with the regional themes, such as festivals, agricultural events and produce fairs.

One of the core outcomes of the Kaikoura plan was the opportunity for collaboration between local Maori groups (the Iwi and Paketa) to build a sustainable tourism industry. This required considerable communication and links with national and regional bodies. Alliances and interaction with the private sector, educational institutions, government organisations, neighbouring districts and even overseas cities provided the means to
achieve mutual benefits from the limited resource base. Cooperation between the Kaikoura District Council and the New Zealand Department of Conservation over the management of marine life characterises these broad intersectorial partnerships.

**Attitudes towards the environment**

As noted, the attitudes of a community, its members and visiting tourists towards the environment will influence the potential to achieve a sustainable tourism precinct. These attitudes can concur or conflict. If they concur, the attraction of the precinct may increase as the community and the visitor are of like mind.

The formation of community and individual attitudes and the patterns of behaviour that result are complex. Cooperation and initiatives within the community will affect the effective implementation of sustainable strategies (Carlsen, Getz & Ali-Knight 2001:293).

Behaviour can be influenced by the provision of infrastructure, education, adoption of community policy or regulation. For example, residents of precincts near fragile ecosystems may, as a matter of principal, stick to marked tracks or boardwalks when they go bushwalking to avoid track braiding and further damage to vegetation and habitats (Figure 23). In Coles Bay on Tasmania’s Freycinet Peninsula, the local residents have instigated a ‘no use of plastic bags’ program, the first town in Australia with such an initiative. Tourists are expected to comply voluntarily. Regulation offers a more proscriptive compliance method. For example, there are laws against littering on the street in all Australian towns and cities and state laws about smoking in public spaces.

![Figure 23: A boardwalk on Mount Wellington, Tasmania, improves safety, reduces track braiding and protects native flora and fauna](image)

To embed positive attitudes towards the environment, the communities covered in the case studies generally placed a priority on local involvement and education. Specifically, at Freycinet the establishment of an integrated transport system that emphasised public or non-motorised individual transportation encouraged the notion of environmental stewardship. This initiative was echoed in Byron Bay with an emphasis on the ‘park and ride’ concept. Traffic and parking congestion is identified as a major problem in the Byron Bay Township, as is volume and speed of traffic. The Byron Bay CBD, which used to be a quiet ambling shopping and dining area en route to the beach, has become a snarled car-dominated gridlock. Providing access with minimal car intervention to the CBD is of vital importance to local residents and tourists.

**Areas of future action**

It is possible to show that communities in rural and regional areas are different to those found in urban areas. They are likely to have different understandings of sustainability and their relationship to a tourism precinct in their community centre is likely to be more intimate and connected than in urban areas. Tourism precincts in rural and regional areas will also have fundamentally different relationships to other industry and land use sectors than precincts in urban areas. This has to be based on cooperation as policies of exclusion or separation are likely to be ineffective and disruptive. The areas of future action that will test these findings include understanding the importance of community structure, the effects tourists have on that structure, and the interrelationship of tourist precincts with other land uses in the precinct and in the region.

**Community structure**

The self-reliance of a community appears to be one of the major factors in its adoption of sustainable practices and its successful interaction with the precinct planning process. Some communities appear more self-reliant
than others. There is little literature that provides a clearly expressed outline of community tools and processes for community involvement specific to either Australia or its rural and regional areas. A more thorough examination of the community’s role in tourism development in rural and regional areas is needed.

**Tourist interactions with the community**

Tourists have an effect on the daily lives of the members of rural and regional communities. Relevant research questions include:

- What impacts do tourists have on the leisure experience, spaces and places of the local community?
- How do rural and regional residents perceive tourists and tourism?
- How do tourism precincts contribute socially and economically to the quality of rural and regional life?
- What are the key conflicts associated with the development of tourist precincts?
- Is there an acceptable rate of change for rural and regional communities and what are the implications of this change for local communities arising from rural and regional tourism?
- How can the diversity of rural and regional tourist experiences be maintained?

**Relationships between sectors and regions**

The relationships between economic sectors in a rural and regional precinct and between the precinct and the rest of surrounding region are critical to the sustainability of a tourist precinct. Relevant research questions include:

- What is the potential for successful inter-sectoral relationships?
- Which intersectoral relationships are essential to maintain a successful tourism precinct?
- What is the potential for successful regional relationships?
- Given their interdependence, how closely should the planning boundary of the precinct be best aligned with the boundary of other land uses?

**The Intangibles of the Environment and Sustainable Tourism Development**

Designers and geographers frequently seek to provide a distinction between space and place. Relph (1980) lists Lukerman’s six components of what constitutes place:

- The idea of location, especially location as it relates to other things and places, is absolutely fundamental. Location can be described in terms of internal characteristics (site) and external connectivity to other locations (situation); thus places have spatial extension and an inside and outside.
- Place involves and integration of elements of nature and culture; ‘each place has its own order, its special ensemble, which distinguishes it from the next place’ (Relph 1980:170). Every place is a unique entity (Figure 24).

![Figure 24: Hobart’s waterfront: places have a combination of qualities that make them unique](image)

- Although every place is unique, they are interwoven by a system of spatial connections and transfers; they are part of a framework of circulation.
- Places are localised—places are parts of larger areas and are focuses in a system of localisation.
- Places are emerging or becoming; with historical and cultural change new elements are added and old elements disappear. Thus places have a distinct historical component.
Places have meaning; they are characterised by the beliefs of humans: ‘geographers wish to understand not only why a place is a factual event in human consciousness, but what beliefs people hold about place … It is this alone that underlies man’s acts which are in turn what give character to a place’ (Relph 1980:169).

We can understand places to be complex integrations of nature and culture that have developed, and are developing, in particular locations, and which are linked by flows of people and goods to other places. A place is not just a ‘where’ of something; it is the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful experience. The intangible attributes discussed here refer to the identifiable character or atmosphere of a precinct, its sense of place or genus loci. This is more than the sum of the each observable part. In assessing intangibles it is important to note that these are based on human perception. When personal perceptions correlate within a group they become common perceptions.

Features of genus loci may include landscape forms evoking enclosure, building masses in contrast to open space, community entrance impressions, nodes for social exchange, ecologically sensitive areas, locations of traditional happenings, sites rich in historic or ethnic lore, and places known as special by the local population. Every community, small town, and rural area has aesthetic and spiritual values like no other. When probed, local residents can describe these values. A major component of planning and developing areas for tourism is respecting and interpreting such values for visitors (Gunn 1997). Genus loci is a dynamic concept and the character of a place is continually evolving. The introduction of tourism into a region will have an affect on the character of that region and understandings of genus loci should be allowed to evolve (Tucker 2001). Sustainability does not imply that things cannot change. Every destination has a character. However, some may be stronger than others. Strong ties between society and setting create a strong sense of place. Often precincts with strong characters develop slowly over a long time, and exhibit authenticity. Authenticity is determined by human perception.

As the ideas of genus loci and authenticity rely on personal perceptions, they will be affected by cultural bias and social meaning (Richards & Hall 2000). A tourist’s age, gender, background and culture of origin will affect how and where they travel and how they perceive the destination (Cohen 1979, in Li 2000). Lang (1987:77) groups these perceptions into four categories of attributes and expectation of experience, distinguishing between the physical, the social, the psychological and the behavioural environment. The physical consists of the terrestrial or geographic setting; the social of the inter-personal and inter-group organisations that exist; the psychological of the images that people have in their heads; and the behavioural of those elements to which a person responds.

Different people have different travel motivations and they will look for and experience different intangible qualities in a place. Tourism is about selling these experiences. Therefore, the understanding of the genus loci of a place is of vital importance. For the purposes of this study, the intangible attributes (or sense of place) in sustainable tourism precincts can be described in four categories, similar to those above. Applying to both natural and built places, these categories can be described as capacities to create and to hold physical attributes, such as spatial, movement and natural parameters; social attributes, such as relationship and cultural parameters; sensual attributes, such as sensory and behavioural parameters; and spiritual attributes, such as emotion, time, memory and psychological parameters. These categories are discussed in the following sections.

Physical attributes

Physical attributes are the combined effect of the natural and made features of a place as perceived and experienced by those who live or visit that place. The physical attributes of a place define character as much, if not more so, than other attributes.

For example, the relationship between the ground, the visitor and the view at Grand Canyon Track, Grose Valley, in the Blue Mountains National Park in New South Wales provides vertical exposure, a sense of disconnection with the ground and an ability to survey the striking physical attributes of the place. The exhilarating physical experience, in combination with the magnificent visual appeal of the place, is highly memorable for visitors and provides evocative promotional images (Figure 25).

Tourism marketing frequently focuses on imparting an impression of the physical attributes of a place. This is mainly because images of these attributes can be easily framed, captured, manipulated and reproduced in a range of media. Other attributes, such as characteristic sounds or fragrances, or a sense of excitement, can be inferred in carefully arranged images of the physical environment. The Whitsunday Region in north Queensland is defined and marketed by its natural physical attributes—tropical islands, rainforest and sailing on calm, bright blue water. Ballarat’s marketing promotes the historical physical attributes of the region (Figure 26).

