Regional festivals: nourishing community resilience: the nature and role of cultural festivals in Northern Rivers NSW communities

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Southern Cross University
Regional festivals

Nourishing community resilience: the nature and role of cultural festivals in Northern Rivers NSW communities.

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The following dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Southern Cross University

Lismore, NSW Australia

December, 2007
Authentication

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University’s rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

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Signature:.........

Date: ..........29 May 2008....................................................
Acknowledgements

As a resident of the Northern Rivers of NSW I have been fascinated by the plethora of community celebrations that populate our regional calendar. I have long been partial to a spot of ceremony, ritual, amusement, feasting and entertainment. I have always been conscious of what underpins such events, after many years working with large and small communities to ‘make them happen’. This has been part of my commitment to lifelong learning!

Another aspect of trying to better understand what is going on around me has been formally taking up the challenges that beset a PhD student! Maybe it is just the art imitating life paradigm, but through both experiences I have learned a great deal.

Both journeys have allowed me to meet people whose contribution to my life and learning has been much appreciated. They have provided stimulation, character-building feedback, great company and support for my intellectual curiosity. I have appreciated the interaction with work colleagues at Southern Cross University through the Australian Regional Research Centre, the Graduate Research College and the Centre for Peace and Social Justice. I particularly thank Dr. Meredith Lawrence and Dr. Kath Fisher. The University is situated in ‘god’s own country’ and too that provides a most desirable dimension to my pursuit of a sense of place and community through my work in the Office of Regional Engagement.

The themes I pick up in the thesis are certainly ones that have surrounded my life in the region. The new and old residents of the region have honed a distinctive culture that is increasingly being shared with visitors. My relationship with a wonderful cross-section of both has been an enduring legacy of this research. I have particularly appreciated the interest in and support for my investigation by community and event leaders. Their insights and experience have provided welcome stimuli.

With me through the epic journeys has been my husband Peter. He has captured the festivities represented in this thesis with flair. The images do a great deal to tell the story I initiate in the text. His willingness to recognise that this exercise ‘had to be done’ and he may as well come for the ride (!) has been a comfort to me during our shared journey.

Associate Professor Baden Offord’s care and attention to the process and the practice has been life affirming. I have valued his capacity to consistently encourage and stimulate as I made my way through darkness into the light!
Abstract

This thesis examines four regional community cultural festivals in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, Australia. It reveals the complex interplay of a sense of place and community, a destination’s identity and representation, host guest relationships and the underlying nature and role of celebration expressed in each festival. It examines the regional context in which the Jacaranda Festival in Grafton, the Beef Week celebrations in Casino, the New Year’s Eve celebrations in Byron Bay and the Mardi Grass Law reform rally in Nimbin are conducted. An extensive literature review provides a global perspective on theories, issues and trends in the sectors reflected in the case study festivals. The phenomenological approach to the case study methodology is explained before each festival is closely scrutinized, addressing the study’s aim.

The thesis aims at a better understanding of the elements of resilience fostered by festivals when communities take intentional action. This resilience dimension emerged as a major outcome of the initial investigation of the nature and role of festivals in regional communities.

The thesis argues that festivals allow people to reflect and determine a sense of community and place, represent their image and identity and contribute to cultural tourism. Community festivals involve the local population in a shared experience to their mutual benefit by providing both social functions and symbolic meanings. This study contends that community-based festivals celebrate the community’s social identity, its historical continuity and its cultural resilience. They are socially constructed and negotiated phenomena and can be staged in everyday places that also become tourist places. Festivals provide a forum for creativity, custom, heritage and cultural practices for both resident and guest.

Investigating community cultural festivals from multiple perspectives allows for greater understanding of the nuances of the relationships between stakeholders. By identifying the patterns, structures and meanings of the contexts that festivals represent we are better informed of the distinctive values, interests and aspirations held by residents when they host festivals. Perspectives on community festivals and resilience were canvassed from diverse perspectives as demonstrated by the following typical responses:
Nourishing resilience through Festivals and Communities

There are many intangible reasons why a community chooses to host a festival such as socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental and each reason is not mutually exclusive (Backman et al, 1995).

* The Northern Rivers region stands apart from the rest of rural Australia as living as if the future matters. This is a very powerful attractor in these times of urban decay and environmental despair (Dunstan, 1994:2).

* Sense of place, can be described as, the common ground where interpretation and community development meets in a concern to create or enhance a sense of place, to establish what is significant and valued in the environment or heritage of a particular community, and to provide action for its wider appreciation and conservation (Binks, 1989:191 cited Trotter, 1998).

* Democratic communities take responsibility for their future. It is undeniable that cohesive community events based on ideals create a sense of community. The excitement and joy that people feel when they work together for their community and future means that they will attempt to recreate that experience. It becomes their preferred way (Emery, 1995:70).

* …the notion of community is always something of a myth. A community implies a coherent entity with a clear identity and a commonality of purpose. The reality is that communities, more often than not, are made up of an agglomeration of factions and interest groups often locked in competitive relationships (Smit, 1995 cited in Joppe, 1996:475).

* Community, the custodians of the content of Australian tourism, must be enabled to participate in tourism by forming its content. Only if Australians are involved in tourism will it survive, (Wood, 1993:7).

Through direct contact and interaction with each festival, the qualitative exploratory study reveals how in formal and informal ways participants at the four case study sites demonstrate the diverse and fragmented nature of festivals. Although none of these festivals is identical, some consistent patterns do emerge to demonstrate that comparisons can be developed. These patterns have their own advantages and disadvantages and it is evident that success or failure is not linked to a particular model for such festivals. Each community has an ongoing challenge of determining how their festival can best meet its needs presently and into the
future. Each is trying to keep pace with the changes that are taking place within their communities, within the region and from external forces. This is where the study also generates new knowledge: tracking the changes occurring in community festivals in contemporary regional Australia.

Through a systematic analysis of data the study significantly contributes to our understanding of the character of community festivals. Through surveys, interviews, media analysis, photographic images and critical observation, it clearly observes that social, economic and environmental issues currently presented in the literature require greater deconstruction and critical engagement. Rich and quilted description of the festivals informs this research providing grounded scholarly investigation. This approach leads to a greater understanding of significant social and cultural agendas in regional communities. Festivals add value to communities. They creatively produce and embed culture. They can be viewed as celebrations of resilience.

The study demonstrates that place-based governance of community cultural festivals may sometimes not succeed in all its objectives, but it is intimate enough with its constituency to provide immediate feedback and can remediate in full public gaze. Attachment to place plays a significant role for individuals and groups in the human experience. The argument is made that festivals can protect and enhance community values, encourage social cohesion, equity and diversity and care for sacred places.

At the core of the investigation is an analysis of how the process of nourishing resilience by making inclusive celebrations, unleashes relationships between many stakeholders. Each participant contributes to the program, traditions, cultural practices, impact and reach of events with differing voices and emphases.

In principle, festivals and their host communities offer individual members a framework for attending to general aspects of life. This study reaffirms that community festivals particularly hold a significant position in three areas of the human condition. They celebrate a sense of place through organising inclusive activities in specific safe environments. They provide a vehicle for communities to host visitors and share such activities as representations of communally agreed values, interests and aspirations. Finally, they are the outward manifestation of the identity of the community and provide a distinctive identifier of place and people.
Publications

This study investigates the nature and role of community cultural festivals. The thesis argues that festivals allow people to reflect and determine a sense of community and place, represent their image and identity and contribute to cultural tourism. The research reveals the importance of resilience within the festival organisation and within the broader host community.

The following peer reviewed publications represent material upon which this thesis is based:


Mackellar, J. and Derrett, R, (2004), Festivals and Innovation in Northern Rivers, New South Wales – examination of the Northern Rivers Herb Festival and Casino Beef Week, Sustainable Tourism CRC Regional Tourism Cases: Innovation in Regional Tourism.


The following referred papers have informed the thesis:

Derrett, R. and Mitchell, P., (2005) Connecting Arts and Local Government to lead future creative regions, Small Towns Conference, Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, La Trobe University, Bendigo.


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Glossary of Terms

Terms most often used in the study are identified below:

**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

‘Active citizenship is a compound of knowledge, skills and attitudes; knowledge about how society works; the skills needed to participate effectively; and a conviction that active participation is the right of citizens’ (Education for Active Citizenship, Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, 1989:7 cited in Wills, 2001:40); and 1997 Declaration of the Role of Australian Local Government (by Australian Local Government Association), ‘Australian Local Government will promote Active Citizenship at the Local level. Local Government will encourage non-discriminatory participation of all citizens in building democratic communities which share power and ensure equitable allocations of community resources’, (Wills, 2001:41).

**CAPACITY**

Researchers and practitioners often use the terms ‘capacity development’ and ‘capacity building’ interchangeably. Strictly taken Capacity Development is the process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to:

1) perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives; and 2) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner.


Capacity-building is an approach to development not something separate from it. It is a response to the multi-dimensional processes of change, not a set of discrete or pre-packaged technical interventions intended to bring about a pre-defined outcome. In supporting organisations working for social justice, it is also necessary to support the various capacities they require to do this: intellectual, organisational, social, political, cultural, material, practical, or financial.


**CARRYING CAPACITY**

Carrying capacity refers to the number of individuals who can be supported in a given area within natural resource limits, and without degrading the natural social, cultural and economic environment for present and future generations. The carrying capacity for any
given area is not fixed. It can be altered by improved technology, but mostly it is changed for
the worse by pressures that accompany a population increase. As the environment is
degraded, carrying capacity actually shrinks, leaving the environment no longer able to
support even the number of people who could formerly have lived in the area on a
sustainable basis. No population can live beyond the environment's carrying capacity for
very long (Capacity organisation, 2005).

CASE STUDY
A case study is the documented history of noteworthy events that have taken place in a given
institution, setting, community or environment (Jennings, 2001:437).

CHOICE
The power of choosing; option; an abundance and variety from which to choose; that which is
preferred or preferable to others.

COMMUNITY
A community comprises people who identify themselves as a group because of their shared
cultural heritage, spirituality, geographic location, special interest or gender. This system of
relationships accommodates the need for freedom of the individual and a need for
connectedness. Community is a phenomenon that follows a predictable pattern (Peck 1987:
60). Peck suggests that ‘community can be one of those words - like God, or love, or death, or
consciousness - that's too large to submit to any single, brief definition’ (ibid).

COMMUNITY FESTIVAL
Community based festivals and events — also called local events originate (as the name
suggests) within a sector of the community that has a need or desire to celebrate a feature of
its life or history. Community based festivals and events will also be of limited duration
(Dimmock & Tiyce, 2001).

COMMUNITY TOURISM
Community tourism places the emphasis on resident participation in tourism policymaking,
planning and consultation in destination management and marketing. Small communities
can monitor, criticise and assist in directing tourism development. Guidelines for socially
sensitive tourism development in British Columbia proposed by D’Amore (1983) and Kelly (2003) contributed to the discussion.

**COMMUNITY WELLBEING**
Community wellbeing outcomes described by Labonte, Hancock and Edwards (1999) and Landry (1994) cited in Wills, (2001:23) are:
Livability - natural and built environments for healthy and easy living;
Equity – equal opportunity for the development of human potential;
Conviviality - people living well together
Adequate prosperity – consuming less but with sufficiency;
Sustainability – sufficient development without threatening viability;
Viability – remaining within the ecological limits and maintaining species diversity;
Vitality – resulting from activity and interaction between people.

**CULTURE**
Culture is an integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thought, speech, action and artefacts and is dependent on a capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. It is a dynamic value system of learned elements with assumptions, conventions, beliefs and rules permitting members of a group to relate to each other and to the world, to communicate and to develop their creative potential (A Working Definition of Culture, Canadian Commission of UNESCO, 1977:6).

Culture embraces all the manifestations of social habits of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the group in which he lives and the products of human activities as determined by these habits (Boas, 1930:79)

**CULTURAL COMMODITISATION (COMMODIFICATION)**
Often regarded as an outcome of tourism impacts on small scale communities, commodification is a process in which cultural forms and practices are given a monetary value and sold as commodities in the tourist market (Wyllie, 2000:65). It is suggested that culture loses its authenticity and its former meaning for people (Wyllie, 2000; Picard, 1996).
CULTURAL TOURISM
Cultural tourism can be defined as the art of participating in another culture, of relating to people and places that demonstrate a strong sense of their own identity. It is concerned with the ways of life of a place (Wood, 1993). It is doing what the locals do.

Cultural tourism is about the dynamic human environment. It is concerned with the whole range of human creation, custom, heritage and activity. It can form partnerships to create the content of tourism, e.g. it can act as a catalyst for further, broader development associated with the built and natural environment, the arts industry, recreation, conventions and events, civic design, community development, health and education.

DAY TRIPPER
A day-tripper is a person who goes on a trip, especially an excursion, lasting all or part of a day but not overnight.

FATE
Fate is that which is inevitably predetermined.

FESTIVAL
A special event recognising a unique moment in time with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs. Local community events may be an activity established to involve the local population in a shared experience to their mutual benefit. Characteristics include celebration marked by special observances, consisting of performances fun, conviviality and cheerfulness.

GUEST
A guest is an individual or a group visiting a location not their home and anticipating hospitality.

HOST
An individual or group predisposed to offering hospitality in a welcoming sociable manner to visitors.
NON PROFIT ORGANISATION
The simplest explanation of a non-profit organisation is that any profit it makes is used to
further the objectives of the organisation and is not distributed to any of its members. A non-
profit organisation can still make a profit, but this profit must be used to carry out its
purposes. Non-profit organisations operate in many areas of society (Australian Business
Register, 2007).

REGION
A region is a geographical area with discrete, distinctive (and sometimes arbitrary) features of
administration, landscape, land-use, heritage, cultural resources and tourism identity.

RESILIENCE
A resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and
collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to and influence the course of
10, No 4, p.11).

SENSE OF PLACE
Contemporary discussion of ‘a sense of place’ has grown from the geographical work
undertaken in the 1970s. It was noted that place had ‘spirit’ or a ‘personality’ and humans
demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to
sites and locations (Tuan, 1974). Subsequently authors suggest that a sense of place varies for
each individual over time (Stewart et al, 1998). Distinctions are made in the literature between
sense of place theory terms as ‘public symbol’ and ‘field of care’ (Tuan, 1974; Eyles, 1985;
Perkins, 1988; Sutton, 1992 all cited in Stewart et al, 1998). These are applied in this study to
residents and visitors through their involvement with community cultural festivals in specific
destinations.

Typically the concept of ‘sense of place’ refers to an individual’s ability to develop feelings of
attachment to particular settings based on combinations of use, attentiveness and emotion
(Stokowski, 2002).
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS
These impacts are the factors that affect the values, beliefs, interests, aspirations, cultural systems and lifestyle of a destination. Impacts have implications for the spaces between people in communities in terms of ‘social capital’.

SOCIAL CAPITAL
‘The social capital of a society includes the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. It includes the shared values and rules for social conduct expressed in personal relationships, trust and a common sense of civic responsibility, that makes a society more than a collection of individuals. Without a degree of common identification with forms of governance, cultural norms and social rules, it is difficult to imagine a functioning society’, (The Initiative on Defining, Monitoring and Measuring Social Capital, Overview and Program Description, Working paper No 1, 1998:1, The World Bank).

Social capital is an attitude, spirit and willingness of people to engage in collective, civic activities. Over time, social capital builds what may be termed as social infrastructure (Volunteering California, 2006).

Social capital relates to the resources available within communities in networks of mutual support, reciprocity and trust. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has adopted the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition, of networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups. The ABS framework conceptualizes social capital as a resource along with natural, produced economic and human capital (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

SOCIAL JUSTICE
The concept of social justice, grounded in the intrinsic value of each person, aims at maximising the potential of self-realisation and quality of life for all people through social intervention and interaction and social empowerment. Social justice in terms of equal access to power and resources, equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes is influenced by and dependent upon society acknowledging and adhering to a range of interrelated rights.

TOURIST
Tourists can be defined in behavioural terms as persons who travel away from their normal residential region for a temporary period of at least one night, to the extent that their
behaviour involves a search for leisure experiences from interactions with features or characteristics of places they choose to visit (Leiper, 1995:11).

**VILLAGE**
A village or community is concerned with the size and density of settlement. A village is small assemblage of houses ranging from 30 – 500 households that is larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town. A range of village characteristics includes community identity, connectedness and integration, function and design and diversity and multi-functionality.

**WELLBEING**
Good or satisfactory condition of existence.

**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>AFC</td>
<td>Australian Film Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANR</td>
<td>Arts Northern Rivers</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARTRC</td>
<td>Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBCSC</td>
<td>Byron Bay Community Safety Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC</td>
<td>Byron Shire Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERRA</td>
<td>Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia ((World Heritage Area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRTA</td>
<td>Clarence River Tourist Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVC</td>
<td>Clarence Valley Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCITA</td>
<td>Department of Communication Information Technology and the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community (1970s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEMP</td>
<td>Help End Marijuana Prohibition (Nimbin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCC</td>
<td>Lismore City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>Multiple Occupancy (communes or intentional communities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCDA</td>
<td>Nimbin Community Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Northern Rivers (region)</td>
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<td>NRACC</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee</td>
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<td>NRRS</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Regional Strategy</td>
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<td>NRRCTO</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation</td>
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<td>NRRDB</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Regional Development Board</td>
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<td>NRT</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Tourism</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>The Northern Star (newspaper)</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>NYE</td>
<td>New Year’s Eve</td>
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<td>PATA</td>
<td>Pacific Asia Travel Association</td>
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<td>RVC</td>
<td>Richmond Valley Council</td>
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<td>SCU</td>
<td>Southern Cross University</td>
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<td>STCRC</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Co-operative Research Centre</td>
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<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<td>VFR</td>
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Chapter 1: Community Festivals and Resilience

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines research into regional community cultural festivals and how they and their host communities foster resilience. It indicates some stimuli for the research objectives that emerged from earlier work conducted in the specific region under investigation. It suggests a research framework that provides a holistic multidisciplinary approach based on how festivals represent a community’s sense of itself and its identity to its residents and for visitors. It explains resilience in terms of how festival organisations and communities more broadly accrue capacity to deal with change. It briefly introduces the four case study festivals and outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Aims

The overall aim of this thesis is to understand the elements of resilience fostered by a festival when a community takes intentional action. It explores the aesthetics of celebration as well as the structures and functions that come together during a community festival. The study explores the intimate connection between a festival, its host community and the broader physical and cultural region in which it is staged. This research contributes new knowledge by identifying the cyclical interface between residents’ sense of place and community, how this represents their identity and through cultural tourism how the festivals manage change. There has been little critical analysis of how community cultural festivals fare over time. Little work is recorded on the path taken by festivals as they evolve and what they contribute to civil society. The rich and thick description of the festivals represented in this study assists in synthesizing disciplinary borders to achieve a more holistic perspective on components of community and ecological capital.

In order to examine these aspects of festivals, this thesis investigates the nature and role of four festivals in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales (NSW). It examines how diverse regional stakeholders contribute to festivals and investigates the contribution festivals make to cultural tourism through representing and determining a regional image and identity.

The study uses a phenomenological approach to research using a multiple case study design. Each festival is different and as such provides different perspectives for analysis. The
examination of four case study festivals documents, evaluates and highlights the sequence of initiatives taken by individuals and groups in creating festivals. By comparing and contrasting the four festivals it aims to demonstrate patterns and practices that demonstrate resilience. The emphasis is particularly on relationships between stakeholders and how festival managements nurture and sustain the festivals. The study recognises the implications for social capital, community wellbeing and resilience. When the management of a community resource like a festival is shared by a diverse group of stakeholders, it is argued that decision-making is better informed and parties to this are capable of greater adaptive behaviours in other areas of the community’s life. The case studies offer an opportunity to observe the behaviours, thinking and actions taken by those engaged with the festival.

The study was piloted initially in two communities (Byron Bay and Nimbin) where I was able to grasp the issues that might impinge of a broader based investigation. One compelling strand of the study of the festivals is their capacity to demonstrate a human ecosystem that nurtures resilience in communities. I take a resilient community to be ‘one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to and influence the course of social and economic change’ (The Community Resilience Manual, Making Waves, 1999:11). It is apparent that increased resilience arises from the diversity present in rural communities. As I investigated the links between festivals and three key aspects of regional community life – a sense of place and sense of community, the community’s image and identity and cultural tourism I noted that these elements nourished community resilience. The phenomenological approach used in the study provides lessons about resilience.

What emerged during the conduct of the research was that the social meaning explored initially revealed resilience as an aspiration of stakeholders. A closer examination of this phenomenon as the research progressed demonstrated that the festival organisers, their organisations and the community at large play an effective role in determining the resilience capacity of the host community. As each draws together the assets of that community, it becomes evident that what is learned from the experience of designing and delivering a festival ensures that the community is better placed to deal with the management of risks associated not only with event management, but broader community challenges. This is more robustly reflected upon in the conclusions outlined in Chapter Nine.

This research provides an insider’s view as a participant observer of case study festivals. As well it offers a process of discovery and understanding that is grounded in the information collected. This iterative process needs to be recognised upfront. The data emerges as each
case study chapter reveals rich description of the festivals’ contexts. It involves comparisons and develops and refines the emerging discussion of resilience. The data collection informs the theoretical analysis that is presented in Chapter Nine.

My initial examination of the festivals is addressed through the following questions:

- What is a community’s sense of place?
- How do regional and local distinctiveness influence festivals and vice versa?
- What is the role of key stakeholders in community festival development and management?
- How are different voices in a community accommodated in festivals?
- How do communities share festivals with visitors?

Answers to these questions provide the study with useful data to build a case for the influence festivals have on the development of the capacity for resilience by individuals, groups and communities.

The four community cultural festivals in this thesis demonstrate how communities share their culture that in turn becomes the content of the tourism experience for visitors. Thus these festivals form the content identified by Wood (1992:4), demonstrating clearly the links between place, culture, community and celebration and how they reflect the host’s values, interests and aspirations to be shared with visitors. Wood’s contention is that the local interaction with visitors influences the image and identity of the hosts in the market place is also supported by this research.

1.3 Background

As part of the Images from the Edge! multi-disciplinary research project into lifestyle and landscape choices of residents of the Northern Rivers of New South Wales (NSW), a paper was commissioned from social activist and festival convenor Graeme Dunstan. The paper entitled Becoming Coastwise, the Path of Festivals and Cultural Tourism, Landscape and Lifestyle Choices for the Northern Rivers of NSW (1994) outlined Dunstan’s rule of thumb on the nature of community celebrations. He worked with my students at Southern Cross University to refine his value proposition on festivals. We all turned to the abundance of community festivals in the region to observe their practices and their impacts. His ideas stimulated robust discussion inside and outside the academy. Dunstan’s paper passionately addressed the community value of festivals and explored some of the outcomes Dunstan expected from festivals. The implications are that festivals allow communities to stay and work together and flourish. Further, he suggests that this bonding, through a lot of effort and creativity,
generated competence in numerous areas of social life. The major outcome was to show the capacity to adapt to change (1994:2) as he explains below.

**First Law of Celebration:** To celebrate is to be human and possibly divine.

This law states that the need to celebrate is as much a part of being human as is breathing. Humans are herd animals and they like clustering. It suggests that the absence of celebration, or the opposition to it, is evidence of the presence of an oppression of the human spirit of one kind or another.

**Second Law of Celebration:** Celebration creates community.

Celebration is the way we humans affirm our connected-ness to each other in meaning, time and place. It is the ritual by which we make and renew our sense of community whatever and wherever that might be. The converse is also true. A community without a signifying celebration is no “community” at all.

**Third Law of celebration:** The more profound the sharing of meaning in the celebration and the more beautiful the art, the more intimately bonded is that community.

This law suggests that celebrations are a measure of the spiritual health of a community and the more a celebration can join people in sharing the core concerns and mysteries of the human condition such as birth, death and connected-ness, the more intimately they will realise their shared humanity as a universal brother and sisterhood of all people, a fundamental unity of love, justice and peaceful coexistence.

The converse of this law states that the more timid celebrations are in expression, the fewer people creatively engaged in production and participation, the more rigid they are about who and what is and is not appropriate participation and the more limited the imagination and creativity manifest, the less the sense of belonging for the participants.

If a celebration does not delve deep into meaning and does not invest in art to make its rituals effective, there can only be a superficial bonding. Politeness may prevail maybe and under the surface there will be alienation and disaffection.

**More Community Building**  Festivals are unordinary times in the life of a community. Making celebration requires that people reach out from their usual routines and interest, go beyond themselves for the community good. The more festivals, the more networks of association are engaged, extended and linked up; the more overlays of networks, the more connected-ness and the richer the experience of community.

**More Community Cohesion** The ‘Laws’ of celebration suggest that the higher the aspirations of community that can be publicly expressed and the more profound the sharing of these ‘communions’, the more closely bound we feel as community, the more we belong and the more we are able to focus and create movement for common cause.

**More Community Integration** Organising a major festival takes a lot of individual and collective effort. To get the job done the organisers have to be able to give a lot of time personally and be able to call in a lot of favours and/or inspire voluntarism. At any time there will be individuals and groups who have got the time, energy, commitment and networks of association to produce a festival. And over time things change. People who did it last year are not available. New people come forward. When community festivals do not fulfill this role of renewing themselves and their community, when they do not reach out to new people and open themselves up to new influences, they ossify and die.
More Cultural Movement  Celebration is a glue which can bind a community and it can also be the elixir which keeps community a fresh and constantly renewing experience, an elixir which keeps community relevant and responsive to the needs of the times. Annual festivals create a community of witness that marks the passage of time, notes the changing of the guard as new power relations arise and old ones change. Thus festivals are both celebrations of death and new life in the community and of the fact that being alive is about growth and change.

More Creativity and Change  Competence Festivals make a tangible statement about the prevailing “state of the art” in the community and festivals stimulate and inspire evolutions. The arts might be the arts of organisation and promotion, of music, making of spectacle, dance, theatre, pageantry, costumery or story telling about the times and the place. It is as if a big mirror is held up and the community of people who care sees itself reflected there, they see what’s good and what’s not so good and they start planning changes.

More Effective Community Values  Most people feel powerless to prevent changes they don’t like or bring on the changes they want. But opinions do not change anything. Collective action does. Social movements are powerful. Social movements are at the centre of human history. They are the only way social justice has prevailed over vested interests.

Dunstan’s perspective reaches similar conclusions to those of Quinn who suggests that, if at the heart of every festival are a place and a place-based community actively reproducing their shared values and belief systems, there is an important sense in which these cultural meanings are intentionally produced to be read by the outside world (2000:264).

These perspectives are partially tested by this study by examining the combination of factors that are associated with festival and community resilience and the minimizing of their vulnerability. What emerges from Quinn and Dunstan is the need to better understand who owns the festival. The organic nature of residents’ sense of place and community underpins the festivals at the core of this study. Through understanding the minutiae and complexity of a community’s spirit, the festival becomes the mechanism to deliver substantive outcomes like resilience. The importance of partnerships between internal and external stakeholders cannot be under estimated in establishing the sustainability of each festival. This interaction is a critical factor in delivering resilience.

My interest has been heightened by observations by Picard & Robinson that fewer studies have sought to position festivals in a context that is fluid, open to different scopes of society and cultural vectors and that resonate with realities of ongoing change (2006:5). They also raise the issue of synchronicity apparent in the relationship festivals have with tourism. The social concentration that occurs at festival time consolidates the sense of inclusiveness that is explored in this study. The temporary realignment that transforms public spaces and the local people in them during festival time is a manifestation of the changes that occur with daily community relationships.
1.4 Community Festivals

Festivals play a significant role in the life of a community. Where people have understood and used festivals to lift spirits, transfer knowledge and enhance neighbourliness, they have created community resilience. This means a robust community exists within the town, the community celebrates a bond and the town prospers. The celebrations that have been sustained through collaborative effort over long periods have seen the strengthening of communities. This can be observed from the levels of community activities, economic growth especially in terms of cultural tourism and the quality of life and wellbeing of residents. In short, the resilience observable through festival making demonstrates the cyclical nature of change that has been embraced without the destruction of the community.

Festivals emerge from the local lived culture and allow residents and visitors to be involved with their creation. Williams (1965:57) suggests that by participating in festivals we find a particular sense of life, a particular community of experience that hardly needs explanation. Festivals, as planned social phenomena, permit encounters with authentic expressions of culture. They offer a sensual process that can be experienced (Getz, 2007:9).

As a participant observer at many regional festivals I was moved to more thoroughly explore people at play. The more one peels back the layers of interaction that occur at community festivals, the easier it is to assess the values, interests and traditions central to the self-concept of the host community. Such festivals are thus an expression of local identity and reflect the internal life of the community notwithstanding they are impacted and influenced by external forces. For each participant the resulting communitas (Getz, 2007:385) refers to that temporary state in which people are together as equals sharing an experience, removed from ordinary life, so they have something very specific in common.

Festivals provide a multi-level understanding of the systems that sustain community functions, inform governance networks and allow for the adaptation and reorganisation that are required to meet challenges is vital to minimizing a community’s vulnerability. If a community’s resilience is reduced, residents are exposed to greater risks of uncertainty and surprise and will be required to rally around a new set of structures and processes. This is apparent in festival management as well.

The four case study festivals became exemplars for determining the challenges and successes that face communities and festival organisers. The resilience that exists in most regional communities and the porous nature of diverse relationships has been underestimated and
under-explored. The impact of these interactions on the festival’s capacity to be sustained over many years has long been a phenomenon of interest to me. The findings provide a useful lens through which to plan, manage and market festivals. Festivals cannot be developed in isolation and require effective networking and stakeholder management to ensure success and sustainability (Getz et al, 2007:121). More needs to be done, but this study addresses some of the key factors that make a difference in harnessing a community’s human capital to good effect. The individual and collaborative effort of festivals not only reflects the local identity but also determines a community’s or region’s distinctiveness.

**Nature and role of festivals**

Festivals are socially constructed and negotiated phenomena that can be staged in everyday places and influence these to become tourist places. Visitors are increasingly attracted to destinations where they can join locals at play. Festivals provide a forum for creativity, custom, heritage and activity for both resident and guest. Participation in community life can take a variety of forms. This thesis shows how. Festivals enable individuals to become interdependent in competent, productive and satisfying ways. These attributes can be seen as strategic approaches to building resilience through communication, problem solving and dealing with stresses.

Following these thoughts, this thesis investigates the nature and role of four festivals in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales (NSW), demonstrating how festivals provide a depth of experience with specific settings for residents, regional stakeholders and visitors. This experience can be transformative for those affected and provide a platform for sustaining further community efforts. The purpose of the case studies is to contribute to our understanding of community cultural festivals and to critique an holistic approach to how particular settings have different meanings for different players. The case studies suggest that people often underestimate their own potential as individuals and that this has the effect of them aspiring alone instead of as a group. Festivals provide benefits for living in a strong, close-knit community that knows who and what it is, what strengths it has and how it can best engage its resources in the interests of residents. Festivals assist communities in the process of self-definition. Festivals also need to be linked to the broader local and global social, economic and political contexts to be adequately understood.

Festivals provide a forum and a space where people make statements about who they are and about how and where they live (Quinn, 2000:264). While place and place-based activity demonstrate shared values and aspirations, it is the open nature of festivals and their role in the relationship building between locals and visitors that warrants scrutiny. The relationship
dynamics change when visitors come to town and participate in festivals. So, the construction of knowledge and identity emerges from a position that is specifically situated in a festival destination. Festivals are actively constructed and therefore subject to change and reinterpretation. From this derives a possible regional distinctiveness. That is a specific quality and range of characteristics that define what is unique about a place that emerges through festivities.

Richard Florida in his numerous publications on the *Creative Class* (2002) introduces the role of place into the conversation about why place matters in regional economic futures. Specific geographic locations stimulate a number of internal and external triggers for people’s engagement, like memory, comfort and security, company of like minds and fun. He identifies a growing recognition of creativity as a central catalyst for the economy is relevant to this study. He suggests,

> the jobs we get, the lives we lead, the people we meet are all shaped by place. I want people to know that their futures happiness is going to be in large part a function of where they choose to live. Ironically, and in some cases tragically, given our global technology-driven Internet economy, the number of places that are important is actually shrinking and not growing (Hines, 2007:84).

Festivals are not restricted to locals. Each festival under scrutiny has developed a relationship with tourism that has economic as well as social and cultural implications. Visitors are an integral party in the stakeholder mix discussed in the study. They can be intentional or unintentional consumers of the homegrown entertainment of the destinations in which they find themselves at a given time. Waterman (1998) acknowledges that festivals transform places from being everyday settings into temporary environments that contribute to the production, processing and consumption of culture, concentrated in time and place. They provide examples of how culture is nourished and contested.

