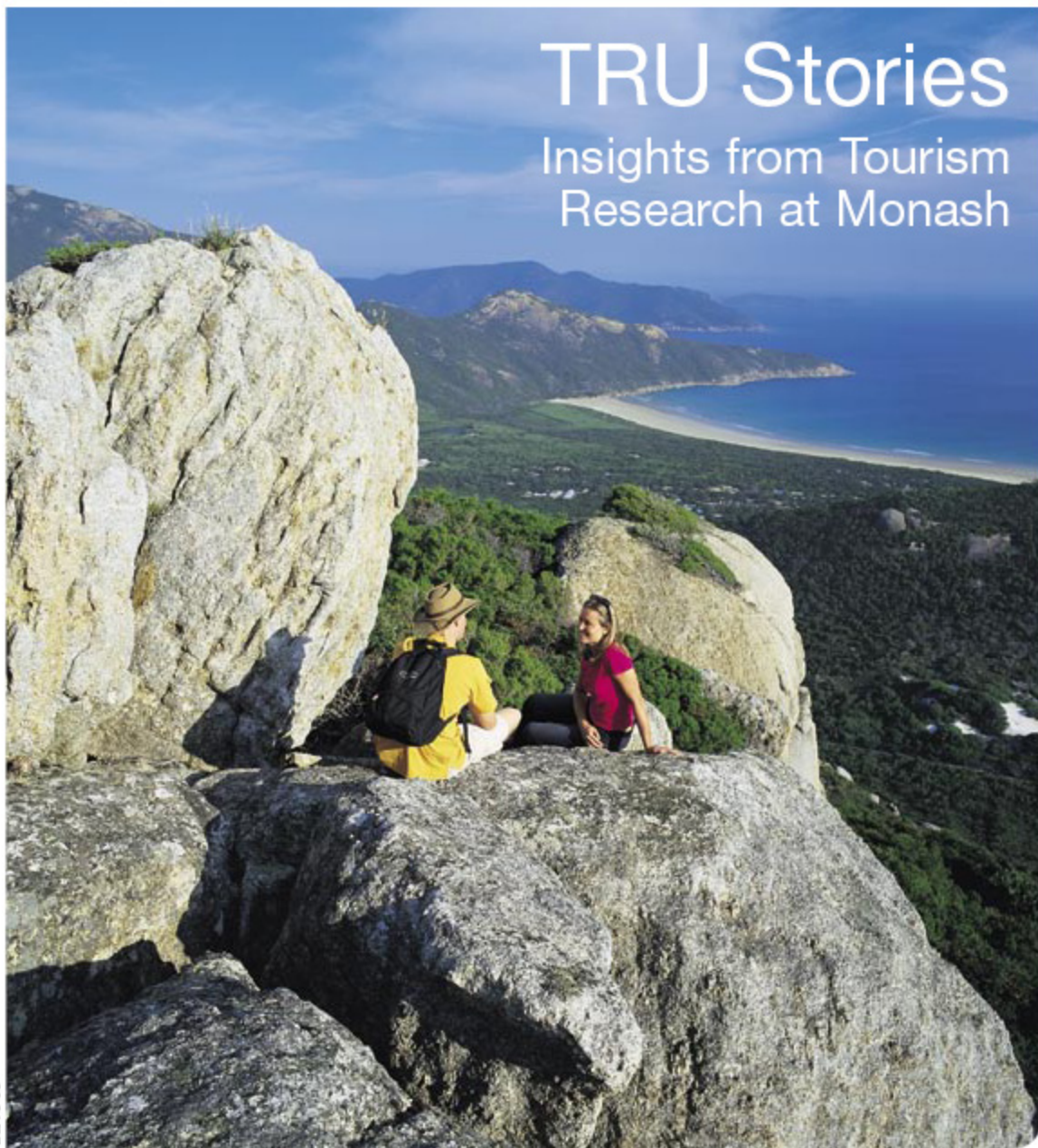




Tourism Research Unit (TRU)

# TRU Stories

Insights from Tourism  
Research at Monash



# **A Summary of Current and Completed Research Projects Being Undertaken by Members of the Monash Tourism Research Unit**

## **Acknowledgments**

The Monash Tourism Research Unit wishes to thank the following organisations for their valuable contributions to the research projects profiled in this booklet:

Estonian Tourist Board  
Frankston City Council  
Frankston Tourism  
Johnstone Centre of Research in Natural Resources and Society – Charles Sturt University  
Monash University  
National Centre for Australian Studies – Monash University  
Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania  
Parks Victoria  
Port Arthur Historic Site  
Shire of Mount Alexander  
Sovereign Hill Museums Association  
Sustainable Tourism CRC  
Tourism Australia  
Tourism Tasmania  
Tourism Victoria  
Uppsala University (Sweden)  
Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand)  
Zoos Victoria

Welcome to the Tourism Research Unit (TRU) at Monash University. Our mission is to be a highly competent and experienced team of cross faculty researchers able to contribute to the knowledge base of tourism and meet the research needs of industry in Victoria, nationally and internationally. We work with people, organisations, innovators and leaders who want to make a difference and be at the top of their game in what they do. We would be pleased to explore ways of undertaking research, discuss opportunities for postgraduate study, and/or put you in touch with other researchers and research groups within Monash University.

TRU's strategic research strengths are in the following seven areas of tourism management:

1. Tourism Planning and Management in Protected Areas
2. Strategic Communication in Tourism (marketing, interpretation, and guiding)
3. Tourism Economics
4. Tourism Training and Education
5. Tourist Behaviour
6. Tourism, Image and Media
7. Tourism Business, Attractions and Events Management

This booklet contains samples of completed and current research being undertaken by a number of TRU members. Should you wish to obtain more information about any of the projects profiled in this publication, please use the contact details provided at the end of each research profile. We also invite you to find out more about TRU by browsing our website:

[www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru](http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru)

Betty Weiler  
Director



Prof Betty Weiler  
Director



Prof Peter Forsyth  
Deputy Director



Prof Sam Ham  
Deputy Director

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## **Exploring Cave Interpretation: Ideas from the Profession**

Rosemary Black and Penny Davidson  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

### **Project aim**

This study explores the guided interpretive methods used and experiences created to interpret Australian tourist cave sites. This research taps the expertise of experienced Australian cave interpreters and managers to describe current personal interpretive practices. It then identifies some key principles for future cave interpretation that can be applied successfully in Australian tourist caves and which are responsive to the multi-dimensional nature of the visitor experience.