Not all physical attributes are attractive; some places might have physical features that a person might find unpleasant. For example, places may be narrow and poorly lit and therefore create a sense of unease or danger; they may be crowded and full of people with no room to move or escape, or poorly signed and maintained (therefore potentially shabby). Conversely, spaces that are empty of people or far away may represent isolation. For someone wanting to get away from it all, an isolated attraction may be highly desirable. Another tourist might describe the same place as dull and unatmospheric, in the absence of shops, other people and noise.
Desirable physical attributes can include more than broad landforms and building. They can extend to other aspects of nature. Australia is marketed overseas for its unique flora and fauna; biodiversity is a drawcard for some tourists. At Freycinet, there is a strong perception of biodiversity and an association with nature due to the area’s abundant wildlife, varieties of forest, littoral and wetlands ecosystems, and wildflowers. Both the terrestrial and marine environments are identified as a valuable asset. The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) states that the peninsula is already recognised as containing ‘numerous rare and threatened plant and animal species and plant communities’ (24). Freycinet also has the perception of being ‘untouched’, a highly desirable asset for certain tourist types.

Tourism can enhance and compromise the physical attributes of place. Increased economic activity can supply the resources necessary to rejuvenate and maintain the built environment. Conversely, additional economic activity can lead to changes that reduce natural appeal. The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) notes that efforts must be made to address visible signs of liquid waste such as onsite treatment and disposal of waste water, and other potential pollutants anticipated with increased tourist numbers, such as black water, litter, fumes from cars, trucks and buses, waste left in the national park and increased noise and light pollution. Light pollution is the increased night lighting in and around tourism developments.

The other case study precincts also recognise and capitalise on physical attributes. Kaikoura is noted for its extremely abundant marine life feeding and breeding habitats, and its proximity to mountain and forests. The mild climate of Byron Bay supports a variety of flora in rainforests, grasslands, wetlands, and on dunes, and there is evidence of Aboriginal settlement. The Byron Region also hosts a wide variety of outdoor activities such as hang gliding, bushwalking, surfing, swimming, sailing, windsurfing and rafting due to its sheltered beaches and waterways, and forested hinterland.

The Peel Region offers a number of natural features to see and experience, making it a popular destination outside Perth. Each season offers a unique experience for the tourist. Several heritage sites in the area allow the visitor to take a step back in time; these sites are accompanied by interpretative information that educates the visitor on the conservation and historic value of these places.
Social attributes

Social attributes pertain to the culture found in a precinct and how that culture is perceived both by residents and tourists. This perception may be based on a general or anecdotal perception of friendliness. It also extends to cultural identity in general. Culture and perceptions of culture arise from the interactions between residents observed by visitors, and between residents and visitors.

Some perceptions will directly influence a tourist’s choices. If a precinct has a reputation for being ‘friendly’, it may draw more tourists than a neighbouring precinct regarded as less friendly. Not all perceptions will directly affect choices in this manner, but they may add to the quality of the tourist experience. With the growth of indigenous tourism in Australia, talking to local Aboriginal residents, experiencing their culture, and going on informal bush tucker walks may be an integral and highly memorable part of a tourist’s travelling experiences.

Rural and regional areas in Australia are generally perceived as having an ‘old-fashioned’ approach to service, i.e. more relaxed and provided at a slower pace than in bigger cities. However, bringing city-based service norms to rural and regional areas can also be self-defeating, as this can replicate the behaviour many tourists are seeking to escape.

Sensual attributes

Sensual attributes refer to the qualities of a place that are evoked through the five senses: the sounds, textures, aesthetics, forms and colours, smells, and tastes that together make a place sensually unique.

Generally there is an emphasis on vision as the predominant sense yet there is a growing recognition that a total sensory experience is generally the most memorable. Newer attractions, particularly five star health retreats and eco-resorts, are providing guests with other sensual experiences such as night walks that emphasise bird and animal sounds, and bush tucker tours that include locating, tasting and cooking indigenous foods.

The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) highlights the importance of viewing opportunities ‘where visitors can appreciate the individual features of Freycinet as part of a larger regional landscape’. This provokes not only an understanding of the context of Freycinet, but also a sense of anticipation in the tourist. This anticipation is initiated on the journey to Freycinet; glimpses or sustained views offer visual delights and many stopping points afford the visitor the opportunity to break, breathe the clean air, and take photographs. As there is little human activity at night at Freycinet, noise at night is minimal, except for fossicking animals and the ‘break of waves onto the beach’. As noted, the air in Tasmania (as in many rural areas in Australia) is very clean. It affords not only excellent long distance views but also highlights the very distinct scents of the eucalypts, wildflowers and other plants of the bush.

Spiritual attributes and authenticity

Spiritual attributes are the emotions and memories that a place evokes in a person’s imagination (Figure 27). They are an integral part of human experience. Spiritual attributes are a result of a combination of other intangible attributes.

Figure 27: Uluru, central Australia—it’s perceived spiritual attributes and genus loci attracts many tourists

They are personal reflections on a place, and may occur instantly, or over a long period of time, or through frequent revisitation to a place.

One key response to places that often evoke imagination and engagement is a perception that the experience is authentic. Authenticity is the quality or condition of being trustworthy, or genuine, possessing the true and
faithful character as against a character that is contrived, fabricated or shallow. Authenticity implies that there exists a factual base to genus loci and that this can evolve.

Authenticity in tourism is from a tourist’s point of view. It occurs when the tourist’s own perceptions of a precinct strongly align with what they understand is the common perception. This understanding develops through experience of the precinct, speaking with residents and gauging intent, particularly of tourism operators and local governments, who may stand to gain financially or politically from misrepresentation.

Authenticity relies on honest intention (Jiven and Larkham 2003)—what the tourist experiences should not be a construction designed to lead them into thinking that a precinct’s genus loci is one thing, when it is actually another. Or, that what the tourist is experiencing is ‘the real thing’, not a representation with ‘staged authenticity’ (Figure 28).

![Figure 28: An authentic, small town experience in Tilba, southern New South Wales](image)

These ideas are particularly relevant to cultural tourism, where an interpretation of place is often demonstrated to a tourist: they do not personally experience it unless they live in the region for some time. However, the need for authenticity in tourism experiences is hotly debated, and the desire for authenticity can often be damaging to the host community as it places pressure on a constant need to be aware and to be on show (Urry 2002:9). In other places (such as Uluru, Figure 27) an authentic experience may require no or minimal effort from the local community.

The Byron Shire Tourism Management (Rob Tonge & Associates, Stephen Fletcher & Associates and Concept Tourism Consultants 2002) notes the privilege of having all types of natural beauty, from beach and headland, to cane fields and rainforest, within the precinct and all of these features are easily accessed. It is still possible to escape the crowds in Byron Bay itself and find a quiet beach for swimming, surfing or fishing; or take a swim under a rainforest waterfall, or go shopping at alternative markets or in the smaller towns for high quality crafts. There is also an interesting added sensual/spiritual layer in Byron Shire. Not only is the area beautiful, it is renowned for hosting a variety of spiritual and sensual experiences, which range from massages and aromatherapy sessions to visits to ashrams or retreats, to seeking alternative counselling or health treatments. The precinct has long had a reputation as the place to go to drop out, unwind, relax, or find oneself or inner peace. The issue of the authenticity of these services is contentious.

**Combined attributes**

Physical, social, sensual and spiritual attributes combine to form an impression or perception on the visitor of the place and its people. In the cool temperate parts of Australia, English colonists attempted to recreate a landscape with which they could feel comfortable. The results of this are still visible and often used to entice tourists from other parts of the country. The perception that some Victorian and Tasmanian landscapes are ‘English’ in character is an example of how intangible attributes combine to create genus loci. The physical features of this include roads winding through hedgerows; small, hawthorn-defined paddocks; pine windbreaks and rivers lined with willows. The coolness in the air, the colours of autumn, the view of church spires across the landscape, and the smell of the turned soil draw on a publicly accepted cultural memory. Images of England and feelings of nostalgia are evoked in the tourist’s mind, even if they have never been to that country (Figure 29).
Areas of future action

As discussed previously, frameworks exist to assess the components of what constitutes place, and the intangible attributes that make up the identifiable character or atmosphere of a precinct, its sense of place or genus loci. While physical attributes are those most regularly conveyed in tourism promotion, social, sensual and spiritual attributes all combine with it to create the sense of place that tourists perceive. The areas of future action that will test these findings align closely with each of the attribute areas.

Physical attributes

The physical attributes of a place are often the driver for an initial tourist attraction and the part of the character of the place most regularly projected to attract visitors. Relevant research questions in this area include:

- What is the value in categorising precincts by their attractive physical attributes, such as heritage building, beachside, nature and forest?
- What are the important physical factors that support a quality experience for tourists and the community in rural and regional environments for each category?
- How do different types of tourists view and use the spaces common in each category?
- Can inclusive tourism spaces be created both physically and socially in rural and regional precincts?
- Is there danger in concentrating on the promotion of physical attributes?
- For heritage based precincts, what impact does the longevity and level of construction of building types have on their form, authenticity and success?

Social attributes

Precincts in rural and regional areas can have social and cultural characteristics that tourists find attractive or intriguing. Relevant research questions in this area include:

- What effects does tourism have on cultural identity of rural and regional precincts?
- How critical are perceptions of community–tourism interaction to establishing a successful tourist precinct?

Sensual attributes

There is a growing recognition that sensual attributes are an important part of the tourist experience. Relevant research questions in this area include:

- Having grown up surrounded by particular sensual attributes, how can a rural and regional community identify those sensual attributes attractive to tourists?
- Once they are identified, how can these attributes be expressed, marketed and protected?