The thesis explores how cultural festivals are potential demonstrations of the heart of a community’s sense of identity. This is particularly evident as Howkins (2001) suggests at the centre of every community is a debate of ideas that give weight to the community’s sense of itself. Festivals represent diversity at play in each community. Research is undertaken here to ascertain how festivals, like other cultural institutions, can contribute to the communication of ideas, information sharing, inculcation of values, promotion of active citizenship, improve the understanding of different cultures and lifestyles and build social partnerships (Kelly and Kelly, 2000). There are opportunities to observe how such practices are made, accumulate and become embodied for local and shared consumption (Blau, 1994:16).
1.5 Nourishing Resilience

The thesis uses festivals as a lens on community resilience. If a community’s resilience is reduced, residents are exposed to greater risks of uncertainty and will be required to rally around a new set of structures and processes. Festivals and events are seen to build social capital and in community development terms showcase the strengths of a community at play and to demonstrate its capacity to cope with external stresses and disturbance as a result of social, political and environmental change (Adger, 2000). Festivals are social phenomena that bring individuals and groups together. I particularly focus on the connection festivals offer residents and visitors and how this experience can assist host communities deal with unexpected change. The skills and experience of festival organisers and audience can be seen to prepare communities better for any stresses that may be generated internally or externally.

The resilience that exists in most regional communities and the nature of diverse stakeholder relationships has been underestimated and under-explored in existing literature. The impact of these interactions on the festival’s capacity to be sustained over many years has long been a phenomenon of interest to me. Hegney et al (2007:3) notes that some early studies like Kumpfer (1999) and Tusaie and Dyer (2003) focused on characteristics that assist individuals to thrive through adversity. They acknowledge the plurality of theoretical constructs, citing Polk’s (1997) four patterns of resilience – the dispositional pattern, the relational pattern, the situational pattern and the philosophical pattern; and Kumpfer’s framework that emphasizes the internal and external stressors and contexts. As suggested in the literature, resilience is complex, dynamic and has multi interrelated dimensions that fluctuate over time (cited in Hegney, 2007:3).

There is growing interest in the characteristics of resilient people (Dent, 2006). The individual’s capacity to bounce back and recover from some adversity, to be optimistic and flexible in their thinking and to persevere in troubled times has been picked up in the caring professions. Such a skill set is a convenient framework to apply to groups of people, like festival organising committees and community champions. By acknowledging the capacity for the setting of clear, realistic and attainable goals on a personal level, it behoves the organisations to which these people belong to capitalize on the individuals’ strengths. This research provides an opportunity to observe how previous challenges may inform practice and operational aspects of event management. The understanding of the risks associated with preparing community festivals and how each group deals with this emerges as a strong element in the longevity of the case study festivals.
As the research progressed it became evident that most stakeholders valued the festival preparation and delivery as a community building exercise from the inside out. Organisers required a good understanding of the potential of mobilizing the assets, the skills and commitment of the locals to maximize the collaborative impact for residents and visitors. Within the four case studies there was less interest in responding to external stimulus. The way the festival organisers dealt with change in the host communities was often impacted by individuals, sometimes known as community champions, who helped influence the way people acted individually or in groups to present their own stories, their self image and that of their place.

These community champions demonstrate many of the resilience traits found in the literature. They act as a catalyst to enable a community to look realistically at itself. They generally address a community’s strengths and capacities rather than dwell on perceived problems. They use asset-mapping tools instinctively or through structures and tools they know will allow for a festival organisation or community to participate in appraising their position and thus facilitate change more comfortably. These catalysts connect people with each other and their existing resources. This is confirmed in this study and explored in Chapter 9, highlighting the importance of building practical plans of action to ensure the learnings can be replicated. This demonstrates that the residents, groups, businesses and regional institutions can reflect on their experience and build on the trust developed during the development of the festival. Bergdall (2003:7) suggests a community experiences internal power by mobilizing its own resources. This strengthens their resilience.

The images of the communities go through continual process of change. Bergdall (2003:3) suggests they involve minor changes as new pieces of information are aligned to an existing image. When images change, behaviours change and these influence festival content, appeal and audiences. They also influence a festival’s and a community’s capacity to demonstrate resilience. Forming a new image as transpired in the Casino Beef Week study example laid the foundation for tentative, even fragile changes.

My principal interest is to better understand how festivals tick and to whom they belong. It seems to me that by understanding festivals better we can build a picture of the characteristics of their resilience. This can then provide a roadmap for a better understanding of community resilience and the role festivals have in ensuring residents can deal with change effectively. I argue that festivals provide a microcosm for applying learnings for larger-scale demonstrations of resilience to benefit the common good. Each community has its own way of dealing with festivals and responding to the resulting resilience. My extensive
reading reveals that such knowledge would be of practical value to specific interest groups like planners, local government authorities and event managers. Much of the academic research, government and community documents offer helpful perspectives on the methodological approaches I subsequently utilise.

Community resilience emerges from (1) solidarity and co-operation, (2) creativity and adaptability, (3) pro-activity, (4) prudence, preparation and planning, (5) responsibility, (6) awareness of environment and where (7) a holistic methodology is present (Better Times, 2006). Festivals and communities can strengthen their level of resilience. The resilience sought by festival organisations in regional communities comes from the interaction between three key aspirations – social/cultural well-being, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. These outcomes result from a greater understanding of the mechanisms that ensure a profound sense of place and community is addressed, a realistic image and identity of residents in their place is promoted and that cultural tourism responds to the authentic representation of the hosts.

Resilience is a key conceptual framework for this thesis because each festival seeks to satisfy the needs of the host community. In the process of designing and delivering appealing celebrations it becomes evident that particular outcomes demonstrate participants’ capacity to transfer skills to other aspects of community life. This is seen as a positive thing.

1.6 Four Regional Community Cultural Festivals

This section explains the four case festivals examined as part of this research. The festivals in this study are introduced. Between them I believe that a robust representation of regional characteristics can be demonstrated. These celebrations offer the reader a broad socio-cultural spectrum of organisers and audiences, within diverse economic environments, in coastal and hinterland locations with programs that have much to do with origins, longevity, specific regional stakeholders and their connection to tourism. The key features of each include its origin, location, the aims and objectives and some elements of its annual program. Greater detail of each festival is disclosed in subsequent chapters linking place, residents and visitors in their efforts to demonstrate festival and community resilience. Some demonstrate these features more effectively and sustainably than others.

Jacaranda Festival, Grafton

The Jacaranda Festival was the first floral festival organised in Australia and is based upon spontaneous revelry, music, dance and a celebration for the beauty with which the City of
Grafton and district is endowed. The first festival commenced on October 29, 1935. Since that time the trees and their lilac blossoms have become the symbol underpinning the festivities.

Hinde & Deefholts (1996) describe how the community and the business sectors contribute to the festival. They indicate that Jacaranda Thursday allows the staff in the central business district to dress up in themed costumes, shops be decorated, and staff perform shows and attract the general public to the shopping precinct. A Queen Crowning Ceremony opens the week-long festival. On the following Saturday night a procession along the main street comprising 130 entries ends the festival. It attracts audiences of up to ten thousand people and great interest in the final family orientated celebrations in the city’s Market Square. The site itself hosts over a crowd of a thousand people.

Local observers note that few changes have occurred over the years in terms of the content of the festival program that arguably is a clue to its resilience. The lilac Jacaranda blossoms’ appearance signals the special time in Grafton. There are day trippers in bus packages to special events like a Saturday market at the TAFE grounds, a floral display at the Cathedral, displays in various city venues, champion gardens, concerts, a car speedway, an aircraft muster, dog agility trials, river based aquatic activities, the Grafton City Council’s fireworks display, greyhound races, the Jacaranda Baby Competition and a vintage car meet.

The volunteer organising committee is reliant on support from individuals, businesses and local government. The non-profit, community based organisation has sustained this event in Grafton simply by soliciting active individuals who have a vested interest in specific events under the Jacaranda Festival banner. It encourages personal links within the community and succession management has been undertaken on a ‘turn-about’ model. Numerous office holders have held other community and local government leadership positions. There is considerable kudos invested in positions of management of the event. The Committee is representative of values specifically held by long-term residents – further exemplifying who is local and what locals regard as important.

**Mardi Grass, Nimbin**

The Nimbin Mardi Grass promotes itself as the biggest hemp harvest festival in the Western world. It regularly attracts over 10,000 people to the village of Nimbin (regular population 600) in the first weekend in May to celebrate all things hemp, like medicine, fibre, fuel and food. The setting for the Parade is the main street of the village, with associated activities staged in adjacent parkland.
The event was originally conceived as a drug law reform protest. Powerful emotional views are held within the host community about the festival. The volunteer management of the event annually undertaken by the HEMP Embassy deals with the communal tensions generated. Meanwhile visitors are oblivious to the community development ramifications. Volunteers are the backbone of the event and there is a determination to keep the organisation locally based. The Police, local government, the Chamber of Commerce, tourism agencies and regional media are all significant players in how the image of the village is projected beyond the three-day festival.

There are seminars, markets, hemp trade fair, hemp fashion shows, a pot art exhibition, street theatre and street music. There are seed swaps, a semi covert judging of the Cannabis Growers Cup (the best heads of the season), debates about the virtues of bush buds versus the hazards of hydro and health advice for cannabis users. The big crowd event is the Mardi Grass Parade. In '98 it was led by the Ganga Fairies’ Marching Band and the legendary Plantem mounted on a white horse called Zero. The central icon, The Big Joint, is danced through Nimbin to the sound of jungle drums.

Mardi Grass is a major cultural and tourism asset to the region. Backpacker tourism to Nimbin is growing mostly due to media it generates and the culture it promotes. Today, the HEMP (Help End Marijuana Prohibition) Embassy manages the festival and has a major shopfront business and tourist attraction in Nimbin. It is part museum (it houses the Big Joint and posters, banners and other art of the Mardi Grass), part drug education centre, part hemp merchandising outlet and part meeting place with internet cafe and organising office for hemp activists.

**New Year’s Eve, Byron Bay**

New Year's Eve community celebrations held in Byron Bay are a result of the establishment of a community safety committee. The community based Council committee sought to redress the image generated by ‘chaos’ and ‘mayhem’ that emerged as a result of New Year’s Eve street activity in 1993/4. The negative national media coverage spurred volunteers to seek solutions of a local nature through strategic partnerships, re-branding the town and the annual street celebrations. Extensive work has been undertaken to reorientate the target market, encourage families to return, provide participation opportunities for locals and holidaymakers through workshops to prepare floats for a parade and harmonization strategies in relation to consumption of alcohol and drugs and innovative waste management to deal with up to thirty thousand people.
Extensive community consultation sought to develop an event that reflected the lifestyle of residents, but capitalised on the iconic status of Byron Bay as a tourism destination. The business sector is vital to ongoing negotiations for effective management and monitoring of subsequent events. The volume of summer holiday visitors and day-trippers from South-East Queensland influenced the strategies employed to diminish pressure on infrastructure in the town’s CBD.

Two residents were instrumental in getting Byron Shire Council to convene a Section 355 Committee, named the Safety Committee, to investigate ways in which a greater community voice could inform the future planning, management and promotion of New Year’s Eve celebrations. This couple energetically led interested parties locally and at a state level in solving the challenges to conduct a safe event for locals and visitors. Their determined advocacy was based on personal experience and attributes in the area of organising, negotiating, networking and documenting local input. Different leaders have followed but the focus remains the same – to reclaim the streets for locals by active de-marketing of the town. A program of entertainment on the streets and at the beachfront now includes music stages, markets, children’s activities, a dance party and fireworks from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. on New Year’s Day.

In recent years Byron Council has sought to manage New Year’s Eve events. Lions, a local service club and community radio group Bay FM worked together for some years to plan and manage the street festivities with Council staff. Volunteer burn out, media interest and new Councillors have initiated new strategies to conduct the celebrations. This fragile approach to reinventing celebrations annually demonstrates little stability but growing resilience.

**Beef Week, Casino**

Casino Beef Week commenced in 1981 as an event linked to a specific local economic driver, the beef cattle industry. It satisfies the need to accommodate locals at leisure and ultimately attract visitors. For many years it was actually a twelve-day week of activity geared to its established market of beef producers across the eastern states of Australia. Since 2004, the festival has been conducted over 5 days. It continues to comprise such elements as the annual dinner dance and crowning of the Beef Week Queen with each of the up to 10 candidates representing a specific breed. Each day there is broadly based community entertainment with a cattle theme. The highlight is a parade of cattle, horse drawn vehicles and commercial floats. A roundabout in the mainstreet is converted into a judging ring for 120+ live steers to compete. In recent years programming has embraced aspects of the timber industry, local arts and crafts and shop displays.
Held in May, it attracts substantial interest from the self-drive tourism market including caravan and motor home owners who base themselves in the town. Service club barbecues like Breakfast with the Butchers are no longer enough for the increasingly sophisticated festival attendee, and so a new element in the festival is Beef on Barker (Street). There, local enterprises value-add to the beef sector with olives, nuts, vegetables, wine and dairy showcasing a sit down coupon based food fest.

In 2007, the management committee chose not to stage Beef Week. The festival enjoyed strong support from Richmond Valley Council, business and the media since its inception. Its demise provided this study with useful data for understanding the importance of sound governance, leadership of volunteer community based organisations and their capacity for resilience and the broader community’s capacity to adjust accordingly.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This section outlines the structure of the thesis. Chapter One identifies the aims and background to the study to examine the critical evolutionary path of four festivals in the Northern Rivers region. It introduces these planned celebrations through a snapshot of the four case studies and links them to the notion of resilience. It introduces the platform for the investigation by identifying some stimulating thinking about the role festivals have in community life, the value of place as a driver for social action and foreshadowing the importance of resilience as an outcome of staging of community cultural festivals.

Chapter Two provides a context for the study by describing the Northern Rivers region’s distinctive features and their impact on the conduct of each of the four festivals. This focus on the characteristics of the Northern Rivers region’s environments informs the development of each of the four case study festivals. It introduces key regional stakeholders and their connectivity to community festivals so that a clearer picture of the region and its capacity is exposed. It indicates the importance of effective partnerships between regional stakeholders in the formation and flourishing of festivals.

Chapter Three reviews literature relevant to the connection between how festivals and the sense of community and place demonstrated in host communities. It specifically deals with what constitutes community, place attachment and the many meanings of culture. The focus on community cultural festivals, community cultural festival management, cultural tourism and destination management are rarely connected in the literature. The comprehensive chapter seeks to provide a coherent conceptual overview through which to frame the case
studies. This chapter provides a wide-ranging examination of the issues and debates represented in the literature and identifying some weaknesses and omissions.

Chapter Four provides an outline of the principles, assumptions and procedures of the research methodology and explains why particular investigative choices best address the study’s aims. Case study methodology provides a substantial lens through which to view the scope and scale of planned community events. The use of open interviews with regional community leaders provides a valuable tool through which to better understand the relationships of festivals to a broader context. My participant observations of four festivals assists in recognising how each can foster resilience and allow for useful comparisons to be made. Models are developed to explain the patterns that emerge.

Chapter Five begins the case-by-case investigation, firstly with Grafton and the Jacaranda Festival. This chapter and subsequent three chapters explores the three key themes of sense of place and sense of community through outlining the origins, context, management, festival partnerships and community champions; destination marketing through image and identity; and cultural tourism and how each destination uses festivals to attract visitors and share community and place with them. Each Chapter offers an opportunity to address the questions of who owns the festival and how the design and delivery of a festival contributes to community resilience. Each Chapter identifies the distinctive features that influence the success or otherwise of the festival and how it builds community capacity to deal with change evident in regional Australia.

Chapter Six focuses on Casino’s Beef Week celebrations. Chapter Seven deals with Nimbin and the Mardi Grass celebrations of the Law Reform Rally. Chapter Eight deals with Byron Bay’s New Year’s Eve celebrations. Each of these chapters allows for reflection on the data gathered and a discussion of them in the light of the key research questions and the literature.

Chapter Nine analyses the broad themes represented by the case studies. It provides key conclusions about the challenges of community celebration making that nourish resilience. It provides a new model for recognising resilience in festival making. It draws together examples of how festivals can grow the community’s capacity to deal with change. It explains how festivals fare over time. The study’s critical understanding and knowledge to the fields of community cultural development, festival management, cultural tourism and community resilience are bedded down. Recommendations for further research are drawn from the strands that emerged from the study.
1.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the framework for this study. It provides the aims of the study by introducing the case study festivals and some background to the research approach. The study examines how parties to the design and delivery of a planned public event such as a community cultural festival respond to the place and community in which it is hosted. It argues that festivals provide an opportunity for individuals and groups to anticipate and plan for the future and by so doing demonstrate adaptive behaviours that offer the community the capacity upon which resilience is based.
Chapter 2: Regional Context

The Northern Rivers
it is spoken
through the old stones
which are the broken teeth
on the craggy lips of an old volcano

it is whispered
in the creeks that fall
from the forest to the sea,
in the mist of the mountain birds
that feather our fiery cheeks
as we climb the trail
to feast upon the view

they are folk songlines
how the cedars fell and the farms
did swell across the valleys,
how a hundred villages grew
in the leap of water
from the rock to the river-moth

by the turn of the century
by the wheel of the river
grew a town where the loggers first did camp,
grew a city…a university, academics,
thr"eates and festivals of whales and flowers
and beef and blues and dance and food —
the river festivals of the rainbow region

it is silent in the shadows of the forest,
it is the veil of batwing which blackens the twilight into deep night,
the gold of fruit, the beat of farm and fleet;
it is the passing of the winter whales
where the fisherman stands
wet and poised upon his lonely rock,

it is the old mountain where the sun first touches the land
and the rivers spill to the sands,
into a sea of southern crossings
and reflections of an ancient land

David Hallett, 1998
2.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the investigation into festivals hosted in the Northern Rivers of NSW. It provides the important background for our understanding of the setting and the influences on the four case study festivals. To have a full appreciation of the environments in which the festivals are hosted, key features of the landscape and lifestyle are examined. These major issues of enquiry assist our understanding of the

- physical features of the region;
- demographic dimensions of residents and visitors – the waves of migration and their impact of regional identity;
- aspects of regional planning undertaken by levels of government and community organisations;
- types of other celebrations held within the region;
- the nature and role of regional partnerships at all levels of social interaction and their implications for effective festival making; and
- the nature of event tourism.

Little research has been undertaken on the many festivals hosted in regional Australian communities. The chapter puts under scrutiny the cultural life of communities in one region. It focuses on the intimate connection between a festival, its host community and the broader physical and cultural region in which it is staged. The case study festivals have become an integral part of the economic and cultural landscape of the Northern Rivers. To this end it is important to understand how the festivals have developed distinctive themes and have learned to adapt and rejuvenate to sustain themselves over time. The chapter goes some way to explain the nature of participation in regional communities in formal and informal ways by individuals and groups. Greater understanding of the context in which the festivals are hosted allows a sound basis for analysis of factors that contribute to organisational and community resilience. It recognises that festival making does not happen in isolation. Many factors impinge on festival planning, programming and delivery.

The diverse and idiosyncratic nature of each case study festival provided data that to my knowledge have not been brought together into an integrated and coherent account. These celebrations are expressions of belonging. The personal and shared aspects of a sense of community identity (Puddifoot, 2003) are amply illuminated in concrete community settings as a variegated landscape rather than a uniform one (Blau, 1994:16). The following explanations demonstrate how the region is comprised of individuals, communities and institutions representing diverse sub-cultures of geographic, demographic and
psychographic importance. The region has a layered heritage reflecting the waves of migration to its coast and its hinterland.

2.2 Description of Region

Geographic Characteristics
The case study festivals are staged in the far north coastal region of New South Wales that comprises Tweed Heads in the north to Corindi Beach in the south, from the Pacific east coast to the Great Dividing Range in the west. The region is approximately 250 kilometres from north to south and varies between eighty-five kilometres and one hundred and fifteen kilometres from east to west, comprising 20,896 square kilometres. There are three distinct sub-regional geographical and economic spheres based on the major river system: the Tweed River Valley, the Richmond River Valley and the Clarence River Valley. The case study destinations of Nimbin (hinterland), Casino (hinterland) and Byron Bay (coastal) are sited in the Richmond River Valley and Grafton is in the Clarence Valley. The map in Figure 2.1 indicates the location of the case study festivals and the proximity of each destination from the Queensland border and the major roads links and rivers. The state border connects the region to a substantial and growing conurbation to the north (in South-East Queensland) that is putting pressure on residents and destination managers. The Richmond River Valley sub-region is in the centre of the region and is the strongest economic sub region (Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee, 1999:9) in terms of population and employment share and growth, plus the number of major towns of Ballina, Lismore Casino and Kyogle.

Historically, this region has managed change to its landscape and character through periods of rapid development and urbanisation at distinct periods. The easy access to substantial areas of endemic vegetation that are part of the Gondwana World Heritage Area (formerly the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia) provides an important backdrop to this urbanization. The population doubled to 150,170 between the 1976 – 1991 censuses (Coiacetto, 1992). The majority of towns and villages were established in the first few decades of European settlement during eras of cedar logging and of free selection of the forested landscape. In recent times specific and deliberate village strategies have been engaged in to accommodate an uneven influx of settlers to the coastal strip of the region particularly (Northern Rivers Strategy, 2001). Successive waves of development and decline have had an impact on the culture of the region and the nature of its representation, practice, production and interpretation for residents and visitors. The resulting demographic mix needs to be explained.
Changing economic environments in rural communities over recent years have included movement away from agriculture, light industry and product-orientated businesses to alternative service-orientated occupations (Allen et al 1988:16). A consequence of this is an engagement with tourism. When MacCannell (1973) articulated his view of the tourist he emphasised that tourism was emblematic of modernity. This is how the tourism phenomenon is perceived in regional communities. Festivals as attractions in the tourism domain allow visitors to share with local participants aspects of their community life.

Tourism is the second major employing industry in the region (12%) with a predominance of small businesses in the sector. The Northern Rivers Area Consultative Committee (1999:4) identified tourism as one of the main economic drivers on the region. Others included the business service sector, community services industries, construction and extractive industries, retail and transport, distribution and storage industries. A new four-lane highway (opened 2002) from the Gold Coast in the north now draws increasing numbers of visitors more quickly into the region.

A ‘sense of community’ is an almost invisible yet critical part of a healthy community. Though difficult to define, it includes a community’s image of itself, its spirit, character, pride, relationships and networking (Bush, 2002). A sense of community comes from a shared vision. Such visions value individuals’ ideas and contribution and involve residents working together on community issues, celebrations and problem solving. Developing a sense of community is challenging long-term work, building levels of connectedness, belonging and support (Duga & Schweitzer, 1997). McCool & Martin (1994:30) define community attachment as the extent and pattern of social participation and integration into the community and sentiment toward the community. Festivals and cultural events are observed as providing a forum for the shared culture to be manifest (Dunstan 1994).

Like the images and spirit presented in Hallett’s poem of people and place, the specific features of the Northern Rivers’ landscape and the lifestyle choices of residents are under scrutiny in this study because they provide a window into the region’s identity. What is proposed is that the case study festivals represent an entre into life in the region. As Dunstan (1994:2) observes:

the Northern Rivers region stands apart from the rest of rural Australia as living as if the future matters. This is a very powerful attractor in these times of urban decay and environmental despair.

Community identity thus reflects a feeling of belonging that allows residents and visitors to relate to and define their habitat (Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2001). Geography
appears to be important in creating identity. The Northern Rivers Regional Strategy identifies a series of characteristics that reflect how people can have a genuine say about the function and identity that connects them to a particular location. It notes a diverse range of features that reinforce for residents, particularly, but also for visitors, such things as a responsiveness to surrounding geographic, hydrological, landscape, ecological, microclimatic and cultural conditions; the influence of local values and autonomy; urban design elements like landmarks and architecture; local employment opportunities; the links and proximity to urban areas; social groupings; a visual catchment that allows for recognition and appreciation of the size of the settlement from a few vantage points; and historic factors that determine settlement location (Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2001:10).
2.3 Regional Demographics

The population of the region is approximately 219,329 in the Richmond Tweed statistical division and 95,660 in the Clarence Valley (ABS, 2006 Census). The Northern Rivers is amongst the ten fastest growing regions in Australia (NEIR, 1998 cited in Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2001:2) and in the 2006 Census an increase in population of 2.2% p.a. was recorded. The study is undertaken against a backdrop of rural revitalisation in regional NSW as residents seek a quality of life that reflects their concern for their personal and communal wellbeing. The framework each resident develops to live, love, learn and leave a legacy occurs within the increasingly complex web of social networks in regional Australia. As the region seeks sustainable solutions to issues of changing land use, employment and investment, human services and infrastructure, the festival case studies provide useful sites to observe communities attempting to preserve their distinctive features.

Population projections indicate a regional population of 417,600 by 2021: 1.8% of the nation’s population (Connelly et al, 2000 cited in Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2001:2). It is
suggested this will in turn contribute to a mega-region from Coffs Harbour to Hervey Bay (Queensland) in 2020 with 22% of Australia’s total population. This population growth suggests that increasing numbers of people are choosing to live in the region and that while many regions are experiencing a decline in growth and structural economic change, this region faces the pressures which come from some of the less attractive elements of economic future. There is a high unemployment rate, a high proportion of residents on low incomes and substantial structural change in traditional industries. Another pressure comes from the population growth rate to the north in South East Queensland. This is particularly significant for the tourism sector in terms not only of visitation but the potential threat to unique features of the natural and rural landscape (Wilson, 2003; Derrett, 2003).

The population of the Richmond Valley is 139,300 with a consistent growth rate demonstrated in the coastal areas (ABS, 2001 Census). Figures (in Table 2.1) also indicate a decline in population levels since the 1996 Census. As a whole Australia’s population is an aging one. The 2001 Census data shows that the Richmond Tweed statistical subdivision has a median age of 40, an increase of three years from the 1996 figures, which is higher than the 1996 NSW average of 34 (Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2002:11). There are high proportions of older people, particularly in coastal urban areas that are popular with retirees. There is a high proportion of young people aged between 0 – 24 in Richmond Valley’s population with indications that they particularly concentrated in rural areas (Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2002:12).

Table 2.1 Population Growth for Richmond Valley Local Government Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>GROWTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballina</td>
<td>34,080</td>
<td>36,656</td>
<td>37,074</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>28,506</td>
<td>29,083</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyogle</td>
<td>10,010</td>
<td>9,788</td>
<td>9671</td>
<td>-0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lismore</td>
<td>43,573</td>
<td>43,199</td>
<td>43,004</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Valley</td>
<td>20,776</td>
<td>20,673</td>
<td>20,468</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>134,439</td>
<td>138,822</td>
<td>139,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 2001 Census in Draft Passenger Transport in the Richmond Valley, Northern Rivers Regional Strategy
Table 2.2  Clarence Valley Statistical Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Pop</th>
<th>Pop growth</th>
<th>ATSI</th>
<th>NESB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>80.13</td>
<td>17389</td>
<td>-0.47%</td>
<td>3.77%</td>
<td>1.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copmanhurst</td>
<td>3143.63</td>
<td>4144</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
<td>4.12%</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pristine Waters</td>
<td>6872.74</td>
<td>10742</td>
<td>1.48%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>4.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maclean</td>
<td>1041.95</td>
<td>16285</td>
<td>2.42%</td>
<td>3.11%</td>
<td>2.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the time of the study, the Council areas mentioned above (Table 2.2) amalgamated. Clarence Valley Council, headquartered in Grafton, now has a broader constituency to administer.

Waves of migration and regional identity

Immigration to the region is the major source of population growth (Weinand & Lea, 1990 cited Cioacetto 1992:21). It offers a combination of residential and lifestyle preferences for those with an increasing ability to act on these preferences. These preferences include a quieter, more relaxed lifestyle, better climate, more space, lower housing costs, less traffic congestion and parking problems, less crime and violence, better recreation facilities and a better environment for raising children (McGregor, 1981). The give and take of successive generations of people who came to the region as original inhabitants, timber-getters, farmers, professionals, merchants, surfers, hippies, alternates and retirees contributes to the tapestry of celebrations which have been generated by individuals and communities. These planned events are attractive to residents and over time have become increasingly popular with visitors to the region. The population explosion being experienced in the region is due to an immigration of a different kind. Dunstan (1994:1) claims that the migration is driven by cultural and environmental imperatives rather than economic ones. Lifestyle factors like clean air and water, less traffic, more forests and unspoiled beaches are drawcards. New residents find opportunities for innovation, with tolerant host communities, diverse, laid-back and creative post-industrial cultures all proving to be powerful attractors. All the host destinations have become home to what are called *sea changers* or *tree changers* as part of the relocation phenomenon from the metropolitan stresses. Tourism, too, contributed to increased exposure of the region to potential new settlers, raising awareness of places perceived to satisfy their preferences. International migration came later.

The unusual settlement pattern of the Northern Rivers (Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 1999:2) has 60% of the population residing in about 300 scattered villages. These villages reflect and reinforce the identity of the distinctive natural, agricultural, socio-cultural and economic character. Economic self-reliance, distinctive vernacular architecture, streetscapes and robust community exchange are characteristics demonstrated in the residential
settlements, service provision, community building, enterprise development and sense of place developed.

**The region’s alternative identity**

Raagamaa (2002) analyses regional identity and social capital formation process and components. He suggests that regional identity is a special kind of phenomenon that forms throughout historical and territorial socialisation. This regional identity formation highlights the correlation with people's interest in achieving common goals, their personal activity and quality of life and how these influence regional development and planning. In this study regional identity is informed by the social capital that is generated from the creation of community festivals. The continuous interaction that occurs between individuals and groups enhances the quality of life that is explored in the social capital theory mentioned in the review of literature. Significant social influences and historic development issues inform how the Northern Rivers is perceived externally.

Significant numbers of immigrants to the Northern River’s region in the 1970s were called ‘new settlers’. The new settlers were distinguished from the hobby farmers and rural retreaters (Taylor, 1981:vii). Each made a contribution to the demographic shifts that have taken place in rural Australia. Those who voluntarily congregated in communes for special purposes had distinctive influence in the Northern Rivers. Rigby (1974 cited in Taylor, 1981:16) developed a six-fold typology of communes. The regional experience on the Northern Rivers included self-actualising communes, communes for mutual support, activist communes, practical communes, therapeutic communes and religious communes as Rigby suggested.

The hamlet style communal movement described by Dunstan (1994) provides workable alternatives to numerous aspects of community life. He suggested they developed values counter to those that appeared to dominate mainstream community life. This investment into commune and communal life clearly demonstrated for local government planners a useful environment to explore the nature of change and to adapt practice in the region. The notion of settlement being an experiment in human engineering is picked up by Malouf (1998:12) in a national historical context of founding a colony where some were progressive and idealistic and achieved a great deal from reformation, using the rejects of one society to create another. Each generation and each migration has new things to celebrate. As some agricultural pursuits became less viable and tourism and its entrepreneurship opportunities became more appealing to residents, visitors were attracted by the mystique associated with rural areas (Wilson et al, 2001:132).
Taylor (1981:22) adapted Watson’s (1967) concepts for social change and noted that sectors of rural populations often resist change through ignorance, fear of the unknown and prejudice. The rate of social change in rural communities may be slower than in cosmopolitan centres, but when adopted in the rural context may be more significant than the greater variety and less challenged changes seen in larger cities. This becomes an obvious element in the evolution of the case study festivals and their capacity to be innovative in programming, administration and communication. Nimbin and Byron Bay have been demonstrably quicker in responding to new ways of thinking and doing. Casino and Grafton festivals have managed to develop in response to a more conservative community that has resisted change more strenuously.

The radical counter culture movement of the 1960s and ‘70s impacted on the study region. Young people settled on farms, actively participated in schools, enterprise development, agriculture and community politics. Their interests and passionate advocacy had implications for local policy and planning. The self-management of these alternative devotees influenced the content of regional cultural tourism through the production of visual, media and performing arts particularly and secondly underpinned the emerging community based event management sector of which the case studies form a part. Decision-making techniques, the distribution of tasks in project management, the relationships between stakeholders, the approach of the media challenged the traditional approach to community development and public administration.

**What new settlers brought to regional festivals**

One aspect of the festivals and their response to regional distinctiveness explored in this research is the engagement by residents with alternative approaches to lifestyle choices and landscape usage. Exploration of the alternative approaches to community design and management in Australia is not extensive. Some work published (Taylor, 1981; Manning-Clark 1986; Metcalf and Vanclay, 1987) on the development of communes and alternatives lifestyles describes the characteristics of the Northern Rivers’ experience. Dunstan (1994) explored the impact on Nimbin of the counter cultural Aquarius Festival and identified a series of social, cultural and economic flow-ons described in his Laws of Celebration outlined in Chapter One.

Horne (1989:62) comments on the intrinsic declaration of communality in the context of Australians’ passion for festivals. He suggests festivals are a *ritualised break from routine that defines certain values in an atmosphere of joy in fellowship*. He introduces two elements of this
type of communal responsiveness, ceremony and ritual. Ceremony and ritual are important aspects of public cultural performance. They are addressed by Dunstan (1994), Cameron (2004) and Schechner (1995) in their experience in Australia and the United States of America. The post Vietnam War social action movements have impacted on regional cultural life and have been distinguished by the use of distinctive clothing, slogans, banners, chanting, dancing and eating as evidenced in Nimbin. The protests bonded the new settlers on the Northern Rivers. They were interested in winning a point, but if it came to a choice, Horne (1989:66) suggests these people were more interested in making a symbolic affirmation of tribal loyalty. This is a key issue in the current political thrusts of the festivals being staged in Nimbin and Byron Bay; different to the more urban, consolidated older agricultural experience of Casino and Grafton. Thurtell (1998:34) suggests that a unique way of life emerged from the cross-fertilisation of rural values and counter cultural dynamics that came with the Aquarius Festival.