### **Methods**

This study is qualitative in nature and utilises a focus group of experienced cave guides and managers followed by a formal peer feedback process. We conducted a half day focus group workshop with Australian cave guides and managers using a series of questions and facilitated discussion. The results were transcribed and content analysed to produce a draft set of principles for guided cave interpretation. A copy of the draft principles were sent to all workshop participants and experts in the field for feedback and comment. Following this process a final set of principles were produced.

### **Results and benefits to industry**

A set of principles for guided cave interpretation were produced entitled "Principles for Guided Cave Interpretation: Ideas from the Profession" which have been distributed to all workshop participants and Australian and New Zealand cave managers and guides.

This research is significant first, because it represents one of the few studies on guided cave interpretation and second, is industry-driven as practitioners in the field of cave management have identified the lack of established principles in cave interpretation as an issue. Finally, this research will contribute to the long-term protection of Australian cave environments by developing a set of principles that will maximise the visitor experience and minimise the impacts on the cave environment.

This set of principles will assist cave guides and managers in planning, developing and delivering effective and entertaining cave tours. This document will also assist in the future training of cave guides.

### **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Dr Rosemary Black  
Dr Penny Davidson

rblack@csu.edu.au  
pdavidson@csu.edu.au

+ 61 2 6051 9983  
+ 61 2 6051 9764

# **How do Zoos Utilise Environmental Interpretation to Foster Sustainable Behaviour: a case study of Zoos Victoria**

Sue Broad  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

The aim of this project was to work with Zoos Victoria to examine the role that their three properties – Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary and Werribee Open Range Zoo – play in fostering sustainable behaviour of their visitors through environmental interpretation. Zoos are under increasing scrutiny regarding the value they bring to ratepayers, the community and the environment, and also regarding the appropriateness of keeping wild animals in captivity. As a result, they justify their existence by referring to potential benefits to society, achieved through their roles relating to recreation, education, research and conservation. The emphasis of these roles has shifted in recent times so that many zoos now concentrate significantly more on conservation and education than they have done in the past. One particularly ambitious conservation outcome is to influence visitors to practice conservation or sustainable behaviours both while at the zoo and after their visit. The importance of this conservation outcome is evidenced by the extent to which the zoo community has embraced it at an international, national, and organisational level. However, there is a lack of evidence that a zoo visit, and in particular the on-site interpretation experienced by a zoo visitor, impacts visitors' knowledge and attitudes, let alone their behaviour.

## **Methods**

Our first step was to conduct a series of workshops with staff and zoo volunteers, to identify which visitor behaviours they felt the zoo was trying or should be trying to influence through the environmental interpretation provided at each property. The next phase of the project focused on three specific exhibits or visitor experiences. We interviewed visitors to find out whether they were receiving the intended conservation messages regarding threats to the species of interest and actions needed to help save the species, and whether communicating these conservation messages might foster sustainable behaviour of visitors.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

The results of the workshops revealed a number of visitor behaviours that participants felt Zoos Victoria should be trying to foster. Most frequently mentioned were donating money or sponsoring zoo animals, recycling consumer products both at and away from the zoo, volunteering with the zoo, joining or supporting environmental or conservation groups, and creating or preserving habitats. Our visitor interviews revealed a number of differences between the three specific exhibits/visitor experiences. From 50 to 90% of visitors could recall seeing or hearing information about threats to the species of interest, and from 39 to 81% of visitors could recall hearing information on actions they could take to help save the species. These results provided insights as to the relative effectiveness of each of the three exhibits/visitor experiences in influencing the understanding that visitors take away from their visit, but because the conservation messages communicated were not designed to foster one particular behaviour, we did not measure behavioural outcomes.

To provide evidence that visitor behaviours have been influenced, a more precise definition of the behaviour of interest is essential. This study has helped zoo managers to appreciate the importance and to find better ways of clearly identifying which visitor behaviour(s) they are trying to influence when designing and implementing interpretive programs. It has also provided them with a sound research framework and approach, guided by persuasive communication theory, on which to base decisions about which messages and what communication strategies to use in order to influence those behaviours.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Dr Sue Broad

Sue.Broad@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9904 7048

# **Beneficial Partnerships Between Universities and Tourism Destinations in Providing Tourism Education Opportunities: location based learning**

Glen Croy  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

The aim of this project is to develop principles to assist universities and industry partners to develop successful and long lasting joint tourism education opportunities, through the use of location based learning. The goals of location based learning, in a tourism context, include providing tourism destinations with access to motivated and educated students to undertake real research projects, whilst at the same time providing students with real tourism work experiences before they enter the work force. This is all provided with the responsibility of supervision and management on the university.

## **Methods**

We have developed and implemented location based learning in partnership with a number of tourism stakeholder groups. Specifically, we have developed university subjects in New Zealand in partnership with Waitaki District Council and Tourism Waitaki; Clutha District Council and the Lawrence community and tourism industry; in Rotorua with industry, Rotorua District Council, central government agencies and community groups. In Australia, we have recently introduced a tourism unit in partnership with Frankston Tourism and the Frankston City Council. Using reflective practice and feedback from students, industry and education institutions, we have established guidelines for the development of partnerships between industry and universities for joint tourism education or knowledge building opportunities.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

In a tourism context, we have found location based learning to be an excellent means of creating a more authentic learning environment with the exemplification and application of conceptual knowledge in the 'real world'. This authenticity provides students with a clearer understanding of the environment in which the concepts are based and the interaction and relationships between these concepts. The inclusion of a real case, site visits, discussions with stakeholders and the explicit connections to assessment provides a deeper interaction with the location and the concepts, on the part of the student, than could have occurred with a fieldtrip to the case site.

However there were challenges in the provision of a location based learning unit derived from this experience, and these have lead to the development of a set of principals that apply mainly to educational institutions. So far these include: the importance of focusing on students' conceptual foundation; the location selected needs to be close; there needs to be a good, if not great relationship with the location partners, who also need to know, acknowledge and expect that it is students doing the work not consultants; the interaction needs to be provided in a controlled environment; and finally, the university needs to place importance on relationships and engagement with its community, industry and locale and its support for innovative learning and teaching.