Spiritual attributes and authenticity

While authenticity in tourism is from the tourist’s point of view, it is based on aspects of the community. Relevant research questions in this area include:

- How much can rural ‘authenticity’ be sacrificed to tourist appeal without destroying the essential sense of place?
- What are the effects of globalisation and homogenisation of goods and services on visitors’ experience in rural and regional tourism?
The Tangible Infrastructure of Sustainable Tourism Development

In this report, tangible infrastructure is that part of the natural and built environment and the organisational or cultural structures of society that supports habitation of a place. This infrastructure is essential for modern society and its considered provision can enhance a place’s *genus loci*. The needs inhabitants generate are met at different levels. The natural environment can satisfy some requirements by providing attractions and resources, such as oceans to swim in and rain to provide a water supply. Some infrastructure can be provided by the operators of tourism businesses within a precinct. This includes hotels, shops, cleaning services and restaurants. However, other infrastructure must be provided by larger bodies such as state governments, local councils or other land management agencies. This includes roads, sewerage plants, policing, health services and a water supply. Providing tangible infrastructure is the basis of several major professional groupings, including engineering, architecture and urban design, management, law, economics, and accountancy.

It is probably impossible to overestimate the importance of tangible infrastructure in creating sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas. It is a well-recognised area of concern for tourism operators and regional planners. The capacity of the tangible infrastructure directly limits the precinct’s carrying capacity while its establishment and maintenance costs can severely test the financial resources and organisational capacity of managing organisations and the community (Figure 30). Their provision and maintenance is particularly important to this study as it is inherently more expensive to provide and support a given level of service in a rural and regional area than it is in an urban one. Simply, the infrastructure is spread more widely and is used by a smaller number of people. Further, with a simpler economy and smaller population base, a rural and regional area generally has fewer resources to plan and finance the construction and maintenance of infrastructure than a similar urban area (Figure 31).

Figure 30: Boardwalks in high rainfall areas are vital but expensive to build and maintain (Mary Cairncross Park, Caloundra, Queensland)

Source: Outdoor Structures Australia (2008)

Figure 31: The problems of maintaining rural infrastructure, Tilba, New South Wales
Tangible infrastructure can be generally categorised into four groups:

1. Natural resource infrastructure that includes water, soil and air supply.
2. Service infrastructure that includes generally unnoticed but essential background systems such as potable water supply and health services.
3. Physical infrastructure that includes visible systems and structures such as shops, information centres and attractions (Figure 32).
4. Regulatory and organisational infrastructure that includes policy development, guidelines, governance and management.

![Information shelter, Franklin Crossing, Derwent Valley Highway, Tasmania](image)

While these are discussed separately following, provision of these types of infrastructure is closely interrelated and interdependent. They often cannot be considered separately in practice. For example, interpretation of a site or precinct requires regulatory, organisational and physical infrastructure. Similarly, a precinct cannot supply sufficient accommodation if a suitable water supply has not been planned and provided. The water supply is then limited by the capacity of local catchments and rainfall. Finally, the quality and location of the accommodation cannot be assured without suitable regulatory and planning regimes.

**Natural resources**

Natural resources form part of the infrastructure that supports the use of a place. For example, bores, rivers, lakes and streams provide the basis of a water supply and a stormwater management system. Land provides somewhere to build, park a car, or to landscape.

As the performance of a precinct’s natural resources will influence its operation, their characteristics must be understood and human interaction with them managed. While natural resources can be robust and can regenerate to some degree, they have natural limits. The amount of rainfall will limit an area’s water supply while the characteristics of local systems will limit its ability to absorb human waste or impacts without significant detrimental effects. The Kaikoura precinct receives good rainfall, which supports the tourism activities of the area. It also has an abundance of marine mammals and other life in the adjacent ocean. This provides a core attraction for tourists (Challenger 2002) but one that could easily disappear without careful strategic management.

**Service infrastructure**

Service infrastructure comprises the generally unnoticed but necessary background systems required for the normal inhabitation of a place. This includes such things as a water supply and a health system. Generally, these services can be divided into essential and discretionary services. Essential services are those that the community feels are crucial for the normal habitation of a place, such as may be acceptable in a remote beachside or desert community. This level of services is nevertheless an agreed cultural construct as what is regarded as normal in one place may be regarded as luxury in another. Also, some places or tourist destinations are seeking to differentiate themselves from others by not providing or allowing particular services in an area for ecological, social, cultural or political reasons.

In most Australian locations, essential service infrastructure would likely include a clean water supply; a safe human waste disposal system, such as a sewerage system; electricity; basic food distribution; basic waste removal; basic medical services; roads and vehicular access; basic public transport, such as an occasional bus;
basic telecommunications, such as a phone system; and basic emergency services (see Figure 33). Not all these services may be in the place, but all are required within a reasonable travel distance.

Figure 33: Physical infrastructure needs support services, such as garbage collection, lawn mowing and maintenance

Discretionary services are those that are desirable for normal habitation. Again, this is a culturally determined set and is likely to include:

- Readily available public transport;
- Regular waste removal, cleaning and maintenance;
- Banking and money exchange;
- Mail and other logistics services;
- General medical services;
- Standard telecommunications, such as phone, television and data services;
- Policing;
- Emergency services, such as a fire brigade, coast guard, and search and rescue;
- Storm water management;
- Diverse food distribution, such as a range of outlets or a market, festivals and events; and
- Library, educational and training opportunities.

Most of these services will not necessarily attract tourists to a precinct but their absence may deter them. The development of Freycinet Peninsula was conditional on linking the existing water storage dams with two catchment areas to increase the security of water supply into the future. The expansion of Strahan Village on Tasmania’s west coast was held up for several years for want of an adequate sewerage scheme. The standard of maintenance and the cleanliness of facilities can encourage or dissuade travellers to stay longer. Issues with distribution of goods or standards of communication can affect the marketability of a precinct.

Depending on the location and the time of year, this service infrastructure may be used primarily by residents, by both residents and tourists, or by tourists solely. The dominant usage patterns can significantly affect sustainability. As discussed below, it is not generally viable for a community to provide and support a significant increase in basic service capacity to cater for a relatively large number of visitors staying for a short period. In Byron Bay, basic water, sewerage, electricity and telecommunications services are regarded as satisfactory for local residents and the ‘normal’ tourist population. However, these services are put under stress during holiday periods and festivals. One of their biggest services challenges is the series of music and other cultural festivals held in the precinct each year. Two of the larger music festivals attract at least 8000 visitors. These festivals generate considerable income for the economy and local businesses. However, some local residents and other tourists are concerned that these events are now too large to be run sustainably, and that they generate significant waste, dust and noise.

Services planned for Freycinet Peninsula include a public transit system. The importance of this was identified in a transport and feasibility study, based on the Cradle Mountain model. This system would use alternative fuel vehicles and have a wide network of stops. Bicycle racks and community bicycles and helmets would also be provided. The sewage treatment plant at Freycinet was also identified as needing upgrading. For financial reasons, this was proposed as a staged development over a number of years. This delay would also allow time to ensure the selected site, method of treatment and disposal of effluent was most beneficial or least detrimental to the area.

One aim of the Kaikoura Plan (2002) was to provide a diverse attraction base; however this would only be successful if supported by good service provision, such as medical care, safety and security.
Physical infrastructure

Physical infrastructure includes the visible systems and structures required for the effective operation of a modern society, specifically one focused on tourism. It includes such things as shops, information centres and attractions. Of the various forms of infrastructure discussed here, the physical infrastructure has the greatest direct impact on visitors. Its quality will influence many of the attributes of the genus loci discussed above and its quantity will directly determine the capacity and marketability of the precinct.

Physical infrastructure may include:
- Hospitality facilities, including food and beverage outlets;
- Accommodation options, such as hotels, motels, caravan parks and camping grounds;
- Guidance and interpretation, such as visitor information centres and interpretation panels;
- Retail facilities (Figure 34);
- Public amenity, such as malls, footpaths, public parks, landscaping, picnic areas and toilets;
- Public facilities, such as jetties, boat ramps and lookouts (Figure 35);
- Commercial facilities, such as banks, ATMs and professional services;
- Signage and direction; and
- Transport and parking services, such as transit centres, rail stations, highways and major roads, and parking areas.

Figure 34: Physical infrastructure—retail facilities in a small rural town

Figure 35: Physical infrastructure: Dismal Swamp Airwalk, north western Tasmania

The range of issues involved in assessing and managing a precinct’s physical infrastructure is too broad to be addressed here. They include all or part of the expertise base of several professions including architecture, urban design, town planning, civil engineering and facilities management.

A major part of all the case studies addressed the adequacy, character and arrangement of physical infrastructure. The plan for Freycinet included a strategy to concentrate people into compact settlements with Coles Bay as the tourist focus. It was proposed that a clear entry point be established for Coles Bay, and that existing public facilities such as the library, tennis courts and picnic area be centralised with a new rural transaction centre. This would also include a visitor information centre. The concept was that creation of a ‘main street’ commercial zone at Coles Bay, linking the point of arrival, information and community facilities, would become part of a village centre and establish greater physical consistency and legibility for the town and the area. Other physical infrastructure proposed included new jetties, upgraded public amenities (such as seating,
landscaping, outdoor eating areas, and public toilets) and additional visitor interpretation opportunities (Figure 36). Additional accommodation was under examination, including a new caravan/camping area near the main street of Coles Bay. Establishing such a strategy provided a structure for land use planning controls, which can limit unchecked developments and restrict services demand.

Figure 36: Physical infrastructure need to be planned, financed, designed, built and maintained

The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) also identified signage as a key factor and advocated visitor directional, hub and themed signage; an upgrading of signs in general; the provision of tourist information signs; the provision of ‘entry’ and ‘gateway’ signs; and advance signs. All signs would conform to a unified and simplified system, which could use intentional pictograms and precinct consistent route markers, brands, symbols and colours.