Writing of contemporary social issues facing regional communities on the Northern Rivers is sparse, though an appreciation of the contribution the new settlers made to the region is canvassed in Wilson’s Belonging in the Rainbow Region, Cultural Perspectives on the NSW North Coast (2003). Most historical accounts finishes in the 1970s (Ryan, 1979 and 1984). Little is available on the cultural and tourism development that has taken place in the region in the past 20 years. The newspapers, The Northern Star, The Northern Rivers Echo, the Byron Shire Echo, the Byron News and the Nimbin Good Times have chronicled on a regular basis the significant changes to the values, interests and aspirations held by the residents. Alternative observations of the impacts of stakeholders on the special events under investigation in this study have proved useful. The HEMP organisation that conducts Nimbin’s Mardi Gras’ website notes,

In 1972 Nimbin was like many similar rural villages of its size (about 100-odd people then) and economic makeup i.e. dairy and timber. Hit hard by changes in farm subsidies and market realities, northern NSW was going through a rural recession. Britain joining the EEC meant the protected butter trade from the colonies went out the window. The impact on towns like Nimbin was a reduction in revenue and then jobs, which in turn led to a population decline as people drifted to the cities and bigger towns looking for work. Nimbin was not totally destitute however. There was still a hard-core, solid, conservative, hard-working and very traditional farming community remaining, but these weren't easy times (Hemp Embassy, 2005).

**Post Aquarius Festival tourism**

Was it inevitable that Nimbin would get picked up sometime by the seeming hordes of long hairs fleeing the cities clutching their ‘Whole Earth Catalogues’ and redolent with the smell of patchouli, intent on getting back to the land? The rural decline meant it was a village wide open
for recycling and when the Aquarius Festival movers and shakers chanced upon it late in 1972. On an alternate return route home to Sydney from their number one choice location, Mullumbimby, it was seen as the perfect location for the Festival that they envisioned as members of the Australian Union of Students. An early Mardi Grass proponent indicates what was on offer,

all the infrastructure was here; the suitably decrepit Hall, the old butter factory and the empty shops so useful for food distribution, art and learning workshops, and administration and networking centres, the fields and river offered itself as a playground. The Nimbin Rocks and the breathtaking views of the Nightcap Range, was a panoramic backdrop to it all. Verily it came to pass that God dealt Nimbin a full hand of hippies (Hopkins, 1996).

Visitors became attracted to people who were attracted to a virtual human zoo that characterized Nimbin. This complex personal connection between collaboration and co-operation (pers.com. Hallett, Balderstone, Wynn Moylan, 1999) was the beginning of what is community cultural tourism. Similarly, festivals held in Byron Bay and elsewhere in the region are typically negotiating formal and informal networks and issues of local leadership and control (Wilson et al, 2001; Huang and Stewart, 1996; Murphy, 1985; Beeton, 2006). Like other tourism development the case study festivals require certain conditions in the host community to be underpin their viability. Each festival has to deal with global regional planning, support and participation of local government, co-operation with others in the tourism sector as well as resident interest in its activities.

In contrast, Wilson (2003:2) suggests the neighbouring northern (Queensland) coastal strip is shamelessly touristic, monocultural, ruthlessly overdeveloped and soul-less. It isn’t so simple, but the conurbation to the north of the Northern Rivers somewhat poses what Pierre Trudeau suggests is the in bed with the elephant syndrome. This occurs where the pressure on a smaller, less developed area pervades much of the political and economic imperatives observed in the Northern Rivers region. The evolving regional identity is affected by the urban culture brought by newly arrived seachange residents demanding on the one hand sophisticated globally iconic lifestyle pursuits, or the other retreating into enclaves desiring little change in their new backyards. Either way, the desire to be close to the natural environment that attracted them in the first place, differentiates much or the town and village development from that sprawling urban environment that characterises the Gold Coast to the north.
2.4 Regional Planning

The festival host communities cannot be understood without an appreciation of broader regional planning issues. Governments at all levels along with regional agencies have sought ways to future proof the region. There is a solid connection between the work undertaken as part of the Northern Rivers Regional Strategy throughout the 1990s and festivals. An indication of the regional participants’ values emerged from a range of different consultation exercises. What The Value Set - Six Core Elements (Northern Rivers Regional Development Board (2003) Working Paper for the Regional Industry and Economic Plan) identified were features that are represented in the case study festivals and their host communities.

- Protecting a Unique Identity built around the character of the region’s towns and villages and special places, its agricultural lands and rural outlook, its mighty rivers, its distinctive topography, its World Heritage Areas and internationally renowned beaches and coastal environments.

- Embracing Difference built around the social and human capital of the region, in particular its alternative-minded, creative, indigenous, entrepreneurial and community-oriented residents, but also a respect for both traditional and emerging values.

- Protecting and Restoring the Environment built around recognising and elevating the importance of the region’s natural and ecological systems and its bio-diversity, and preserving or progressively reinstating these, and minimising resource throughputs and waste generation resulting from production and other activities.

- Pursuing Continuous Innovation built around enhanced processes for learning and training in all activities, deepening education, research (and commercialisation) and further developing and utilising the technological capability of the region, including information and telecommunications technologies.

- Improving Governance built around partnerships, better cross and between government coordination and harmonised approaches to development control and management.

- Developing a Sustainable Economy built around economic diversity, the region’s distinct identity and capability, the efficient use of land and resources, the growth of local small business enterprises, reinvesting local wealth locally, appropriate import replacement, export development and promoting and supporting sectors and industries with potential for success in the global economy.

Another influential plan for the region was the NSW Far North Coast’s Nature-based and Ecotourism Plan (1995). It identified a vision to ‘nurture a place that welcomes visitors by celebrating and respecting the environment and its influence on lifestyle’. Landscape and lifestyle were seen to be integral to the development of effective tourism products for the region and essential parts of its image and identity. The topography and climate are important for residents and visitors. The sub-tropical climate influences many outdoor recreational pursuits particularly. The lifestyle choices made by residents and visitors in response to the landscape were seen to act as significant, distinctive and diverse attractors in the tourism mix.
offered by the region. The document went on to influence subsequent tourism planning, including the emerging Rainforest Way cross border drive tourism initiative.

The Cultural Tourism Plan (1995) developed by local government, arts practitioners and tourism operators offered a vision to promote

the diverse and unique culture of the region capable of setting a national example for artistic excellence and cultural authenticity while recognising the opportunities for economic growth and development (Derrett, Wynn-Moylan & Ballantyne, 1995:1).

As a result of this planning links between arts, heritage, community and tourism enterprises in the region marketed by tourism agencies as Northern Rivers tropicalnsw, became the focus of the establishment of the Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation which aimed to

integrate and co-ordinate cultural tourism activity so as to promote the growth and quality of the vital culture in the region and to develop an organisational structure that will encourage co-operative marketing of cultural activities and provide the support facilities for viable cultural tourism industry development (1995:1).

Both these organisations had implications for the case study festivals. Nimbin, Casino, Grafton and Byron Bay communities have ongoing debates about visitor management, promotion of culturally sensitive tourism like festivals and sustainable activity that maintains compatibility with the residents’ values, interests and aspirations. There was much debate, but policy and planning was limited. The dilemma facing exponents of this dynamic and complex approach to community based tourism activity is whether each is moulding culture for tourism and tourists and/or moulding tourism and tourists for culture (Craik, 1997:122).

This study canvasses personal and professional perspectives on the regional planning. A leader involved with numerous initiatives to prepare relevant and appropriate planning responses for the region was Ian Oelrichs. He was instrumental in ensuring that all levels of government came to the table with sectoral interest groups to seek optimum responses. His conversation on potential for comprehensive place based regional planning highlights findings discussed elsewhere in the thesis.

When I arrived to live permanently in the Northern Rivers region a decade ago, I became starkly aware of how important landscape architecture should be to the future of regional Australia and I found virtually no culture of landscape thinking within communities, businesses, local government or even the local architects and planners. The need was all around us; degraded streetscapes, decaying villages, neglected rural lands, ravished dune systems, non existent landscape planning, unfriendly and unsuccessful town centres, clichéd tourism development, little useful appreciation of heritage values and woeful natural resource planning and interpretation. There are perilously few landscape architects, the planners are either in or from local government and
most are steeped in that moribund culture and the architects are forgotten and jealous soles trying to gain some self worth by creating monuments to their own lack of perception. There are exceptions of course but by enlarge, regional Australia is, in terms of its landscape, dying a death of a thousand cuts.

One ray of hope rises over the horizon. When there is a discussion about what makes regional Australia great, what is at the heart of regional villages and what do communities value most, ‘place’ and sense of place are always near the top of the list. Communities know there is more to why a great village is great than just the services on offer or the length of the beach for example – they feel the spirit that exists in every great location, in every great place. Unfortunately there are very few community leaders, politicians, planners, architects and even landscape architects in the bush who understand what “place” is fully about, how to define it, how to plan and design for it and manage it. There is not an easily accessible process or program available as there is now for say landcare, catchment management and conservation volunteers or as there was for tidy towns, god forbid – all stalwarts, present and past for dealing with the degeneration of regional landscapes (Ian Oelrichs, pers com. 2001).

2.5 Regional Festivals

The case study festivals are part of a portfolio of leisure and recreational cultural pursuits for the region’s residents. Most festivals demonstrate shared and personal dimensions to a sense of community that are context specific. We need to recognise the informal participation as spectator, or organiser, or creator or consumer, as individuals, in family groups, in special interest groups and at various levels of responsibility and authority. These are common ways for individuals and groups to demonstrate positive community development goals, like resilience. So, as each experiences a growth in their competence, productivity and satisfaction from active engagement, they are better placed to become proactive, in diverse ways, when the whole community requires their involvement in others aspects of community life. This is particularly noticeable in the area of tourism. The challenge for the communities is to understand and meet visitors’ needs to satisfy their curiosity, sense of adventure and novelty (Chacko & Schaffer, 1993: Derrett, 2000) concurrent with their own experience of the shared festivities.
There is a proliferation of community cultural festivals in the region. Music festivals particularly hold a strong position in the region, attracting swelling numbers of visitors (Gibson and Connell, 2003; Gibson, 2002; Ballantyne, 1995; and Oliver, 1995). The Herbfestival in Lismore responded to emerging horticultural interests and small business producing regional cuisine and Ballina’s celebrations along the riverfront, Rivafest were two examples. These two festivals started with high community expectations for their response to regional distinctiveness, but have been completely abandoned. Their inability to survive reflects the vicissitudes faced by the case study festivals. The business models employed to get these events started were initially backed by local government. It was believed such a model would deliver effective strategic approaches to festival management. However, confusion ensued as it became apparent there was a mismatch between auspicing agent and operational aspects of delivering a festival. The mixed messages that came to the residents did not sustain their enthusiasm or commitment.

The types of celebrations well established in the region cover a spectrum of engagement from annual specific sporting carnivals (e.g. Masters Games in Lismore, Winter Whales ocean swim in Byron Bay, Grafton Cup annual horse racing season), heritage commemorations at natural and built venues (Rainforest Day at Rocky Creek Dam), parades and processions with floats and music (Big Rig - Trucks in mainstreets of Lismore), people and machines, socio-cultural activist spectacles to draw attention to political issues (NAIDOC indigenous week each July), participation in state sponsored formal and celebratory events, art-form based events in music, visual arts (Lismore Lantern Parade, Jacaranda Drawing Prize in Grafton), writing (Byron Bay Writers Festival), business events, expositions and exhibitions and trade
shows (4WD and caravan and Camping Show in Lismore), fairs and markets (weekly Organic and Farmers markets with entertainment in Lismore and Byron Bay), agricultural shows in Casino, Grafton Nimbin and Lismore.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 2.2  Coming together on many issues of community interest
Diverse interests represented on stage at the Cannabis Law Reform Rally at Nimbin’s Mardi Grass (2006) demonstrate the connection this issue makes with broader concerns for the environment, personal well-being and health. The grassroots community engagement model for organising this event has ensured its longevity.

2.6 Key Regional Festival Partners

A characteristic of community based cultural festivals is the opportunity provided for collaboration between diverse regional stakeholders. These relationships are complex relationships. How complex is explored further in the case study chapters. A major aspect of the survival of each festival is a response to interaction between diverse partners in festival design and delivery. An appreciation of these relationships assists us in evaluating a community’s resilience capacity. The following examines the key stakeholder connections with the case study festivals. The imperatives and processes engaged with by local government, various regional agencies committed to economic and cultural development, the media, the involvement of community champions and festival organisers, residents and visitors are examined. Conclusions on this aspect of the study are drawn in Chapter Nine.
Local Government

Councils in the Northern Rivers region generally see the planning and promotion of events in terms of creating employment and providing economic benefits to the local community (Ballina Shire Special Events Policy, 2002). There is growing recognition by festival organisers of the complex range of approvals, bureaucratic processes, and public safety implications and consent procedures. Councils are keen to encourage a calendar of regular events. The days of spontaneously developing and delivering a community festival are long gone. Regional councils are increasingly mindful of the value of festivals to their destination’s image and identity, so they wish to maintain a close connection to the delivering of their key annual events.

The four case studies are located within Council jurisdictions that have festival policies as well as cultural and economic plans. In NSW there is a statutory obligation for Councils to develop a cultural plan. There are resource implications for funding from state government to local council initiatives. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Government and Shires Association and the NSW Ministry for the Arts (2003) endorses the need for local government to be mindful of the benefits of festival policy and planning. Simultaneously, arts, culture and cultural development are emerging as key indicators of general community development or lifestyle indicators, as Australia, the nation, enters its second century (Byrne, 1999). Byrne suggests there are many factors contributing to the development of the local government role – the pace of cultural, social and economic change, the development of integrated planning concepts and practice and the demands from the community for increased access to decision making processes. Local government functions enrich local identity, sense of place and the community’s quality of life (Byrne, 1999).

Local government is particularly important in the development of successful regional community tourism development (Wilson, 2001:134). In the Northern Rivers, councils are keen to show their credentials in economic development, promotion of tourism, the creation and maintenance of infrastructure, zoning, and encouraging co-operation amongst all community stakeholders. Effective community festivals result from local government strategic plans, specific festival strategies and support for organisers in the development of their festival. The employment of community event co-ordinators within local government allows policy and practice to be tackled in a transparent and equitable manner. Lismore City Council, Richmond Valley Council and Clarence Valley Council have event co-ordinators on staff. This study supports the observations of Healy et al (2003) regarding the vital role local government has in mediating relationships between individual communities and other public institutions, particularly state and federal governments. Funding from state/federal
government agencies for festival organisers or their partners is generally linked to a commitment of funds or in-kind support from local government.

Arts Northern Rivers has direct links to local government and has undertaken substantial consultation with event organisers and local government event co-ordinators. The ongoing liaison is an effort to develop a regional strategy that can be adequately resourced to support practitioners. Research into audience development, marketing and tourism connections was undertaken by Arts Northern Rivers (2005) in conjunction with local government. Resulting recommendations identify the optimum level of involvement.

At the heart of this investment by local government in the festival marketplace is a tension between what is regarded as its community cultural development role, notions of the public good and an eagerness to invest in cultural infrastructure for material, electoral and symbolic gain (Stevenson, 2000:93). While there is little academic research into the connection between local government and festivals, this study identifies that Councils share concern for appropriate representation of place and people with festival organisers. These shared goals allow for certain independence of approach to the legislative and statutory frameworks within which each operates. The role of individuals within both organisations emerges as a significant issue. It is often observed that the same people are represented in the management of both organisations. They each demonstrate a cultural perspective that is incorporated in policy making and practice.

Local government provides partnership opportunities that emphasise what unites rather than what divides a community. It can generate mutual confidence and respect; provide positive attitude backed up with practical support; become involved in joint training options; demystify event management processes and practices. By recognising the inter-relationship between cultural and social activity and its own peculiar demographic trends local government can address concerns for transport and safe streets. It can recognise that the culture sector constitutes a series of industries and can create employment and enjoyment (Lismore Events Strategy, 1998).

Councils’ cultural policies (Lismore Events Strategy, 1998; Byron Shire Cultural Policy, 2002) reflect the values held by its constituency. In the Northern Rivers instance these are articulated as integrity - moral uprightness and honesty; a customer focus - staff and services to be focused on the user; continuous improvement –and endeavour to achieve higher standards within agreed resource constraints; and accessibility and equity - ensuring reasonable availability and treat all people in a fair and open manner (Lismore Events
Strategy, 1998: 4). The four Councils demonstrate a commitment to involvement and partnership by encouraging consultation and participation to varying degrees. Fostering trust between parties can be problematic. Byron Shire Council has not always enjoyed a smooth relationship with the New Year’s Eve Committee. The relationship between Lismore City Council and the Mardi Grass Committee has been strained as logistical perspectives on the operations (like parking, traffic flow and toilets) of the festival were negotiated and by the fact that Lismore City Council chose not to include the politically sensitive Mardi Grass in its 2007 event promotional calendar.

Fundamentally, each of the local governments involved provides an opportunity for partnerships between their authority, community interests, the private sector and individuals. This is evident as each Council demonstrates a need to protect the essentially unpredictable quality of festivals their community hosts. Each provides varying levels of enabling support rather than prescriptive, formulaic approaches. Though there are regulations. Lismore City Council’s Events Officer facilitated organisational concerns for Nimbin’s Mardi Grass and utilised the project team approach to solving challenges in planning, safety, logistics, traffic and waste management. The Council’s in-house project team encouraged an open attitude to this cross-disciplinary work. Such an approach also provided each of the festivals with a major opportunity to assist with some professional administration of the festivals. Volunteer work undertaken by festival organisers is indispensable but Council resources and professional help greatly enhances the festival’s aims. Each of the Councils dedicates a pool of money to support large-scale event based promotions from time to time.

Councils have had to deal with media generated controversy over time regarding their involvement with each of the festivals. Communication by councils tends to be the key factor to attract public scrutiny. Councils for Grafton and Casino have demonstrated smoother relationships with their festivals in terms of public recognition and resource support. They have attracted less public scrutiny than Byron Shire Council. The latter has regularly used the public media to explain to their constituency, their behaviour, and expectations and need to control the profits particularly of successful NYE celebrations. The Mayor of Lismore fueled media speculation about local government support in the lead up to the 2004 Mardi Grass in Nimbin. This was reported as

The new council may wish to revisit the question of Nimbin Mardi Grass. I have no problems with a festival in Nimbin. I think festivals are wonderful events. It’s just the drug theme that I do not support. Each time this comes up in council meetings we have a split vote. Council couldn’t stop the festival even if we didn’t give it approval (Satherley, 2004:6).
All Councils use cultural mapping as a technique for identifying and documenting local cultural resources. This process aims to foster a sense of place through personal contact with interested individuals and groups contributing data. The process provides an objective focus on the physical tangible attributes. In the case of Grafton City Council (now Clarence Valley Council), a Cultural Catchment document (Appendix G) brought together a profile of the tangible and organisational resources representing the local cultural assets. Its new Cultural Plan (2007) identifies a significant role for Council in festivals. Byron Shire Council adopted a Cultural Policy in 2002 after a consultant undertook extensive contact with arts practitioners and community based cultural organisations within the Shire. Lismore City Council developed a Cultural Policy in line with state requirements that is reviewed annually. Large infrastructure projects like the Lismore’s riverbank redevelopment and Art in the Heart cultural precinct provide opportunities for broad community consultation to expose the values and aspirations of residents. These documents connect with the Council’s Events Strategy (1998) and Council’s Strategic Plan.

These documents address key issues linking local government to its constituency’s sense of place and community, particularly through infrastructure development. Interestingly, neither of these Councils have active Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Policies. Byron Shire Council’s policy has lapsed. Shantz, (2002:11) indicates that SIA may be utilized by Councils to profile their community, scope the issues of concern, formulate alternatives and estimate impacts on the quality of life of residents. She urged the engagement with community wellbeing outcomes that allow for collaboration between Council and the community so as to devolve power, empower citizens and gain community ownership of directions and priorities for wellbeing (Shantz, 2002:13). Shantz’ work at Lismore City Council connects social policy to community cultural practice.

Council festival policies and strategies lead to plans that deal with such areas as waste management, traffic, volunteer support from fire brigade, SES, public land management; of event planning assistance, marketing support, infrastructure and logistics support. Residents of Nimbin see the village as the quaint, idiosyncratic poor relation of the major regional centre of Lismore and the HEMP Embassy committee works annually to facilitate Council support for the needs stated earlier (pers. com. Balderstone, 1999, 2002).

Local government in the region is coming to terms with implications for regional economic development of tourism. There is increasing recognition that there are resilience implications for Council involvement in planning and marketing events. The sub-set of festivals and special events is affected by what is seen as rapid change in short periods. It is observed that
job growth is not in keeping with population growth in sun-belt economies. Councils and smaller communities, like Nimbin, question whether the jobs tourism generates for this region will be the required panacea after downturns in traditional agriculture. Maybe tourism is more significant in smaller, less diversified economies where culture is the content of tourism (Wood, 1993). Regional councils are looking to festivals and festival tourism for the balance between the economic, environmental and community development. Richmond Valley Council hosted free event management workshops for community organisers as part of a community economic development initiative during 2004.

**Regional Strategic Alliances**

A number of regional agencies – government and non-government are committed to specific outcomes for the region. Each is keen to ensure clear communication and support for initiatives that they generate for their respective constituencies. Some are in a position to advocate on behalf of special interest groups, some are better placed to facilitate funding and resource sharing. All represent social/cultural, environmental and economic interests in the region. All the case study festivals have active connections to these agencies. A positive outcome of pro-active festival development by such agencies facilitates more active citizen involvement in government planning in the region and new methods and technologies for public participation in decision making such a ‘policy juries’. The region provides a model for other places to follow (Dunstan, 1994; Derrett, Wynn-Moylan & Ballantyne, 1995). Below some of the major players involved with the case study festivals are identified.

**Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation 1995 - 2003**

The Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation (NRRCTO), a cluster of tourism, local government and cultural interests added the byline, *Australia’s creative edge!* to their corporate communication. This organisation, established in 1995, recognised the importance, opportunity and the impact of festivals and events on the annual calendars of residents and visitors. The Cultural Tourism Plan subsequently developed (Derrett, Wynn-Moylan & Ballantyne, 1995) a vision to promote ‘the diverse and unique culture of the region capable of setting a national example for artistic excellence and cultural authenticity while recognising the opportunities for economic growth and development’. This built on Nettleship’s (1994) work in the region that suggested that ‘cultural tourism is the practice of travelling to experience the culture of a destination and the business of presenting a destination’s cultural assets and attributes to travellers’. The NRRCTO conducted numerous forums for event organisers to streamline product development, marketing expertise, shared infrastructure and capital resources and establish effective strategic alliances with regional
partners in line with the Cultural Tourism Plan. Arts Northern Rivers and Southern Cross University have subsequently picked up this work.

The organisation’s Cultural Tourism Plan (1996) identified the need to develop a regional events strategy. It recognised that festivals fulfilled a pivotal role at the interface between the host community and potential guests delivered through tourism. It appeared that both the host community in representing itself in terms of a ‘sense of place’, and tourism marketers used the same images and identity generated by festivals as substantial markers. There is considerable arts practice represented in the programs of each of the case study festivals.

The culture and tourism sectors offered opportunities for regional communities to better explore the politics of place. Festivals provide the face of local democracy, so when attempting to create a regional festival strategy, there is a need to test the pulse of the people. The Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation sought responses to the view held by its members about the contribution festivals made to a sense of community. It felt that community festivals particularly held a significant position in three areas of the human condition. They celebrated a sense of place through organising inclusive activities in specific safe environments. They provided a vehicle for communities to host visitors and shared such activities as representations of communally agreed values, interests and aspirations. Thirdly, they were the outward manifestation of the identity of the community and provided a distinctive identifier of place and people.

The Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation recognised the complexity of the journey to seek collaboration, dealing with fragmented and often contradictory social structures, distinctive geographic locations, community resources and the willingness of residents to share with visitors. It wished to have regional life offer festival organisers and their supporters opportunities to act where it suits them best, globally and locally – maybe glocally (!) to develop products and services that would place the Northern Rivers on the broader tourism map. It recognised that events satisfied local leisure needs as well as provided opportunities for new markets. It sought to lessen the host-guest gulf by introducing local natural and built amenities to visitors. It addressed community concerns for tourism impacts on destinations.

The Northern Rivers Cultural Tourism Plan (1996) identifies that with some traditional social and spiritual structures in decline event attendees no longer represent stereotypical markets. It recognises that in the Northern Rivers the same person attended a lantern parade with the grandchildren, participated in a cycle ride, attended a writer’s workshop and listened to
blues music for hours on end. It acknowledged that festival organisers have finite and fragile resources. Over time some ideas lose their currency or credibility. The power exerted by individuals and sub-groups begins to work independently of the dominant culture. All this means that festival organisers need to be alert to such trends as they prepare their annual program for market.

The Plan (1996) identifies barriers within the regional context that include the tensions between initial vision/creativity/enthusiasm and seemingly non-negotiable bureaucracy. They recognise notion of accountability, especially through public patronage and other economic controllers, can fragment communities. It cites lack of co-operation, reluctance to integrate resources, ideas, skills and experience, fragmentation of efforts, needless overlapping, wasting limited resources, lack of financial and other resources, even the knowledge of appropriate resources as barriers. Parochial rivalry and competition between community events and their external networks are recognised in the Plan and still beset the host communities.

There is a prevailing pragmatism of the tourism sector towards cultural products. An emerging concern in the region is whether there are in fact too many events altogether. The ‘events-led recovery’ is a subset of the regional tourism dilemma that proposes that festivals are the panacea for regional economic development. There is recognition that effective festivals positively reflect community standards, priorities and imagery (Beeton, 2006), but organisers are concerned that to perpetuate images that are acceptable to residents, they have to minimise the commodification that can so easily infiltrate their programs. They say they work assiduously to maintain the integrity of the ‘local’ and the ‘regional’ while resisting inappropriate rural stereotypes. Casino, of course, presents as ‘genuine’ rural tourism.
Northern Rivers Tourism

The regional tourism organisation is known as Northern Rivers Tourism. Since its inception in the early 1990s it has sought effective ways to create positive images of destinations within the region. Substantial funds sourced from state government have been committed to research and planning. Festivals have regularly been included in regional tourism plans, as a core element of the cultural tourism sector. While there has been an increased understanding of the role festivals play in the product mix for tourists within the region, little has been done to package and promote them to visitors. This has been left to individual event organisers. The Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation saw its role as the agency to best represent festival organisers, assist with training and encourage local government involvement in developing a regional strategy to support existing festivals and events.

In 2002, Northern Rivers Tourism included a commitment to festivals as a substantial element of the attractions sector in its Tourism Action Plan. With the demise of the Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation (2003), it was felt that Northern Rivers Tourism could present an inclusive vision of regional event products and services. There is little evidence of a co-ordinated approach to this from a tourism perspective. Local government appears to take the lead.

Northern Rivers Regional Development Board and the business community

Festivals and events are encouraged in regional economies for their capacity to showcase the region, promote future tourism and business activity (Ritchie, 1984, cited Fredline and Faulkner, 2002:103). Commonly suggested advantages for the business sector (Getz, 1997) to
be supportive of festivals and events include the prospect of increased business income, potential public and private investment in the destination, tax revenues and an improved standard of living for residents. Some members of the business sector in each of the case study communities identify opportunities for direct and indirect employment, new money in the economy and chances for specific businesses to increase trade as a result of the event. Others recognise the opportunity for what is known as social responsibility or corporate citizenship and they see advantages of connecting their business with a well-developed community festival. However, Nimbin’s Chamber of Commerce research (1999) demonstrated a reluctance to connect at all with Mardi Grass – in fact many businesses closed during the festival.

The nature, duration, location and history of the festivals in Casino, Byron Bay, Nimbin and Grafton reflect the way business is done in each town. The Northern Rivers Regional Development Board recognised the role and importance of festivals in their Regional Industry and Economic Plan (RIEP, 2005). The Board committed itself to the creative industries. It worked closely with the Department of State and Regional Development to encourage support for Beef on Barker to promote regional cuisine as part of Casino’s Beef Week celebrations. The Department of State and Regional Development’s interest in community economic development projects has benefited Nimbin and Casino at festival time.

**Special Interest Groups**

The Jacaranda Festival and Beef Week have provided an umbrella for the delivery of some specific special interest events. Arts events at the Grafton Regional Gallery, youth activities, and vintage car rallies cater for enthusiasts during Grafton’s festivities. In Casino a rodeo, a horse race meeting and a ‘Mr Beef’ competition provide entertainment, thrills and challenges and gaming options for particular attendees. The organisers of these festival elements come with their own networks, skill sets and budgets. They are drawn to the umbrella event via their specific interest in a recreational pursuit. They use the opportunity to reach a wider audience. The locations for the sub-set programs are centrally absorbed or in site-specific purpose built amenities. In Casino, a ‘show and shine’ rally for customized vehicles, cars and bikes, has grown to be quite a discrete attraction within Beef Week. Its main street location draws substantial crowds and provides a focus for members of distinct motor groups from across the region and interstate.

In Nimbin, Mardi Grass appears to be a single-issue event, but the nature of the program allows the Rally to canvass themes of interest to particular interest groups. Speeches, banners, print material distributed at the Rally relate to national political issues at the time, locals
concerns and broader issues linking hemp with business, waste management, medicine, clothing and fashion.

**Arts Northern Rivers**

In the 1980s there was a co-ordinated approach to regional cultural development auspiced by collaboration between local government and the Arts Council of NSW. A Regional Arts Development Officer was employed to work with arts organisations, community groups and Councils to stimulate, nurture and consolidate cultural activity. After a period of dormancy where Councils returned to managing community and arts developments within their own constituency, a new iteration of the collaborative approach emerged in 2004. Arts Northern Rivers has enhanced capacity and resources to work closely with arts practitioners and the cultural sector to ensure the vibrant practice and reach of the creative industries and individual and groups presentations clearly responded to regional interests.

Arts Northern Rivers has encouraged links between arts, festivals and tourism interests. Seminars, workshops, research and guests sharing best practice management have been undertaken and promoted to up-skill those working as festival organisers. An Arts Northern Rivers research project gathered information to establish the gaps in skills demonstrated by festival organisations. It highlighted the benefits of resource sharing and again drew attention to collaborative marketing strategies.

**Regional Media**

The media in all its guises does much to celebrate the sense of community and place, promote particular images and regional identity and to highlight elements of the cultural tourism agenda. Editorials, news items and advertising each contribute to this study’s research. Regular Editorials respond overtly to the dilemma facing communities as they search for ways to best address their aspirations. The editorials and feature articles recognise what is distinctive about communities in their footprint. They express interest in regional resilience. In recent times they have identified opportunities to address the management of festivals. They amply articulate the issues raised within this study. For example,

> In a way they are similar but different – Byron Bay and Nimbin. Both in their own way are popular tourist destinations. Both are nationally and internationally known. Both have problems – Byron Bay is a victim of its own popularity and Nimbin is a victim of an ugly drug culture spoiling the ideals and dreams of its residents.

> Byron Bay solved its problems this year with careful planning and the dedication of the Byron Bay New Year’s Eve Community Safety Committee.
Nimbin residents, concerned about the street dealing and public drinking, agreed on a street behaviour code

...In the future, more and more often it will be the empowerment of local citizens that gets things done in our communities.

The reality is that government and government departments and authorities, at whatever levels, have difficulty in actually achieving the sorts of results we as citizens expect of them.

In the end it is up to citizens to stand together and make a difference – it has worked at the Bay and it is working in Nimbin. And that is a healthy indicator for our society (The Northern Star, 1996:6).

Regional media is a substantial player in effectively marketing individual events, promoting the region and reflecting the feelings of locals and visitors. They play an advocacy role on regional issues, and have been known to take up a ‘cause’. In recent times papers have taken up a call to improve the effectiveness of the management of regional events in line with community interests in residents’ quality of life and promotional value for investment and tourism. They call for a reassessment of current practice and seek to use their powerful position to motivate and inspire communities through public interest stories to recognise new ways of doing event business. The Northern Star has consolidated a campaign to engage the Casino community behind the resurrection of Beef Week for 2008.

Regional media invests in event management and marketing (particularly) through cash or ‘in kind’ support. Organisers of each festival understand how the media works to varying degrees. On occasion, for example, naming rights issues have not been effectively handled. Some organising committees have failed to appreciate the difference between paid advertising and editorial and sponsorship, donations and partnerships. Sensitivities exist on all sides. The dialogue between organisers and the media can sometimes leave the intricacies of specific roles of media exposed and festivals vulnerable. The nature of collaborative promotion, branding and marketing is unfamiliar territory for some organisers and so they employ independent promoters and use a mix of community and commercial media outlets. There is a decided need for education in utilising the most appropriate media form for particular events. Missed opportunities became evident in this study.

The Australian Provincial Newspapers group (APN) holds substantial interests in the print media of the Northern Rivers. They deliver The Northern Star based in Lismore, The Byron Shire News, the Daily Examiner in Grafton and the Richmond River Express Examiner in Casino. Each arm of the APN organisation has developed close links with the festival host communities. They have extensively documented the festivals over the years and host significant archives. Alternative independent media holdings, publishing the Northern Rivers
Echo and the Byron Shire Echo also contribute to the mix of reporting, commentary, distribution and engagement with organisers and participants. Their watching brief has contributed to modification of some management practices and program content over the years.