The major benefit identified by all industry partners was the provision of research that they may not otherwise have had access to. In many cases this was also identified as the first step in developing an ongoing research relationship between researchers and location. At a more general level, this also provides the tourism industry with graduates that have a more complex awareness of the processes of the industry, and on a local level, direct access to potential employees with a working knowledge of the location's industry.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Glen Croy

Glen.Croy@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9904 7032

# **Gaining Visitor Acceptance of Alternative Transportation Systems in Australian National Parks**

Jim Curtis, Betty Weiler and Sam Ham  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

The aim of the project is to develop and evaluate a persuasive communication strategy designed to increase visitor use of alternative transportation systems in Australian national parks. As visitor and vehicle numbers continue to grow, park managers are faced with the dilemma of balancing the objective of environmental protection with that of visitor access. In response, park authorities at Cradle Mountain in Tasmania and the Grampians in Victoria have introduced shuttle bus services in an attempt to relieve the pressures created by these growing numbers. However, forcing visitors to use alternative transportation systems is often not an option. Park authorities are therefore interested in developing strategic communication campaigns aimed at persuading visitors to use these services.

## **Methods**

Persuasive communication needs to be driven by theory if it is to be effective at influencing visitor behaviour. The more park authorities know about the factors that influence a person's decision to perform or not perform a behaviour (e.g. using a voluntary shuttle bus), the more likely they will be able to develop effective communications to influence these decisions. Thus, in the first phase of the research, we conducted field interviews to identify a pool of potentially salient beliefs underlying visitors' decisions to use or not use the shuttle bus services at Cradle Mountain and the Grampians. The second phase involves administering a fixed-item questionnaire in the field to measure the strength and importance of the beliefs identified in Phase 1, and to determine which of them distinguish users from non-users of the shuttle bus services. This subset of beliefs is then selected for the final phase, in which we will experimentally test the effectiveness of different persuasive communication messages and approaches aimed at increasing visitor use of the shuttle bus services.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

Alternative transportation systems are a new management tool within Australian national parks. To be successful, they need to be supported by visitors who are willing to forgo their cars and embrace these alternative transportation modes. The research will therefore be of significant benefit to park managers eager to address the congestion issues facing national parks. As a result of the research, park managers will receive a tested persuasive communication strategy that aims to influence voluntary travel mode choice in national parks. The communication strategy should help to increase passenger numbers on shuttle bus services and relieve the pressures on existing environmental, road and car parking resources. The research will also produce instruments that can potentially be adapted in other park settings with similar shuttle bus services. By conducting the research at Cradle Mountain and the Grampians, we will also be able to explore which issues are common and specific to the sites, which may lead to important insights into how the findings of the research may require adaptation prior to applications in other national parks.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Jim Curtis	James.Curtis@buseco.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9904 7067
Professor Betty Weiler	Betty.Weiler@buseco.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9904 7104
Professor Sam Ham	Sam.Ham@buseco.monash.edu.au	

# **Understanding Outdoor Adventure Experiences: a study of New Zealand mountaineers**

Lee Davidson, Betty Weiler and Elery Hamilton-Smith  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

The aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of outdoor adventure experiences, focussing specifically on New Zealand mountaineers. Past research on adventure has tended to focus on motivations for participation, with a particular interest in understanding the role of risk-taking in attracting certain kinds of people to take up these activities. In this study, I am seeking to understand on-going and intense participation in mountaineering in terms of the context of people's lives as a whole. How has it become a meaningful and central focus to their lives? What impact does it have on other aspects of their lives? In asking these kinds of questions, I aim to contribute to our understanding of the growing popularity and relevance of adventure experiences in today's society.

## **Methods**

The main research method used for this study was to interview twenty-two New Zealand mountaineers, for whom climbing could be considered a central focus of their lives, but who did not work professionally as mountain guides. The reason for this distinction was to focus on climbing experiences which were purely for one's own enjoyment, as opposed to being part of one's work obligations. The interviews took anywhere from one to three hours, depending on how 'talkative' the interviewees were and the time they had available, and were primarily focussed on capturing the life stories of the interviewees, with some additional questions to fill in the gaps. Those interviewed ranged in age from their twenties, to their late sixties, and seven of the total were women mountaineers. From their stories I was able to determine the major themes in the ways in which they understand their climbing experiences, and how these have impacted upon their lives. Supporting information was also found by reviewing the New Zealand Alpine Journal (New Zealand's primary climbing publication) from the 1950s to the present day. I also spoke to a number of prominent New Zealand climbers to ask them to comment on some of my major findings.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

A strong theme that is coming through in the findings is the way in which those who have made a significant and life-long commitment to mountaineering feel that the activity and the life-style that surrounds it very accurately express their sense of who they are. Many described being drawn to the activity at a relatively young age because it was when they were climbing, and when they were in the mountains, that they felt most comfortable, most 'at home' and most fully themselves. Climbing gives them a 'sense of perspective' that they don't find elsewhere in their lives, and it gives them a focal point around which to structure their lives, including not only the activity itself, but also a social environment and a set of values that they feel strongly about. These values include love and respect for the natural environment, a preference for intense experiences rather than the accumulation of material goods, being modest about one's achievements, exercising caution and good judgement when climbing, and a sense of responsibility towards one's fellow climbers. These findings are helpful for understanding why and how people today find their primary life focus in adventurous leisure activities such as mountaineering. In terms of the industry there are two main areas to which these findings can be applied: adventure tourism and protected area management. As commercially organised adventures become increasingly popular, it is important that such experiences are fully understood so that they can be managed for the maximum benefit, and with the minimum of adverse impacts. For protected area managers expected to balance ecological preservation with growing demands for human use of natural environments, to ensure that recreational activities are managed within a framework of sustainable development, it is important to take into consideration the personal, social, and cultural dynamics which render these activities valuable as human experiences.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Lee Davidson	lee.davidson@vuw.ac.nz	+ 64 4 463 5929
Professor Betty Weiler	Betty.Weiler@buseco.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9904 7104

## **New Measures of Tourism Yield**

Peter Forsyth, Thiep van Ho, Larry Dwyer<sup>1</sup> and Ray Spurr<sup>1</sup>  
Monash Tourism Research Unit  
<sup>1</sup> University of New South Wales

### **Project Aim**

Tourism yield is a well known, though loosely defined measure of the gain to the industry or economy from accessing specific markets. Thus we speak of the yield from Japanese or Canadian visitors, the yield from backpackers or VFR visitors. Simpler measures of yield include expenditure per visitor, and more robust measures include the impact on the industry per visitor. In measuring yield, it is important to specify from which entity's perspective yield is being measured- is it the firm, the industry, or the economy as a whole? All three levels are interested in measuring yield. Most of the yield measures which are employed to date measure the impact on the firm or industry. The Sustainable Tourism CRC's economic modelling team has been developing measures of economy-wide yield. The object is to obtain measures of how an additional visitor impacts on the economy as a whole, taking into account both positive and negative effects.