Tourists surveyed at Kaikoura said they were more than happy with the public infrastructure such as roads, parking, water, waste disposal, and parks and reserves. To assist with development, accommodation standards were developed. It was proposed that guidelines be established for signage and advertising. Mismatched, ad hoc and numerous signs outside businesses and on roadsides are being tackled as many tourists and local residents believe this constitutes visual pollution. The report also promotes efficient use of infrastructure that benefits both the tourism industry and the owners of the facilities.

As at Freycinet, the Byron Bay Council has advocated strategies to prevent further degradation of the natural environment, particularly in reference to the Cape Reserve. This would involve rehabilitating disturbed areas, weed removal programs and retaining native vegetation. The maintenance of clear and robust tracks in this area also facilitates rehabilitation. Due to the strong cultural and historical heritage of the area, including aboriginal settlements, it was recommended that interpretation panels be installed around the reserve, educating tourists and local residents of the cultural and environmental significance of the headland.

On a broader scale, it was recommended that the Pacific Highway be upgraded, thereby reducing travel time for visitors from Queensland, encouraging more day-trippers and short break visitors. This, however, would put pressure on parking and local roads in the town. To address parking problems, options were developed that included introduction of parking time limits or parking bays, a central business area by-pass, pedestrianisation of a major shopping road (returning it to the atmosphere it had twenty years ago) a park and ride transit centre and zones only for local traffic. This scheme would be supported by free regular shuttle bus services, thereby benefiting local residents, businesses and tourists.

Regulatory and organisational infrastructure

Regulatory and organisational infrastructure includes the background intellectual, regulatory, policy development, governance and management systems required for the safe and orderly operation and development of a place, and especially a tourism precinct. As with other areas of infrastructure, providing this infrastructure in rural and regional areas is intrinsically more difficult than urban areas due to the potential for multiple land uses in the precinct and the capacity of local government and the community to provide the necessary skills, expertise and resources. As discussed above, urban precincts are often a single land use located wholly within a host community. In rural and regional areas, the boundaries of a precinct can encompass numerous land uses and include several, sometimes quite separate, communities. Each of the land uses or land tenure types is likely to have a representative group or management agency, such as a farmers and graziers association, progress associations, and state government forestry and parks and wildlife agencies. Establishing consistent policy and guidelines for the precinct will necessarily include achieving a common vision with each of these agencies and accommodating the various legislative and regulatory requirements.

The organisational task of achieving a consistent regulatory and organisational approach for a precinct can be taxing for communities in many rural and regional areas. In many of these areas, the local government authority
may be the only body with both the skill base and resources to undertake the task. Even then, the capacity of the local government association may be insufficient. For Tasmania’s Freycinet Peninsula, the state government had to assist Glamorgan Spring Bay Council to establish the key planning exercise for that precinct and set up the community structures necessary to interact with the consultants. Regulatory and organisational infrastructure can be generally categorised into three groups:

1. Regulatory mechanisms;
2. Organisational structure; and
3. Tools such as current planning and management documents.

**Regulatory mechanisms**

The quality of regulations, government policy and guidelines and the actions of staff charged with their implementation will affect the sustainability of a precinct. Australia’s regulatory mechanisms are established and maintained by the three tiers of Australian government: federal, state and local. As states hold the constitutional responsibility for land use and building issues, the majority of regulations governing tangible infrastructure are established under state law. The state can delegate particular authority to local government, such as control of local land planning, but generally retains direct responsibility for issues that cross over several local government areas, such as management of national parks. Sometimes, responsibility is shared. For example, state authorities such as New South Wales’s Roads and Traffic Authority may control the highway network, while local government authorities manage local roads.

State governments can delegate the detail of particular regulatory requirements to national agencies, while remaining ultimately responsible for the enabling legislation. The more important example of this is the Building Code of Australia. This code governs the basic construction standard of every new Australian building and was developed by the Australian Building Codes Board. The code also calls up numerous Australian Standards whose requirements then become enforceable regulations. Generally, the regulations and standards governing the quality and performance of a precinct’s service and physical infrastructure already exist. However, some may need to be modified to suit the requirements of the precinct’s development. In these cases, the good will and professionalism of the staff charged with the implementation of these regulations and standards can be critical in facilitating or frustrating change.

One major aspect that is broadly under local council control, with only moderating state government control, is land use planning and zoning. Local government land use planning and zoning is based on approved planning schemes: long-term legally binding documents that encapsulate the aspirations for the physical form of all or part of the municipality or shire. These documents combine conditions for development of different land use types (such as housing or light industrial) and maps of the designated uses of particular areas of land.

The detail of a planning scheme can significantly influence the sustainability of a tourism precinct. A developing tourism precinct may not fit into the land uses set out in an existing scheme, while particular land uses in the precinct may not match or be adversely affected by definitions used in the scheme. If this occurs, development is constrained until the planning scheme is changed. In Western Australia it was found that increasing integration of residential zoning into tourism precincts increased the flexibility of investment opportunities (Department for Planning and Infrastructure 2003). An integration of zoning may also decrease the urban sprawl of regional towns.

The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) contained the most explicit discussion of the employment of regulatory mechanisms in the implementation of its strategies. Key recommendations included refining the Glamorgan Spring Bay Planning Scheme 1994 to retain the existing scale of Coles Bay and Swanick and to maintain the ‘naturalness’ of a landscape buffer between them; developing a recreation management plan which would identify and control the spread, type, spectrum and needs of facilities in the precinct; determining the appropriateness and location of marine reserves using the identification, selection and review process detailed in Tasmanian Marine Protected Area Strategy; and addressing key zoning issues. This included subdivision restrictions, buffer zoning, development of service industries and respect for topography and views. It is also proposed to integrate the amended planning scheme with the amended Freycinet National Park Management Plan (2002).

Kaikoura is prone to earthquakes, floods and tsunamis. Regulatory and organisational bodies had to recognise and address the consequences of these events and plan to manage their impact on the resident community and on tourists. This included preparing a natural disaster management protocol and ensuring that civil defence contingency plans included warnings and evacuation procedures specifically designed for tourists.

**Organisational structure**

A sustainable precinct requires regular and effective management. Organisational infrastructure includes the type and structure of strategic and day-to-day management processes in tourism precincts. Strategic management includes community consultation and enhancement processes; the development and maintenance of marketing, servicing and operational strategies; and interaction with regulators and policy-makers outside the precinct. Issues such as maximum visitor numbers are influenced by management policies. Access restrictions or constraints are often in place to avoid the problem of ‘loving a destination to death’. However, policies focusing
only on impact as a result of usage levels may be narrow in focus and miss important factors in the control of impact, such as types of use allowed (Wight 1998). Day-to-day management includes the basic maintenance of essential services. In rural and regional areas, strategic and day-to-day management is often the responsibility of local government staff as they have the required expertise and the services provided to tourists largely correspond with services supplied to the community.

The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) provides a detailed discussion of organisational structure and demonstrates how a well-planned and represented management group can operate as part of a successful sustainable tourism precinct. The charter of the Freycinet Management Group was to establish a representative, adequately funded and vigorously constituted body whose participants would accept a memorandum of understanding indicating they shared the vision and key principles of the development plan. The Freycinet Management Group includes provisions such as agreeing to coordinate implementation between various stakeholders; providing a strategic leadership program and effective program management; being a contact point and linkage between regulatory agencies, intending developers and the public; and facilitating and coordinating communications and marketing approach.

At Byron Bay, one key theme that became apparent from a survey of local residents was the belief that the council lacked the ability to manage tourism development at that time. The survey also highlighted other areas of concern for residents, which included increased crowding and environmental degradation.

**Tools**

A range of state and federal government organisations are charged with promoting sustainability, tourism, heritage, transport management and other relevant infrastructure issues. Part of their activity includes providing guidance on these topics to the broader community. This report is an example. The documents or guidelines so produced are tools to be used by tourism and precinct managers to guide and improve their practice. Including surveys, reports, auditing programs and feasibility studies, the tools consist of:

- transport and feasibility studies;
- guidelines for development in particular locations, such as design guidelines for coastal development;
- environmental monitoring baselines studies;
- visitors surveys and comments;
- aerial photography surveys;
- environmental impact assessments;
- topographical and vegetation analysis; and
- heritage evaluations.

Some tools explain processes for planning, rather than providing information to be used in planning. State of the Environment Reporting is used to keep track of commitments made to sustainability and can help to improve and facilitate decision-making. It can be used as a guide in designing and conducting surveys and is a means by which data on the environmental conditions of an area can be collected, analysed and disseminated. It is also an effective means by which awareness of issues (such as heritage and Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Peel Region) can be identified and recommendations made. For example, State of the Environment Reporting used by the Tasmanian Resource Planning and Development Commission (2003) states the objectives of the Resource Management and Planning System of the state as being to:

- promote the sustainable development of natural and physical resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;
- provide for the fair, orderly and sustainable use and development of air, land and water;
- encourage public involvement in resource management and planning;
- facilitate economic development in accordance with the objectives set out in [the report]; and
- promote the sharing of responsibility for resource management between the different spheres of government, the community and industry in the state.

**Areas of future action**

All professions dealing with the physical infrastructure of a place (architecture, planning, engineering, municipal government and others) are struggling with the concept and implementation of sustainable practices. They are attempting to understand the attainment of intergenerational sustainability when current electoral, budgetary, planning and development cycles are so short. The areas of future action that will refine how these attempts affect the sustainability of tourist precincts include the capacity of physical systems, the capability of the organisational infrastructure and the pressures of success or failure.