**Community champions**

In each community key individuals work to ensure each of the case study festivals appears on schedule. There is evidence of volunteer burn-out, but also individual and corporate resilience. In each case, articulate, committed and experienced personnel come forward to assist with driving the festival’s agenda. While individuals’ capacities vary, the core characteristics required to inspire, lead and deliver such festivals can readily be recognised. In some festivals the leadership actually comes from partner agencies, while the festival remains the focus for all parties. Individual leadership skills do not have to reside in one person, but one person may have to elicit the elements from a team to make the festival happen.

The four festival organisations demonstrate social entrepreneurship. Individual festival champions involved within and outside the festival organisations demonstrate valuable insights, experience and skills in the preparation and delivery of the festivals. There are success stories based on the initiatives, fund-raising, marketing and management undertaken within festival structures. The terms community champions or social entrepreneurs are contested but the festivals demonstrate tangible outcomes by the considerable number of ‘acts of community’ (Thompson, 2000) provided by individuals within the festival organisation or the broader host community.

In each of the four communities individuals understand the needs of the festival. They champion initiatives taken, recognise opportunities and solicit partnerships. Many have no business experience, but capably undertake entrepreneurial behaviours to ensure the viability of the festival and its sustainability. These festivals can be seen as social enterprises. The host communities as well as the members of the festival organisations support mechanisms to encourage and support individuals who can contribute to the shared vision.

I think community champions are essential. I can’t even conceive there being any social change or any cultural movement without someone who stands up and says, let’s go in this direction folks, and they work on a vision, they work with goodwill, they collect volunteers around them (pers com. Dunstan, 1999).

Over at Byron Bay it was Rory and Annie O’Halloran. They were the champions. Here, in Nimbin, Bob Hopkins created the Mardi Grass, There’s
no question Bob did six years of absolute genius work leading the drug law reform in Nimbin (pers.com. Dunstan, 1999).

There are challenges for community champions involved with festival organisations. Dunstan (pers.com. 1999) identifies the difficulty of dealing with burned out champions. And there are seasons of them as well. Such leaders should be recognised as seasonal, so that people do it for a while and withdraw. He suggests that it can leads to burnout. Sometimes it can damage people permanently. One champion recognises another champion, someone who knows what you went through and had difficulty with and offers to support existing champion. They are people with spirit, sustaining the spirit (pers.com, Dunstan, 1999)

Community champions have emerged over the years to provide leadership on specific issues, or more generally to advocate a stronger stance in local and regional decision-making. Councillor Diana Roberts (1999) a resident of Nimbin and a member of Lismore City Council noted that hardworking idealists, time rich social activists and corporate citizens with a distinct penchant for social responsibility emerge as effective galvanisers of public opinion. Dedication to a cause and a willingness to negotiate, mediate, articulate and document have been features of a band of respected professional spokespeople who have merged in each community. Community champions have emerged over the years to provide leadership on specific issues, or more generally to advocate a stronger stance in local and regional decision-making.

Michael Balderstone, while known as a law reform activist, is recognised for his commitment to bringing various voices in the community together on issues of interest to residents in Nimbin. He is an advocate willing to work with individuals, groups and institutions to facilitate opportunities identified by himself or others within the community. In terms of the Mardi Grass festival, it was recognised that however informal the organisational elements appear, Michael ‘somehow pollinates each area of Mardi Grass until it miraculously gels in the nick of time’ (Koenig & Lipton, 2003: 5).

In Byron Bay, a recently arrived man with substantial festival management experience in Victorian communities became active in his new home. John Brophy was named Byron Shire Citizen of the Year (The Northern Star, 2007:19) after only seven years in Byron Bay. He shared his earlier experience with a cross section of community organisations to facilitate their longevity. John demonstrated a distinctive feature of community champions, that of having a broad commitment to community engagement and a willingness to devote time in retirement to causes he believed grow the social capacity of his neighbours.
In Casino, institutionally placed advocates in local and state government demonstrated a commitment to Beef Week. They used their position, experience and connections for the advantage of the Beef Week message. Some served on the organising committee. Grafton’s incumbent Mayor has a place in the festival organisation. Particular Mayors have had active long-term associations with the Jacaranda Festival and demonstrated a common practice of people staying with that organisation for many years. Their roles may change within the Committee structure, but their interest and commitment is not diminished with age. This has implications for intergenerational change in managing the festivals. Loyalty to community interests and personal capacity to contribute time and energy has led to sustainable links with local government and special interest groups.

**Festival Organisers**

Festival organisers and community champions can be different people. The four case study festivals organisers demonstrate management and leadership styles through their connections to the host communities. This is also indicative of the personal connections the committee of management members have with the host community. Each festival’s organisation is involved at a grassroots level to provide what they see as non-exploitative experiences for their fellow residents. Members of festival organisations recognise the potential positive outcomes of increased citizen participation in such undertakings. Each organisation seeks diverse and innovative approaches to solving problems and creating vital and attractive entertainments for residents and visitors. Nimbin’s HEMP Embassy looks to new opportunities to reach a broader range of citizens through animating political discourse, while in Casino, Byron Bay and Grafton organisers are keen to widen their planning and operations to include the concerns and aspirations of all segments of the community through the umbrella nature of their programs. Public meetings are held to canvas community views. Sometimes, the media is the medium used to stimulate greater involvement by residents in the preparation and delivery of the festival.

The strength of regional festivals as community-based activity is that they teach skills necessary to become leaders, coordinators and analysts (Gunn and Gunn, 1991; Dunstan 1994) on the job. It is evident that skills learned in one area of activity are translated into other community-orientated activities. Community festival development brings together diverse interests across age, gender, race, and class. This becomes evident as Mardi Grass engages young people to be trained and employed as marshals and security for the festival parade, for example.
All festival organisations are based on volunteers. Volunteer participants in the festival organisations demonstrated an understanding their contribution of unpaid time to something they believed to be of benefit to others. The demographic mix amongst the volunteer based committees varies. Some organisers are part time employees needed to respond to their committees. They do make decisions and implement them; however, these functions occurred in the context of social and political power vested in the organisational structure. Some organisational leaders are more visionary than others in ensuring that the stakeholder engagement doesn’t bog down the effective delivery of an annual program. Grafton and Casino management committees are comprised of people who have been involved for considerable periods of time. Executive positions are often shuffled amongst a small number of individuals who are dedicated to the long haul of participation. At Casino’s 2004 Beef Week Annual General Meeting members discussed issues associated with attracting young people into the organisation through the content of the program and encouraging involvement in the management of activities for young people.

This exposes a shortcoming in the preparation for resilience by the festivals and their communities. While this steadfast commitment to their favoured event is obvious, their indefatigable determination to hold on to these events does not include consideration for who follows in the leaders’ footprint. None of the organising committees demonstrated a strategic approach to attracting youthful involvement in the management of their festival. Committee members uniformly were socially active, committed ‘mature’ members of the community. However there are opportunities within these teams to better utilize (not just ‘use’) the skills of their members. Volunteerism has become the scapegoat in the demise of numerous Northern Rivers regional festivals, including Beef Week. Festivals are being scaled back e.g. Rivafest in Ballina, Tweed Banana Festival in Murwillumbah and the parade has disappeared from the Wintersun Festival in Coolangatta. There is little evidence of management committees regularly evaluating their practices, their governance and operations or audit the skills of their members to ensure they make the best fit for the success of their organisation.

**Residents**

Festivals and events offer an integrated approach to creating the vibrant communities to which people aspire (Getz, 1997; Hall, 1992; Dunstan, 1994). By providing a local focus they can satisfy specific industry niches. Regional festivals offer lifelong learning opportunities and civic partnerships. Organisers of regional festivals are residents. They recognised the case study festivals as family festivals, accessible to all members of the host community. Grafton and Casino residents demonstrate a greater readiness to engage with their festivals than Byron Bay and Nimbin.
The majority of attendees at each of the festivals are local residents, and secondary attendees are regionally based visitors. Residents provide the means of festival production and the audience. Residents can choose to attend each of the elements of the festivals or ignore them. The festivals are not of such a scale that residents are drawn to abandon the town when the celebrations are held. In fact, many residents home-host visitors so they can all attend the festival. A phenomenon developed in Grafton actively pursues former residents to return to the city to participate in the festivities. Residents in Casino and Grafton appear to support the festivals through dressing up appropriately in line with annual themes.

**Figure removed due to copyright restrictions**

**Image 2.4  Distinctive clothing of participants**

*Checked shirts, denims and broad brimmed hats are de rigueur at Casino Beef Week for locals and visitors alike!*

In marketing terms the decision to host an event as an attraction to the destination requires a promotion and communication strategy to inform, persuade and remind visitors of what they can expect when they attend the festival. Byron Bay’s NYE celebrations are essentially for residents and those already in the town during the summer. The de-marketing of the activities is a distinctive feature of the relationship the host community wants to have with visitors. They have indicated they wish to reduce the demand for such entertainments amongst outsiders and allow the streets to be reclaimed by residents. To some members of the Byron Bay NYE festival organisation there is reluctance to employ any marketing strategies to promote the destination at that time. In 2005 Byron Shire Council determined they would handle the management and marketing of the NYE festival seeking to minimize its appeal to visitors and concentrate on resident satisfaction.
Visitors
Visitors are the final major partner under scrutiny in this chapter. They feature essentially as audience for what the local community has developed by way of celebration and recreation. Visitors are attracted to what Morrison (2000) suggests is authentic and may be a bit risky, unrepeateable and even unpredictable. It is important to note that while visitors are attracted to specific festivals, there are functional attributes of each event and its location that play an important role in the decision making of the attendee (Jenkins, 1999). The less tangible elements that make up the whole reason for visitors to travel to each destination and participate in each festival are complex.

Figure 2.2 indicates the visitor mix at Northern Rivers regional events. While there may be slight shifts in emphasis, visitor satisfaction can depend on the individual’s perception of carrying capacity of festival sites. Data derived from Byron Bay and Nimbin festivals indicate visitors are mindful of various dimensions of community life (Lawrence & Derrett, 2003; Derrett, Dimmock & Prosser, 1997; Allen et al, 1988). Respondents also noted the tolerance of host communities to tourism. Young people attending festivals in Byron Bay and Nimbin particularly find the crush from large numbers of participants alluring!
The role of visitors in determining the sense of community and place in terms of image and identity is significant. It is worth noting the increased attention to reasons for people to travel, especially in uncertain times. Visitors are interested in celebrating difference as much as acknowledging the personal growth that can occur through exposure to diversity represented in distinctive locations. Kurosawa cites Arthur Frommer’s list of why people should travel, 

travellers learn that all people in the world are basically alike; they discover that everyone regards himself or herself as wiser and better than other people in the world. Travel makes us care about strangers and teaches you that not everyone shares your beliefs. They learn that there is more than one solution to a problem; that you can be a minority and teaches you humility (The Australian, 2003: R15).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter provides a snapshot of the environments that impact on festivals in the Northern Rivers region. It provides background to the relationships cultivated within and between major aspects of the social, economic and political environment. It captures some of the dynamics that operate within the region as festivals are delivered. Each of these elements has a crucial role to play in the case study festivals. They contribute to how residents determine their sense of place and community, how their identity is represented and how cultural tourism is embraced. The study argues that a clear understanding of the context within which the festivals occur, especially the engagement of regional stakeholders, ensures an appreciation of the conditions required to nourish community resilience.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies how community cultural festivals can be situated in the community and social/cultural studies literature. It identifies a number of gaps that can be addressed in this research. Little has been written that draws together the relationship between community cultural festivals, their various stakeholders and environments in which they operate in an Australian regional context. How festivals nourish a community’s quality of life and increase its capacity to deliver resilience is also discussed in light of Putnam’s (2002) suggestion that working together is easier in a community with a substantial stock of social capital that can be accrued from prior successful experiences.

This chapter reviews literature that establishes a case for further investigation of the interaction between the three key areas of festivals, communities and place. Through this process it emerges that considerable work is required to make sense of the integrated nature of these areas in practice. Specific literature is explored and the gaps identified through exploring each of the following areas:

- Festivals and Sense of Place
- Festivals and a Sense of Community
- Community Culture
- Image and Identity
- Cultural Tourism
- Community Cultural Festivals

Event literature to date has emphasised the economic and management disciplines (Getz, 2007:103) rather than the strength developed by the community holding the festival. The review of literature to inform and justify this study involved me in critical background reading on a broad range of topics, ideas and methodologies. A systematic search of academic research, practical reports, manuals and analysis of public documents has been crucial in increasing my understanding of existing knowledge and experience in particular fields of festival studies. I found material of interest in diverse disciplines. This has provided an intellectual context for engaged discussion of each case study. Apart from extending the work of other researchers in the field, this study makes an integrated and original contribution. It recognises a broader context for festival making and explores the legacy and impact on communities and tourism.
The links between these fields and the study’s research questions are documented in Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions</th>
<th>Content and context for literature search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is a community’s sense of place?</td>
<td>Location, and place attachment, settlement patterns, significant events in community’s history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do regional and local distinctiveness influence festivals and vice versa?</td>
<td>Built and natural environments, event origins, event program, themes, timing, duration, links to regional characteristics, aims and objectives, tourist attractions and motivation theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of key stakeholders in community festival development and management?</td>
<td>Management, leadership, community champions, volunteers, politicisation, media, role of government, resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are different voices in a community accommodated in festivals?</td>
<td>Sub-cultures, dissent spectrum, response to community wellbeing building blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do communities share festivals with visitors?</td>
<td>Planning and infrastructure, tourism visitation, destination marketing &amp; branding, economic, environmental and social impacts, cultural tourism, festival resilience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Situating the literature

I have long been conscious of the social concentration that occurs when a festival is staged. The place hums. There is a distinctive ambience that at once reassures one’s eagerness to share good fun times while simultaneously sensing some personal vulnerability. If that is how it is for the consumer, what do organisers and host communities have to do to elicit such responses? One of this chapter’s objectives is to better situate this study’s enquiry into the nature of celebration — to particularly understand how festivals are made. The four festivals examined in this thesis have been functioning for many years and by investigating what constitutes effective leadership and management, creativity and reach to local and visiting markets, I attempt to build a picture of resilience. I also expect that from the research, based on the experience of festival partners, to glean ways for communities as whole to benefit from this experience.

I look at four regional festivals to see whether there are some key threads to be drawn from their preparation, delivery and consumption. I believe that festival making has implications for the rest of the community’s life. When appraising myself of what is currently thought, known or practiced about festival making, a major gap in our understanding appears to be an acknowledgement of the capacity of festivals to reveal the essence of community life and how its image and identity is shared with visitors. There is also the opportunity to link the social
action that comes from festival making to the skills required for communities as a whole to
deal in a deliberative fashion with challenges and change.

My observations suggest host communities use these festivals to look forward to the future as
well as to tradition. We see them experimenting and taking risks and on the other hand
exploring their roots. Individuals and groups conduct themselves with pride, through acts of
hedonism and festivities. The multidimensional engagement not only embraces personal and
societal behaviours, it offers a prism into community resilience. While the pursuits described
in the case studies can at times be regarded as creative, they inform the social and political
dynamics of the community. People at play can reflect and determine other aspects of
community life.

### 3.3 The scope of the literature

Many researchers have identified changing economic environments in rural communities that
include a movement away from agriculture, light industry and product-orientated businesses
to alternative service-orientated occupations (Allen et al 1988:16). As regional communities
shift their economic gaze and engage with tourism through festivals, visitors have access to
new aspects of community life.

To date, discourse on the nature and role of festivals has drawn on writings in sociology and
cultural anthropology, as well as literature related to community development, sense of place,
festivals and destination management. As festivals are the lens in our exploration of resilience
in communities, it is important to be alert to the elements that are shared by both festivals and
communities in the literature. We are also beholden to investigate the distinctive
characteristics of a region that influence festival and community behaviours. This capacity to
cope with change is reflected in or defined by festivals and is under-represented in the
literature. One of the motivators of this research has been an interest in addressing this
deficiency. A lack of coherent representation of the key themes in the literature has provided
the impetus to draw the diverse and interdependent literature together in this present study.

Festivals are interesting phenomena studied in the past by anthropologists, sociologists and
specific-interest researchers in the arts and sport for example. While it is clear that community
cultural festivals not only serve resident needs but also attract visitors, tourism researchers
appear to have been slow to explore the complex social and cultural significance of festivals.
What became evident in reviewing existing literature are the conflicting perspectives that
emerge about the roles individuals and groups play in festival making, Dredge (2006:562)
acknowledges the increasing attention being given to communication and collaboration in the tourism planning and policymaking literature, but in the present study, the investigation concerns itself with the contribution festivals make to social cohesion, civic participation and ultimately sustainable cultural capital in resilient regional communities.

Connecting festivals with tourism
There is a growing literature connecting tourism and festivals (Getz, 1997; Dwyer et al, 2000; Dunstan, 1994; Foo & Rosetto, 1999; Fredline & Faulkner, 2002; Goldblatt, 1997; Hall, 1992; McDonnell et al, 1999; Trotter, 1999 Vukonic, 1996; Jurowski, 1996; Quinn, 2000). Substantial emphasis in these works is on the impacts of festivals on destinations, particularly economic costs and benefits. Less well documented is the area determining whose festival it is and whose place is being celebrated. Festivals provide bottom-up, locally based approaches to community empowerment (Simpson et al, 2003:277) and the processes that require participation and leadership can be problematic and have not been examined with great rigour.

Forms of tourism practice, including festivals and special events, vary in nature from place to place. As tourism attractions, festivals can be examined in relation to their spatial, social and cultural contexts. There is a growing interest in developing a better understanding of the cultural identities of host communities in tourist destinations (Gilbert, 1989; Keogh, 1990; Ritchie, 1991; Ap & Crompton, 1993; Prentice, 1993; Ritchie, 1993; Robinson, 2000:v, Picard & Robinson, 2006). Culture, identity and meaning are open to competing and complementary interpretations and definitions.

The study's central investigation is into the nature of festivals, communities and host regions and how they deal with visitors through event tourism. Event tourism literature is gradually coming to terms with analyses beyond the earlier preoccupation with economic benefits. With the growing interest in the triple bottom line, that is, increased determination to better understand the socio-cultural and environmental implications as well as the economic implications of destination management, greater attention needs to be given by constituent communities to delivering festivals. In the socio-cultural sphere many disciplines engaged with rural communities are seeking answers to the resilience challenge. What do communities have to do to ensure their residents are prepared to cope with change in ways relevant to their needs, resources and aspirations?
Social implications of festivals

The cross-disciplinary nature of this research required attention to literature dealing with the social implications of place, place attachment and physical boundaries, power, politics and personal interaction. Little exploration has been presented in the literature of the importance of a sense of community and sense of place in the choices made in developing community festivals. Tourism literature tends to deal with festivals as attractions. The little research into regional tourism development extant identifies festivals as significant drivers of socio-cultural development. Even less attends to the reciprocal influence of the host community on the product and the visitor on the residents. Recent work by Beeton (2006) and Dredge (2006) recognises the growing interest in community tourism. This research can contribute to the shift in thinking and practice.

There are a number of significant influences on the choices I made in the four case studies. These include not only the personal or the intra-personal described by Richins and Pearce, (2000:211) where the process is affected by the beliefs, attitudes and values brought to a situation by participants; but the circumstantial influences where broader conditions are applied. These include factors that are external to the host community, but will have long-term impacts. The regulatory concerns for event managers that affect insurance, audience safety and harm minimisation strategies are more structural. Getz (2001:3) and MacLeod (2006) highlight the nature of specific festival places and spaces in Europe and North America that demonstrate how cultural celebrations use different settings. Relevant to this study are location and regularity of use of specific physical locations, regulatory controls, site design and planning, safety and security and access for attendees. This information varies between local government areas.

Some literature deals with the connectivity residents feel for their own locale and the importance this has in how they go about their daily lives. There is an emerging discussion of whether festivals skim the surface of people’s lives and lack the substance represented in the expression of being alive, a communication with things that sustain our physical and mythological lives (Cameron, 2002, cited in Sorenson, 2002). The arts community has long been involved with community cultural development and is alert to the dilemma facing communities coming together to express themselves. Cameron (2004) and Schechner (1995) discuss the role of ritual and integration of arts practice into community celebrations. This picks up on the balance required by event organisers, the skills in negotiation required and the community’s capacity to engage with differing points of view as is evidenced in the four case studies.
Themes emerging from the research questions have been dealt with in contemporary anthropological tourism writing (Dann, 1996; Picard, 1996; Smith 1989) identifying strongly with the relationship between hosts and guests, community cultural development, regionalism, economic development, tourism and its subset, cultural tourism especially in the area of socio-cultural impacts. The grassroots nature of community festivals alerts the formal political sector to the impact of external environments. The case study festivals are constantly dealing with government interest in capacity building, community economic development and partnerships between different levels of government. The governance and organisation issues that are raised by such partnerships involve an exploration of the business management literature.

**Community capital**

While the organisational stresses on festival convenors are under scrutiny in this study, it is the relationships individuals and groups have within communities that seem to sustain the festivals. The networks of social support evident in regional communities are an important aspect of the sense of belonging to a place. Rolfe (2006, citing Fraser et al, 2004; Macintyre et al., 2002; and Sampson et al., 2002) acknowledges recent studies in Canada and Australia that identify that a sense of belonging to a place or community plays a significant role in the resilience capacities of individuals, families, organisations and whole communities. This highlights that community can be defined in spatial or non-spatial terms with boundaries that may be geographical or between people involved with social interaction or with psychological ties with each other and the place in which they live.

Rolfe (2006:9) cites work by Hart (1998) that acknowledges the value of community capital that is an aggregate of natural, human, social and built capital from which a community receives benefits and on which the community relies for continued existence. The sustainability theme and its attendant need to have all four types of capital active for communities to function successfully is particularly relevant to the current study. It is evident that the interaction between the four types of capital empowers festival organisers to share their vision for the festival with the wider community. Positive relationships between festival stakeholders responsible for contributing such capital to the common good enhance the capacity for longevity of the festival.

The habits and practices exhibited in the Northern Rivers cases are replicated in work of the Oscar Romero Catholic Worker House in Oklahoma City, (Better Times, 2006). Here it is suggested that community resilience emerges from (1) solidarity and co-operation, (2) creativity and adaptability, (3) pro-activity, (4) prudence, preparation and planning, (5)
responsibility, (6) awareness of environment and (7) the presence of a holistic methodology. Work done by the Community Resilience Project Team is of interest to this research (Community Resilience, 2006). It looks to provide resources to rural communities in Canada. Festivals offer participants a community face for the social and economic fickleness that can beset community initiatives.

In other work undertaken in Canada for community recovery and renewal it is suggested that relationships create resilience (Perry, 2000; Stern and Seifert 2002). People who identify themselves as a group because of a shared cultural heritage, occupation, spirituality, geographic location, language or gender develop a culture that is an integrated pattern of human behaviour. This includes thought, speech, action and artefacts and is dependent on a capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. It is a manifestation of the accumulated experiences of humans as they interact with one another and with their environments. This is a composite of the creative, emotional, intellectual, technological, organisational responses groups of people make over time.

3.4 Festivals and Sense of Place

Contemporary regional Australia replicates what is noted in the broader nation of immigrants and settlers. Waves of migration represent the identities and belonging in particular landscapes. Sometimes these physical landscapes are strange and inhospitable and the modification that takes places affects the behaviours of residents over time. This resonates particularly in Byron Bay for me as waves of migration have modified the dynamics of the demographic mix and influence a great deal of social activism, along with substantial economic investment.

This study explores where space becomes place and where culture declares its presence as a result (Carter, 1987:xxii). The settlement of regional Australia amply demonstrates the spatial process of negotiating borders and setting boundaries. The hosting of community celebrations provides another function that acknowledges how residents convert physical boundaries to satisfy social and cultural needs. Tourism, for example, is typified in some respects as the experience and consumption of place (Meethan, 1995). For places to achieve distinctiveness and status as places to go, or to be seen in, they have to be created. Organisers of events can offer tangible and intangible experiences to connect people to places, which is why some popular events are sited in spectacular locations.
In fact, definitions of a sense of place (Stegner cited in Sandford, 1996) emphasise elements such as an appreciation of unique geography, the remembered and celebrated history and how that is carried forward into contemporary society and a cast of characters. This can be applied to the relationship of residents and visitors to community festivals as unique experiences are realised. Festivals are key celebrations of place and can demonstrate close personal ties and solidarity that are considered critical to the formation and maintenance of community (Huang & Stewart, 1996:26). Individual and collective connections with festivals as leisure experiences can demonstrate what Crouch (1999:257) describes as one way in which people practice space. He suggests ‘space is used to transform the way of making sense of being somewhere and doing something chosen on one’s own terms’ (ibid 266). Festivals can thus assist in making sense of where people are through an understanding of the stories and unseen aspects of life in communities. Crouch (1999:260) notes the importance of photography in studying social engagement in particular places as a means of making sense of space.

The accumulated culture accompanying each wave of migrants to the Northern Rivers of NSW provides an opportunity to extend a boundary. Sub-cultural groups have a role in the preparation and presentation of cultural festivals and represent the historical instances of change management, application of attitudes and ideas, sharing of a future and a reflection of what constitutes heritage. The distinctive groups settling in the Northern Rivers over time emphasise the sort of self-reliance and love of outdoors characteristic of the myths of European settlement of the nation. Interestingly such a traditional approach to place attachment comes from the disciplines of geography, psychology and sociology (Stewart et al, 1998:258).

Acknowledgement of cultural difference has become a feature of Northern Rivers’ festivals. Residents see themselves as tolerant of difference. By locating a sense of belonging in soil (place) and soul (McIntosh, 1999:15), the waves of migration being experienced globally contribute to the diversity and prosperity of their adopted place and community. The dual identity (from whence new settlers came and their adoptive place) underpins what is named multiculturalism in Australia and appears in this study as hospitality, a core value in regional communities.

**Personal responses to a sense of place**

Lofgren (1989:183) claims that the same place, the same piece of land is looked upon with different eyes by different generations. Both he and Crang (1998) connect culture to the landscape in differing ways for different people. Each person makes sense independently or in groups, while Crang suggests (1998:14 – 15) that landscape implies that the environment is being collectively moulded in an ongoing way. This suggests that the landscape, the place in
which residents and visitors find themselves, comes to reflect the prevailing beliefs, practices and technologies of culture and community. Rural landscape demographics are changing and this is leading to greater complexity and heterogeneity in rural occupancy. Increasing numbers of small-scale lifestyle farmers are emerging in regional areas and are motivated by a variety of non-traditional agricultural drivers and lifestyle choices.

This reflects the emphasis Tuan (1974) suggests that while places can exhibit spirit or personality, it is only humans who can have a sense of place. He suggests that people demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to sites and locations (Tuan, 1974; Stewart et al, 1998). What emerges, too, is that a sense of place varies for individuals over time and exposure to sites. If this can happen for residents through prolonged attachment, what is equally worthy of exploration is the experience of people visiting a place briefly for a festival, for example, and being exposed to the physical appeal and impact on their leisure experience. Their appreciation of place can become a substantial influence on repeat visitation.

McIntosh (1999) highlights a Scottish identity that is firmly allied to a sense of place rather than a sense of tribe. He suggests tension exists in contemporary society where tribe or community matters less than place. In exploring the Scottish experience of place, McIntosh (1999:15) draws on a Gaelic proverb, ‘the bonds of milk are stronger than the bonds of blood’ to explain that choosing to belong and being chosen matters more than belonging by accident of birth. This raises issues associated with waves of migration that ‘cleanse’ and replace indigenous communities and earlier cultures become modified. The resulting shift in power can be manifested through cultural difference in communities. However it also leads to some opportunities for incomers to explore traditional cultural practices through festivals.

The things that tie residents to place have been captured in the Ahwahnee Community Principles, adopted in 1991 (Local Government Commission, 2000) where attention focuses on such elements as integrated planning of all essential aspects of daily life. The sense of place discussion readily connects with sustainability frameworks and triple bottom line principles like the size, scale, access and activities engaging residents being within comfortable and agreed boundaries. Community or clusters of communities require a well defined edge, adequate open space, corridors connecting interesting spaces and buildings and where possible natural terrain. In urban areas civic design needs to be geared to minimise waste and efficiently conserve resources to enhance livability. The latter always poses a logistical concern for festival organisers as the pressure of numbers and availability of adequate infrastructure collide.
The diverse demographic of the Northern Rivers that is explored in Chapter Two demonstrates a range of ages, household types, social and ethnic backgrounds, all of which influence how individuals relate to the landscape in which they live. The place in which they reside provides them with choices in terms of movement, housing, services, amenities, employment to suit different needs, incomes and preferences (Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2001:12), all of which they share with visitors when a festival is hosted.

Planners and destination managers concerned with viable economic development strategies consider a sense of place as an important component of strategy, for the resident expression of such is generally what makes regional communities attractive to visitors. While understanding the essence of individuals’ and communities’ sense of place can be difficult to observe and explain, the role of community champions can be usefully employed to inform the pursuit of sustainable tourism development. This was demonstrated in a study (Burr, 1995) undertaken in four rural Pennsylvanian counties noting that the multiple senses of place identified could be used to satisfy quality of life concerns for rural development. This can be allied with wellbeing indicators to gain some sort of measure of satisfaction and appropriateness for the local culture.

Memory and sense of place
Ferris (1996) notes how memory and sense of place shape individuals. The heritage quotient underpinning my study’s festivals reflects his concern for how people can devalue the places they are from by abandoning old worlds, attempting to achieve success – often elsewhere, by making their mark on society and by separating themselves from their roots. Festivals and events provide a vehicle for the arts to preserve and celebrate culture and socially offer family reunions. He suggests place is a family affair. Attendees at the case study festivals reported substantial commitment to place through exposure to host destinations. Many old residents returned regularly to the festival sites for nostalgic reasons, or to introduce following generations to personal heritage. This emphasises the notion of place being a social construct; that it isn’t an extra associated only with taste, touch, sound and sight, but that it is something people can’t afford to be without. People bring their ‘there’, ‘here’. People strive to interpret place through what exists there for them. Jackson (1994) discusses this theme by suggesting that places are formed through experiential qualities of physical spaces and shared encounters and beliefs and exposure to internal ‘rhythms’ of communities.

Landry (2000:37) suggests quality of life is strongly tied to place in environmental terms and more personal, subjective connections to a location. Place attachment is seen as a centre of felt
value. Much more than an environment, it provides meaning in life and is a fundamental need and is enhanced when people are involved in the shaping of places.

Horne (1964), Drew (1994), Malouf (1998) and Flannery (2002) join other Australian writers in representing Australian’s individual and collective affinity to rural landscapes. It has been associated with exploitation and development of the environment often through agriculture and natural resources. Flannery (2002) argues that people need to adapt to the environment otherwise it cannot give what it has to offer ‘while we imagine that we are people from another place’, whether from urban areas or overseas. Sandford (1996) suggests that once you participate in the natural landscape, you are gradually shaped by it. In the Northern Rivers it can be argued that the coastal environment offers the same imperative.

O’Toole (2002) writes of the real promotion of festivals coming when the ‘product’ becomes part of the culture. He suggests the physical environment in which festivals are hosted profile their areas way beyond any promotional campaign. Festivals can get this process moving through the passion and professionalism of the creators and organisers. His work in a project in New South Wales’ Macquarie Marshes (Event Project Management System, 2003) emphasises the need for long-term festival aims to embrace the environment as a cultural artefact. The celebration of an aspect of Australian culture should not just provide only earnestness to convince people to attend, but passion that demonstrates inclusiveness. Stakeholders seemingly external to the festival, but sharing the environment for other purposes, need to be invited.

Recent work undertaken in Queensland (Arts Queensland, 2005:40) describes a ‘sense of place’ as central to community identity building and belonging or attachment to a locality. The work undertaken between Arts Queensland and the Queensland Department of Housing suggests such a phenomenon is developed through an understanding and appreciation of the distinctiveness of the locality. While local distinctiveness is often recognisable, yet difficult to describe, its meaning can be influenced by traditions represented in the built and human environments. The present study locates festivals as a valuable contributor to cultural or psychological well-being of the community. The character of a place is the general ambience of a place. It is represented in festivals.

The thinking underpinning the study suggests a sense of place is about regional detail. Meaning is embedded in places, through local heritage, character, values and beliefs, and is essential in developing a sense and understanding of place and community identity and belonging. This is manifested in the celebrations hosted in the communities and is inextricably
linked to the sense of community generated by the residents. This is reflected in the way stakeholders reflect on their festival experience. They recall their participation in personal terms that offers us a better understanding of how each embraces dimensions of lifestyle and landscape in their daily lives.