### **Methods**

Typically, expenditure from an additional visitor increases economic activity (value added, employment) in the tourism industry, but at least some of this increase is a result of drawing resources, such as labour and capital, away from other industries, thereby reducing their output and employment. Our model gives an economy-wide measure of yield, that is, it tells us the net impact on employment, in terms of output, employment or net benefits (increase in the value of output less the cost of extra resources needed to produce it). We are using a computable general equilibrium model of the Australian and NSW economies, specially adapted to explore tourism aspects, to develop yield measures. The net gain to the economy as a whole is usually smaller than the initial impact on expenditure.

### **Results and Benefits to Industry**

Economy-wide yield tells us how much the economy in general, as distinct from the industry, has gained from an additional tourist of a particular type. This is of direct relevance in tourism policy making. For example, it is possible to measure the gain to the economy from say, additional backpacker visitors, and compare this to that from additional VFR visitors. It is also possible to use the yield measures to trace the economic implications of changes in the patterns of visitors (for example, a decline in Japanese visitors accompanied by a rise in Chinese visitors).

### **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Professor Peter Forsyth

Peter.Forsyth@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9905 2495

## **Tourism Benefits and Aviation Policy**

Peter Forsyth and Thiep van Ho  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

### **Project Aim**

In recent years, proposed international aviation policy changes in a number of countries have been subjected to economic assessment. When changes such as liberalisation have been proposed, the costs and benefits have been estimated. Typically, the main beneficiaries of liberalisation have been home country travellers, and the main losers have been the home country airlines. In discussion of aviation policy changes, tourism benefits have often been recognised but rarely carefully measured. This project involves the measurement of tourism benefits to an economy by employing a computable general equilibrium model of the Australian and NSW economies.

### **Methods**

We are part of a Sustainable Tourism CRC team which has developed a model which incorporates a detailed tourism sector. The impacts on inbound and outbound tourism expenditure of a change in aviation policy can be estimated, and the effects of this change in expenditure on economy aggregates such as employment and GDP can be assessed. We are thus able to calculate the net benefit to the economy, in terms of the value of the additional output less the costs of extra resources used to produce this output. The result is a measure of the tourism related benefits from a change in policy which can be compared to other components of cost and benefit, such as the impact on airline profits and the fares savings to home country passengers.

### **Results and Benefits to Industry**

The results are of direct relevance to those interested in aviation policy, including policy makers, tourism promotion agencies and peak industry groups. With these results we are able to assess the tourism implications of aviation policy changes. Thus, for example, the tourism benefits from liberalising the Australia-US air route, which is currently under consideration, can be evaluated and put into context.

### **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Professor Peter Forsyth

Peter.Forsyth@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9905 2495

# **Making an Edgier Interpretation of the Gold Rushes and Eureka Stockade**

Warwick Frost  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

Interpretation provides meaning and understanding for the visitor, but whose meaning and whose understanding? While there is a growing body of research on methods for effective interpretation, the process by which the message is formulated and chosen is poorly understood. Indeed, in heritage tourism there is often little appreciation for the role of historians as historical interpreters with differing opinions and perspectives. In other words, it is not always possible (and desirable) to base visitor interpretation on objective facts and reject any conflicting views.

My research focuses on new interpretations of history and the contributions of these to visitor interpretation at heritage sites and attractions. I am particularly interested in heritage tourism associated with the Gold Rushes. In the last decade or so historians have significantly reinterpreted the Gold Rushes, particularly concentrating on women, indigenous people, Chinese and other migrant groups and the lesser “poor man’s diggings” goldfields. As historian David Goodman has put it, his colleagues are rewriting an “edgier history” of the Gold Rushes. If historians’ views are changing, how then is visitor interpretation changing?

## **Methods**

My methods are primarily comparative. My research has looked at heritage attractions in Victoria (Ballarat, Castlemaine and Beechworth), New Zealand (Otago) and California (Nevada City, Bodie, Jamestown). I am also exploring extension of this research to other states and possibly non-gold mining areas (such as Burra).

A particularly important case study is that of the Eureka Stockade. This is a highly contested heritage site, with conflicting disputes over its meaning, location and ownership of artefacts. Such issues came to the fore in its 2004 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, which raises questions about the effectiveness of such historical festivals.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

My intention is that the results will be used for better planning of interpretation at heritage sites. Rather than focussing exclusively on methods, it is important that visitor interpretation engages with changing historical interpretations and debates.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Dr Warwick Frost

Warwick.Frost@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9904 7042

## **Beach Tourism Patterns in Victoria**

Warwick Frost  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

### **Project aim**

In the summer of 2004/5 there were a number of public calls for measures to reduce tourism and/or shift the costs of tourism at certain beach locations. These proposed measures included a toll on the Great Ocean Road, a rate surcharge for holiday homes and a beach tax on overseas tourists. In the public debate over these proposals, it was notable that there was very little statistical data available regarding beach tourism. Indeed, what was used was often misinterpreted. For example, in discussions regarding the Great Ocean Road, the statistics used were for the Great Ocean Road Region, which is far larger than the coastal areas adjoining the actual road.

My aim is to produce data specifically focussed on beach visitors for a range of places along the Victorian coast.

### **Methods**

Data will be drawn from the International Visitor Survey and the National Visitor Survey. These surveys are conducted by Tourism Research Australia (formerly the Bureau of Tourism Research). Results are available for small areas (such as local council areas), though this database has rarely been used by academic researchers. My intention is to examine the characteristics of beach-goers and compare these for a number of major coastal resorts.

While my focus is on beach patterns, I also aim to use this same methodology to investigate other areas of tourism (for example heritage and wine tourists).

### **Results and benefits to industry**

The results of this project will be valuable for coastal planning and policy-making. Two examples illustrate the possibilities. First, it will be possible to identify the usage of holiday homes for various locations and it may be that this varies along the Victorian coast. Second, I hope to examine hinterland activities, such as visiting National Parks and other attractions. Again, this may vary along the coast.