**Capacity of physical systems**

For a successful tourism precinct to exist, the natural, service and physical infrastructure of a place must be capable of providing the services required satisfactorily. Establishing a sustainable tourism precinct means that
this infrastructure must be provided and operate in such a way that the qualities of the place are maintained and preferably enhanced. Relevant research questions include:

- Can the sustainable carrying capacity of rural and regional tourism precincts be determined?
- What issues are critical to the sustainable carrying capacity?
- Can these issues be linked to precinct categories?
- What are the environment and infrastructure costs and benefits of rural and regional tourism to the local community?
- Can the constraints on infrastructure development in rural and regional areas be meaningfully compared to those found in urban tourism?
- What influence does transport in rural and regional areas have on visitor access and numbers?
- What is the role of events or other mass influxes in developing rural and regional precincts?
- How can events or other mass influxes be managed so that they are affordable and beneficial to rural and regional areas?

**Capability of the organisational infrastructure**

Establishing the organisational capacity to maintain a sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas is intrinsically more difficult than urban areas due to the potential for multiple land uses within the precincts and the capacity of local government and the community to provide the necessary skills, expertise and resources. Relevant research questions include:

- What models of organisational development work best with tourist precinct in rural and regional areas?
- What factors are critical to the success of these models in precincts of different types?
- How are these factors best addressed in a rural and regional precinct?
- How can organisational infrastructure be resourced in small communities?
- What regulatory constraints limit the development of sustainable tourism precinct?
- What are the major types of world events likely to impact tourists and trends of tourist activity in rural and regional environments?
- Can these trends be usefully predicted and what importance should be placed on them when developing sustainable places?

**Pressures of success or failure**

The success of tourism precincts can threaten the characteristics that make a place attractive. Relevant research questions include:

- What is a sustainable rate arising of change from rural and regional tourism and what are the implications of this change and the rate of change for local communities?
- How can change be constrained to acceptable levels?
- How do rural and regional communities manage cycles of boom and bust?

**Economy and Tourism Development**

Economics is the science relating to the production and distribution of the material resources of a community or nation (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005). To bring this definition more in line with the principles of sustainable development, ‘without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ can be added.

Tourism is considered an unusual industry as it produces no ‘take-home’ end product but rather sells the experience of intangible attributes of a place through the construction of tangible infrastructure. This requires the allocation of a wide variety of both natural and social resources (Sinclair & Stabler 1997:58). In monetary terms, the immediate costs and profits of tourism are borne by both the private and public sectors. The private sector is concerned with the use of resources to make a profit for its stakeholders. To generate a return on investment, an enterprise’s income must be greater than its operational and capital costs. While some period of unprofitability may be accepted initially, private enterprises generally need to make a suitable return on investment in the short to medium term. If they do not, capital is reallocated, losses realised and the enterprise closes. In the public sector, the balance of cost and return is not as simple as this. Public sector costs can result in benefits to the community and improvement in the environment that are not direct, proportional or easily traced. Also, the public sector generally needs to take a longer view than private industry. A seemingly unprofitable investment today may result in viable long-term benefits to the environment and community. Also, the public sector needs to consider effects beyond those of the immediate operation. For example, Tasmania’s Bass Strait and Sydney shipping line may or may not make a direct profit for the government. However, in assessing continuing support for that enterprise, the government considered the total tax and other revenue generated by tourists that the three ships could bring into the state. They only reluctantly decided to sell the third boat.
Profitability in the private and public sectors is often mistaken for sustainability. It is not. If the profits are generated by unsustainable exploitation of non-market natural or built resources, they cannot be sustainable. As discussed above, the natural resources will fail and the built environment will cease to be an attraction. Consequently, profits will cease. Ecological economics encompasses the study of both sustainable market and non-market allocation of resources. A further important consideration in economic sustainability is who receives the profits. Key elements of sustainable economies address the fair distribution of wealth, equitable distribution of benefits and burdens of tourism (including cross generation, class and gender equity), necessary changes in consumption patterns, or full integration of tourism with the local economy (World Tourism Organisation (WTO) 2004; WCSTC 1995; World Travel & Tourism Council, World Tourism Organisation & Earth Council 1996).

At Kaikoura, a core aim was to reduce over-reliance on tourism for economic development. To do so, it was identified that tourism would have to be integrated into other income producing activities, yet could not be considered a short-term activity. To ensure the viability of the tourism planning process, the Kaikoura District Advisory Board prepared a council-funded business plan covering tourism research, development, marketing and promotions. It notes that the local economy needed certain threshold sites to provide momentum and stability while also heeding the dangers of ‘boom and bust’. Strategies to address this included divided controlled economic growth and the anchoring of key developments in the community.

Economic strategies are often discussed as by-products of strategies for social and environmental sustainability such as manipulation of carbon credits, or as a separate issue to sustainability altogether. However, all three aspects of sustainability have to be addressed. Triple Bottom Line accounting and some areas of marketing can be used as organising tools for sustainable economic strategy development.

**Triple bottom line accountability**

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is an audit organisation tool used in business accounting to monitor a company's contribution to sustainability. Traditional accounting has focused on financial concerns and produced reports summarising income and expenditure, and profit and loss for shareholders. With an increasing awareness that a company's pursuit of financial profit can compromise principles of sustainability, there has been tendency to assess a company's performance against financial, environmental and social results and account for these separately. The TBL model can also be used in the public and private sectors. Precincts can be audited in this way to examine their performance against established sustainability criteria.

Criticisms of TBL are that it has no substance and is too vague to be effective, or that it has been superseded with other more rigorous and established methods of sustainability reporting, such as impact assessment. It also may not allow room for different weightings on priorities for a precinct. The matrix in Table 2 shows the considerations for each concerned group that should be addressed in a Triple Bottom Line Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder groups</th>
<th>Economy—Financial</th>
<th>Ecology—Environment</th>
<th>Equity—Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shareholders</td>
<td>Return on investment, stock value, profitability</td>
<td>Risk reduction, use of resources</td>
<td>Public image, legal and ethical practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franchisees/ subsidiaries</td>
<td>Profit or performance potential</td>
<td>‘Clean’ strategy, implementation support</td>
<td>Honourable practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Total compensation</td>
<td>Hazard levels</td>
<td>Professional development corporate culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Pricing quality, value-based product or services</td>
<td>Environmentally safe and sustainable products and services</td>
<td>Ethical practices, responsiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>Pricing, payment terms</td>
<td>Shared environmental strategy and technology</td>
<td>Ethical partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry competitors</td>
<td>Competitive free market practices</td>
<td>Shared standards and technology</td>
<td>Legal and ethical standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Financial stability, philanthropy</td>
<td>Risk or hazard levels, environmental impact, restoration</td>
<td>Local hiring, community service, enhanced quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public, global, humanity</td>
<td>Economic equity and stability, internalisation of external costs</td>
<td>Strategies and practices to benefit biosphere</td>
<td>Strategies to benefit communities and global cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future generations</td>
<td>Research and development funding, response investment</td>
<td>Minimise environmental impact, habitat restoration</td>
<td>Safe, humane and sustainable culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural world</td>
<td>Restoration funding, investment</td>
<td>Sustainable practices, natural diversity</td>
<td>Humane treatment for all life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (inKNOWvate Consulting 2008)
The BSTM (Rob Tonge & Associates, Stephen Fletcher & Associates and Concept Tourism Consultants 2002:4) makes an oblique reference to Triple Bottom Line:

Successful tourism destination management demands strong leadership and establishment of appropriate management, policies and practices that over time, achieve a balance between the environmental, economic and social aspects and the direct impact on the community (the Triple Bottom Line concept).

Although there is no further evidence of direct application of this tool, the reference group acknowledged that sustainable tourism:

[...]

Marketing

Widely discussed in tourism literature, marketing is one tool of economics by which the economic allocation of resources is enacted. It encompasses any business strategy put in place to help ensure the commercial success of the precinct.

Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers or users ... the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services. (Richardson 1996:5)

Marketing is a tool employed in both the public and the private sectors. A traditional marketing mix can include the following:

- Product—what you are offering;
- Place—where and when the service will be provided;
- Promotion—how you tell people all about it;
- Price—how much will it cost;
- Physical evidence—physical promotional material;
- Participants—who provides the service; and
- Process—how will people use and get to the precinct. This can be guided tours of the region, walking paths, interpretation plaques and bus tours.

Marketing of a destination can affect its sustainability. Marketing does not include economic strategies for resources that have ecological but no monetary value. For example, a landscape that has important biodiversity functions but that is not beautiful or arable and therefore not marketable as a tourism product or for agricultural use, can be overlooked as an important asset in a sustainable precinct. A precinct may be more sustainable without tourism. Similarly, if the rush to meet demand overrides the ability of the destination to supply, the environment and the community can be damaged (Kastenholz 2004).

Rather than merely marketing sustainability, it is possible to make marketing sustainable. For example, a sustainable economic strategy for residents may be a policy of hiring local staff rather than staff from other regions, thereby integrating tourism with the local economy; ensuring equal salaries for male and female staff, promoting equity; reducing the use of fossil fuels by providing bicycles as transport; or encouraging longer stays. Green Globe 21 requires statements of strategies such as these for accreditation for both communities and single operations. There are two other areas that affect marketing and the sustainability of tourism precincts. These are recognisability as a precinct and appeal to tourists and ‘fit’ between tourist profile and destination.