### 3.5 Festivals and a Sense of Community

**What is Community?**

Sociologists generally use the term ‘community’ in a combined social and spatial sense, referring to an aggregate of people who occupy a common and bounded territory within which they establish and participate in common institutions (Warren, 1962: 104). But just because people feel they are a community, doesn’t necessarily mean they are. An essential ingredient in achieving community appears to be a commitment by the group to meaningful communication. The community development literature deals with this. Getz (2007), too, in his assessment of the growth of event studies suggests *communitas* as a significant element of festival experience. It is now commonplace to talk of *creating community*. Survival needs (explored by Maslow in his motivation theory through a hierarchy of needs proposed in his 1943 paper) are not sufficient to satisfy the human spirit. People are complex beings, in need of social interaction and emotional support.

The emerging literature on a sense of community serves this study well. A review of recent research undertaken by Regional Arts NSW (2007:3) suggests that social and cultural impact, often understood in terms of community wellbeing, indicate that the arts activity, including cultural festivals stimulate job creation, tourism, attract visitors and investment and diversify the traditional focus on agribusinesses that holds many rural communities in decline. They also show that the arts and culture contribute to community wellbeing, cohesion and quality of life. Research into a sense of community that identifies a sense of membership, mutual importance and dependence, shared world-views, bonding/networking and mutual responsibility for the community as key indicators are demonstrated in the case study destinations. An understanding of these frameworks has implications for festival organisers attempting to connect with and reflect their host community.

A community comprises people who identify themselves as a group because of their shared cultural heritage, spirituality, geographic location, special interest or gender (Peck 1987: 60). For this study a community is defined as a group of people living near one another, in a social relationship in which intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs, risks and a number of other conditions are present and common. These inform the identity of the participants and their
degree of commitment to the community. Continuity of the connections between leaders, between leaders and followers, and among followers is vital to the strength of a community. Members individually hold the collective personality of the whole, but through sustained connections and continued conversations, participants in communities develop emotional bonds, intellectual pathways, enhanced linguistic abilities and even a higher capacity for critical thinking and problem solving.

In nearly every context, individual and collective, behaviours are required to find a balance between inclusion and exclusion; for the individual, a matter of choice; for the group, a matter of shared determination. The sum of the creative energy (often referred to as synergy) and the strength of the mechanisms that maintain this balance is manifest as an observable and resilient sense of community (www.answers.com/topic/community, 2004).

Joppe (1996:475) makes the point that community is not always synonymous with municipality and that some communities may cluster beyond such boundaries and will be self-defining based on shared purpose and common goals. In community development terms the prerequisite is broad participation in projects designed to allow ownership to remain in the hands of members of the community.

Table 3.2 builds a matrix identifying key indicators of community recognising how strengths and weaknesses are manifested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Strong Sense of Community</th>
<th>Weak Sense of Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of membership</td>
<td>The active participants proudly display symbols of membership in the community.</td>
<td>The active participants do not view themselves as a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual importance</td>
<td>The active participants recognise, cherish and support the contributions of each other</td>
<td>Participants are active only because one or a few powerful persons are involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared world views</td>
<td>The active participants hold common beliefs and promote shared values important to them</td>
<td>The active participants hold fundamentally different beliefs and values and cannot reconcile their differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding/Networking</td>
<td>The active participants enjoy one another and look forward to time spent together</td>
<td>The active participants have no affinity for each other and relationships are formal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual responsibility for the community</td>
<td>The survival and health of the community is a primary concern of all its active participants</td>
<td>One or only a few persons struggle to keep the group together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After www.communityplanning.org.uk, 2003
This study focuses on communities in destinations in regional Australia. These communities are not homogeneous. That community is an intangible phenomenon and more than the sum of its parts (Peck, 1990: 60) is demonstrated through the spectrum from greater diversity to homogeneity evident amongst residents in each of the destinations. Each community can also be discussed using the spectrum outlined above in Table 3.2. The variety of stakeholders required to effectively create and deliver community festivals work along this spectrum from homogeneity to increased pluralism.

A starting point of this thesis is the notion that there has been a substantial transformation in the lives of residents in regional and rural Australia. Historians and social commentators (Ryan, 1979; 1984; Ryan & Smith, 2001; Rogers, 1998; Mackay, 1993; Chigwidden, 2001; Allen et al, 2002,) document the shift from homogeneous conservative agricultural communities to diverse service-orientated communities and suggest residents have to deal with new challenges in their pursuit of an acceptable quality of life. An investigation of how festivals work enables us to clarify our perspectives on a community’s capacity for resilience.

McMillan & Chavis's (1986) work on a sense of community has been influential. They propose that sense of community is composed of four elements — membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection. They identify five attributes of membership to a community they suggest are boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment and a common symbol system.

The photographic observations of the four case studies clearly demonstrate a range of overt social and cultural boundaries such as language, dress and ritual referred to in this literature. They acknowledge that ‘boundaries’ emerge in some community relationships. These can become a troublesome feature of the ‘membership’ portion of the definition. The authors point out that ‘while much sympathetic interest in and research on the deviant have been generated, group members’ legitimate needs for boundaries to protect their intimate social connections have often been overlooked’ (McMillan & Chavis, 1986:9). The people not in the photographs have a significant contribution to the community’s sense of itself too. Some residents make other recreation choices, while acknowledging the appeal of the festivals.

McMillan & Chavis assert ‘the emotional connection seems to be the definitive element for true community’ (1986:14). They mention the role of shared history (participation in or at least identification with it). Studies of the event experience reported by Getz identify how visitors wish to engage emotionally and cognitively with places, people and dimensions of lifestyle (2007:183). McMillan (1996:322) adds ‘shared history becomes the community's story
symbolised in art’ (in a very broad sense). Over time the images of the festivals make a distinctive impression in the local and external psyche. This informs the identity of the community and how residents react to these images and outside perceptions becomes part of the lived culture.

**Community and cultural policy**
The thesis explores how cultural festivals are potential demonstrations of the heart of a community’s sense of identity. Howkins (2001) suggests that at the centre of every community is a debate of ideas that gives weight to the community’s sense of itself. Research has been undertaken here to ascertain how festivals, like other cultural institutions, can contribute to the communication of ideas, information sharing, inculcation of values, promotion of active citizenship, improve the understanding of different cultures and lifestyles and build social partnerships (Kelly and Kelly, 2000). There are opportunities to observe how such practices are made, accumulate and become embodied for local and shared consumption (Blau, 1994:16).

Craik, when evaluating cultural policy in Australia, recognises

> the instrumental approach to using art and cultural projects to revitalise a sense of community has been around long enough for evaluations to be made. Those in favour of such a strategy emphasise outcomes that have enabled individuals to re-engage with their local community, create a community ethos, improve ‘social inclusiveness’ and generally promote cultural sustainability (2007:26).

She suggests that cultural policy nationally has also become intimately tied up with cultural planning and cultural development (e.g. Florida, 2002; Hawkes, 2001: Landry and Bianchini 1995; Matarasso 1997). She picks up on Hawkes’ (2001: 2, 4) identification of three aspects of ‘culture’: values and aspirations which set the framework of a society’s raison d’etre; practices and cultural media through which culture is actualised; and the visible manifestations and artefacts of cultural practice. This has implications for regional Councils and communities keen to demonstrate to their residents and visitors an authentic local experience. This has implications for festival organisers who wish to reflect important elements of how residents feel about their connection to one another and how this is expressed. This also impacts on the relationship organisers have with potential partnerships with local government who need to justify their commitment to festivals.

Craik says,

> In this approach to the management of culture, cultural diversity and difference are part-and-parcel of a commitment to cultural sustainability. As
part of reconciling cultural sustainability with the other pillars, cultural policy becomes annexed to what I have called elsewhere ‘lifestyle culture’ or ‘ecoculture’ (Craik 2005) where art and culture become core planks of cultural planning and everyday ‘lived’ cultural experiences (2007:27).

Festivals and events offer an integrated approach to creating the vibrant communities to which people aspire (Getz, 1997; Hall, 1992; Dunstan, 1994). Festivals serve the needs of residents. They can protect the natural environment, increase social equity and provide a vision for participants. By providing a local focus they can satisfy specific industry niches. Through volunteerism they offer lifelong learning opportunities and civic partnerships that can be transferred to other aspects of community life. Festivals can be a long-term investment in the aggregate value and principles that underpin that elusive sense of community.

Social Capital
Social capital is now commonly spoken of in community, bureaucratic and political circles (Community Builders, 2007; Our Community, 2007) and is ascribed to the triple bottom line accounting utilised by business and government. In Australia, Eva Cox generated considerable discussion on social capital through the 1995 Boyer Lectures. She suggested there are four major capital measures, one of which takes up far too much policy time and attention at present. This is financial capital. Physical capital makes it onto the agenda because of the environmental movement. So there are fierce debates on trees, water, coal and what constitutes sustainable development. Some types of physical capital and financial capital deplete with overuse, or become scarce or too expensive. Event tourism research focused on these two areas initially.

Cox argued that too little attention is paid to social capital. For Putnam (2000), social capital refers to the processes ‘between’ people that establish networks, norms, and social trust and facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit. She deliberately uses the term ‘capital’ because it invests the concept with the reflected status from other forms of capital. The term ‘social capital’ is also appropriate because it something which can be measured and quantified.

Social capital can be accrued by working together voluntarily in egalitarian organisations. The communities in this study demonstrate the advantages of the connections that Cox (1995) and Theobold (1999) describe as integral to wholesome healthy communities. Accumulated social trust allows groups and organisations to develop the tolerance sometimes needed to deal with conflicts and differing interests. Each suggests that social capital is as vital as language for human society.
In the growing literature on social capital a number of themes (Cox, 1995) are emerging. Once again it is evident that festivals and communities are capable of demonstrating these themes in varying degrees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3 Social Capital Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After Cox, 1995

The work of Butler and Onyx (1998) found that social capital could be measured, through a generic social capital factor. They suggest there are eight distinct elements that appear to define social capital. They are: a) participation in local community; b) proactivity in a social context; c) feelings of trust and safety; d) neighbourhood connections; e) family and friends
connections; f) tolerance of diversity; g) value of life; and h) work connections. Putnam’s (2000) work in the United States also recognises the value of these connections.

They suggest that four of the elements demonstrated in their studies are about participation and connections in various arenas: a) participation in local community; d) neighbourhood connections; e) family and friends connections; and h) work connections. Four of the elements are the building blocks of social capital: b) proactivity in a social context; c) feelings of trust and safety; f) tolerance of diversity; and g) value of life. These elements are relevant in the present study as community based non-profit organisations seek to provide a recreational amenity through the provision of a festival.

Communities and social capital
In terms of community solidarity and its interaction with tourism development, work by Huang and Stewart (1996:26) explores the psychocultural perspective of community and the personal ties of individuals. This approach questions whether engagement with tourism through festivals for example will change the personal relationships of residents, whether it affects community diversification, generates a consciousness of outsiders and a ‘we’ and ‘them’ distinction, characterises residents’ images of their town forming and maintaining bonds among residents. Huang and Stewart assert (1996:29) that solidarity generated by a willingness of residents to work together to achieve an expected image is different from sharing a common cultural background, the traditional basis for bonding. This has implications for our observations on resilience in case study festivals.

While MacCannell, (1973) raises the notion of local culture being transformed into a commodity and becoming a staged culture, Huang and Stewart (1996:30) suggest residents develop bonds as a result of the psychological investment of working together developing the town’s image. If the tourism is community-created as is suggested by festivals welcoming visitors, the dynamic of working together to develop the community’s image may bind residents and encourage identification with community. This has become evident in this study where the festivals become the representation of the destination in promotional terms and in the mind of other regional residents.

Falk and Kirkpatrick (2000) comment on the changes that have occurred in rural communities in recent years. They suggest that there are qualitative differences to the traditional locale-based notion of community and propose a term ‘communities-of-common-purpose’, as community life is variable and defined by its purpose. They suggest (2000:103) that that similar characteristics exist in communities whether they are communities of (i) place/locale,
They advance a new definition for social capital that builds on their observations. They suggest that social capital is the product of social interactions with the potential to contribute to the social, civic or economic well-being of a community of purpose. The interactions draw on knowledge and identity resources and simultaneously use and build stores of social capital. The nature of social capital depends on various qualitative dimensions of the interactions in which it is produced, such as the quality of the internal-external interactions, the historicity, futuricity, reciprocity, trust and the shared values and norms (2000: 103-4).

Individuals and communities are beneficiaries of the key elements of social capital as discussed above from Putman (1993, 2000), Cox (1995) and Falk and Kirkpatrick (2000). The latter particularly argue that social capital resources grow the capacity of communities to respond to challenges that beset them and are able to simultaneously built upon and drawn upon through the interactions between individuals in those communities. The three levels they (Falk and Kirkpatrick, 2000) ascribe are the macro level (society), meso level (of communities and organisations) and micro level social capital (pertaining to individuals). The interaction on various levels between stakeholders builds their capacity to be resilient which is a major aspect of the study.

**Community Wellbeing**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics *Measuring Wellbeing* study (Trewin, 2001:270) asks how culture and leisure relates to individual wellbeing and subsequently impacts on the wellbeing of the wider society. These findings have informed the festival analysis undertaken in this study.

By examining how communities of values are created (Ulrich, 1998:157) a framework for evaluation can be developed. Such communities, it seems, forge strong and distinct identities, and establish clear rules of inclusion and share information across boundaries. As Cox (1995) suggests, communities that create social reciprocity using symbols, myths and stories to create and sustain values manage enough similarity so that the community feels familiar. These then become clear building blocks for what is termed ‘community wellbeing’ (Wills, 2001). Community wellbeing can be described as having such outcomes for residents as livability, sustainability, viability and vitality (Wills, 2001). In this study the wellbeing model assists in evaluating the relative and comparative success of the four festivals in reflecting regional distinctiveness.
Community wellbeing as identified by the Local Government Community Services Association of Australia (Wills, 2001) incorporates six qualities (mentioned below in Table 3.3) for developing healthy and sustainable communities (Labonte, Hancock and Edwards, 1999 cited Wills 2001:23). Landry adds the activity, participation and interaction between people to the mix (1994 cited Wills, 2001:23) as ‘vitality’. These elements provide an opportunity to sensitively assess how communities see themselves and measure themselves against a set of criteria that can meaningfully underpin how a sense of community and place contribute to cultural festivals. These are represented thus:

Table 3.4 Community Wellbeing Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Wellbeing Dimensions</th>
<th>Community Wellbeing Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social and cultural</td>
<td>Conviviality, equity, vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Adequate prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental and built</td>
<td>Liveability, sustainability and viability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wills, 2001:22

The wellbeing criteria outlined provide a useful evaluation tool for the relative and comparative success of the four festivals in reflecting regional distinctiveness. It is at the very least aspirational. It demonstrates inclusive triple bottom line concepts familiar to local government planners who regularly have to deal with development applications from festival organisers. Local government Councillors need to have such concepts in their armoury as they deal with the various interest groups amongst their constituency. In Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight data is presented using this useful framework. Each identifies the range of responses across the four in each of the seven categories.

These results are linked to Wellbeing Building Blocks (Wills, 2001 34) that include democratic governance, active citizenship, social justice and social capital. These assist in demonstrating how a sense of community and place are integral parts of regional cultural festivals. Each provides a useful and sensitive snapshot of specific communities. It has currency for planners and policy makers.

Table 3.5 Wellbeing Building Blocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Building Blocks</th>
<th>Components/Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic governance</td>
<td>Visions, goals, leadership, policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active citizenship</td>
<td>Equal political, civil and civic rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>Human rights, social supports, empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>Interpersonal and organisational trust, reciprocity and collective action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wills, 2001:34

The present study utilises this wellbeing dimensions and building blocks framework as well as the outcomes of the Victorian Community Indicators Project (2005) to make sense of
wellbeing and engagement in communities. The Engage East Midlands document (Clark, 2001), Community Participation: a Self assessment Toolkit for Partnerships and the Scottish Community Centre’s (Taylor, 2001) Involving Communities – a Handbook of Policy Practice, both how demonstrate increasing global attention is being placed on better understanding of community wellbeing.

There is a growing literature connecting social capital and community wellbeing to a new understanding of resilience as it is applied to communities. The Community Resilience (2006) project team in Canada has developed a model with four key dimensions - (1) people – residents’ beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in matters of leadership, initiative, education, pride, co-operation, self-reliance and participation; (2) organisations – the scope, nature and level of collaboration within local organisations, institutions and groups; (3) resources – the extent to which the community builds on local resources to achieve its goals, while drawing on external resources strategically; and (4) community process – the nature and extent of community economic development planning, participation and action. While the focus here is on revitalising communities economically, such themes form the basis for the forces at play when a festival is developed. Under each of these headings the Canadian research has identified twenty-three characteristics of community resilience. These resonate with this study’s findings.

The analysis of the four case studies undertaken in Chapter Nine focuses on the resilience factors emerging from an appreciation of the wellbeing dynamics represented above. They serve the research well by recognising the diverse inputs into organisations at different scales. For example, festival organisations are small units, while whole communities attempting to tackle broad political or environmental issues require similar indicators to track their success in dealing with people, collaboration, resources and engagement. How they go about this is influenced by the community’s culture.

**Community Culture**

One of the problems encountered in dealing with culture is that there are so many different meanings and definitions attached to the term. Conventionally culture can be considered in two ways: first, in terms of aesthetic matters (relative to the institutionalising of arts) and secondly, as a concept used by anthropologists to describe the way people live. The word 'culture' comes from the Latin *cultus*, which means 'care', and from the French *colere* which means 'to till' as in 'till the ground'. It can be a collective name for all behavior patterns socially acquired and transmitted by means of symbols. Hence it is a collective noun for all the distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as language, tool-
making, industry, art, science, law, government, morals and religion, but also the material instruments or artifacts in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effect, such as buildings, tools, machines, communication devices and art objects.

Rykemann (1996) in the Boyer Lectures suggests that ‘culture is the true and unique signature of man’. Culture is the very means through which we realise the fullness of our humanity. Inasmuch as we are human, we are all producers and consumers of culture; we all experience culture in diverse forms. This is readily translated into the community cultural festival milieu where shared culture and lifestyle satisfies community members’ needs through a process known as reinforcement (Huang & Stewart, 1996). Huang & Stewart (1996:26) suggest that mutual reinforcement. This becomes apparent when examining festival relationships, as it appears that community can influence its members by strengthening interpersonal connectedness and simultaneously residents may believe they have an influence on community.

Flannery (2002) connects culture to place. He comments on the diverse cultural mix that has developed on the Australian continent and how culture and place each deal with change. He suggests a slow convergence on a yet-to-be-formed Australian culture that is suited to Australian conditions. He stresses an environmental view of culture. He invokes the practices of the Aboriginal people and distinctive landscapes they responded to over time. This is picked up in two of the regional festivals discussed in this study particularly in relation to Nimbin and Byron Bay.

There is a risk of confusing what belongs to culture, especially popular culture which can affect members of communities, though not necessarily determine every activity with which it becomes engaged, and what belongs to tourism which is a significant medium through which culture is observed, practised and changed. Quinn (2002:265) raises the argument about cultural homogenisation of festivals that generates a sameness between places and cultural celebrations. The emergence of new, recreated or hybrid festivals satisfying a global tourism market raises the question of who is now producing the dominant meaning of community or place. Is it a group labelled tourists or those labelled local residents? The arrival of tourists may cause confusion for local residents who wish to control their culture and its development. It also questions what constitutes a dwelling place and a visited place (Quinn, 2002:265).

Traditionally, cultural elements of community life become the identity markers for the ‘brand’ of a location in the tourism marketplace. So there is integration between the response to the
landscape and lifestyle - the customary practices and the tourism products that are available for sharing with visitors. It is very difficult to separate tourism from culture. The strategies suggested by Dogan (1989) provide a series of boundaries in the host/guest conundrum. What he highlights is the dynamic complex adjustments that are made to people’s habits, daily routines, beliefs, values and social lives. His research indicates that socio-cultural structures change under the influence of tourism. Residents invest in their community through involvement rituals that reinforces a sense of belonging. The attachment to place and community that develops through membership of their community provides strong identification with the culture developed there and is seen to be sufficient in some circumstances to withstand the intrusion of visitors.

**Community culture and tourism**

The tourism resource base, natural and human, can be irreversibly lost through degradation, exploitation and entrenched practices. The challenge to a region’s cultural capital is intimately linked to the needs, expectations and perceptions of all stakeholders, not just residents. The relationships can be explored through extended relationships with selected community champions. Research by Huang & Stewart (1996:30) into delineating social boundaries, identification with an ideal shared image of community appears to encourage residents to work together as can be demonstrated with festival development. Similarly Long, Perdue & Allen (1990) recognised there was a threshold beyond which the quality of community life diminishes for residents.

Tourism is one of the structured environments in which culture is embedded. Cultural products and institutions generally are not unlike other consumer goods, regardless of the meanings that people attach to them. Tourism itself is a cultural phenomenon. Culture appears to have no shape to it (Blau, 1992:2) because it is subjective on a personal and communal level. As a cultural phenomenon tourism is not the same for everyone who may be travelling, ‘as a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change’ (Smith, 1989:1).

When does a community convert its culture into a tourism attraction? MacCannell, (1973) raises concern for the transformation of a once-local culture into a commodity as a staged culture. Picard (1996:182) demonstrates that it is only after the Balinese consider their culture as capital, as a source of financial transactions, that they can regard their culture as worthy of safeguarding. It is noted that once culture is exploited to attract tourists, hosts/residents become cut off from their origins and become products in a tourist brochure. The same
tension can be seen in the Northern Rivers region with the emerging emphasis on community cultural festivals.

Interestingly when Delamere, Wankel and Hinch (2001) were preparing their research into resident attitudes toward the social impacts of community festivals they generated a pool of costs and benefits that are worth connecting to the current study. Organising committees look to many of the elements described below in table 2.5 as motivations and reasons for sustaining festivals for the common good. Typical elements emerge within the four case studies and to varying degrees influence the community’s capacity for resilience.

Table 3.6  Social costs and benefits of community festivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Item Pool of Social Benefits of Community Festivals</th>
<th>Initial Item Pool of Social Costs of Community Festivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Togetherness/sharing of ideas (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Volunteer burnout (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism (Delamere, 1993; Tourism Canada, n.d.)</td>
<td>Create competition between communities (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family activities (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Overcrowding (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Overtaxing the system (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building new organisations (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Physical disturbance/Overuse of facilities (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community ownership (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Loss of community ownership (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to different cultures (Delamere, 1993; Getz &amp; Frisby, 1990; Tourism Canada, n.d.)</td>
<td>Displacement of community residents (Butler, 1975; Delamere, 1993; Getz, 1991; New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department, 1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of community (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Drain on community (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common goals (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Competition within the community (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergroup cooperation (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Failure syndrome (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community identity (Delamere, 1993; Longson, 1989)</td>
<td>Overuse of sponsorship mechanisms (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bragging rights/celebration (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Disruption of normal routines (Butler, 1975; Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building leaders and voluntarism (Delamere, 1993; Getz &amp; Frisby, 1990)</td>
<td>Disagreement within community (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venues for performers (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Cultural differences (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for local residents (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Stereotyped image of the community (Delamere, 1993; Province of British Columbia, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities/cultural legacies (Delamere, 1993; Weaver &amp; Robinson, 1989)</td>
<td>Limited vision/Power (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community wellness (Delamere, 1993)</td>
<td>Lack/Loss of community identity (Delamere, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life (Butler, 1975; Getz &amp; Frisby, 1990)</td>
<td>Negative morals (Delamere, 1993; New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department, 1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added entertainment options (Lundberg, 1990; Weaver &amp; Robinson, 1989)</td>
<td>Increases in traffic (Getz, 1991; Lundberg, 1990; Province of British Columbia, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater educational opportunities (Lundberg, 1990; Weaver &amp; Robinson, 1989)</td>
<td>Growth in crime (Lundberg, 1990; New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department, 1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show others why community is unique and special (Weaver &amp; Robinson, 1989)</td>
<td>Intergroup conflict (New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department, 1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve community image (Getz &amp; Frisby, 1990; Weaver &amp; Robinson, 1989)</td>
<td>Possible limits to public access (Lundberg, 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for community to discover and develop cultural skills and talents (Tourism Canada, n.d.; Weaver &amp; Robinson, 1989)</td>
<td>Possible changes in community social and leisure habits (Butler, 1975; Province of British Columbia, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for residents to experience new activities (Weaver &amp; Robinson, 1989)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal well-being (Longson, 1989)</td>
<td>Inequitable distribution of benefits and disbenefits (Getz, 1991)</td>
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<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities for the sharing of family experiences (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
<td>Ecological damage or pollution (Getz, 1991; Lundberg, 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening of friendship bonds (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
<td>Increase in litter (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to meet festival performers/workers (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
<td>Increase in noise pollution (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expenditure of community energy (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community energy better spent on other causes (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stresses of participating or volunteering affecting workplace performance (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influx of visitors reduces community privacy (Delamere &amp; Hinch, 1996)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delamere, Wankel, Hinch, 2001:15

Delamere et al (2001) recognised in their study (Table 3.6) that the impact of community festivals on stakeholders produce diverse responses. This is appreciated within the four case studies as organisers seek to sustain the position of their festivals in the cultural life of the host destinations.

### 3.6 Image and Identity

Chapter Two dealt with the constituent parts of the image and identity generated by the landscape and lifestyle of residents in the Northern Rivers region. It is evident there are demographic, cultural and land use dimensions to how destinations that host festivals are perceived. Of interest to this study is the influence festivals have on the way destinations are perceived. Gallarza et al (2002:56) suggest from a tourism perspective that an individual’s subjective perception and consequent behaviour and destination choice are influenced by image. They recognise the multidisciplinary approaches to be taken when studying destination image, because of its formation through such disciplines as anthropology, sociology, geography and marketing (2002:57). They also acknowledge change of image over time and the fact that there can be active and passive residents engagement in the image (2002:58). This study reveals how closely images of host destinations are linked to festivals.

Murphy, Moscardo & Beckendorff (2007) recognise that destination branding is growing rapidly as an approach to tourism destination promotion. They acknowledge this concept is borrowed from the world of general consumer goods and is being applied to national tourism destinations, academic analysis of the value and effectiveness of destination branding has emerged more slowly. Their research of tourists in Far North Queensland indicated that
tourists were able to articulate different destination brand personalities for each region they investigated. However they suggest that more work might need to be done to adapt existing frameworks of brand personality to the tourism context.

Sirgy and Su (2000) developed a model that postulates relationships between destination environment, destination visitor image, tourists' self-concept, self-congruity, functional congruity, and travel behavior. Self-congruity is regarded as the match between the destination visitor image and tourists' self-concept (actual, ideal, social, and ideal social self-image). They argued that the destination environment influences the formation and change of the destination visitor image and the tourist-perceived utilitarian destination attributes.

A tourist destination's image is one of the most important strategic tools for creating and sustaining tourist destinations, yet images relating to tourist perceptions of regions have been taken somewhat for granted in tourism marketing. This study observes how host destinations use their festivals as part of their promotion portfolio, either positioning their attractiveness for visitors, differentiating their place from other regional towns and villages. Therkelsen (2003) argues that tourism destinations are culture-bound products that generate associations and meanings that are influenced by the cultural background of the potential tourist. She also suggests that the host community shares some associations with place and meanings for visitors, whereas others are shared by a number of cultural communities inside the destination or beyond. In this vein, Byron Bay as a tourism destination may generate certain internationally shared meanings and its New Year’s Eve celebrations can appeal to a culturally differentiated market. Byron Bay’s image could be called a *glocal* (global and local) approach to market communication. It a consistent and strong image, readily recognisable and festival organisers should isolate the few core elements to their advantage.

Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2004) raise the complexity of branding *place*. As in this study, there is acknowledgment of the diverse stakeholder base, the lack of regard for destination managers or authorities wishing to focus on the underdeveloped identities of the host communities and the potential visitor and their connectivity. They also recognise the extended reach of the lifestyle choices of residents (in this study’s case – through festivals) and the pressures on the development brands from some sectors of the community. They clearly indicate the importance of connecting the brand to the visitor experience rather than thinking of the slick commercial promotional elements that are often seen as central to a destination’s brand. (2004:5). Marketers see brands as an important communication tool, but what emerges from this study is its value as a relationship rather than just images. Festivals provide a bridge...
between the image held by visitors of the destination and the personality of the destination exemplified by the residents at play.

3.7 Cultural Tourism

Tourism is one of the structured environments in which culture is embedded. Cultural products and institutions generally are not unlike other consumer goods, regardless of the meanings that people attach to them. So, is cultural tourism the new tourism, the new special interest tourism paradigm? The quality of life issues that are part of an individual’s everyday life are taken on holidays. It is timely for cultural tourism product in Australia to be understood from the perspective of the service providers, whether they emerge from the tourism or cultural industries or regional communities.

There are a number of benefits that accrue from engagement with arts and cultural tourism. Many of the case study festivals engage with local arts practitioners in formal and informal ways. The arts community is seen to provide the catalyst for the creativity and distinctiveness each festival organisations seeks to present. Arts infrastructure like galleries, museums, libraries, public art, market stalls of arts and crafts, banners and design elements in promotional material are locally sourced. The opportunity for those involved with the emerging regional creative industries to contribute to the festivals is recognised and encouraged by various festival partners. So it appears that arts and cultural tourism can:

- Act as a catalyst for the support and promotion of strong, vibrant communities that highlight a distinctive sense of place for residents and visitors
- Celebrate and protect a region’s culture, heritage and natural environment and the residents’ lifestyles
- Attract visitors for longer stays and encourage greater visitor spends
- Value add to existing travel experiences available in the region
- Recognise arts and cultural development in the broader context of Australian life
- Facilitate and promote partnerships between arts, non-arts industries and government at all levels
- Promote and communicate excellence through partnerships and product development
- Acknowledge and stimulate strategic regional solutions by celebrating innovation
- Create career pathways, skills development and mentoring opportunities in both arts and tourism sectors. (adapted Northern Rivers Cultural Tourism Plan, 1995; Queensland Arts and Cultural Tourism Strategy, 2006)

The emphasis for visitors needs to be on the educational, experiential and communicative experience and on the authenticity, transparency or honesty of their contact with locals, their
lifestyle and landscape. Visitors are increasingly seasoned travellers who are more mature, demanding and discriminating in their travel choices (Craik, 2001).

There is increasing availability of reliable and specific cultural tourism research. In 2005, Tourism Research Australia (TRA) released a report, Cultural Tourism in Regions of Australia, commissioned by the Cultural Ministers’ Council Statistics Working Group. The purpose of the report was to examine ‘the importance of cultural tourism in regions of Australia by quantifying cultural tourism activity and expenditure at national, state/territory and regional level’ (Tourism Research Australia, 2005:v). This, unfortunately, fails to take into account the important tangential influence festivals have on the hidden regional economies, the human capital committed to regional community development and networks emboldened by festivals for monetary gain.

Tourism Research Australia used an activities-based definition of cultural tourists:

  cultural visitors have been defined as those travellers who participated in one or more cultural activities in Australia, including: attend theatre, concerts or other performing arts, visit museums or art galleries, visit art/craft workshops/studios, attend festivals/fairs or cultural events, experience Aboriginal art/craft and cultural displays, visit an Aboriginal site/community or visit history/heritage buildings, sites or monuments (Tourism Research Australia, 2005:v).

Cultural tourism highlights the cultural, heritage or artistic aspects of a destination through experiences and activities for tourists - a kind of cultural immersion. Some people define themselves as cultural tourists because culture is their primary motivation for travel. These are the pure or genuine cultural tourists; yet they are the distinct minority. This group constitutes a niche or special interest form of travel. But other groups of tourists can also be classified as cultural tourists because they take advantage of cultural resources during their travel experience emanating from other motivations (such as recreation, business, visiting friends or relatives, or sightseeing). For these tourists, culture is a secondary motivation (Craik, 2001). The festival experience resonates with Craik’s assessment of the cultural tourism experience.

3.8 Community Cultural Festivals

Easterling (cited in Labonte, 1999) defines community capacity as ‘the set of assets or strengths that residents individually and collectively bring to the cause of improving local quality of life’. Labonte (1999:2) lists the dimensions of community capacity as ‘skills and knowledge, leadership, a sense of efficacy, norms of trust and reciprocity, social networks and
a culture of openness and learning’. Each of these resonates within the case studies and provides a lens through which to test the resilience demonstrated by festival organisations and host communities.

Community Cultural Tourism

Fostering a sense of place is a common aim of cultural tourism and community cultural development and sets them apart from mass consumerism (Trotter, 1999:40). Communities on the Northern Rivers of NSW adopt cultural tourism practices as they appear to satisfy visitors’ objectives including a concern for a unique individual experience; opportunities to explore and seek out information and establishing their own interpretation from the data and experience available; chances to engage with place and explore a multiplicity of perspectives; to have independence and autonomy; and a capacity to participate in local activities and engage with local residents (ibid). Nettleship’s (1994) work in the Northern Rivers region suggests that cultural tourism is the practice of travelling to experience the culture of a destination and the business of presenting a destination’s cultural assets and attributes to travellers.

Individuals participating as organisers, spectators or consumers of events generally wish to satisfy their curiosity, learn more, appreciate beauty, collect things, improve themselves, express their personalities and receive approval from others. The benefits sought by attendees include gainfully filling their increased leisure time, receiving value for money expended, gaining new experiences, a high level of service, social/cultural advancement, security and recognition. In the Northern Rivers there is a demonstrable understanding of such demand and while the individual is central to the satisfaction in the event experience, the sense of community finds expression through the conduct of festivals. In fact the evidence indicates that the visitors value the festivals for their insight into local life (Lismore Event Strategy, 1998).