### **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Dr Warwick Frost

Warwick.Frost@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9904 7042

# **Development of an Evaluation Tool Kit for Assessing the Effectiveness of Face-to-Face Interpretive Programs at Nature, Heritage and Food & Beverage Interpretation Settings**

Sam Ham and Betty Weiler  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

The aim of this project was to work hand-in-hand with industry to develop a practical, easy-to-use tool kit for evaluating face-to-face interpretive programs. Of particular interest were interpretive programs offered to visitors at natural areas, heritage sites, and food and beverage tourism attractions (such as wineries, breweries and food processing facilities). Our goal was to make available to industry practitioners a simple methodology that provides valid and reliable measurements of effectiveness they feel are important and relevant to the outcomes they want their interpretive programs to produce, and yet which impose little burden on staff and visitors. A guiding premise of our work was that the final product could be applied simply, inexpensively and yet rigorously by people who had no formal background in social science research.

## **Methods**

Our first step was to capture a broad-based industry perspective on the most important indicators of “effective” or “successful” interpretation. To do this, we facilitated workshops with a wide representation of operational staff (including executives, program managers, interpreters and guides, and marketing and retail staff) at two heritage tourism sites. We then relied on additional input from our Industry Reference Group and other industry representatives to develop a degree of consensus regarding the most important and most relevant indicators of “successful” interpretation. The two workshops were conducted with staff at Sovereign Hill Outdoor Museum in Victoria and Port Arthur Historic Site in Tasmania. The Industry Reference Group consisted of representatives from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Tourism Tasmania, Port Arthur, and Sovereign Hill. Other industry advisors included representatives of national parks, heritage sites, two breweries, a nature-based tour operator, and a heritage-based tour operator. Resulting from these various sources of informed input was a pool of 46 different indicators of effective interpretation. We used the stated priorities of our industry partners to analytically reduce the list to 11 key indicators. These include measurements of how much visitors were provoked to thought by face-to-face interpretive programs, how relevant, meaningful and enjoyable they were, impacts on visitors’ attitudes to nature and heritage preservation, their appreciation of Aboriginal connections to the land, their inclination to engage in positive word-of-mouth advertising, how much they were stimulated to purchase mementos or souvenirs related to the site, whether they wanted to stay longer at the site or return someday for a repeat visit, and the kind and amount of interaction interpreters and visitors engaged in.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

With the interests of industry captured in the 11 indicators, we applied our knowledge of research and statistical analysis to develop and field test a 3-minute visitor questionnaire that can be used by any practitioners to collect valid and reliable data on 10 different quantitative indicators of effective interpretation. Following industry input, we also developed a reliable observation form for documenting verbal and non-verbal interaction between interpreters and visitors. In late 2005, these will be available through the CRC for Sustainable Tourism in the form of a practical, industry-tested *Interpretation Evaluation Tool Kit* that includes a CD with the questionnaires and observation form, a ready-to-use Excel file for analysing the data (which requires no prior experience), and a step-by-step “how-to” manual that provides plain-language instructions on how to collect, analyse and use the data to improve face-to-face interpretation focused on nature, heritage, and food and beverage topics.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Professor Sam Ham  
Professor Betty Weiler

Sam.Ham@buseco.monash.edu.au  
Betty.Weiler@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9904 7104

# **Experimental Evaluation of Persuasive Communication Strategies Aimed at Keeping Visitors on the Walking Tracks at Port Campbell National Park**

Sam Ham and Betty Weiler  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

In collaboration with Parks Victoria (PV), this research developed and evaluated persuasive communication aimed at keeping people on the walking tracks at Port Campbell National Park. Strategic communication is seen as a potentially effective method of influencing visitor behaviour, especially if guided by theory and developed in accordance with research on the persuasive effect of communication. Our research aimed to design and test a communication strategy that could be used together with direct visitor management strategies to reduce off-track walking at PCNP and other protected areas. We also set out to test the usefulness of the application of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) for managing other problem behaviours. The three-year project was funded by the Sustainable Tourism CRC, Parks Victoria, and Monash University.

## **Methods**

Following the TPB, we collected 2003 data from visitors at two PCNP walking tracks, the Twelve Apostles and Loch Ard Gorge, in order to identify visitors' most prominent beliefs about the relative trade-offs of staying on the track and the things that would make it easy or difficult for them to do that. In addition, we inventoried and evaluated the existing communication environment to determine which messages PV was currently using to persuade visitors to stay on the track and the extent to which these messages were both interesting and easy to read. This was followed by a 2004 on-site interview survey that determined the relative strength and importance of the identified beliefs. The results of this study led to selection of the beliefs that we then targeted in a third and final stage of research (completed in April 2005), with signs designed in accordance with the findings of contemporary persuasive communication research. We experimentally evaluated the effectiveness of five different messages compared to a control condition in order to determine which of the approaches stood the best chance of persuading PCNP visitors to stay on designated walking tracks. Post-communication measurements of visitors' beliefs about staying on the track, as well as observations of visitor reading behaviour of the signs, provide an indication of the relative effectiveness of the five messages in influencing visitor beliefs and attitudes about staying on the track, and therefore, their potential to influence visitor walking track behaviour.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

We found that there were differences in the beliefs and attitudes of visitors who were exposed to the experimental signs compared to those who were not exposed to them, and that some signs made more of a difference than others. Because of the strong theoretical foundation of this study, we were able to explain the reasons for the relative success of the various messages in impacting visitors' beliefs and to identify ways that the same approaches can be used in other parks. The results can be used as a basis for designing a more targeted communication effort at Port Campbell National Park aimed at keeping people on the tracks, and the methodology we used can be applied to visitor behaviour problems in parks and tourism settings nationwide.

Our findings support the notion that that theoretically-driven communication can be a viable management tool not only at PCNP but elsewhere. The results provide an alternative to relying on direct measures, such as site hardening, erection of barriers, restricted access, regulations, fines and other forms of law enforcement, to influencing off-track walking and other undesirable behaviours in protected areas.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Professor Sam Ham  
Professor Betty Weiler

Sam.Ham@buseco.monash.edu.au  
Betty.Weiler@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9904 7104

# Implementing Sustainable Practice in Tourism Operations

Megan Hanley and Sharron Pfueller  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## Project aim

This project aims to explore ways in which tourism operations can increase their environmental sustainability. In particular, it has examined the extent of knowledge of sustainability and use of sustainable practices within a range of tourism enterprises in the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport region.