The character of a precinct itself will often draw people to a place. For example, Alice Springs is attractive to tourists not only for its cultural significance and amazing landscapes, but also for the romantic notion of experiencing the desert life and meeting the desert peoples.

Understanding the tourist is well recognised in the tourism industry as being an important marketing tool, in shaping both the focus of tourism related products and the advertising of those products. This fit is important in making a tourism precinct sustainable. The definition of the term travel motivation can be phrased as ‘why do certain groups of people choose certain holiday experiences?’. There is often a range of motivations for travel and the subsequent choice of destination. These can change with life experience and the values of the traveller. It also may change with the traveller’s situation, including choices available and time constraints. For example, the types and motivations of tourists visiting the destinations in Figures 37 and 38 are likely to be vastly different. The choice is also linked with personal and psychological motivations. A ‘good motivational profile of visitors’ says Pearce (2000), ‘should be of assistance in understanding how well the destination characteristics fit the needs of the traveller’ (p.265).
The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) identifies the need for a unified regional branding, positioning and marketing strategy; an overall strategic interpretation communication and marketing strategy, which would incorporate existing elements such as the Tourism Tasmania East Coast Touring Route, a quality touring map and guide developed by the Freycinet Coast Tourism Board, an East Coast Interpretation Centre, interpretation panels (FNP), plus a summer ranger program, local tourism operator initiatives and visitor information at local stores. This strategy identified precincts, priorities, interpretation themes and key mechanisms for delivery of the themes consistent with the Freycinet Tourism Development Plan. The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) states that: ‘[I]ntegrated thematic interpretation’ is central to achieving world best practice. ‘Integrated thematic interpretation’ uses strong messages, or themes, that aim to enhance the visitor experience by helping them to gain a sense of the significance and the meaning of their experience. Central to this is the development of ‘place based’ themes, responding to the natural and cultural values of an area, and ‘audience sensitive’ themes. That is themes grounded in understanding the unique characteristics of the local visitor market … Activities, products and services will need to satisfy a range of visitor and residents’ needs including their differing interest, ages, skill levels, mobility, available time and expectations.

Tourism Tasmania surveys identified nature, cultural heritage, and food and wine as core appeals in the precinct and found a ‘more robust’ visitor experience of Freycinet would result where all three coincided. The FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004) also identifies the need to understand and make use of ‘market intelligence’. For example, it was found that the volume of traffic in Coles Bay peaks twice a day for arrival while departure is more dispersed. Further, when thematic interpretation is well conceived, grounded in an understanding of the unique characteristics of the local visitor market, and integrated with marketing communications, ‘it can leverage other economic opportunities at the site, in the region or across the state’ (Inspiring Place 2004:107).

Only the Kaikoura District Council Tourism Strategy for the Kaikoura District (2002) provides as detailed and explicit a marketing strategy as the FTDP (Inspiring Place 2004). In order to attract businesses and events that were compatible with the environmental and cultural ethos of tourism in Kaikoura, the report found that it was important to harmonise marketing and promotional strategies with this ethos. The aim was to attract visitors that have an appreciation for the Kaikoura product, the small coastal village character and the prevalent environmental ethos. The challenge was to extend the season, widen the attraction base and increase the visitor flow to a stable level without compromising the environmental and social considerations (24). One key observation in the Kaikoura District Council Tourism Strategy for the Kaikoura District (2002) was the need to make decisions based on reliable data; it is suggested that an integrated Tourism Information System be
established to provide a continuous and consistent decision making aide for tourism planning, management and marketing.

Maintaining quality information systems and continuous monitoring is essential. Such information includes visitor flows, market size and segmentation, duration of stays, accommodation patterns, transport patterns and growth rates (Challenger 2002:14).

**Branding and advertising**

Branding is the process by which both a brand and brand identity are developed; this may constitute a corporate brand, product brand, service brand or a branded environment.

Advertising is the promotional material or events made available to the public about a precinct. It can include formal and informal advertising such as television advertisements, flyers, websites, word-of-mouth, displays and happenings. Advertising can influence several aspects of a precinct’s sustainability, including:

- Awareness of the precinct to potential tourists;
- Awareness of attractions available in the precinct to both tourists and residents;
- Levels of expectation and satisfaction among tourists;
- Awareness of environmental or cultural issues;
- Raising community moral; and
- Establishing the image of the character of a precinct.

As discussed above, the character or spirit of a precinct can be a drawcard in itself for tourists to a place. Advertising facilitates increased awareness to potential tourists about the special qualities a precinct offers to experience, as well as the attractions that are available. Advertising can also play a role in the development or reinforcement of the identity of a precinct. In addition to the attributes outlined above, the signs, symbols and images associated with a precinct seen in contemporary culture can in themselves influence the identity of a precinct (Rojek & Urry 1997). Advertising is a form of distributing these images. The images of identity that are distributed do not necessarily have to correlate with reality. This can cause several reactions. The precinct can evolve into the advertised identity, as in the case of cultural reinterpretations of the Ned Kelly history and its affect on towns such as Beechworth, Victoria. Tourists’ expectations may be unfulfilled. In Latrobe, Tasmania, the precinct slogan was changed from ‘Platypus Capital of the World’ to prevent the risk of disappointing customers who might not see any of the monotremes, as platypuses are elusive and generally nocturnal animals.

The morale of a community, and therefore its potential attraction, can be lifted by slogans used in promotion such as the Tasmanian marketing slogan and logo, ‘Love This Place’ and the subsequent franchising of the slogan to other parties. Key features of the Kaikoura tourism image brand are marine mammals, notably whales, sea products, the coastal character of the town, service excellence and a clean, green ethos. The quality images reflected in the Kaikoura icons include townscape, customer service, architectural themes, environmental awareness events and conservation.

**Areas of future action**

Growth is generally accepted unconditionally and there are few life cycle assessment models for economy. Discussion of sustainability and tourism in economics, sustainable economic theories, systems, structures, strategies or success factors is scarce. Literature on economic restructuring focuses largely on medium-term solutions, which disregard the long-term vision of sustainability theories (Shaw & Williams 1998:50). The areas of future action that will test and expand these findings include assessing the economic value, benefits and costs of regional and rural tourism to communities; determining ways in which rural and regional tourism destinations can optimise visitor expenditure; and developing models for economic potential in different types of rural and regional tourism precincts.

**Integration of Community, Environment, and Economy**

Although they have been broken into their constituent parts in the discussion above, the issues of community, environment and economy cannot be separately considered in practice. In any sustainable tourism precinct, as in all aspects of human society, they are integrated and dependant on each other. The importance of each in any particular case depends on the demands of the place and the community.

Relationships can be facilitated by tangible infrastructure, such as the provision of telecommunications, or by intangible attributes such as the feeling of community engendered by the structure of the built environment Marketing strategies such as word-of-mouth can be affected by social relationships (Richardson 1996). This strategy also relies heavily on the intangible attributes available to experience at the destination.

The intangible attributes of physical infrastructure itself are important for the experience of a tourist. Intangible attributes can be facilitated by tangible infrastructure, or influenced by economic factors and environmental relationships. In Geeveston in Tasmania, the residents pooled their money and resources to revive
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRECINCTS IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AREAS

the town and attract tourists to the region. The addition of infrastructure to destinations can have a positive or negative affect on the *genus loci* of that place.

Figures 39, 40 and 41 illustrate the range of natural and built elements in rural and regional precincts. The three built elements—interpretation centre, amenities block and picnic areas—were all planned, designed and built by their communities but the result of these three similar processes are quite different. Like any other aspect of human action, making a sustainable tourism precinct requires a blend of art and skill, a capacity to identify what is important and an ability to act to achieve this.

Figure 39: Architect Gregory Burgess’ response to *genus loci* at Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, Uluru

Figure 40: Forest picnic area, between the trees
Precincts are also significantly affected by external influences beyond local control including:

- the actions and decisions of other levels of government;
- national and international economic condition;
- terrorism, such as the 9/11 and Bali attacks and the risk of pandemics such as SARS;
- long-term environmental change, e.g. the rise in sea level caused predicted as a result of global warming can negate local action to preserve wetlands;
- long-term trends in customer demand;
- long-term resource availability—how can a precinct dependant on car-based travel be sustainable if oil supplies are being exhausted?; and
- technological changes—will developments in cyberspace negate the need for tourists to tour at all or will they encourage it?

In conclusion, it is pertinent to summarise the aims of each of the case studies examined in Chapter 1. Each of the case studies not only describes, but demonstrates through practice, significant moves towards sustainability. These changes do not just involve addressing environmental issues but they also address the community’s needs and the local economy.

At Freycinet the consolidation of infrastructure in Coles Bay, the adaptive reuse of existing damaged areas or infrastructure, understanding and addressing patterns of use, and the implementation and development of environmental initiatives within the community (no plastic bags) are examples of a proactive attempt to address sustainability, although there is some evidence of community dissatisfaction. The precinct generally has a very positive image in terms of facilities and experience. The Management Plan of the Cape Byron Headland Trust and the decision-making processes involved in its development and implementation reflect the acute awareness of its authors and their responsibility to protect, conserve and enhance the reserve. In terms of the BSTM (Rob Tonge & Associates, Stephen Fletcher & Associates and Concept Tourism Consultants 2002), seven key issues for moving towards a sustainable future in Byron Bay are:

1. Opportunities for managing and potentially limiting the type and extent of further tourism products, in particular accommodation, within Byron Bay;
2. Opportunity for orchestrating a change over time of the mix of tourism products with a particular focus on increasing high yield, low impact accommodation and product;
3. Reducing the social impact of visitors to Byron Bay;
4. Access and parking issues including opportunities for a CBD bypass and park and ride/transit centre;
5. Addressing the issue of short-term rental accommodation for tourists, being a currently unregulated activity with acknowledged social impacts;
6. Maintaining a strong economy, recognising the economic contribution of tourism; and
7. The image of Byron Bay.