Trotter picks up on Murphy’s community approach to tourism where residents participate in generating the ‘short term objectives of the business sector and possibly encourage greater variation and local flavour in projects’ (Murphy 1985, cited in Trotter, 1999:41). It is evident that case study communities demonstrate a capacity to develop discrete responses in time and space to managing the shift in the regional economy from agriculture, housing, technology and creating employment options in cultural tourism.

The role of partnerships and collaboration is an accepted mechanism for sustainable development (Robinson, 1999). There’s a crucial gap in the sustainability debate that is often
an after-thought following environmental/economic considerations (Robinson, 1999:387) and that is the importance of cultural celebration.

The imbalances that can occur between special interest stakeholder groups in communities can impact on the passive and active tourism development that occurs in regional communities. The commitment to sustaining cultures through tourism can enhance regional distinctiveness and diversity and mitigate against homogeneity. This raises the issue for festivals as to whether the culture they reflect will provide the tourism sector with a commodity to develop, represent or sell (Robinson, 1999; Urry & Macnaghten, 1998; Urry, 1990).

Tourism and culture are not strangers to one another. This study demonstrates that event tourism is a cultural practice (Rojek & Urry, 1997:5) and that tourism and culture are mutually implicated. This conceptual conjoinment is complex and the question may be that cultural tourism is the cultural component of tourism. It does raise issues associated with cultural consent (Robinson, 1999), so that festivals don’t only provide a cultural experience for tourists, for instance, but contribute to the co-management of tourism through ownership of a cultural resource and joint decision-making through sustainable regional community development (Robinson, 1999; Getz & Jamal, 1994; Woods 1993).

The cultural resources a community accrues are the result of human interaction with or intervention in the natural world (Brokensha & Guldberg, 1992). So the cultural tourism sector can be viewed as a resource industry, with a corporate persona. It has developed identifiable, formal, institutionalised incarnations too. I argue that it provides the visitor with opportunities to share what represents the best and worst of a community’s expression and experience. The shift represented in the literature identifies the need to manage change in rural regions, with events providing a vehicle to do this. Some areas now create specific events to attract tourists. While some regions’ goals for holding events have changed from a ‘civic pride’ ideal toward ‘financial gain’ it is worth exploring the impact on regional culture of tourism activity.

This tension is heightened by the ‘top-down’ investment by Tourism NSW (TNSW Masterplan, 2002) in regional flagship events and the federal government ‘cultural touring’ programs (Department of Communication Information Technology and the Arts, 2002) demanding management and marketing standards consistent with the fundamentals of current business practice. Here the two cultures of tourism and community culture, image and identity collide. The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA, 1993) proposed endemic
tourism was profitable tourism that fosters environmental understanding, appreciation and conservation and sustains the culture and well being of local communities. This could be said to inform the vision of the Far North Coast Nature-based and Ecotourism Plan (1995) that sought to nurture a place that welcomes visitors by celebrating and respecting the environment and its influence on lifestyle.

Host communities provide the conduit for sharing cultural tourism. Members of the community are the custodians of the rich and diverse content of tourism (in Australia) and must be encouraged to participate in the process of forming its content (Wood, 1993). Aspects of cultural values have become commodified and a tension can exist between those who wish to protect and preserve low scale community based activity from exploitation and appropriation by the media, for example. This study recognises that lifestyle choices available to residents and visitors are now the being broadened. They have extended beyond the bounds of particular geographical communities. They are fragmented and shared through the growing number of ‘infotainment’ programs including the all-pervasive technology. This fracturing of essential aspects of communities’ culture, things that distinguished one group of people from another, is what those involved with cultural tourism wish to avoid.

In the 1970s Heenan addressed aspects of compatibility between festivals and the Northern Rivers citizenry, developing a typology to explain three attitudinal archetypes (Heenan, 1978:31). He foreshadowed much of the concern now expressed in tourism and community development circles. He identified the need to distinguish between viability of attracting more and more visitors to festivals and legitimacy for host communities reluctant to share too much of their local themes and values. He believes it to be naive and inaccurate that host and guests can be placed in only one of the three categories he outlined. The festival patterns he identified are (1) the underlying belief that the host community bases success of the festival on local features, themes and values to maintain continued interest; (2) festivals are created specifically to attract visitors, as outsiders are the economic drivers; and (3) provides for a festival that integrates both of the earlier patterns. His research identified civic leaders who recognise that

over the years, we have found that visitors are attracted to our festival; because it gives them the opportunity to meet our folks on a one-on-one basis and to participate actively in the enjoyment of our culture’ (Heenan, 1978:32).

Can tourism and culture exchange their respective attributes and cultural tourism be reconciled as an opportunity to market culture as a tourism product? Picard (1996:180) suggests that the initial antagonism between culture and tourism is expressed by a system of opposites contrasting the respective attributes of each in term of inside-outside and cultural
values—economic values. It is not enough for tourism to become ‘cultural’ but regional culture may emerge as ‘touristic’. It is the transfer of an identifiable culture—usually seen as the heritage derived from earlier lifestyle choices that become the capital from which residents can profit in the market economy. The anthropological elements of culture like daily exchanges, language, and elements of celebration like ritual and arts practice, become translated into a commodity.

Communities may invest tax dollars or various types of in-kind public assistance into festivals and events for the economic benefits accrued (Crompton and McKay, 1994:33). Communities anticipated that an event will attract visitors from outside the area and that their expenditures while they are there will inject new wealth into the community. In Australia the scarcity of public money has led to increased scrutiny of its allocation. As a result, producing an economic impact study to demonstrate that economic returns will exceed its investment has become almost a *de rigueur* requirement for event organisers (Crompton and McKay, 1994:33). So far no such tool is required in the area of socio-cultural impacts. This study recognises that local government, for example is alert to the economic multiplier effect, but little attention is paid to policy connecting the preservation of culture, heritage and the environment.

A growth in public discussion of community-based activity (Beeton, 2006; Kelly, 2003; Theobold, 1999; Dunstan, 1994) raises issues about the skills necessary to become leaders, coordinators and analysts. Skills learned in one area of activity, such as organising a community land trust, can be transferred to other areas such as developing new businesses or alternative financial institutions or festival management. Community-based development brings together diverse interests across gender, race, and class. A broader, shared vision is the glue that is essential for cooperation among business, labor, consumers and government as communities seek to gain control over their economic futures.

The growth of community tourism development research (Beeton, 2006; Van der Stoep, 2000; Glover, 1998; Haywood, 1991; Krippendorf, 1991; Murphy, 1985;) has identified its emergence in regional communities from more general community and economic development. Glover (1998) firmly suggests that the whole community must be committed and be developed as a tourist attraction. The need for economic diversification, a reaction to earlier haphazard tourism development, externally funded initiatives and imposed tourism development and a call for increased local participation in government actions have often been the initial concerns (Van der Stoep, 2000:311).
**Festivals and sustainability**

Festival management at a destination level is often located within the local government economic development portfolio, as they are perceived as sustainable development options for regional centres. This is sometimes recorded as ‘community tourism development’ (Joppe, 1996:475). Whether local government or the community drives the activity, there is increasing discussion in the literature of the extent to which local residents determine the process of community (tourism) development (Joffe, 1996; Murphy, 1985; Jurowski, 1996).

Festival making now features in sustainable community-based tourism development. The benefits seen to accrue include community buy-in and empowerment, to improve the chance of long-term success. It is evident that the impacts of tourism are not the same for all residents (Jurowski, 1996:112) as their values and interests affect the way they perceive the costs and benefits. Kelly (2003:3) uses an example in Horsefly, British Columbia to emphasise the importance of community based groups and businesses involved in the community tourism planning process. It is noted that a smaller, isolated community can help the process, because people demonstrate a willingness to work together.

One key aspect of sustainability is the capacity of community festival organisers to deal with programming. While Goldblatt, (2000; 1997), Allen et al (2005), Tonge (1999), Watt (1998) and Getz (1997) go to great lengths to identify the value of designing programs with themes, and venues and staging and content that match the hosts and other target markets, there is little evidence in the case studies that management is cogniscent of the theory. Logistics for staging an event appear to be purely driven by existing resources, current practices and what has been observed in other local events. The trial and error method of determining what is programmed and how it is delivered often reflects the rural ‘can do’ culture, rather than an appreciation of the importance of strategic planning for successful events.

**Festivals as event tourism**

Both the social function and symbolic meaning of the festival are closely related to a series of overt values that the community recognises as essential to its ideology and world view, to its social identity, its historical continuity, and its physical survival, which is ultimately what festival celebrates Falassi, (1987:2).

Festivals are identified as a one of the fastest growing forms of leisure and tourism related phenomena (Hall, 1987; Roche, 1994; Gunn, 1994).

Event tourism is concerned with the roles that festivals and special events can play in destination development and the maximisation of an event’s attractiveness to tourists Getz, (1991:5).
Getz and Frisby (1987) and Hall (1989) suggest that events may not only serve to attract tourists, but also assist in the development or maintenance of community or regional identity. Long and Perdue (1990 cited in Hall, 1992) offer a number of reasons why communities organise events, including enhancing or preserving local culture and history and providing local recreation and leisure opportunities.

Communities hosting festivals use them to feature the talents, experience or skills of locals or an opportunity for creative exchange by inviting others to join in through competitions, performances, displays and free interaction. A distinctive and specific feature is the energetic pursuit of conscious excess in terms of participants or organisers through entertainment, instruction and consumption of food and beverage. Goldblatt (1997) defines a festival as ‘a special event (that) recognises a unique moment in time with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs’. Festivals can transform residents through their capacity to play host and affirm their values and beliefs. The attributes of the nature and roles exemplified by festivals recognised in the literature and in the case studies include those identified by Getz (1991:326).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festive spirit</td>
<td>Reflection of values and belonging through ritual, revelry, scale, fantasy, magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of basic needs</td>
<td>Physical, interpersonal, social and psychological needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniqueness</td>
<td>Distinctive features of program, image-making, promotions, site, scale, food and beverage; outside normal experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Elements associated with local cultural attributes. The participation of community as hosts, staff, performers, suppliers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Events rooted in community, closely associated with reinforcing traditions &amp; practices; can even be fabricated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Events developed with minimal infrastructure, adapted to changing markets; provide umbrella for a variety of activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Willingness of community to host visitors and residents alike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangibility</td>
<td>Experience of place through festival content and host community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themeing</td>
<td>Themeing can be physical manifestation of elements like tradition, authenticity and festive spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism</td>
<td>Elements of production can relate to cultural values, political or economic objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>Can provide affordable leisure, social or cultural experiences for hosts and guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Access to spontaneous leisure and social opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Getz (1991:326)

This typology is discussed in Chapter Four as it is utilized to confirm the appropriateness of the four case study festivals for this study. The attributes in Table 3.7 commonly occur in community events. Getz notes that they contribute to community pride and development that assists in defining a community’s sense of itself and its place. Against each characteristic is a
brief explanation of how this is manifested in the delivery of such festivals. The vocabulary used clearly represents the potential roles of each case study festival.

Festivals play a number of significant roles in a town or region. Getz identifies these as attractions, image makers, animators of static attractions and catalysts for further development. They can be seen to minimise negative impacts of mass visitation and foster better host-guest relations. Festivals can lengthen tourist seasons, extend peak season or introduce a ‘new season’ into the life of a community (1991:326).

The community development perspective on event tourism represented in such forums as Our Community (2007) and Community Builders (2007) acknowledges the elements of community spirit and pride, co-operation, leadership, enhancement of cultural traditions, capacity to control development, improvements to social and health amenities and environmental quality. These aspects of event tourism are demonstrated in the four case studies.

The publicity that festivals and events can generate for a community can not only have a cumulative impact on the location as a tourist destination but also feed into the image and identity of the community and assist with creating an appealing and consolidated authenticity. The festival is about people having a good time and rarely requires massive infrastructure as it is generally organised around existing resources. Festivals offer the potential, too, to foster local organisational development, leadership and networking, all of which are critical underpinnings of community based tourism development. Getz (1991) argues that the consequence of this process would produce tourism development more aligned with community desires, more authentic, thus satisfying to residents and visitors and more sustainable over the long term.

**Festivals in tourism literature**

As attractions: Festivals are dealt with in the tourism literature as a significant element of the attractions sector. The role of community-based festivals is attracting increasing attention. United States researchers Mayfield and Crompton (1995) identify generic community reasons for staging festivals. Festivals are one of the fastest growing types of tourist attraction. Their festival study emphasises the importance of recreation/socialisation, culture/education, tourism, internal revenue generation, natural resources, agriculture, external revenue generation and community pride/spirit (1995:37). A case study analysis of festival management by Frisby and Getz (1989:7) determines how the tourism potential of festivals
can be reached. They suggest, ‘the ability of festivals to become successful tourist attractions depends in part on their goals and the way in which they are managed’.

Beeton (2006) recognises the importance of community-based products and services for visitors. Links to unique aspects of a community’s heritage or local landscape reflected in festivals ensure that visitors not only come once, but also often are drawn to repeat visitation because of the distinctive elements of the program.

As partnerships: There are examples of the partnership between the arts and tourism (Myerscough, 1988; Hughes, 1989; Cohen, 1993; Craik, 1995) providing the justification for heightened debate on what constitutes ‘cultural tourism’. ‘Celebration is a glue which binds a community’ suggests Dunstan (1994:1). Community based celebrations can be a powerful attractor and provide the competitive advantage as a tourism destination.

As community participation: According to Getz (1988), visitors want more opportunities to do what the locals do, as part of their interest in participating in an authentic, participatory experience, festivals are providing the culture-tourism nexus. Festivals that provide individuals with an opportunity to reach out from their routines and participate in the production of a celebration help showcase that community’s creativity. The spectacle that results and the associated rituals act as powerful attractors. Festivals that include practical workshops or hands-on opportunities to make your own souvenirs become powerful attractors for visitors.

As social activism: Festivals are more than a means to teach the skills of effective social action (Dunstan, 1994). They are also a means of effective social action. So another expected outcome of a policy of pro-active festival development would be a broad based skilling for social action. When assessing the roles of stakeholders in community based cultural festivals significant emphasis is given to internal and external entities (McDonnell et al, 1999). These include organisers, visitors, media, local government, the business and tourism sectors who all contribute to their host community’s aspirations. Individuals represented in these sectors bring their expertise to bear on issues of community import and often the festivals contain program elements that respond to current concerns. Whether as host, participant, supplier, spectator, sponsor or facilitator little literature deals specifically with how festivals impact on each sector.
**Festivals as Cultural Tourism**

This study of four community cultural festivals demonstrates that tourism is a cultural practice (Rojek & Urry, 1997:5) and that tourism and culture are synergistic in the extreme. Cultural tourism may appear a new term, but the phenomenon is not new. As elements of culture are converted into the market system, existing cultural institutions and patterns need to be preserved. Cultural artefacts and as the regional community’s resources are ‘fragile’ and ‘finite’ or ‘precious and perishable’ (Picard, 1996:198) and if they are to be preserved for future generations, they must be developed with an appropriate socio-cultural carrying capacity in mind. Residents express concern that the integrity of what they hold dear in terms of recreation and cultural pursuits needs to be maintained, especially when they share such activity with visitors. They see that as part of the appeal for local events in the tourism sector.

Festivals are regarded amongst cultural assets in Australia. These are defined by the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 as consisting of:

- those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia, or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the present community (cited in Brokensha & Guldberg, 1992:67).

While it is understood that individuals attend events, many arrive in groups. Motivating factors for both can include a quality experience providing satisfaction for escape, emotion, exclusivity, education, status seeking, authenticity, ambience, novelty, diversity, knowledge, uniqueness (Hall & Zeppel, 1990:88 in Hall, 1991:189; Bywater, 1993; Richards, 2005). Interest expressed by tourists for renewal of self, self-enrichment and cultural tourism products can readily address self-expression and feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, interaction and belongingness.

The growing popularity of festivals as a substantial sector of ‘cultural tourism’ in Australia is attributed (Tourism NSW 1989:61 and Hall, 1991:188) to rising levels of education, growing interest in special interest holidays and tours, shifting tourism patterns towards short breaks to attractions, dissatisfaction with ‘bland’ international culture, increasing profile raising of arts activity, increasing awareness of Australia’s heritage, both European and indigenous, greater mobility of the population and greater levels of leisure time.

As the pace of tourism accelerates and cultural audiences are looking for new experiences partnerships with the tourism sector can become an important aspect of their overall program (Reiss, 1993:48; Dimmock & Tiyce, 2001). Festivals provide a forum for the formal and informal community’s cultural practices. Attributes of the partnerships of equals identified include the cultural sector offering some unique travel experiences otherwise unavailable at a
reasonable cost, providing a reason the lengthen the stay in a destination and broadening the appeal of a tourism package.

Festivals can act as a catalyst for further, broader development associated with the built and natural environment, the arts industry, recreation, conventions and events, civic design, community development, health and education (Getz, 1991). The cultural tourism sector can be viewed as a resource industry being active in focusing a region’s aspirations and identity. Festival managers are aware there needs to be vigilance to ensure the identity, integrity and quality of life of host communities.

As a result I argue that festivals provide an effective vehicle to participate in another culture, to relate to people and places that demonstrate a strong sense of their own identity. They provide a dynamic labour intensive activity to maintain some local ownership and cultural integrity. Festivals demonstrate, through their longevity, self-sufficiency, adaptability, flexibility and capacity for change and self-generation substantial creativity. This creativity may provide the capacity to deal with the consequences and conflicts that may emerge. Once embraced by the host community there is a greater incentive to become hosts to visitors. As the festival and its environs become a popular drawcard, the host destination authorities and residents need to contemplate how they will handle the influx of visitors.

**Community Cultural Festival Management**

This section deals with a crucial area for community festivals – their management and organisation. As contact with festival organisers progressed during this study, it became evident that those actively working on preparing and presenting festivals did little to nurture, sustain and celebrate their own participation. This lack of understanding of organisational volatility and strategic management appears to be a significant barrier to festival longevity.

The management patterns in community cultural organisations have borrowed extensively from general business practice. This may not always be the most prudent course. The volunteer dimension often influences choices made within the organisation. Handy, (1990, 1996) and Drucker, (1990) address this as an increasing understanding, appreciation and awareness of the contribution arts/culture/community volunteerism makes to the quality of daily life is affirmed. In the general business community where companies are now more amenable to partnerships for mutual benefit, a greater willingness to develop more significant relationships has emerged. Festival management at a community level is dealing with increased concern for access, employment opportunities and acknowledgement of sub-cultural needs and so have benefited from links with more informed business practice (Getz, 2007).
The broader debate on the role of cultural management in Australia indicates that creative work and business skills need not be mutually exclusive. Cultural tourism enterprises are attempting to develop as viable, sustainable businesses in the cultural sector. The management choices being implemented are not unlike those practised by other small businesses in other industries. Speaking at the ‘Creating Culture – the new growth industries’ conference (1994), Leo Schofield argued,

> If culture, in the broadest sense of that exhausted word, is really developing into an industry then we should be mindful of a number of attendant needs if the infant industry is to achieve its potential. Growth in any industry is not automatic. Growth is something that is managed, even in human beings. Growth in any industry also thrives in competition and all labourers in the cultural vineyard are to welcome it. There really can be very little doubt that culture can be a growth industry, an industry with limitless potential. But first, it needs to be shaped and marketed, and most importantly perceived as an industry – by the public, by politicians, but especially by the people who work in it (Schofield, cited in Millar, 1995:3).

In the Northern Rivers, research has been undertaken into the potential of the creative industries to impact on regional economies (Henkel, 2006). This has implications for festivals. Janet Millar, in an editorial for the inaugural edition of Smarts, outlined concerns about national cultural industry development.

> A perception exists, although happily diminishing, that defining cultural workers in business and industry terms somehow tarnishes their very creativity – as if economic imperatives are laudable for other occupations but leave a nasty metallic taste in the mouth of artists (Millar, 1995:1).

**How festival organisations function**

Organisations do not operate in a vacuum. Diverse writers (Gray, 1994; Drucker, 1993; Reiss, 1993; Windschuttle, 1987) argue they operate in economic, social, physical, political and cultural contexts that determine what they can do and the costs associated with doing it. The principal environments that influence the strategic and operational management choices, and in turn generate a ‘culture’ within each cultural organisation include a substantial list of pressure - (inter)national practice trends; (inter)national economic trends; the legal/political environment; demographics – composition of society by sub-cultures. In the regional context, labour market forces; the media; geographical location; physical resources of the organisation; cultural sector competition; technology; consumer behaviours and motivations; personal qualities of founders and leaders; and cultural sector education and training all play a role. Each of these dimensions of organisational environments can be related to varying degrees to the case study organisations (Handy, 1990; Drucker, 1993).
Culture helps to account for variations among organisations and event managers; and why different groups of people perceive things in their own way and perform things differently from other groups (Potter 1987 cited in Mullins et al 1993:15). The culture developed and sustained within festival organisations can help reduce complexity and uncertainty. It can provide a consistency in outlook and values and make possible the processes of decision-making, co-ordination and control (Gorman 1987 cited in Mullins et al 1993:15).

How organisations deal with the external coalitions (Mintzberg, 1983) varies. Questions of organisational ownership; knowing who the associates of the organisation are, the suppliers, clients, partners and how they influence the development of a management culture are raised in the study. This helps focus attention on the external stakeholder relationships. Internally, how employees and volunteers deal with the personal and cultural baggage they bring to the organisation and the various publics the organisation serves can be problematic. This study finds evidence that what is considered in the public interest, needs of special interest groups, competitors, media and family and friends influence choices management makes.

Further, it determines these external influences vary too. They can be episodic or regular; general or focused; detached or personal; initiative or obstructive; formal or informal. The impact, for example of the interaction of government agencies (at all levels) and funding opportunities for organisations is affected directly by these variables. Many community based organisations are resource poor – whether financial or in relation to technology and amenities. The sorts of relationships these organisations establish with other groups in their communities are a measure of their management savvy, experience and resilience.

Early work by Caplow (1976) recognised common characteristics that have emerged in the study festival organisations. These include a collective identity; a membership list and associate/friends network; a program of activity and timetable to go with it. A constitution with a set of formal rules partly can be undermined by informal practices that develop over time. This casual approach to decision making, deal doing and partnering can over time make ongoing management problematic. Festival organisations have procedures for adding and removing members; utilitarian objects used in the organisational program; symbolic objects used in the organisational program; and sometimes symbolic objects used in ceremonies and rituals. Parades and museums emerge as repositories for the latter in the case studies. The organisation’s history and special vocabulary can contain some elements of folklore. Each organisation has a territory and a method of placing members within that territory according to their relative importance,

During any given period in an organisation’s history, it will be growing, stable or declining. During each stage of an organisation’s life cycle the forces
that cause management adjustments influence the culture and vice versa. Goals are not always met, for reasons beyond the control of the committee and the membership. How the individual organisation deals with the crises that arise from time to time - the skill, the luck, the planning, the leadership and corporate experience into play - clearly reflects and influences the culture of the organisation (Caplow, 1976:5).

One area of festival management concern in the present study emerged from perceived and actual crowding at Byron Bay’s New Year’s Eve celebrations. Lee and Graefe (2003:1) in their study examined social carrying capacity to better manage the quality of visitors’ experience. The theoretical models identified the importance of festival organisers’ on-going monitoring of visitor responses through a multiple-item survey instrument to better measure visitors’ complex experience at festivals. This would establish more effective and appropriate measurement of density and perceived crowding. This study uses a similar model for its Byron Bay festival (Lawrence and Derrett, 2003).

**Successful festival management**

Getz (2003:218; Lade and Jackson, 2004) suggest increased attention needs to be given to the critical success factors in festival management. Getz’s preliminary pathology of why festivals fail identifies problems associated with marketing and planning, external forces, human resources, financial resources and organisational culture. He notes that, like the present case study festivals, the operating environments for these organisations demands high public scrutiny. They are dependent on external sources of funding from Councils, other government agencies, sponsorships arrangements and donations. This imperative demands transparency and accountability from those investing in the events. Many are dependent on public good will and resources they share with other groups in the community. As not for profit organisations they tend to be managed by volunteers and exist primarily for reasons other than private profit (2003:217).

The notion of a festival lifecycle characterised by Getz (1991) builds on the marketing technique espoused in the 1960s by Theodore Levitt (1965, cited Walle, 1994) and Butler (1981) identifying the phases of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation potentially followed by rejuvenation, stability or decline. This can be applied to festivals and their host organisations. An understanding of the flow represented by such an organisation or festival alerts leaders to anticipate future demand and prepare adaptive strategies. This is another measure of effective management. As each festival competes for audiences whose expectations are rising and becoming more sophisticated, organisations need to stay fresh (along with the programs they deliver) or each is likely to decline rapidly.
Festival management lifecycle
The corporate culture in not-for-profit festival organisations has been examined through the evolution of festival organisations (Morgan, 1991; Chako & Schaffer, 1993; Getz, 1993:11; Frisby & Getz, 1989). The work of these authors uses Katz’s model (1981) where five stages of organisational growth – origin, informal organisation, emergence of leadership, formalisation and professionalism. This is of interest in this study as management committees wrestle with their vision for the future of their festival. There is a need for such groups to maintain community involvement and Katz suggests that some groups may, in fact, relinquish the final two stages (formalisation and professionalism) in their quest to retain links to their constituents.

The case study work done by Katz (1957) identifies the stages of an organisation's ‘natural history’. It is also been built on by Lusky and Ingman (1979). The tensions between formalisation, professionalisation and bureaucratisation on the one hand and the maintenance of self-help impulses and vitality on the other are tested in this research. Definitions of the nature of groups by Katz & Bender suggest,

Self-help groups are voluntary, small group structures for mutual aid and the accomplishment of a special purpose. They are usually formed by peers...the initiators and members of such groups perceive that their needs are not, or cannot be, met by or through existing social institutions...they often provide material assistance...are frequently ‘cause’-oriented and promulgate an ideology or values ... (1976, cited in Katz 1981:135).

Katz (1981:136) analyses other defining attributes. These include community based self-help groups who always involve face-to-face interactions. The origin of self-help groups is spontaneous (they are not usually set up by an outside group) and personal participation is an extremely important ingredient. He also suggests that bureaucratisation is antithetical to the self-help organisation; that members agree on and engage in some actions; typically, the groups start from a position of powerlessness; the group fills needs for a reference group, a point of connection and identification with others, a base for activity and a source of ego-reinforcement. These observations become quite testing for the festival organisations in the study which each emerged from volunteer community based network seeking to contribute something beneficial to their community.

Studies of community based non-profit groups have generally been descriptive case studies and based on anecdotal evidence (Katz, 1981:140). This current study draws on this approach. There is an absence of a codified body of work and this makes bibliographical research difficult. Scholars have reached a broad consensus that the organisational and structural nature of groups is determined primarily by shared problems and experiences of members...
(Katz, 1981:141; Drucker, 1990; Anheier, 2000). In fact, Anheier suggests management of non-profit organisations is often ill understood because we proceed from the wrong assumptions about how these organisations operate. Based on this premise, he developed what he calls a new approach, a model of the non-profit form as a conglomerate of multiple organisations with multiple bottom lines that demand a variety of different management approaches and styles. These include: a **holistic conception** that emphasises the diversity of orientations within and outside the organisation; a **normative dimension** that includes not only economic aspects but also the importance of values and politics; a **strategic-developmental dimension** that sees organisations as evolving systems encountering problems and opportunities that frequently involve fundamental dilemmas; and an **operative dimension** that deals with the everyday functioning of organisations (Anheier, 2000:10).

**Festival Organisations**

Lusky and Ingman (1979, cited in Katz 1981:141) found that,

Leadership conflicts, resource and problems...membership disaffection stemmed from the group's having become formally incorporated, from receiving public funding and from the core staff's viewing themselves as professionals rather than peers of the members.

Handy suggests ‘there are four basic styles from which organisations choose some mix depending on their history, the kind of work they do and the kind of people who do it’ (1988:85). While the semantics in the literature varies, e.g. Handy uses power, role, task and person (after Harrison, cited in Handy, 1985:188) others use organic and mechanistic language (1988:446). Handy’s work in the 1980s follows work by Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982). He depicts the **Club Culture** as a spider’s web, because the key to the whole organisation sits in the centre, surrounded by ever widening circles of intimates and influences. The closer you are to the spider, the more influence you have. The organisational idea in the club culture is that the organisation is there to extend the person of the head or, often, of the founder. If they could do everything personally they would. This may sound like a dictatorship, but it is based on trust and a personal culture. This can be problematic in volunteer based community groups, but the central founder figure is someone readily recognised in the Grafton and Casino case studies.

These cultures have a great strength in their ability to respond immediately and intuitively to opportunities or crises because of short lines of communication and because of centralised power (Handy, 1988:87).

The character of a central figure is a convenient way of running things when the core organisation is small and closely gathered together so that personal communication is easy.
This study identifies issues of leadership and management where practice closely relates to those aspects of organisational culture identified by Handy.

The organisational idea in the Task Culture is that a group or team of talents and resources should be applied to a project, problem or task. The task culture evolved in response to the need for an organisational form that could respond to change in a less individualistic way than a club culture, and more speedily than a role culture (Handy, 1988:90).

The task culture is the preferred culture of many competent people because they work in groups, sharing both skills and responsibilities. The culture is usually built around a cooperative group of colleagues without much overt hierarchy. The professional people involved can be expensive. No organisation is culturally pure according to Handy (1988). The structure that is employed by an organisation can be seen as its skeletal response to its membership or to the project it is to which it is committed. Organisations do not operate in a predictable world. The structure chosen by an organisation refers to the division of work that needs to be done.

In this study, the festival organisations have been in existence for periods ranging from ten to seventy years and attention has been focused on how such organising committees are sustained. Succession management emerges as a consistent challenge. Handy (1988:110) suggests there are three ways to hold an organisation together through: the hierarchy of command; rules and procedures; and co-ordinating groups.

Handy suggests that most organisations tend to use all three, as the hierarchy of command turns out to be too cumbersome and rules and procedures too rigid. Organisations wish to remain small enough to maintain a common identity, while coping with a whole range of activities. So, if ‘the structure of an organisation is its skeleton, then the systems are its nerves’, (Handy, 1988:121). Handy identifies three mechanisms that can facilitate effective communications within an organisation (Handy, 1988:124) use more than one medium and more than one net; encourage two way communication; and avoid links in the chain, i.e. when possible avoid layers and do it directly.

Pilisuk and Parks’ exploratory study of 28 varying groups (1980, cited in Katz 1981) investigated, among other things, membership characteristics (e.g. degree of openness, homogeneity), institutional relationships, patterns of origin, leadership, ideology, formalisation of structure and group focus. Other studies have sought to relate ideological to structural factors (Katz & Bender 1976, cited in Katz 1981). They tested such hypotheses ‘the
greater the degree of ideological conformity demanded of membership, the greater the group cohesiveness, but the lower the level of active participation by members’ (1981:144).

This thesis alerts us to the necessity of not underestimating the community’s demographic and historic dynamics, the hidden economy and the regional culture of engagement. The informal arrangements that include how people demonstrate their connection to both the locality and the company they keep in their daily lives is translated into rendering assistance on an ‘as needs’ basis in community events. The skills, experience and personal resources that are shared in this way build the capacity of some organisations beyond the standard tangible measurements. Although the study doesn’t identify any personal ‘baggage’ individual participants may carry into their festival dealings, it does recognise however that pre-existing tensions and conflicts can impact on present practice.

It is interesting to match the composition of the festival committee with the degree of homogeneity in the community, in terms of length of residence, sub-cultural interest groups, professional expertise, community connectivity and managerial experience. Research noted here is relevant to an assessment of effectiveness and longevity of management practice in festival organisations. Two of the festivals have been in existence for over 20 years and it is instructional for us to examine what, if any, management strategies have been employed to ensure sustainability.

Katz (1981:145) identifies the possible, proper and desirable relationship of the not for profit group to the role of professionals as one of the most often discussed, crucial and vexing. He comments that from the existing commentaries on professional-lay relationships, a ‘collaborative’ model predominates (1981:146). Katz’ work has been with self help groups, but outcomes of the research upon which he comments are relevant to the discussion of issues under analysis in the four case study festivals, with respect to the value of collaboration and co-operation as a key plank for effecting change and ensuring resilience.

Each of the case studies in this thesis incorporates the structural, management and planning issues raised above. They link the characteristics of each festival’s organisation, communication, management and networks to residents’ sense of community and place. Allen et al (2002:56) suggest that festival organisations benefit from formal and informal communication within host communities. Host communities impart a great deal of past experience to the management mix of festival organisations. The power of word of mouth is evoked as a strategic management tool and is well known in small communities.
Leadership

The literature on leadership is extensive and diverse. Outside the business and management literature, leadership is treated as a psychological construct (Pierce and Newstrom, 2000:7) where the leader is a person who possesses certain desirable personality and demographic traits; while others suggest a sociological phenomenon where the leader is a result of the confluence of a person, a group and the needs arising from a situation faced by each. Heller (1999:5) suggests effective leadership is derived from the mastery of a range of skills, from implementing and administering processes to inspiring others to achieve excellence. Trait theory (Fairholm, 2002) is just one aspect of the leadership discussion. In recent times four main areas are examined in the literature: trait theory (looking at great leaders and discusses the accumulation of key traits and personal qualities), behaviour theory, situational theory and values-based transformational theory (Fairholm, 2002:2).