## Methods

We mailed a self-completing questionnaire to 186 tourism operators identified from the web sites of Mornington Peninsula Tourism and Phillip Island Tourism. These operators included 118 accommodation providers, 5 in gardens and wildlife, 8 in heritage and art, 15 in tours and transport, 17 in wineries and food and 23 activity providers.

Of these, 31(16%) responded. They were asked about their knowledge of sustainability principles, the extent of their engagement in environmentally responsible practices e.g. tree-planting, waste minimisation, whether they had an environmental policy, their level of contact with managers of natural areas (Parks, reserves etc) and their knowledge of a conservation initiative on the Peninsula, the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport Biosphere Reserve. Responses were rated on a 0 – 5 scale and results examined for any associations between variables.

Five operators were subsequently interviewed as were five managers of protected natural areas.

## Results and benefits to industry

The majority of operators had only average to below average knowledge of sustainability principles while around two-thirds implemented some type of sustainability initiative. These included environmental education and interpretation programs, minimising waste and recycling, use of technology for saving resources, better farming practice, “green” building infrastructure, native habitat restoration and revegetation, engaging in research, accreditation and membership of environmental organisations for tourism operators and products sold by them, internal policy and committees and preserving heritage values. However, most of these operators had only one or two of such practices. Operators who had more contact with natural area managers were more likely to implement sustainability measures, to know sustainability principles and to be aware of the Biosphere Reserve. Tourism operators felt that staff managing protected areas should take a greater role in tourism across the region to promote sustainability. The results indicate that managers of protected areas are pivotal in fostering sustainable tourism across the industry as well as in the context of nature-based tourism and ecotourism.

## Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:

Dr Sharron Pfueller  
Megan Hanley

Sharron.Pfueller@arts.monash.edu.au  
Megan\_Hanley@sita.com.au

+ 61 3 9905 4619  
+ 61 3 9702 8111

# **The Benefits of European Union Enlargement to the Estonian Tourism Industry**

Jeff Jarvis  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project Aim**

The enlargement of the European Union (EU) in May 2004 has substantially reorientated the geographical patterns of tourism development. This study looks at evaluating the benefits that flowed to the tourism industry from Estonia's accession to the EU. It provides tourism boards and the industry with a case study on the impact of the arrival of budget airlines into a market, how the "branding" of a destination can improve the environment for tourism investment and how the publicity surrounding a major international event can stimulate consumer demand.

## **Methods**

The main research method used to compile this report was an analysis of existing tourism industry statistics from the Estonian Tourist Board. In association with this, in depth research was conducted with a number of key industry representatives such as the presidents of the hotel association and travel agents association, the Estonian Tourist Board, individual inbound tour operators and accommodation providers based in Tallinn, Estonia.

## **Results and Benefits to Industry**

Overall the study highlights the ways in which the industry was boosted by 120 million Euros in tourism receipts in the year Estonia joined the EU. Tourism grew substantially in 2004 with additional visitors staying in paid accommodation increasing by 24%, while visitor nights increased by 21%. The study identified that EU membership, along with NATO membership, directly stimulated increased investment in the tourism industry where the increasingly secure image of Estonia within Europe directly countered the lawlessness perceived in the initial break up of the Soviet Union. This also was further boosted with the launch of the "Brand Estonia" "Positively transforming" and "Nordic with a Twist" strategy.

Secondly, the policy shifts associated with joining the EU, namely the removal of border controls and the "open skies" policy, increased access to the country from the other EU member states making it easier for potential tourists to visit. The industry was directly benefited by the pre-emptive re-structure of the national airline Estonian Air into a low cost carrier, in response to imminent competition. Within months of Estonia joining the EU the first budget carriers (Easyjet, Volare) began touching down at Tallinn airport having a dramatic impact on arrivals. Easyjet's flights from London for example delivered a 189% increase in UK visitors to the industry in the first two months of operation in 2004.

Finally, membership of the EU generated a large increase in foreign media coverage of Estonia, primarily within the EU, but also globally. This media coverage then benefited the industry by acting as a free promotion of the country in key markets and stimulating demand. It also provided the country with a further opportunity to promote the specific "Brand Estonia" attributes.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Jeff Jarvis

Jeff.Jarvis@arts.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9905 5286

# **The Building of “Brand Australia”**

Jeff Jarvis  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project Aim**

Branding is increasingly gaining recognition in tourism marketing as an essential step in the international marketing of destinations. The “brand state” has been defined as the outside world’s ideas about a particular country that can have an impact on a countries economic and political currency. Tourism destination brands are also increasingly beginning to reach beyond the tourism industry. This study involves an analysis of the Brand Australia campaign and its evolution from “Australia – Naturally Free Spirited” (1996) to “Australia – life in a different light” (2005). It provides tourism boards and the wider industry with an evaluation of the drivers of “Brand Australia” and the impact that marketing can have on brand attributes in the high yielding tourism source market of Sweden, which was used as a case study

## **Methods**

The research methods used to compile this study included an initial in depth study of 21 current Swedish University students on their attitudes to and images of Australia. This was then followed with a survey to measure the image attributes of Australia with University students in Sweden and Estonia (where no Brand Australia marketing activities had taken place). In addition an in depth interview was conducted with the manager of the Australian Tourist Commission (Tourism Australia) for Scandinavia.

## **Results and Benefits to Industry**

The results show that Australia has an overall positive image as a youthful, positive and sunny destination in the minds of Swedish University students with many showing a high desire to visit. The key drivers of Australia’s image in Sweden appear to be “popular culture” in the form of television shows such as repeats of “Flying Doctors” and “Home and Away” rather than specific media and marketing campaigns run by the government. The image of Australia was found to be remarkably similar in Estonia, which was used as a control group where no marketing activity had taken place. Overall this identifies to industry that Australia’s latent image is primarily positive and dictated by popular culture and that marketing campaigns need to use this latent image as a base from which to build the brand.

**Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Jeff Jarvis

Jeff.Jarvis@arts.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9905 5286

# **The Strategic Importance of International Students to the Australian Backpacker Industry**

Jeff Jarvis and Victoria Peel  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project Aim**

Backpackers are now widely regarded as one of the highest yielding segments of international visitors to Australia. In 2003 they comprised 10% of all visitors, 25% of all nights spent in Australia and were worth over \$2.2 Billion. However, within the backpacker market notable sub segments with observable behavioural and travel patterns exist, such as Working Holiday Makers and those backpackers who combine travel and studying. This study provides the industry with a profile of the behaviour of these previously undefined "Study Backpackers" and the opportunities they present for the broader tourism industry.