Five priority themes were identified in the local Agenda 21 (Document B—Peel Region) that the council notes need to be addressed (for the City of Mandurah and immediate areas with recommendations however that other areas adopt similar guidelines).

1. Natural environment
   - The importance of recognitive environmental and sustainable issues and the need for their hasty resolution.
   - Increase in budget required to support environmental control and management (Figure 42).
Identify number of bush reserves with management plans already in place, the number of wetlands lost to development and number of access points on the coastline.

2. Employment for young people
   - Create more jobs to keep them in the region.

3. Economic tourism and development
   - Provide information on Mandurah’s economy to businesses to help identify areas for improvement.
   - Increase the number of new (appropriate) businesses to Mandurah.

4. Leadership, consultation and communication
   - Improve communication within and with Mandurah’s community and other areas within the precinct.

5. Community services, infrastructure and transport
   - Develop and maintain transport connection with, particularly, Perth.
   - Develop and maintain good operating bus network between communities and towns within the precinct.
   - Develop and maintain high standard services, infrastructure and support for these (Figure 43).

Figure 42: Large vehicles and caravans create environmental and infrastructure problems

Figure 43: Local infrastructure made available for tourist use in Tilba, southern New South Wales
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

This report focuses on the concept and operation of sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas. Tourism precincts are an important part of the nation’s tourism infrastructure. They are critical to visitors’ sense of attraction and expectation, and their perceptions of destination and place. As such, recognised precincts such as Sydney’s Rocks area and Ballarat’s historic zone form a focus of tourism marketing, promotion and development. The successful development of new precincts and efficient maintenance of existing ones requires the appreciation and implementation of a complex range of skills applied to a wide variety of interconnecting issues. These include community dynamics, tangible physical infrastructure, the intangible characteristics and values of place, and understandings of sustainability.

In Chapter 2 of this report, four precinct case studies were identified and examined to determine if similarities in process, scale, attraction and configuration could be found. There were several clear commonalities: each had community involvement (although not consistently a ‘grass roots up’ process), clearly defined boundaries, existing tourism developments that required management, the development of a management plan, and well enunciated aims of sustainable practices, in the short and long term.

Recognising and developing new precincts successfully and maintaining existing ones efficiently is a complex task that requires skills in:

- intuitive and analytical problem recognition;
- strategic and physical planning;
- architectural and urban design;
- environmental assessment and planning;
- statutory control;
- strategic and day-to-day management and financial processes; and
- community liaison and participation.

In combination, this list includes the skill bases of several professions, from architects and engineers to community managers and sociologists. This range of skills must then be brought to bear on the problems at hand by an effective multidisciplinary team trained in working with the broad community to predict, establish, maintain and enhance the tangible infrastructure of a precinct while preserving the intangible qualities that make them attractive. The team would be largest and most active during the period in which the precinct was being planned or developed but remain active as the precinct operates. Even with specialist training, it is not easy to understand all aspects of this process, let alone have a working understanding of it. Given this, a tourism industry professional will understand only certain issues regarding the process of identifying and/or establishing a tourism operation within an existing tourism precinct and this will be determined by their own training and experience.

Further, the highly marketable yet genuinely required implementation of sustainable practices brings its own problems of variations in definitions, fiscal comprises and community or local authority resistance.

Planning and developing successful sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas is most likely to comprise any or all of the following activities or processes:

- Good community consultation and partnership arrangements between local and state government.
- ‘Ownership’ by local residents. Key conflicts associated with the development of tourist precincts should be clearly articulated to and by local residents.
- Commissioning, dissemination and implementation of strategy and planning documents, prepared by consultants who have experience in the field of sustainable tourism, in the understanding that these are ‘working documents’, which are subject to change.
- The employment of recognised tools such as Agenda 21, in the preparation of these documents.
- The auditing of these documents, and their implementation, by recognised methods such as Green Globe 21.
- An awareness of the need for a long-term vision in these documents, rather than short-term financial gain.
- Identification of key historical, heritage, cultural, natural attractions within the district and the kind to which model these conform—this aids in strategic planning, particularly of infrastructure such as roads and accommodation.
- Identification of the types of tourists and their motivations for visiting the precinct, and an understanding of the impacts tourists have on the leisure experience, spaces and places of the local community.
- An understanding of the type and needs of the community located within and near the tourism precinct, and of skills, assets, and resources already located in the region.
- The need to review current auditing tools such as the Triple Bottom Line, which could be replaced with a model such as the Integrated Bottom Line.
Active discussion about sustainable precincts in rural and regional areas by tourism and other consulting professions centres on three key areas: enabling community participation; the usefulness of the concept of a precinct in rural and regional areas; and sustainable development in general and particularly in a rural or regional precinct.

Community Participation
Sustainable development in a tourism precinct depends on community participation. Therefore, the development of sustainable tourism precincts relies on effective, positive and long-term community consultation and participation. The potential of mobilising community participation will vary with the size and skills base of the community, and its history of self-reliance. In areas such as Byron Bay, with a sizable and reasonably well-educated population, there is considerable potential to activate the community and possibly a danger for representative bodies if this potential is not adopted. There are suggestions in the Byron Bay and Kaikoura management plans that the respective councils were forced by their communities to take action and to lead tourism development, rather than respond to it. In the case of Freycinet however, the small size and non-permanent residency of the community has possibly delayed integration of precinct planning with community expectation.

The history of self-reliance is also a factor in the adoption of sustainable practices. It appears that some communities are more self-reliant than others and this can be due to distance from other levels of government and historic development. A self-reliant community will generally engage more actively and profitably with the precinct development process than a community that is used to relying on at least one formal level of government for action. It this respect, the Kaikoura community has an interesting approach—it has clearly determined principles and values, and adapts them to situations as they arise, using the values as a guide for community decision-making.

There is little discussion in the literature that provides a comprehensive or clearly expressed outline of community tools and processes for community involvement specific to Australia and, further, to rural and regional areas. As this is a volatile industry, there are many case studies on individual operations in the literature, but not many which provide exemplars for communities. A more thorough examination of the community’s role in tourism development in rural and regional areas is needed.

The Usefulness of the Concept of a Precinct in a Rural and Regional Area
There is a need for a concept that applies to a rural and regional area that tourists recognise as a particular place that has an identifiable community and a group of associated activities that are attractive. Further, this place is such that tourists want to and can stay there and conduct their day-to-day operations there as they recognise an actual or implicit boundary to this place. As tourists recognise these boundaries, it is likely that the community shares similar recognitions, and that the place both groups identify as the core of the area is the centre of the community. Given the multiple land uses found in rural and regional areas, is it better to call this bounded place a mixed use precinct? Further, is it being integrated with other land uses and not segregating or alienating the local community or the tourist? For example, the Freycinet plan identifies the need to work with National Park authorities and the local fishing industry.

Precincts with tourism plans are generally those that currently experience or anticipate mass tourism. So, is the concept of a tourism precinct valid for smaller or less visited destinations? If it isn’t, what area, density or size of community or tourist industry is needed for it to be valid? If the concept of a tourism precinct is not useful from smaller destinations, what other concept is useful? Is it necessary for a small place to develop an independent tourism plan, or can tourism be incorporated with general or regional planning? More research is needed to include smaller destinations without mass tourism. The issue of scale is highly contentious.

Sustainable Development
The professions of architecture and engineering, in particular, are struggling with the concept and the implementation of sustainable practices. If the attainment of sustainability is based on intergenerational equity, why are tourism plans for only five to ten years? Growing a plantation tree takes 35 years, a building is generally designed for a minimum of 15 years and a maximum of hundreds, yet many plans are designed for short term benefits only.

The communities of Freycinet and Kaikoura expressed concerns about boom and bust, or about growing too large, too quickly and too expensively for local residents; pushing property prices up and changing the local low-key atmosphere. Is there a limit of acceptable change (LAC) for economic growth? Growth is always accepted unconditionally and there are few LAC models for economy. Thus far, there has been little literature found which specifically concerns sustainability and tourism in economics, sustainable economic theories, systems,
structures, strategies or success factors. Literature on economic restructuring focuses largely on medium-term solutions, which disregard the long-term vision of sustainability theories (Shaw & Williams 1998:50).

Case studies need to be followed up as there are only two accredited Green Globe 21 communities in Australia and one in New Zealand and this has only occurred very recently. These will need to be examined to determine what is successful in the short and long term. To establish sustainable tourism, a workable balance must be struck between the welfare of the community, the environment and a viable local economy. In many ways, this is intrinsically more difficult to do in a rural and regional precinct than in a compact urban one as:

- tourism is generally only one land use of many;
- they are harder to characterise. There are more combination of forms and arrangement for rural and regional precincts. A workable solution in one location may not be relevant in another;
- the community is more directly influenced and closer to the process;
- the skill and resource base may be constrained; and
- the cost of providing that skill and resource base is higher.

This begs a fundamental question. Is the term tourism precinct useful or appropriate for a rural or regional area? Examination of the case studies shows that precincts in Australia are not managed on a sustainable basis but have development planning strategies that promote sustainability. It is highly recommended that a review of these case studies be undertaken in the future to look at issues and implications of implementation.

There are guidelines for environmental impact and assessment programs, yet there are fewer guidelines and assessment programs for social impacts. These are sometimes incorporated under definitions of environment. There are no current guidelines or assessment programs specifically on economic sustainability.