This study investigates the role of festival management teams and community champions and establishes that specific characteristics emerge from their sense of community and sense of place. Behaviourally it explores not only the common characteristics of leaders and what they are like, but also rather what leaders actually do (Fairholm, 2002:5). Some light is shed on this with definitions from Bass (1990, cited in Pierce and Newstrom, 2000:7) identifying the following concepts. There are definitions that revolve around concepts of influence, power and securing compliance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.8 Definitions of Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership as the art of inducing compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership as the exercise of influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership as a form of persuasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership as a power relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work on organisational management and leadership has identified the shared characteristics of followers and leaders (Daft, 2002:262). This suggests that an effective follower is both active and an independent thinker and wants both their leaders and colleagues to be honest and competent. Followers want to be led, not controlled; they want their peers to be dependable and co-operative. Daft (2002:262) suggests these features help develop a sense of organisational community.
The leadership profiles that emerge from a search for definitions recorded by Bass (1990) are included in table 3.9.

### Table 3.9 Leadership Profiles

| Leadership as a focus of group process | This set of definitions positions the leader as the hub, nucleus and/or pivotal point for group activity. |
| Leadership as personality and its effects | Definitions in terms of the personality attributes or strength of character of the leader him/herself |
| Leadership as an act or behaviour | Definitions about what leaders do suggesting it results in others acting or responding in a shared direction |
| Leadership as an instrument of goal achievement | Definitions with leadership as the principal force that motivates and coordinates the organisation to achieve objectives. |
| Leadership as an emerging effect of interaction | Definitions that acknowledge a group action resulting in interactions within and among members of a group. |
| Leadership as a differentiated role | Definitions emerging out of role theory where different members make different contributions to the attainment of goals and leadership is but one well-defined, needed and differentiated role. |
| Leadership as the initiation of structure | Another role definition where the initiation and maintenance of structure is expected. |

The power exerted by festival organisers places them in line with the leadership frameworks mentioned, for example as an instrument of goal achievement in Grafton, the Committee President is seen to advance the organisation’s goals internally and in the wider community. Different practices by leaders can be seen to effect specific changes within the organisation and externally with links to local and regional agencies.

The study provides an opportunity to assess characteristics identified above to personnel connected with the management of the case study festival organisations. Individuals and structures influence current practice. Situational theory highlights the variables that are evident in festival organisations. This study provides an insight into the dynamics, relationships, individuals’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, organisational change and culture and recognises what influences leaders’ effectiveness (Fairholm, 2002:7). Documentation of decisions made over time indicates that leadership principles can vary with the traits of incumbents as well as the internal and external environments of the organisation.

**Destination Management**

In the tourism literature, the life cycle model offered by Butler (1980) provides a framework to understand the dynamics of growth and change as applied to tourism destinations (Prosser, 1995). This model has been extensively used to describe, explain and predict tourist destination challenges. The model accommodates reasonably predictable patterns represented elsewhere in tourism literature. Doxey (1975) identifies host community responses to tourism...
development: levels of euphoria, apathy, irritation, antagonism, and finally a fundamental shift from the original initiative. Time frames are also a critical feature of Butler’s model. The principles borrowed from human development via the marketing literature connect to the carrying capacity of a destination. Butler proposes a sequence that traces a new destination becoming attractive to explorers who then receive goods and services offered by engaged hosts in an ‘involvement’ phase. With increasing numbers of visitors the destination will require more formal investment through a ‘development’ phase. Consolidation will result from a period of rapid growth allowing the destination to perhaps reduce the growth. This phase is followed by a period of ‘stagnation’ where such choices as decline or rejuvenation may be observed.

Prosser (1995:320) comments on numerous empirical studies that have refined and modified Butler’s model to suit the particular interest of the researcher. What is sought in this present study is whether the evolutionary model of an entity like a tourism destination could be applied to an analysis of community cultural festivals. The resilience to stress the human body demonstrates over time (Kabot-Zinn, 2001) is replicated when communities need their destination to respond and adapt as identified in Butler’s model too.

The organic nature of festivals with their substantial dependence on human resources requires the development of an open and transparent pathway for participants. It would appear that one single model does not do justice to the complex nature of the relationships emerging as festivals and their stakeholders, the interface with the landscape and the connection with visitors. A unified model ignores the dynamics of whole systems that are evident in festival development. An extrapolation of the limitations and organisational pitfalls that influence the way festivals develop are explored in the case study chapters.

**Relations between host communities and visitors**

Craik (1995:89) and Leiper (1990:233) suggest that tourism may change the characteristics of the destination community. Whether the characteristic of the host-guest interaction is beneficial or detrimental is difficult to accurately determine (Dogan, 1989; Smith, 1989) though Huang & Stewart, (1996:26) note the personal ties and community solidarity of hosts established when engaged with tourism development. There tend to be transitory interactions, seldom demonstrating the personal commitment to the relationship that is normally found in a non-transitory relationship, though a major exception exists with repeat visitors who often develop friends in places they habitually visit. The interaction is typically brief.
In mass tourist destinations a local resident may only have brief, transitory contact with a continuous flow of tourists (Getz, 2007). Festivals offer interaction that could be unbalanced as hosts are in familiar surroundings with familiar routines and visitors are not (Mathieson and Wall, 1982), but regional hospitality puts paid to that. Community festivals break down the typical tourism dynamic of visitors being at leisure while the hosts are at work, as festivals offer spontaneity. This differs from the oft-felt artificial circumstances of tourism industry personnel being in specific hospitality roles or in staged entertainments for the visitors (McCannell, 1973).

Issues identified by Craik (1995:91) citing the threats to host communities experiencing tourists as invaders include the loss of privacy, destruction of the culture that attracts visitors as attractions are transformed into a ‘museum’; hostility at perceived exploitation, commoditisation and lack of consultation are relevant to the community cultural tourism development on the Northern Rivers of NSW. From the residents’ perspective there are several reasons for the strains to the hospitality offered to visitors. One stranger may be acceptable, but in mass a threat exists and implies many of the concerns represented in the growing literature on negative impacts of tourism. Locals seek to retain their sense of the territorial imperative (Leiper, 1990:240). It appears that not all host cultures are as resilient as they wish when general impacts of visitation are observed.

The debasement of the local culture by commodification does not require the consent of the participants. There can be damage to local society through the ‘demonstration effect’ because tourists are at leisure and seen to be not working and to be self-indulgent (Dogan, 1989; Wood, 1993). They typically demonstrate a materially rich lifestyle where they spend a lot, are fashionably dressed and lively comfortably. Their highly mobile lifestyle contrasts with locals who may resent the ability to move freely from country to country and finally their behaviours may transgress local traditional customs. So, tourists unwittingly become catalysts of change, division and frustration within the host community. This may lead to the break up of the society as some people’s aspirations can’t be met locally and they leave in frustration. The damage or threats to socio-cultural environments may include increased criminal activity, immoral conduct, a significant proportion of low paid and low skilled tourism employment, and cultural or economic imperialism (Picard, 1996).

The appeal of ‘authenticity’ in the touristic experience is well documented (McCannell, 1989; Hall & Weiler, 1992). In its efforts to provide authentic cultural experiences for its customers the tourism industry is often chastised for commoditising the culture of the host community to enhance touristic consumption. This is particularly relevant in the discussion on festivals. I
contend that what a community does in celebrating its spirit, its being becomes distinctly attractive to the business of tourism; by tour operators, accommodation and tourism promotional agencies. There are virtually two cultures. One, the culture of the host community including the traditional practices and forms being offered to visitors and there is a management or organisational culture which emerges from an industry such as tourism.

The development of the serious leisure market is predicated on the desire of participants for authenticity in a non-exploitative manner (Stebbins, 1996). Development guidelines that safeguard the interests of local people, preserve heritage and contemporary lifestyle choices, encourage responsible treatment of the natural and human environment, secure an appropriate scale and encourage partnerships of all stakeholders are now demanded. The cultural resources of a region create the how and what for visitors. Cultural tourism can form partnerships to create the content of tourism. It is concerned with the ways of life of a place through a whole range of human creation, custom, heritage and activity.

The models of whole tourism systems apply the elements of this human activity in various ways. Gunn (1988 cited Leiper 1997) specifies the key elements of information, and direction, tourists, transport, attractions, and services and facilities. Jafari’s (1989 cited Leiper, 1997) model sets out six phases that occur in all normal trips, corporation, expatriation, animation, repatriation, incorporation and omission. This process is set in the ordinary (routine) world and the non-ordinary world (during trips). Leiper (1995, cited Leiper 1997) places the human element centrally. Three geographical elements represent places that appear in all tourists’ itineraries; generating region, transit route and destination region with the organisational support of tourism industries. These are cited in various environments - physical, social, cultural and economic. In each of these models the tourist comes with their own culture to experience another culture. How this is experienced is at the base of this study.

Urry (1990:57-9) suggests a number of determinants of the particular social relations that are established between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’. These include the number of tourists visiting a place compared with the size of the host population and scale of the destination; the character of the attraction, and the degree to which it can be packaged for tourist consumption. He suggests the economic and social differences between hosts and tourists; the sophistication of particular standards of accommodation and service demanded by tourists and the extent to which the state actively promotes tourism all enhance the relationships between hosts and visitors. Tourism generally can contribute to changes in value systems, individual behaviours, family relationships, collective lifestyles, safety levels, moral conduct, creative expression, traditional

**Impacts on host community**

Doxey’s (1975) index of irritation is the most regularly cited framework demonstrating the impact on communities by visitors. The carrying capacity of communities when a festival is staged provides a useful lens through which to examine Doxey’s proposition and those of others. In the host/guest discussion it provides a simple, useful matrix that identifies stages through which host communities progress during their increasing exposure to visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.10</th>
<th>Doxey’s levels of host irritation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euphoria</td>
<td>Initial phase of development, visitors and investors welcome, little planning and few control mechanisms. Locals are enthusiastic and there is a feeling of mutual satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy</td>
<td>Visitors taken for granted, contacts between residents and outsiders more formal (commercial), planning concerned mostly with marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritation/Annoyance</td>
<td>Saturation points approached, residents have misgivings about tourist industry, policy makers attempt solutions via increasing infrastructure rather than limiting growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonism</td>
<td>Irritations openly expressed, visitors seen as cause of all problems, planning now remedial but promotion increased to offset deteriorating reputation of destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The final level</td>
<td>The chance that the host community may have forgotten what they cherished in the first place originally drew the tourists and so the environment in which it is operating now has changed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*After Doxey, 1975*

This identifies the changes that may take place over time in the resident community, but it also suggests that all members of the community have the same attitude. The framework is limited in its application, as it fails to recognise the various opinions that may exist simultaneously in any community.

The passive or active responses to tourism, favourable or unfavourable attitudes are addressed by the typology developed by Bjorkland and Philbrick (1972:8 and 1975:68 cited in Mathieson and Wall 1983:140) and Butler (1974) in the host attitudinal/behavioural processes outlined in Table 3.11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.11</th>
<th>Comparison of Research into Residents Response to Visitors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>euphoria</td>
<td>active</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Dogan (1989:216) identifies the responses host communities choose when faced with considerable impacts of touristic activity. He suggests the strategies chosen to cope with the resulting host-guest relationship depend on the socio-cultural characteristics of the host community. The changes that occur when a festival is staged impact on the host community’s habits, daily routines, social lives, beliefs and values.

The adjustments made have often been perceived as negative and the literature documents consequences associated with decline in traditions, materialism, increase in crime rate, social conflicts, crowding, environmental deterioration, increase in prostitution and drug use, growth in imports, culture becoming commercialised for tourists, growth of servile attitude (Dogan, 1989:217; Crandell, 1987:375).

The social consequences Doğan (1989:217) highlights include the loss of authenticity and identity of culture as a similar tourism culture grows in each community. He identifies the transformation of important intimate and personal relationships into a source of economic gain. He notes that value systems based on moral values can be replaced by a system based on money (1989:218).

Craik identifies generic and specific patterns of impacts and changes that require customised attention. The key cultural indicators suggested for inclusion in a stakeholder enquiry include:

- the degree of the community’s dependence on tourism; the distribution of economic benefits across a destination community
- the degree of public involvement and consultation in planning, policy making and management
- the degree and forms for commercialisation and commodification of the destination culture for tourists
- the perceived environmental degradation, significant loss of amenity or unacceptable modification of the destination site
- the sense of autonomy, self confidence and cultural identity or the destination community (1995:94).

These issues are examined in the present study to assess the implications on the festivals, the residents and economic resilience of the community. These can readily linked to the costs and benefits outlined in Table 3.12.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Economic          | Business income  
Personal income  
Investment and sponsorship  
Tax revenue  
Employment and training  
Increased business opportunities  
Improved standard of living | Inflated prices  
Opportunity costs  
High risk of failure  
Poor accountability  
Misallocation of funds |
| Natural environment | Conservation and protection  
Development of best practice  
Education and awareness  
Increased recreational facilities  
Improved amenity | Degradation of natural resources  
Pollution  
Erosion of heritage values  
Loss of recreational opportunities  
Decreased amenity |
| Built environment | Improved infrastructure  
Transport  
Communications  
Recycling & waste management  
Urban development and renewal  
Increased social services | Vandalisation of public facilities  
Built heritage destruction |
| Cultural          | Revitalisation of traditions  
Development of arts & crafts  
Greater intercultural understanding | Commodification of culture  
 Destruction of cultural heritage |
| Social            | Shared celebration  
Sense of community pride  
Skills development  
Enhanced sense of place and identity  
Increased community participation  
Validation of community groups  
Exchange of skills & ideologies | People and traffic congestion  
Bad behaviour  
Noise pollution  
Substance abuse  
Crime – theft, property damage, prostitution  
Erosion of local language  
Disruption to residents way of life  
Challenge morals and values  
Erosion of community image  
Loss of identity  
Social instability  
Community alienation  
Out migration |
| Political         | Improved profile  
International prestige  
Regulatory & social change | Legitimisation of ideology  
Propaganda  
Loss of community ownership  
and control |
| Tourism           | Improved destination image  
Increased marketing  
Increased visitor numbers  
Extended length of stay  
Higher yield | Exploitation  
Loss of authenticity  
Demonstration effects |


A community’s involvement in tourism development is akin to the ideology of participation in urban and regional planning (Prentice, 1993:218; Dredge, 2006). Murphy (1985) and Beeton (2006) argue that a community’s involvement must be demonstrated before commitments to tourism development are made. He uses terms like community-approach and community-driven to indicate a legitimisation of tourism development through a partnership between the community and decision makers.
The capacity of a destination to absorb the demands upon it by visitors and the broader tourist industry depends on the interrelationship of numerous, complex factors (Mathieson & Wall, 1982:22-3). These include the natural environmental features and processes; economic structure and economic development; social structure and organisation; political organisation; and level of tourist development. Each of these affects the way the case study festivals reflect a sense of community and place.

Growing awareness by residents of local heritage, both natural and cultural in all its guises has highlighted the potential connections between tourism, the cultural practice and conservation. If heritage is not for people then it is of little value (Pearson & Sullivan, 1995). Heritage places and practices particularly belong to the society that values them. The authentic experiences visitors seek through cultural tourism allow the tourism industry to become active in facilitating the community’s sense of where it has come from. Festivals transfer an identifiable culture - usually seen as the heritage derived from earlier lifestyle choices that become the capital from which residents can profit in the market economy.

3.9 Gaps in the literature

What is missing from the community festival and events literature is a comprehensive analysis of the influence of the residents’ sense of community and place have on the celebrations that emerge from their heritage, landscape and lifestyle choices. The context in which community based festivals are staged is an under researched socio-cultural phenomenon. Research to date mainly explores the economic impacts; particularly benefits accrued for communities hosting events (Getz, 1997; Hall, 1995; Dwyer, 2000). Sporting events that reflect a community’s particular interests have come under scrutiny (Breen, 1997; Breen, Bull, & Walo, 1999; Arthur & Graham, 1996); but any assessment of the connection between the values, interests and aspirations of a community and capacity to celebrate is limited to the sparse emerging literature on community cultural development. There is an opportunity to better map the elements, processes and relationships than those that exist in existing models.

The literature on resilience in social and community situations is only just emerging. It appears to come from the physical, health and environmental sciences (Brown, 2003; Luthar et al, 2000; von Eye and Schuster, 2002). In the personal realm resilience is connected to trauma and how to deal with it. Adger (2000:347) suggests that ecological and social resilience may be linked through dependence on ecosystems of communities and their economic activities. I discerned no links to community co-operation through Adger (2000:348) notes that analysis of
vulnerability as a social phenomenon has a tradition in cultural geography where stress in a social sense encompasses disruption to groups’ or individuals’ livelihoods and forced adaptation.

Some literature deals with the social implications of power, politics and personal interaction, but researchers still need to adequately evaluate the importance of a sense of community and sense of place in the choices made in developing community festivals. A number of significant influences on the choices made by these four case studies include not only the personal or the intra-personal described by Richins and Pearce (2000:211), where the process is affected by the beliefs, attitudes and values brought to a situation by participants; but the circumstantial influences where broader conditions are applied. Rich description case studies provide the best ways to investigate and understand ‘community’. To observe people at play through performance in various contexts exposes behaviours in a heightened form. To celebrate creatively through a passion for things held dear becomes public expression that can be transformative. Festivals allow people to divert themselves and others from what they do ordinarily. Currently little of this addressed in the literature.

One purpose of the study is to contribute new knowledge to the field of cultural tourism by examining how the values, interests and aspirations of individuals are influenced by their biophysical environment (space and place) that leads to a sense of community, which in turn influences how a community celebrates. This celebration affects the community’s wellbeing when shared with visitors who interact with residents. It is a celebration of belonging. It can be argued that a cyclical process, a process of reciprocity is in train. This is not currently represented in the festival literature. The majority of studies to date have treated participation in a one-dimensional way, ignoring the informal qualitative aspects of the concept; concentrating on involvement with formal community organisations (Coakes & Bishop, 2002).

As regions such as the Northern Rivers come to terms with their future development, challenges arise as individuals and groups within communities initiate, plan, prepare, promote and manage community celebrations. There is little research on how a community is empowered to contribute to the content of tourism. Wood suggests that tourism influences identity by generating images such as that of the quintessential Australian. This anthropological approach to cultural tourism is highlighted by Lips who suggests that

Cultural tourism is the art of participating in another culture, of relating to people and places that have a strong sense of their own identity. It is an approach to tourism that gives tourists credit for intelligence, and promises them some depth of experience and real-life layering that can be explored on many levels (cited in Wood, 1992:4).
Literature emerging in the festival and events management sector has yet to fully embrace the socio-cultural elements so important for this discussion (Getz, 2007). Much has been made of the economic impacts of festivals on communities and destinations; but little has examined the nature of the roles of individuals, groups and festival partners who collaborate to provide the social and cultural glue that is valued by each when making festivals.

There is a gap in the understanding of the links between place, the culture developed by residents of that specific place and how they celebrate this sentiment through the festivals they develop. The issues and themes raised by the research objectives of this study demonstrate the need for a multidisciplinary approach to resolve them. Such issues are currently dealt with in a disparate manner in existing tourism, anthropology, community development and cultural studies literature.

There has been little critical analysis of how community cultural festivals fare over time. Little work is recorded on the path taken by festivals as they evolve and what they contribute to civil society. The analysis of four case study festivals serves to document, evaluate and highlight the sequence of initiatives taken by individuals and groups in creating festivals, the emphasis of relationships between stakeholders and management to nurture and sustain the festivals and the implications for social capital, community well being and the identity of each festival. The rich and thick description of the festivals assists in neutralising disciplinary borders for a more holistic perspective on components of community and ecological capital.

Festivals are not restricted to locals. Each festival under scrutiny has developed a relationship with tourism. Visitors are an integral party in the stakeholder mix discussed in the study. They can be intentional or unintentional consumers of the homegrown entertainment of the destinations in which they find themselves at a given time. Waterman (1998) acknowledges that festivals transform places from being everyday settings into temporary environments that contribute to the production, processing and consumption of culture, concentrated in time and place. The festivals provide examples of how culture is contested – how subgroups in the community may resist engagement and create tension.

Festivals offer an integrated approach to creating the vibrant communities to which people aspire (Getz, 1997; Goldblatt, 1997; Hall, 1992; Dunstan, 1994). The cultural phenomenon that festivals represent in four destinations allows the place and the place-based communities to intentionally reproduce their shared values and belief systems (Quinn, 2000:264). Festival narratives from residents reveal an intimate connection to distinctive features of the region.
This local knowledge, cultural inheritance and social structure distinguish one community from another and one festival from another.

Changing economic environments in rural communities over recent years have included movement away from agriculture, light industry and product-orientated businesses to alternative service-orientated occupations (Allen et al 1988:16). A consequence of this is an engagement with tourism. When MacCannell (1973) articulated his view of the tourist he emphasised that tourism was emblematic of modernity.

3.10 Conclusion

This study attempts to close some of the gaps identified in the literature reviewed above. It is important that the diverse literature represented in this chapter be taken into account when approaching a detailed investigation into community festivals. The following chapter outlines how the present study went about doing that. Chapter Four addresses methodological issues encountered in the process.
Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter diverse perspectives are embraced to create new knowledge about the conduct and impact of festivals. An interdisciplinary approach is required for this research. It seeks to better understand what occurs when a planned community event materializes and from exploratory or descriptive research it builds to predict implications. The focus is on participant observations, interviews, focus groups and model building. The direct experience of key stakeholders in four case study festivals is interpreted. A systematic phenomenology is employed to gain insights. This chapter explains the largely qualitative methods used in the research. What has been of interest to me is the application of phenomenological methods to gain an understanding of how festivals as cultural products themselves emerge from a community’s culture and the contribution they can make to social resilience within the festival organisation and the broader region.

4.2 Rationale for research approach

The factors at play when a community hosts a cultural festival require a strong descriptive base to ensure the resulting research model will have value for other researchers, community event organisers and local government policy makers. A sociological model that describes and analyses the festival experience rather that prescriptively predicting outcomes as suggested by Butler (1990, 1991) is pursued here. The influence of a range of environmental, political, socio-cultural and economic factors helps explain the evolutionary path taken by the case study festivals.

The research approach is essentially founded on the disciplines of cultural anthropology and sociology. This has involved the application of social science methodologies. The increased interest in and importance of cultural practices and institutions in our social lives (du Gay et al, 1997:1) offers us an empirical opportunity to be concerned with matters of substance like the production of festivals. Du Gay et al suggest (ibid, 1997:2) that cultural description and analysis is increasingly crucial to the production of sociological knowledge. So, this study commits to satisfying the precondition for better understanding social practices by providing an explanation of how these practices are integrated into daily life, and how they can, in an epistemological sense provide new knowledge.
The thesis recognises the work of du Gray et al (1997:3) that confirms the cyclical nature of the cultural processes in the analysis of a cultural artefact or text. In fact, they called it a *circuit of culture* that generates five major cultural processes they call representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation that sits well with the model developed in this study. When we investigate how festivals are represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use, we find this study’s approach confirmed by du Gay et al’s observations (1997:3). The sociological perspective has informed the study’s understanding of people’s motivations for participating in planned community events and the implications for social trends and determining good practice in satisfying leisure behaviours. It helps explain the formation of the cyclical personal and social constructs that come from the host-guest experience when festivals are hosted.

It has built on the knowledge of culture, celebration and the value people place on their engagement with authentic festival experiences. Getz (2007:72) recognises the themes of cultural impacts, the context of host-guest relationships and the employment of observation techniques as key to the development of cultural policies and processes. They provide meaning for the exploration of sense of place and community. These disciplines assist in determining the patterns and processes that emerge when a festival is hosted. They inform other areas of knowledge formation like management, history and human geography. Each allows for ancillary research methodologies like content analysis of public and organisational archives, media analysis and policy documents.

**Case study research**

Case studies may be considered not so much a methodology as a strategy within which a number of investigations can take place to analyse contexts and processes. Getz, (2007:368) justified his use of the case study approach to comparing festivals as a powerful exploratory research tool. He suggests they can play an important role in creating new knowledge. Case studies allow for a qualitative approach to data collection. Case studies are frequently used as a research tool as they uniquely contribute to knowledge of individual, organisational, social and political phenomena (Yin, 1989:14) and help identify issues and research themes (Jennings, 2001:178). As an exploratory research technique it allows for intense investigation of a few situations (Zikmund 1997:107; Stoeker, 1991).

I believe the case study approach serves this regional investigation well. The capacity of specific case study destinations to successfully reveal useful data for Huang & Stewart (1996) in their observations of rural communities in the United States of America has been a guide. I
am keen to understand the roles of key stakeholders in community festival development and management. How different voices in a community are accommodated and how communities share festivals with visitors can be effectively revealed through case study analysis. Community is a political concept and the role of the power dynamics between the stakeholders is not well documented. It is important to acknowledge who in small communities is involved in festivals and who is not. Academics and planners are beginning to use case studies to demonstrate the voices and contributions of various stakeholders in festival making. This is an important tool in community consultation. It allows conclusions to be drawn that have a narrative base and encourages participative decision-making.

Selecting cases is a difficult process, but the literature provides guidance in this area (Yin, 1989a). Yin (1989:23) believes a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. The case study protocols suggested by Yin (1984:64) ensure reliability through a series of steps. The four steps followed in this study were, providing an overview of the case study project including objectives; a field procedures action plan; a series of case study questions and a template for the case study report.

This approach allows for personal experiences, reflections and insights to be collected in conversational, semi-structured and open-ended encounters with residents and visitors. Such contact is supplemented with the use of personal, professional and public documents (Jennings, 2001:159). The distinctive features of the case study strategy include its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence, documents, artefacts, interviews and observations grounded in a specific social setting.

A rigorous multi-method data collection design is required to solve the problem of rival causal factors and includes such sources as structured and unstructured interviews, surveys, focus groups, narrative analysis, phenomenological research, content analysis, participant observation, examination of archival records and secondary data analysis. Testing the same propositions through data gathered by multiple methods helps address some of the validation problems in case study designs (Jennings, 2001).

The general approach to designing case studies recommends exploratory, explanatory and descriptive elements. Each of those three approaches is included in this research. In exploratory case studies, fieldwork and data collection may be undertaken prior to the definition of the research questions.
**Qualitative methods**

The theoretical position taken in this research is that of phenomenology. It allows the focus to be on the way residents and visitors interpret their own and others’ actions, describe things and experience them through their senses (Patton, 1990:69) and how they build meaning through communication that can be observed by the researcher (Jennings, 2001:159). Participant observation allows for in-depth reflective descriptions through exploratory and descriptive case studies that can clearly determine the ‘what’, ‘who’ and ‘where’ (Jennings, 2001:177). The phenomenological approach (Seamon, 2000) suggests the researcher is open to the phenomenon of festivals and allows each festival to show itself in its fullness and complexity. This empirical approach allows first-hand grounded contact with the festivals. By participating in the festival experience, by conducting in-depth interviews and by careful observation and description through an artifactual text like photographs, an intimacy with the phenomenon through prolonged exposure can be adapted to explore the study objectives.

I argue that a qualitative study is required to better understand or interpret, how the phenomena of festivals offer both sense of community and place in terms of meanings people have constructed and bring to them. This study provides several forms of enquiry to explain the experience as it is lived or felt or undergone by all stakeholders in the provision of community cultural festivals (Sherman and Webb, 1988). The study strives for a depth of understanding as an end in itself, not as an attempt to predict what may happen in the future (Patton, 1985), or to generalise to a universe. This qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole. Qualitative research is often undertaken expressly because there is a lack of theory to explain a phenomenon adequately. This study addresses this.

**Data required**

The type of data required for this study is of both a primary and secondary nature. Each provides diverse sources to better explain the phenomenon of festivals in communities. Festivals are largely uncharted territory, so attempts to explore the phenomenon need to be directed but flexible. The approach adopted in this study is rich, multidimensional and unstructured in some ways in an attempt to capture the essence of each festival. The main primary data sources of interviews, focus groups and observation provide relevant and recent material that readily portrayed the human experience. The advantages of secondary data sources used in this study are that they are accessible, low cost and provide retrospective, high quality material. The four case studies benefit from extensive use of both
types of sources. The literature review provides background information relating to this research and informs some of the methodological approaches.

The use of multiple sources of evidence allows a broad range of historical, attitudinal and observational issues to be addressed. This approach draws on a range of primary and secondary data. I believe that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are appropriate and address the diversity of stakeholders. Quantitative data are already in the public domain and assist in providing context and content for the exploration of the festivals. Qualitative methods allow for experience-based opportunities to report on feelings and personal thinking of festival stakeholders. The complexity of the issues associated with community development in particular is important in this study and requires a variety of evidence to substantiate any analysis. Yin suggests (1994) that no single source has a complete advantage over all the others. The corroborative and complementary model accommodates different sources of information and better addresses the objectives of the study. Yin (1994) suggests document review as a useful source of complementary evidence and it is employed in this study to inform on each festival’s origins, structure and management.

Such research procedures allow for staged information gathering that include descriptive elements, informal discussions and observations allow for profile development of each destination and each festival in each community. I undertook informal discussions with residents, media, event organisers, performers and stallholders, community members, business operators, government agencies and visitors. This elicited details of and responses to festival organisation, content of program, physical location and layout of program elements and income and expenditure streams.

Lofland believes participants are better represented in their own terms if data collected:
- includes direct quotations from participants, both what they say and what they write down
- includes a great deal of pure description of people, activities, interactions and settings;
- captures what actually takes place and what people actually say
- gets close enough to the people and situation to personally understand in depth the details of what goes on (cited in Patton, 1990:32).

The multi-method approach (Patton, 1989:157; Yin 1989:95–103) to fieldwork increases both the validity and reliability of the data from observation, interviewing and documentation analysis through a creative process (Patton, 1989:159).
**Pilot/scoping study**

In 1999 I undertook an initial scoping study of two festivals held in Byron Bay and Nimbin. This included a focus on their communities, tourism and cultural sectors and identified a number of crucial interactions. These interactions informed the methodology I developed for the wider study. They particularly influenced the contextual model I developed to describe the structure and dynamics of the festival networks.

Table 4.1 Key Themes from Preliminary Investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Nimbin</th>
<th>Byron Bay</th>
<th>Research Issues/Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community and sense of place</td>
<td>Influence of alternative approaches to communication; consensus in arts &amp; tourism; forums; collaborative entrepreneurship, social action</td>
<td>Individual entrepreneurship; active; mix of experience, skill and willingness to share in free enterprise model</td>
<td>Tension between individualism &amp; connectedness; paradox; from fate to choice; alternative communities; new paradigm? self regulation; shaping of community; documented as Australian model; thresholds; image and identity, new ideas and settlers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waves of migration</td>
<td>Indigenous people; farmers; new settlers; drugs, fun</td>
<td>Primary producers; surfers; hippies; entrepreneurs; baby boomers; backpackers; resident participation</td>
<td>Changes in lifestyle; values; entrepreneurship; resources at play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Festivals</td>
<td>Mardi Grass Aquarius model; community training programs; leadership</td>
<td>Last Night, First Light From chaos - order; Culture from safety, tourism hot spot</td>
<td>Management; impact on community; pleasure &amp; leisure; harmonisation; safety; negotiating tensions; roles of festivals differ in each community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicisation</td>
<td>Anti drug legislation; counter culture archetype</td>
<td>Protest; Regional icon status</td>
<td>Media; Regional Development; Role of local government; Tourism marketing; Policy and planning; community champions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cultural attributes that emerged in the scoping study included heritage — lived and living; *the way we do things around here*; the aesthetics of wholesale and retail exchange of products and services in the cultural and tourism sectors. The natural attributes included the biophysical characteristics of the region, the climate, natural resources, topography and conservation, seasonality, recreation and leisure pursuits and business in the public and private sector. The key stakeholders to emerge in the pilot study were identified as residents, special interest groups conducting festivals, the host-guest interface represented by the tourism experience, visitors, government agencies investing in the socio-cultural, economic and environmental infrastructure, media, entrepreneurs, the host community generically and individual community champions. Thus festivals are expressions of complex relationships and inter-activities.
Developing a model

In developing a model for the broader study a holistic perspective on the past, present and future of each event was encapsulated. Key participants told stories of their engagement, or that of their family, over time. Input was sought from various stakeholders bonded to each festival. Figure 4.1 captures the broader more contextual perspective. Their stories revealed their aspirations and their ties to the community. The three core elements that that tied the discussion to festivals were residents, place and visitors. From this a quality of the ‘genius loci’ led to the broader study’s themes outlined below.

Figure 4.1 Themes for study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of attachment to place and community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social functions of festivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of life to be shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research model (Figure 4.2) was developed from the elements shown in Figure 4.1. It provides a framework to explore how the relationships are managed when a festival is at the core. The model recognises there are exchange points where personal energy and information sharing contributes to a continual process of change and adaptation that affects the overall health and stability of the entire system (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998). As a result it can be argued that the communities increase capacity and complexity of life through time and thus nourish the resilience each requires to manage change in the region.