## **Methods**

The research methods used to compile this study included an analysis of existing International Visitor Survey data in association with a survey conducted with short term study abroad and exchange international university students studying in Australia. In addition in depth interviews were conducted with international education industry specialists in Australia and the USA (a major source market of short term international students).

## **Results and Benefits to Industry**

The results highlights to industry that "study backpackers" are a rapidly growing and high yield segment of the overall backpacker market in Australia. Although this group is motivated to come to Australia primarily in order to study, travel opportunities play a key role in that decision and they are therefore highly travel intensive. As study commitments limit their mobility, this sub group differs from holidaying backpackers in their visitation patterns, which typically reflects a hub and spoke pattern of dispersal from their study base. Travel also occurs more frequently during university breaks where they travel as a 'traditional' backpacker purchasing existing industry products. Study backpackers can be identified as a high yield sub segment of the backpacker market demonstrating expenditure on tuition fees (study abroad students), accommodation (usually a rented flat), transport (occasionally car purchase) and general tourism products and services. In addition, this group is a significant stimulus of inbound travel for both their host city and Australia overall when visited by friends and family.

The growth in this segment has been motivated by the joint expansion in marketing of Australia as a tourist destination and in the marketing to international students conducted by the university sector. The study backpacker segment has also led to specific product development. Universities have responded by offering courses that include major study tours to key tourist destinations around Australia and developing "orientation programs" upon arrival which include regional tourism products and attractions. In response to the relative time-poverty of the study backpackers, the private sector has started to respond by packaging existing "independent" backpacker product for consumption over university holidays.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Jeff Jarvis  
Dr Vicki Peel

Jeff.Jarvis@arts.monash.edu.au  
Vicki.Peel@arts.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9905 5286  
+ 61 3 9905 5285

# **Managing Backpackers and Residents in Urban Areas**

Victoria Peel  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project Aim**

This study examines community perceptions of the nature and value of backpackers residing for extended periods in Australian cities. The tendency of this travel sector to seek to merge with a visited community has been perceived by government as a positive aspect of the segment. However this behaviour is also negatively viewed as likely to have an intrusive impact on the host community. This research aims to determine the chief problems associated with backpackers' congregating in residential urban areas over time and to develop appropriate guidelines for local tourism managers in response.

## **Methods**

To profile media and community attitudes toward backpackers Australia-wide, we undertook an analysis of local and national print media commentary related to backpacker behaviour from 1990 until 2004, including articles and letters to the editor.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

The study showed that the Australian community has a very different attitude to backpackers compared to the now generally positive view of this market segment as promoted by federal government tourism bodies. Community and government perceptions of backpackers need to better align to ensure the future success of government planning to expand this market. The study therefore contributes guidelines for local government tourism planners in identifying and managing the influence of this segment, which will prove particularly valuable for urban destinations where their impact is most profound.

**Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Dr Vicki Peel

Vicki.Peel@arts.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9905 5285

# How Tourists React to Profound Wildlife Experiences

Liam Smith, Betty Weiler and Sam Ham  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## Project aim

Human encounters with wildlife can range from experiences that have little effect on the people who experience them, to experiences that can be called profound. The aim of this project was to explore the 'profound' end of the spectrum and to identify what variables may make experiences profound. Many people have had profound wildlife experiences, yet if we asked what made the experience profound, the answer may not readily come to mind. Was it how close the animal was, the eye contact that was made, or something more abstract like the communication that was felt to have occurred between the person and the animal? Because zoos are generally interested in influencing the way their visitors behave toward animals both at the zoo and when they return home, and profound experiences, by definition, impact on the way people think and feel about animals, this type of experience was the focus of investigation.

## Methods

Using in-depth interviews, we asked wildlife tourism visitors who stated they had had what they considered to be a profound wildlife encounter, to talk at length about their experience. We explored their perceptions on what made the experience profound, how it affected their lives and what they thought tourism operators could or should do to facilitate more experiences similar to their own.

An initial list of over fifty potentially causal variables (such as making eye contact, being close to the animal, and the type of animal) was generated from the interviews. However, this list was refined by considering whether each variable was manipulable by tourism operators. Some variables were deemed too difficult to manipulate, such as whether the animal chose to interact, and these were omitted. Twenty six variables were identified as being both potentially causal to profound wildlife experiences and manipulable by wildlife tourism operators.

## Results and benefits to industry

Based on the findings of this research, several proposals were made to the wildlife tourism industry, including zoos, about how they may facilitate more profound experiences. Some of these proposals included allowing visitors to go behind the scenes wherever possible, using glass for eye contact, and close encounters and touching where appropriate.

This research is to be continued in a further phase that will seek to create these sorts of situations in zoos artificially or find them where they exist and discover how visitors react to different types of experiences. This may be done using standard psychometric testing equipment, such as heart rate and breathing rate monitoring and the amount of sweat produced. Gaining a greater understanding of these experiences should assist zoo designers in creating exhibits with a focus on the visitor experience which will hopefully lead to opportunities for visitors to have a range of experiences including profound ones. The benefits of doing this are likely to be repeat visitation and word-of-mouth promotion as well as influencing the way in which visitors behave toward animals.

## Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:

Liam Smith	Liam.Smith@buseco.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9904 7107
Professor Betty Weiler	Betty.Weiler@buseco.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9904 7104
Professor Sam Ham	Sam.Ham@buseco.monash.edu.au	

# **Relationship Between Tourism in National Parks and Community-Based Conservation: the case of West Bali National Park, Indonesia**

Arisetiarso Soemodinoto, Sharron Pfueller and John Grindrod  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

The aim of this project was to assess the relationship between tourism's socio-economic and socio-cultural impacts and local communities' conservation-oriented behaviour. This has been approached through a case study of West Bali National Park, Indonesia. Key research objectives are [a] to review the status of tourism development at the West Bali National Park; [b] to identify community attitudes and perceptions of tourism and evaluate related socio-economic and socio-cultural impacts; and [c] to evaluate the implications of tourism for the conservation of natural resources at a local level.