**Language and Terms**

The tourism industry has its share of jargon and confusing or misuse of terminology. Tourism remains a relatively new and developing field of study and of practice. To describe the behaviour and arrangement they are observing, academics and industry practitioners develop new words and phrases or apply new meanings to existing ones, appropriated from general use or from other disciplines. Language is used to convey meaning and it does this most effectively between people who have common understandings of the meaning of terms.

If the word or phrase strikes a chord with others, the term will be used repeatedly. This evolution of new words and phrases is useful, yet a clear tourism vocabulary is needed as it can summarise often complex concepts in few words. Conventional words and phrases noted regularly in the case studies examined in this scoping study include:

- Accessibility
- Carrying capacity
- Conservation
- Environmental stewardship
- Heritage themes
- Infrastructure
- Management
- Protecting core values
- Settlements instead of towns
- Economy
- Traffic management
- Attraction
- Community goals
- Ecology
- Experience
- High standard
- Integrated approach
- Minimise visual impact
- Relaxed
- Stakeholder
- Sustainable tourism
- Wildlife and wilderness
- Awareness
- Community involvement
- Environment
- Green and clean destination
- Hub
- Lifestyle
- Naturalness
- Responsibility
- Sustainability for future generations
- Tourism operator
- ‘Place based’ themes
- Rural transaction centre
- Day tripper
- Activity based costing
- Total visitor destination
- ‘Audience sensitive’ themes
- Destination life cycle
- Visiting friends and relatives

The presence of these terms indicates at least two factors. First, they have been appropriated from other disciplines (e.g. psychology, business management or advertising) and not contextualised or explained; and, second, generated during the preparation of the planning documents and therefore they may require definition before the documents are disseminated.

In the literature and case studies examined, the term precinct seems to be particularly misunderstood, misapplied (either deliberately or accidentally) and used alternately with terms such as cluster, region, area, zone and hub. It is recommended that these terms should be applied to specific situations, but as to how these applications and specific definitions are allocated is undetermined.
Areas of Future Action

Many of the major aspects of sustainable tourism precincts in rural and regional areas are discussed in the body of this report. However, almost all areas deserve additional research. The main areas of future action include:

- The profile and actions of tourists in rural and regional areas;
- The usefulness of the concept of a tourism precinct;
- Matching this concept of a tourism precinct to practice on the ground;
- Understanding the importance of community structure to precinct development;
- The effects tourists have on that structure;
- The interrelationship of tourist precincts with other land uses in the precinct and in the region;
- More detailed understanding of the physical, social, sensual and spiritual attributes and authenticity of a precinct;
- The provision, capacity and arrangement of physical infrastructure systems;
- The provision, capability and structure of organisational infrastructure;
- The pressures of success or failure on the infrastructure of a precinct;
- Assessing the economic value, benefits and costs of regional and rural tourism to communities;
- Determining ways in which rural and regional tourism destinations can optimise visitor expenditure;
- Developing models for economic potential in different types of rural and regional tourism precincts;
- Exploring which of the differences between rural and regional and urban precincts are critical to their operation; and
- Finding out how major external influences can be recognised and managed.
APPENDIX A: PRECINCTS REVIEWED FOR THIS STUDY

Following the dissemination of the interim technical paper, industry partners and representatives proposed many tourist areas as potential case studies. Documentation on these and other tourism areas was collected and their contents and recommendations analysed. The assessments of the precincts were then compared to three criteria agreed to define areas suitable for inclusion in this scoping study. These criteria were:

- The region contained an area that could potentially be defined as a tourism precinct in a regional or rural location;
- The planning documentation or independent reviews of the precinct identified sustainability as a major focus; and
- The planning documentation included directives associated with tourism development.

Four areas were selected for preparation as case studies. Others were deemed inappropriate for this study as there was either too little available information, an absence of any formal reporting on the area or insufficient accent on sustainability. Other areas did not satisfy the developing definition for a tourism precinct. For example, several were single tourist operations rather than precincts. Other areas were considered appropriate for study but their detailed assessment was beyond the resources of this study. They may be suitable for ongoing research in this field. These areas were:

- Douglas Shire Council, Queensland
- Quobba Tourism Precinct, Western Australia
- Broken Hill Heritage and Cultural Tourism Program, South Australia
- Redland Shire Council (Stradbroke Island) Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy, Queensland
- Richmond Shire, Queensland
- Hervey Bay, Queensland
- Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Precincts deemed inappropriate for this study are listed in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Reason for exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice Springs, Northern Territory</td>
<td>No sustainable focus: its official tourism precinct is more an urban model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldon, Victoria</td>
<td>Not enough information available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston, Tasmania</td>
<td>Not demonstratively sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mersey Valley Precinct, Tasmania</td>
<td>Not demonstratively sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Mountain, Tasmania</td>
<td>Not a precinct as per the established definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Isa, Queensland</td>
<td>Not a precinct as per the established definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey Tourism and Heritage Precinct, Queensland</td>
<td>Not demonstratively sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentaria Shire, Queensland</td>
<td>Could not find discussion of a precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly, Western Australia</td>
<td>Could not find discussion of a tourism precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maroochy Shire, Queensland</td>
<td>No feedback from industry partners as to whether there is a precinct here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: MAJOR STRATEGY DOCUMENTS AND GUIDELINES

Strategy documents
A broad range of strategy documents was inspected during this study. Organisations with exemplary strategy documents that can serve as guides for Australian tourism are listed below. Organisations which produce relevant international strategies include the United Nations, the World Tourism Organization, Green Globe 21, the Pacific Asia Travel Association and the World Travel and Tourism Council. Organisations producing relevant national strategies include the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (Office of National Tourism); the Australian Environment Directory; the Australian Greenhouse Office; the Australian Heritage Commission; CSIRO; Environment Australia; the National Oceans Office; the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator; national tourism authorities; the Australian Tourism Commission (Tourism Australia); representative trade bodies; Ecotourism Australia; Aboriginal Tourism Australia; the CRC for Sustainable Tourism; Leave No Trace; the National Heritage Trust; the Australian Regional Tourism Network; and the Centre for Regional Tourism Research. Organisations producing relevant state strategies include Cairns Charter, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Interim Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and the Queensland Ecotourism Plan.

Major guidelines
Major exemplary international guideline documents reviewed include:
- National and Regional Tourism Planning: Methodologies and Case Studies (Inskeep & World Tourism Organization 1994)
- Travel and Tourism Industry Benchmarking Methodologies (Scott, Beckenham & Watt 2004).

Major exemplary national guideline documents reviewed include:
- EcoCertification Program (Ecotourism Australia 2003).
- Rural Tourism Strategy (Commonwealth of Australia 2000)
- Sustainable Regional Development: Final Report (Dore & Woodhill 1999)—lists recommended traits for sustainable regional development strategies, as follows:
  - Purposeful: Clear reasons for why it has been developed.
  - Visionary: Based on a well-developed, widely shared, long-term vision.
  - Inclusive: Has a high level of community (stakeholder) involvement and ownership.
  - Clear process: Utilises an appropriate, widely understood, equitable, interactive and forward-moving process for development and implementation.
  - Informed and informing: Utilises and shares the best available information and builds the knowledge and research base.
  - Holistic: Takes an integrated or holistic view of issues: social, cultural, economic, and ecological issues, their actions and interdependencies.
  - Integrated: Integrates with other plans, strategies and initiatives.
  - Appropriate scale: Recognises that action may best occur at the regional, sub-regional or local level.
  - Institutional backing: To be effective, the strategy needs to be supported, empowered and resourced by appropriate institutional /organisational structures.
  - Focused: Clearly identifies the key issues for the region.
  - Options evaluated: Assesses positive and negative impacts of alternative options.
  - Costed: Attempts to identify monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits of the options.
  - Prioritised: Prioritises, in a transparent and equitable way, the importance and/or logical order of activities.
- Action—and outcome—oriented: Is designed to produce action and is held accountable by the record of its outcomes.
- Responsibilities clarified: Includes a well-defined division of responsibilities and roles of all stakeholders.
- Negotiated: Agreements about implementation need to be negotiated.
- Monitored, evaluated, adapted: Includes a simple framework for monitoring, evaluation and review.
- Communicative and credible: Effectively communicates high-quality, honest information.

While they originally have no financial ‘cost’, the components of the natural environment are used as a resource that can be converted into or used to produce a return for the community or for the individual tourist venture. If this natural environment is used or exploited at a rate faster than it can replenish itself or in a way from which it cannot recover, then the use will not be sustainable and the resource will deteriorate. If the unsustainable use continues, the resource will fail, as will the other components of the natural and built environment that depend on it. If the natural environment is used at a rate where it can replenish itself and in a way that allows it to recover without long term adverse affect, the use may be sustainable.

The built environment requires a considerable allocation of resources to construct and maintain. While it is a resource that can be used to generate a financial return, it does not replenish itself and deteriorates from the day it is completed. Further, the design and construction of the built environment reflect the requirements and values of the time it was built. This can be beneficial if these values form part of the architectural or aesthetic appeal of the place. However, it can be detrimental if the resulting artefact is unattractive, poorly placed, unsafe, or if its operation is shown to cause significant impacts on the natural environment.
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Tourism on the Carnarvon-Ningaloo Coast Between Quobba Station and Exmouth and its Implications for Sustainability of the Coast.
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- Travel and tourism business
- Academic researchers
- Government regulators and policy makers

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The 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
The 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.

The 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.