## **Methods**

We conducted a combination of structured and semi-structured interviews in three villages: two in the periphery and one inside the National Park. A total of 40 respondents were interviewed to elicit their attitudes and perceptions toward the National Park, tourism and conservation and to assess their actual conservation activities. We also interviewed Park officials, other forestry and local government personnel and tourism operators. Government documents were examined to establish the historical development of the National Park, associated tourism and the local communities.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

Although tourism in West Bali National Park has involved local people as required by government regulations, views on tourism's impacts on local communities were ambiguous. Most respondents thought that tourism had benefits for local people, mainly in terms of employment opportunities, but it also had produced negative impacts such as [1] envy among local communities, as only a small number of people could work in tourism; [2] division among local people because of changes in legal land-ownership status; [3] increasing pressures on resources of the Park, and [4] feelings that local people were being unfairly treated by the National Park and local government. The majority of respondents also believed that conservation was important but expected that it could not be undertaken at the expense of their livelihood and assets. They felt that the government, in this case the Park administration, must make available all the necessary fund and programs.

These findings suggest that tourism operators and National Park managers need to investigate local needs and develop community-oriented strategies to encourage engagement in both tourism and conservation activities. The results and the research approach could be extended to tourism in other developing countries to ultimately help devise suitable programs that mutually benefit the Park, tourism and local communities.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Arisetiarso Soemodinoto	asoe9@student.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9905 8458
Dr Sharron Pfueller	Sharron.Pfueller@arts.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9905 4619
Dr John Grindrod	John.Grindrod@arts.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9905 4621

# **An Examination of Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Labor, Emotional Dissonance and Burnout in Employees at a Major Tourism Attraction**

Pieter Van Dijk and Andrea Kirk-Brown  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## **Project aim**

The research project is examining emotional intelligence and its influence on an individual's ability to manage possible negative consequences of performing emotional labour in a customer service context. The project is a case study of a major tourism attraction that provides a number of customer/visitor services that include education, guided and interactive experiences, demonstrations, theatre and performances, and retail/shopping opportunities for visitors. The project is looking at ways employees proactively manage the possible negative consequences of performing emotional labour and the utility of emotional intelligence in this process. The link between emotional labour and burnout needs clarification and therefore this project is examining what it is about performing emotional labour that makes it a threat to an employee's emotional well-being. Included in this is what it is that makes emotional labour a positive experience for employees.

## **Methods**

To find out the relevance of emotional labour we conducted a number of interviews with staff. The results of these interviews suggest to us that emotional labour as described by Hochschild (originator of the term) is a valid conceptualisation of what visitor/customer service personnel do when interacting with the public. We then collected qualitative data to help us refine our way of measuring emotional intelligence, and a self-completed survey to which 181 staff responded. Our various data sources and methods are helping us to build a picture of emotional labour and its consequences. We have not only identified when and how individuals use emotional intelligence to manage and influence the outcomes of emotional labour, but have also isolated an individual's sense of identity in relation to the organisation as a key factor in this.

## **Results and benefits to industry**

Our research has produced a practical easy-to-use measure of emotional intelligence developed for industry. It is envisaged from this research that proactive coping methods for employees who perform emotional labour will be suggested and developed. Included with this will be the development of behavioural questions for recruitment and selection of suitable emotional labourers. We also plan to develop industry relevant training in emotional intelligence, including coping methods for those already involved in the industry as well as those who are new to this type of work.

## **Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:**

Peter Van Dijk	Pieter.VanDijk@buseco.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9904 7167
Dr Andrea Kirk-Brown	Andrea.Kirk-Brown@buseco.monash.edu.au	+ 61 3 9904 7094

# Understanding Expectations and Experiences of Chinese Visitors to Victoria

Xin Yu and Betty Weiler  
Monash Tourism Research Unit

## Project aim

This project examines the critical factors facilitating and inhibiting Chinese visitors' satisfaction with their experiences in Victoria, Australia. As partners in this study, Tourism Victoria and Sovereign Hill Museum Association together with a number of specialist tour operators in this market want to understand what visitors actually experience, gain insight into the meanings of these experiences, and determine how experience can be improved. In particular, it is hoped that the results can be used to "lobby" for change in the Chinese outbound tourism industry, which tends to influence a lot of control over the way tours are packaged and delivered.

## Methods

We have been collecting information over a period of about six months, using a combination of observations, conversational interviews with both visitors and guides, and a visitor survey in order to get useful and meaningful results.

Our industry partners provided input into the research design as well as access to Chinese visitors. As a result, we have been able to conduct observations at several key tourism attractions in Victoria to examine the patterns of Chinese visitors' behaviour, their responses to the places visited and activities participated in, and their interactions with locals. This has given us solid evidence of what Chinese visitors experience and the roles of various players (local, tour guides, restaurants, duty free shops, tour operators and attractions).

We have also carried out a visitor survey as well as conducted in-depth conversational interviews with Chinese visitors at attractions, while they are travelling between attractions, and in the airport departure lounge, to hear their "voice" about the types of experiences they were seeking, their best/most satisfactory and worst/least satisfactory things about their visit and what these experiences mean to them. Conversational interviews with tour guides has enabled us to examine what *guides* say about what visitors think, feel and do, compared to what *visitors* say and actually do.

## Results and benefits to industry

Tour operators and managers can use the results to paint a picture of the Chinese visitor's expectations and experiences, as a basis for developing a clearer understanding of this market. The results are expected to help government and industry improve their knowledge of Chinese visitors and develop more relevant marketing and product development strategies. This could lead to identification of sub-markets within the Chinese market, to product enhancement or the development of new products in Victoria, and to marketing programs that more effectively target, position and promote Victoria as a destination. By addressing issues that directly influence visitor numbers, length of stay in Victoria and positive word-of-mouth advertising, the research outcomes will also contribute to greater sustainability in this very important market.

## Additional details regarding this research can be obtained from:

Professor Betty Weiler  
Dr Xin Yu

Betty.Weiler@buseco.monash.edu.au  
Xin.Yu@buseco.monash.edu.au

+ 61 3 9904 7104  
+ 61 3 9904 7076

## Further Information

For further details about research projects conducted by the Monash Tourism Research Unit, please contact:

Annita Allman, Executive Assistant  
Tourism Research Unit  
Faculty of Business and Economics  
Monash University  
PO Box 1071  
Narre Warren VIC 3805

Telephone (03) 9904 7224

Facsimile (03) 9904 7225

Email: [Enquiries.TRU@BusEco.monash.edu.au](mailto:Enquiries.TRU@BusEco.monash.edu.au)

[www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru/](http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru/)