While the intersecting lines of the Venn diagram appear as boundaries, they are porous and unsettled. The enclosed areas identify opportunities of meeting and exchange. These new relationships take form and thus become discrete areas of cultural density worth investigating. Over time the connections become clearer and each community produces different solutions for how to live in their place, invest it with meaning and celebrate its culture. In fact, the unsettled nature of these boundaries is one of the overwhelming characteristics uncovered in this research. Understanding this assists communities better deal with their future.

This diagram also alerts us to the interconnectivity raised by du Gay et al (1997) circuit of culture. While the nomenclature may be different, what constitutes image and identity in
Figure 4.2 arises from the representation and identity used in their model; the business of making a festival and consuming its program and its impacts are substantive elements of cultural tourism which also takes into account the interface with regulators. The role of a sense of community and place emerges are the glue that ensures the cultural uniqueness of individual festivals.

Figure 4.2  Community Cultural Festivals and Community Resilience

The challenge is to make sense of the data collected through the qualitative enquiry approach, to reduce its volume, identify the significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal.

In preparing a model for this study I generalized patterns of behaviour and qualities of wellbeing by observing the role festivals pay in the daily lives of residents and visitors to specific destinations through a holistic – physical, spatial, cultural, social, spiritual and environmental approach. Seamon (2000) suggests that through a phenomenological investigation of the context of say, festivals, a researcher may discern the routine, the unusual, mundane and surprising lifeworld. Through the personal sensibility and awareness of the researcher and the secondary constructions revealed by other sources a clear understanding of the place and the homeness of residents can be clearly seen. The case study
festivals take place in times of continual regional change. I observe spatial fragmentation through changes to land use and internal and external migration within the region and rapidly changing, instantaneous telecommunication development, so as the researcher I had to be there!

Choosing case study festivals
The wider exploratory study identified the need to expand the study to include two other festivals and communities. The focus on four festivals (one key community cultural event in each location) allowed for greater breadth of comparison and contrast between festivals held in the same region. This provided for a spectrum of responses to the key research questions to be explored.

To assist in the choice of case study festivals, I used Getz’s (1991:325) characteristics typology to get a sense of how the events compared and whether they provided sufficient robustness in their design and delivery to enable analysis. My preliminary assessment of case study festivals using Getz’ provided a useful framework to assess festival delivery. The narratives outlined in each case study chapter assist in evaluating the capacity of each to demonstrate the characteristics. This helped inform my initial choice of the four festivals for the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Grafton</th>
<th>Casino</th>
<th>Nimbin</th>
<th>Byron Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festive spirit</td>
<td>Reflection of values and belonging through ritual, revelry, scale, fantasy,</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>magic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of basic needs</td>
<td>Physical, interpersonal, social and psychological needs</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniqueness</td>
<td>Distinctive features of program, image-making, promotions, site, scale, food</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and beverage; outside normal experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Elements associated with local cultural attributes. The participation of</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community as hosts, staff, performers, suppliers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Events rooted in community, closely associated with reinforcing traditions &amp;</td>
<td>√√</td>
<td>√√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>practices; can even be fabricated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Events developed with minimal infrastructure, adapted to changing markets;</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provide umbrella for a variety of activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Willingness of community to host visitors and residents alike</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangibility</td>
<td>Experience of place through festival content and host community.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themeing</td>
<td>Themeing can be physical manifestation of elements like tradition, authenticity and festive spirit.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>.•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism</td>
<td>Elements of production can relate to cultural values, political or economic objects</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>.•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>Can provide affordable leisure, social or cultural experiences for hosts and guests</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Access to spontaneous leisure and social opportunities.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derrett, 2000 after Getz 1991:325

✓ indicates that the festival satisfies the general criteria suggested.
• indicates that there are some reservations regarding the festival’s fulfillment of the criteria.

This scan of Getz’ attributes and the initial investigation identified the following key issues that would assist in better understanding the origins, planning and management of each of the four festivals. In whatever inter-personal format chosen, it is important to be open to respondents and adapt questions, tone and interest to both the respondents’ commentaries and the researcher’s shifts in understanding. This is how more of the phenomenon of festivals is revealed. When photographs, for example, were used to demonstrate the themes and issues revealed at each festival I returned to each one time and again to more clearly understand aspects of that festival. These informed the research framework that was developed. These were explored in the Literature Review in Chapter Three.

The festival case studies are based on destinations within a distinctive region. Florida (2002) suggests that place is the geographical and organisational engine-room for human capital. Simply put, when residents interact with the place in which they carry on their daily lives, it can be argued that a sense of place and community emerges. The study clearly shows that festivals can demonstrate this phenomenon through time – not only for residents but also for visitors to the host destination. Each destination comprises specific community based sub-cultural organisations that conduct each festival and so this study is concerned with local and regional stakeholders.

The four case study festivals have been chosen from the ample annual calendar of festivals that are staged in the region. Between them I believe that a robust representation of regional characteristics can be demonstrated. These celebrations offer the reader a broad socio-cultural spectrum of organisers and audiences, within diverse economic environments, in coastal and hinterland locations and programs that have much to do with origins, longevity, specific regional stakeholders and their connection to tourism. Grafton and Casino festivals are long standing, use traditional management strategies and represent the more conservative concerns of residents in hinterland regional locations. The planned events in Byron Bay and
Nimbin tackle contemporary social and political issues in iconic tourism locations. The spectrum that emerges captures the variety and depth of community engagement in festivals. Like themed public celebrations (Getz, 2007:31) the world over, each festival hosts a parade that demonstrate the core interest of this research.

Stake (1995) recommends that the selection offers the opportunity to maximise what can be learned knowing, being aware of time constraints. Hence I selected accessible subject cases that satisfy the Getz typology. This informed much of the observation undertaken in the study.

Each of the four festivals provides a specific mood, tone or spirit that responds to a sense of place, time of year or season. Each festival’s distinctive features provide a substantial spectrum for analysis and discussion. The program of each festival provides residents and visitors access to new and novel activities, as well as security and recognition as individuals. As community based festivals they appear to tie together issues of choice, identity, and culture. Festival organisers deliver programs demonstrating who the locals are and what they want as well as a celebration that provides the aesthetics of wonder - capturing a distinctive regional spirit for the visitors.

To investigate festivals that reflect and determine a community’s sense of itself requires material that clearly indicates the distinctive characteristics of individual communities and the region at large, both in terms of its biophysical dimensions and the lifestyle choices made over time of its residents. When identifying what contributes to a community’s sense of place within these specific communities, accepted criteria taken from the literature are used to evaluate, synthesise and establish patterns and relationships. When examining the origins, development and management of each festival both primary and secondary data is required.

Likewise, an examination of each festival requires an understanding of the roles of key festival stakeholders — including local government, regional strategic alliances and state government departments, the business community, special interest groups in destination communities, regional and local media, individual community champions, festival organisers, residents and visitors. This was particularly relevant to better understand the connection between each festival and tourism. As the research reveals the characteristics and qualities of people in specific environments, the careful watching and describing of festivals and their contexts need to be studied and recorded.
4.3 Scope of study

This study has limited its focus to the substantive socio-cultural aspects of festivals and regional distinctiveness. It makes minimal reference to economic and environmental issues associated with the planning, management or marketing of festivals. Where such factors affect festivals they are acknowledged. The importance of these elements is recognised; however it is determined their inclusion would deflect the focus from the main issues to be addressed.

The study specifically limits its focus to the period 1999–2006, though relevant material outside this timeframe is acknowledged when drawn into the discussion.

4.4 Data collection methods

The universality of the festival phenomenon is examined through the experience of multiple stakeholders in this study. As a participant observer I indicate, in the first instance, my personal experience of community cultural festivals. My observations of the four case studies are the principal method of gathering data. As indicated in Chapter Two there are other regional stakeholders whose perspectives are captured in a variety of ways in the research. The supporting methods of data gathering are outlined below.

Evidence for this study came from seven sources. Each of the sources is explained below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3</th>
<th>Data Sources Used</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Secondary data, local and regional archives, museums, Southern Cross University Library, private collections, tourism brochures, survey results, websites</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, &amp; 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media analysis</td>
<td>Local and regional press, press releases</td>
<td>2, 5, 6, 7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official policy document analysis</td>
<td>Council &amp; government agencies</td>
<td>2, 5, 6, 7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In depth personal interviews</td>
<td>Key culture and tourism sector stakeholders and community champions</td>
<td>2, 5, 6, 7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Host community members, festival organisers</td>
<td>7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Attendance at community events, cultural activity, forums, community amenities, photography, writer’s consumption in terms of deep involvement</td>
<td>5, 6, 7, 8 &amp; 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Analysis of existing data</td>
<td>5, 6, 7, 8 &amp; 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Experience

I have had prolonged direct contact with and persistent observation of each festival for over ten years. The study is underpinned by my desire to better understand four communities in the Northern Rivers region. The exploration started from my own experience and as such does not follow conventional objective or detached approaches to the context of the festival study. It is important to acknowledge the connection I have to the region, festival management and engagement in each of the case study communities. I considered my long-term residence of the region an asset as the investigation journeyed through a scoping stage, a participant observation stage and interview of key informant stage. As a result, my voice is heard during reflexive pieces included in each case study chapter. This is not the conventional approach I had previously experienced, but I believe it allows for a stronger edge to the participant observation of the festivals.

The study arose from my forty-year association with the design, planning and delivery of many community-based events for communities in the region. This personal experience with the issues associated with community cultural festivals raised my concern about the absence of rigorous scholarly research in this field. Over the years I examined major community events from a participant’s perspective and recognised the undervaluing of the residents’ importance and their satisfaction with community life generally and festival engagement in particular. This experience serves to support the notion that the human researcher can recognise and record the often subtle verbal and non-verbal cues of participants’ actions and behaviours. It may appear a simple task, but its complexity requires empathy and familiarity between the researcher and sites of investigation, the festivals. This deep personal involvement is a form of introspective participant observation but was not the only motivation for the research.

During the conduct of my university teaching programs on event planning and management, I mapped a conceptual framework. I recognised that extant literature did not deal with the multi-vocal community dimension of festival organisation with sufficient finesse. There appears to be reluctance by tourism researchers particularly to unpick the complex issues associated with the nature of cultural meanings in festivals, the production of local knowledge and the negotiation of community identity (Quinn, 2000). I have been conscious of the phenomenon from practice. The case study approach provides a picture of an underexplored dimension.

My regional networks and experience allowed access to extensive documents and records, provided introductions to personnel of interest for interviews and assisted in identifying the
four festivals. My experience leads me to believe it is important to recognise the place in
which the research is undertaken and give residents and visitors a voice in the data collection.
The trust developed over many years of involvement with regional cultural development
affords me significant entre to sources of valuable information for the thick description that is
necessary. This minimises misinformation and distortions that may be introduced (Creswell,
1998). By close contact with each festival I can make decisions about what material is salient
to the study, relevant to its purpose and of interest to the focus of resilience, sense of place
and community (Creswell, 1998:201).

In each case study festival I reflect on any biases that my position may raise and assumptions
that may impact on the inquiry. Past experiences require clarification as the data collected are
interpreted. I believe the rich description that emerges from my observations allows for
insights and conclusions to be transferred to other cases. This personal viewpoint is
motivated by a strong commitment to appropriate regional development and minimising the
exploitation of festival organisers just entering the profession.

While not directly involved in the preparation or presentation of any of the case study
festivals, I have been an audience/participant of each for many years (longer than the
duration of the study period). Over time, personal recollection, personal photographic
documentation, shared memories with other attendees has informed my thinking. This
personal experience informs the research questions and led to the exploration of varied useful
non-traditional data sources. A grassroots understanding of festival development, design and
delivery assists in the recording of key elements of the event experience of others observed at
the four festivals. It has informed initial impressions of the event, physical and logistical
access. Observations of my annual immersion in each event are recorded The observation
notes serve as a basic mapping exercise to plot the festival experience through atmosphere
generated and excitement for sectors of the audience and the organisers. The connection with
other data collected on the festivals allowed for triangulation and confirmation.

**Participant observation**

Direct observation occurs when a field visit is conducted during the case study (Tellis, 1997).
This technique is useful for providing additional information about the topic being studied.
The reliability is enhanced when more than one observer is involved in the task as occurred
with the Byron Bay case study (Lawrence & Derrett, 2003). Glesne & Peshkin (1992)
recommend that researchers should be as unobtrusive as wallpaper. Carlsen (2003:248)
suggests participant observation as a useful technique for recording key elements of an event
experience. By taking part in the experience of an event under scrutiny researchers can be
partially involved (non-participant) or completely involved as a participant. He suggests such
observations can be unobtrusive and don’t interfere with the enjoyment by other attendees. It accurately simulates and records the actual visitor experience often recording factors that organisers are too busy to observe. Such observation can augment other visitor surveys and enables triangulation of data. It is important that the objectivity of observers is maintained, however some would argue this is impossible. It would seem better to acknowledge one’s own values. Thus it is inevitable is that the values of observers may influence observations (Carlsen, 2003:251).

Participant observation in a number of specific settings in each community provided me with first hand impressions of planning, management and marketing of each festival. It allowed me to observe relevant, interesting and idiosyncratic aspects of the conduct of the festival. These observations reflect the operationalising of the preparation and impacts of the festival on the host community and place. My detailed notes describe the interactions and my impressions of the event and its attendees under scrutiny. This was not always easy as I was an active participant in the festival program and I needed to debrief after each session to ensure accuracy and consolidate information. The main recording techniques I used were note taking and photography. The extent to which the researcher discloses their research interest to other participants varies and is dependent on whether disclosure will prejudice the available material to be collected. My judgment on informing other attendees was dependent on how clearly I have understood each situation.

The advantages of participant observation as a major data source are that information acquired highlights the behaviours and events that may not emerge in discussion with others and it is time efficient and cost effective. There is a degree of flexibility in this approach as this is generally the only way for social behaviours to be revealed. Observation and interviewing can be conducted simultaneously (Jennings, 2001:171). It was a preferred strategy for me as on occasions small groups of people in specific locations could be observed at meetings, community forums and focus groups. In each community I was able to attend meetings that related to the conduct of the case study festivals and I took notes, e.g the community forums in Nimbin that are explained in the Chapter Seven.

In this study I assumed various roles identified by Burgess (1982:45) and Junker (1960) who discuss the nature of participant observation. These are: complete participant, observer as participant and the participant as observer. This allowed me attend a festival in a completely unfettered way, like other attendees to absorb the sensory, experiential nature of the event, secondly to be more focused on observing my own and other attendees responses to the program, the place and the management strategies of organisers, and finally to satisfy the
criteria I had set myself at each event to record general observations and impressions in a more systematic way. Festivals allow the researcher to overcome any problems of access to particular sub-cultural groups in a community.

On some occasions, the participant as observer allows the researcher and subject to be aware that their relationship stems from the case study research being undertaken, but generally the subject is not aware that they are being studied. However, the unobtrusive collection of data requires careful management, as the researcher may be open to accusations of bias and distortion. This emphasises the importance of recording information in a timely fashion, rather than relying on memory to record data after a significant period. Care needs to be taken too, with the social and emotional behaviours of the researcher at festivals, as their behaviours could change the course of the phenomena they are trying to observe. I attempted to not obviously reveal my purpose for engagement on some occasions, while on others required consent from some event attendees when taking photographs.

**Observation tools used**

**Systematic observation tool**
Each festival was deliberately observed during the day and into the night, annually between 1999-2003. An evaluation was conducted into event activities, organisers and audiences attending each festival. At major umbrella events like Casino’s Beef Week and Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival a broad range of event precincts were observed, some returned to annually. These observations were compared in light of images presented by print media, websites, magazines, television and other sources like tourism brochures.

Participant observation involved systematically commenting on and observing activities and audiences at half hourly intervals during scheduled programmed events using a uniform framework (Lawrence & Derrett, 2003). During the systematic observation on Byron Bay’s New Year’s Eve, variables included:
Table 4.4  Systematic Observation Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weather Conditions</th>
<th>Fine, Showers, Heavy Rain, Windy, Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Number of People in the Crowd</td>
<td>&lt;100, 101 to 500, 501 to 1000, 1001 to 2000, 2001 to 4000, 4000- 10,000, 10,000+, 20,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Profile of Event Attendees</td>
<td>Families With Children, Teenagers, Young Adults 21-35 Years (No Children), Adults 36-50 Years (No Children), Over 50+ Years (No Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Reaction</td>
<td>Positively Engaged, Orderly, Negatively Engaged – lack of vandalism or violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Observations</td>
<td>Interaction between crowd and entertainers, use of infrastructure, seats, streets, waste etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photographs and video footage

Black and white and colour photographs were taken at each event each year. Video footage was taken in each event precinct in Byron Bay for New Year’s Eve (Lawrence & Derrett, 2003) to assist in determining audience numbers and audience profiles at regular intervals throughout the event activity. Additional photographs were taken of the crowd, various activities and individuals. Permission to take photographs was sought from as many of individual event participants as possible and model releases signed by some. Crowd based images sought to indicate levels of participation. Images provide detail of dress, demographics, social relationships, spatial relationships, mood, atmosphere, streetscape, event programs and so on. Images captured the mood, spirit, themes and relationships that demonstrated the tone of each event. A selection of these images is included in the text of the thesis to support the key issues and observations discussed.

Evaluation of events

Critical evaluation of the program at each festival used a systematic process using the following variables identified by Getz (2001 cited in Lawrence & Derrett, 2003) in his ‘Place Setting Model’ was undertaken. The report contained responses to the effectiveness and satisfaction of stakeholders to the specific programs and precincts under investigation.

Table 4.5  Specific Evaluation of Event Programs and Precincts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Setting</th>
<th>Location, Site characteristics, Social/cultural context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Staff/volunteers, Participants/entertainers, Attendees/Audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Systems</td>
<td>Event program activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenities</td>
<td>Waste management, Food and beverage services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Crowd flow/capacity, Emergency services (medical and ambulance), Risk management issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>Information, branding, sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other additional observations</td>
<td>a record made of other interesting, idiosyncratic or useful observations, e.g. business support, tourism activity,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documents
Document analysis allows for a profile to be determined not only of the festival organising infrastructure but the host community. Sources used include printed tourism promotional material, Council meeting minutes, policy and strategic planning documents, directories, websites and Australian Bureau of Statistics data. Some festival committees’ press releases and media coverage of festivals add substance to the profile of each event. From these techniques common themes emerged for the study to generate comparative data at various levels of investigation of the four festivals and destinations.

Similarly, media coverage of each festival in local, regional, national and international print and visual coverage was under scrutiny. Television and radio transcripts relating to the festivals have had their content analysed.

Official documents
The study took cognisance of the documents held in the public domain. These included local government policy documents, museum records of specific events and organisation. Regional organisations that have prepared plans for cultural tourism, regional development, strategic land use planning were included in making sense of regional distinctiveness. Formal federal government documents like the Australia Bureau of Statistics data on population and society assisted in clarifying the context for festivals and community engagement. Museums, public libraries and the University library, along with Council Chambers for meeting minutes and Council resolutions were all important sources of data.

Primary sources
Apart from contact with individuals involved with the conduct of the festivals original documents pertaining to the history of management and marketing of the festivals became a source for inclusion in generating a clearer picture of each destination. Posters, meeting minutes, lists and honour boards in public places, marketing collateral to promote events and video footage contributed to this research.

Media sources
The study took into consideration what regional media records about each event. As observed in Chapter Two, the level of media interest in each community varied. Some events provide more controversy for editorializing than others, e.g. the conduct of the Byron Bay New Year’s Eve celebrations has been contentious over time, but all print media deal with recoding events through photography and use of press releases from festival organisers. The
research also picks up on the use of the Internet, websites, blogs and promotional opportunities through email newsletters and tourism collateral. Some specific analysis (Neilson, 2001) is utilized in the Nimbin Chapter (Seven). Letters to the Editor provided useful insights into the feelings, symbols and responses to festival experiences and have been used in each of the festival case studies. Research into media coverage over time allowed for a longitudinal perspective of some perspectives on changing community responses to festivals.

In-depth interviews
In line with required ethical conduct, interviewees involved in the research voluntarily chose to contribute their perspectives on the issues raised in the information shared with them prior to the formal interview. Interviewees were chosen because of their strong links to the host communities, their involvement with the conduct of the case study festivals and their appreciation and involvement with regional issues. Appendix B lists the names of interviewees from the four destinations.

Each understood the purpose, methods, risks, inconveniences and possible outcomes of the research before they signed a consent form for their participation. During the conduct of the research, attention was paid to privacy, confidentiality and cultural sensitivities of participants at all levels. Recorded interviews and subsequent transcriptions were stored, accessed and used in accordance with the agreement of the interviewees. Interviews were conducted in locations negotiated for comfort, convenience and safety. All interviewees agreed to have their names attached to any quotes transcribed from their interview in the text of the thesis.

Interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information. Interviews provide a phenomenological approach to enquiry that is concerned very much with individual conscious experiences of events or situations. During the interviews people shared how they perceive, understand and explain the world in which they live. Open-ended, focused, and structured interviews are used. In an open-ended interview, respondents are asked to comment about certain events. They may propose solutions or provide insight into events. They may also corroborate evidence obtained from other sources. The focused interview is used where the respondent is interviewed for a short period of time answering set questions. This ensures consistency across the set. Data acquired from informants is, whenever possible, verified through other sources. Interviews were tape-recorded and extracts transcribed. Each interviewee responded to questions about the festival’s history, current management, and the link with the host community and visitors.
During each interview I sought observations of the changing cultural and tourism landscape of each community. Interviewees were asked to evaluate the key internal and/or external interventions that influence this change. Comments on or by any community champions who make a significant contribution to this change were collected. Interviewees were asked about any trends in either/or the sectors of community cultural activity and tourism and their impacts on each community.

Interviewees were asked their views on the socio-cultural and political conditions that exist in a regional context identifying how decisions were made and who they regard the significant stakeholders to be. Through this it became evident what public policy making strategies are employed; any tensions, limitations, leadership, competition between communities, collaborative opportunities, fragility of regional infrastructure, the thresholds and momentum for viable and sustainable festivals can be identified. These issues are central to the study’s aim.

**Focus groups**

Focus groups provided information on the relationship of festival participants, organisers and non-attendees have to the four festivals. A focus group represents a contrived situation in which people are brought together to discuss particular issues and ideas. This first person sharing of accounts on issues and experiences allowed me interpret their responses. By bringing a collective edge to participant interviews, the interaction that takes place provides data and insights that may not be revealed had the contact involved individual interviews. It was interesting to acknowledge the *communitas* that Getz speaks of (2007:366) emerging as a key aspect of this qualitative methodology. Responses to impacts on community infrastructure, traffic, crowds, access to facilities, transport, local pride and identity, jobs and other economic implications assist in establishing a profile of each event and destination. These issues were of particular concern to the focus group conducted in Byron Bay. Health and safety issues, vandalism, harm minimisation strategies employed, local cultural activities engaged with, local character reflected in event content are explored through this research technique.

In each community a judgement sample of a cross section of people, that is people of different ages, length of residency, gender and work experience accessible to the researcher contributed to the data collection. The researcher, an experienced facilitator moderated each focus group discussion and allowed open discussion with time to discuss the research questions. Participants interacted with one another and that allowed unexpected trends and issues to emerge. Participants in the focus groups were selected from volunteers and people
recommended by festival organisers and tourism managers. As residents of the host communities these individuals were able to provide perspectives of the community at play during the festivals, as well as when the community attended to other aspects of daily life. This allowed for a comprehensive overview of impacts and implications of the programs and process that were employed by festival organisers.

**Existing surveys**

Another contributing source was the results of research independently conducted at Byron Bay (Lawrence & Derrett, 2003), Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival (de Vaurno, 2000) and in Nimbin for Mardi Grass 1997-99 (Dimmock, Tiyce & Derrett) and Neilson’s media survey (2001). Surveys had been completed and analysed and assisted in building a picture of each case study festival. (See appendices for details)

During Byron Bay’s NYE celebration 2002/3, age and postcode information was sought from a convenience sample of attendees at the dance party as they purchased tickets. Further demographic and geographic information was sought from a random sample of attendees at the event. Postcode information sought from purchasers of New Year’s Eve car stickers proved a difficult task as volunteers used at the Visitor Centre and in sales booths was unable to undertake additional recording work. This analysis was therefore not undertaken (Lawrence & Derrett, 2003).

The processes of data collection and data analysis overlap in qualitative research. Jennings (2001:196) suggests that during data collection researchers may be considering content analysis, constant comparative analysis, matrix building, mapping, domain analysis, event structure building and modelling.

**Ethics**

The research methodology employed in this study has been undertaken in compliance with the ethical principles and associated guidelines for research involving humans (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans, 2001). Some of the data included in the study was collected earlier while the researcher was a doctoral student at Griffith University. Subsequent secondary data was collected during candidature at Southern Cross University. At all times the researcher has been mindful of the welfare and rights of participants in the study and has demonstrated respect for the integrity of individuals throughout the research. Individuals from each of the communities under scrutiny were interviewed. These people were mature residents who had been recommended by local government officials, or from festival organisations and service clubs in the two pilot study
communities. In depth interviews of one hour’s duration were conducted from 1999. Eleven of these were tape recorded, transcribed and excerpts of these interviews are included in the text of the thesis.

The thesis presents the participants’ positions directly. The thesis aims to be more than descriptions of individual’s perspectives. Some of the responses have been interpreted and analysed in light of the research questions and to further contextual understanding. I have a responsibility to share the experiences of the community leaders faithfully to ensure an accurate picture is gained of the contexts for the festivals’ conduct.

4.6 Data analysis methods

Patton offers a simple method of analysing case study evidence. He suggests three steps:

• assemble the raw data
• construct a case record
• write a case study narrative. The case study may be presented chronologically and thematically, indicating a holistic portrayal of each destination (1990:388).

This study supports Patton’s contention (1990:375) that the first task in qualitative analysis is a descriptive one and must be separated from interpretation. Qualitative data analysis needs to be focused. The research method is people-oriented. The process of discovery through observation and face-to-face interviewing involves formal and informal talk, non-verbal messages and nuances.

Katz (1981:135) also suggests the descriptive case study method in his early studies of the tendency toward formalisation and bureaucratisation that has subsequently been replicated in other festival management research (Getz, 1993). He constructs a ‘natural history’ of organisations consisting of five successive stages that I found useful to reflect upon for this study. I have used the developmental pattern he outlines in connection with the origin and development of the four case study organisations. He identified: (i) origin; (ii) informal organisation; (iii) emergence of leadership; (iv) formal organisation, and (v) professionalisation (Getz, 1993:15). This pattern is noticeable in the four case study festival organisations.

Getz (1993:15) suggests results from case studies cannot be generalised, but that they can be valuable for refining methods and generating hypotheses. The techniques he considers useful in determining the culture in community (not for profit) cultural organisations include
observations, assessments, interviews, the development of a chronology of the organisation’s history, a content analysis of legal and administrative of documentation, the construction of personal profiles, the analysis of networks and observation of behavioural change will all contribute to a clear evaluation of the management culture of each organisation. All of these relevant techniques have been observed in this study.

In this study qualitative data analysis occurred during data collection, data analysis and data reporting phases. Qualitative data analysis involves the organisation of like categories and the development of relationships and process models based on constant comparison of the text based data (Jennings, 2001: 196). Typical of qualitative studies, this research produced a great deal of diverse data — audio and visual recording, interviews transcriptions, secondary data and deep descriptions of festivals observed. This study’s analysis identified themes and motifs that began during data collection and were manifested in the model used to underpin the research. The analysis also identified areas for future research that emerged from issues regarding management, policy and practice.

The analysis was grounded in the real world of festivals and communities and was collected through conversations and visual images, for example and reported as such. Yin (1994) suggests that the document analysis assists by augmenting and corroborating other sources of information. Content analysis requires the researcher to sample widely. This ensures that whether subjective or objective the criteria for inclusion or exclusion are clearly available. In this thesis each of the case studies provided for subjective inclusion of material under the heading ‘Reflection’ and the more objective analysis is undertaken in the ‘Discussion’ section of Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight. The themes that emerge are drawn together and their implications discussed in Chapter Nine.

In this study the following data analysis methods were used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Analysis</th>
<th>Data Analyzed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content analysis: openness, communicativity, naturalism &amp; interpretivity (Jennings, 2001:202)</td>
<td>Secondary data sources like public documents, archival documents, personal documents, administrative documents, formal studies and reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant comparative analysis</td>
<td>Development of grounded theory from data collected in a particular setting over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and display</td>
<td>Use of typologies, maps, conceptual displays to assist in analyzing data, develop model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal types</td>
<td>Model or abstraction to describe social relations or processes – can accentuate sameness between cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the data collected analysis in Chapter Nine allows for inferences to be found, particularly from the empirical data. Data is interpreted in a way to allow the reader to follow the research design readily. By organising the data in a way to allow comparison, conclusions are drawn mapping a generalised story or map of the characteristics of the region, communities and festival case studies. The analysis reveals patterns and processes to be compared with what is actually observed (Yin, 1991). The study was able to identify trends and speculate on scenarios that emerge from how festivals evolve and sustain themselves.

Chapter Nine ties together the history of the four festivals in a way that is underrepresented in the literature (Getz, 2007:376). There is a systematic comparison across a number of fields to contrast the approach of each festival in dealing with specific aspects of its current design and delivery as well as addressing some of the opportunities to gain traction in the field of resilience. Using these data analysis techniques linkages can be made between concepts, relationships and through statements made by primary sources.

Textual representation of the data allows for better understanding of how the communities make sense of the festivals they host. The study reports on multiple cases discovering the characteristics of each festival, community and the region as the uniqueness of these phenomena has not previously been connected. This includes sufficient description and direct quotations to clearly explain the findings. Each case study chapter has a 'Reflection' response that records my participant observations and a 'Discussion' section that connects the case study to the literature. The reflexive response allows for a personal yet interactive analysis in terms of the socio-cultural developments. The report provides scope for comparisons between the four festivals. The data are reflected upon and conclusions are drawn after the data had been analysed. Recommendations for further research are identified in Chapter Nine.

A number of papers based on this research were prepared and presented at conferences and for publication during the course of the study (see list at front of thesis). This allowed for useful feedback from peers to the ideas and observations documented. This informed subsequent iterations of the reporting of the research. Some material from these publications is included in the text of the thesis.

### 4.7 Limitations of the study

This study is limited to the geographic region known as the Northern Rivers of NSW. The region includes the far north coastal region of New South Wales from Tweed Heads in the
north to Corindi Beach in the south, from the Pacific east coast to the Great Dividing Range in the west. The region is approximately 250 kilometres from north to south and varies between eighty-five kilometres and one hundred and fifteen kilometres from east to west, comprising 20,896 square kilometres.

There are three distinct sub-regional geographical and economic spheres based on the major river system. They are Tweed River Valley, the Richmond River Valley and the Clarence River Valley. The case study destinations of Nimbin (hinterland), Casino (hinterland) and Byron Bay (coastal) are sited in the Richmond River Valley and Grafton in the Clarence Valley.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter reports on the qualitative exploratory research used through the case study approach. It outlines the way the research was structured and carried out. It describes the assumptions, principles and procedures used for the data collection and analysis. The methodology creates an argument for how communities faced with challenges endemic to regional areas can strategically develop, manage and sustain resilient communities through festivals. This methodology reinforces the cyclical nature not only of the research methodology but of the substantive focus of the investigation -festivals- as well. Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight provide a descriptive appraisal of facts and observations of the four festivals that emphasise this.
Chapter 5:  Grafton: through a purple haze

Jacaranda Welcome Song
Welcome to Grafton where the Jacaranda trees
Make the city beautiful and perfume every breeze,
Take our hand in friendship,
We’re glad to have you here,
Join our dancing – sing our songs,
And come again next year.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 5.0  Jacaranda Avenue
This particular streetscape celebrates the growing natural heritage associated with Grafton’s identity and its eponymous community cultural festival. The signage identifies this urban landscape as an integral part of what the Jacaranda Festival represents. Families can lodge their weekly garbage collection beneath the colourful display of the purpose planted trees that are linked to the socio-cultural fabric of the city. This avenue is a double row of trees lining a thoroughfare that is part of the residents’ and visitors’ daily life.
5.1 Introduction

It is important in an exploration of the four case study festivals to clearly appreciate the geographical and historical contexts in which each is embedded. This chapter commences with a snapshot of the location of the Jacaranda Festival in the host destination, Grafton. Throughout the examination it is evident that residents make sense of their position in the immediate vicinity and the city’s within the region through their support for their annual community festival. The festival program reflects the layers of connectivity felt by residents for the landscape and the lived heritage (Huang & Stewart, 1996:26). The festival helps make sense of both the past and provides certain optimism about the future by showcasing, in a heightened way, aspects of the city’s traditional way of life. Ellyard (2007) suggests that this can underpin an efficient and effective framework for communities to approach the future by doing old things better and new things before others. The Jacaranda Festival has over time offered residents a comfortable mindset that addresses nature, culture and wellness as central features of the hospitality shared with visitors. It can be argued that the geographical features and experiences of settlement over time have informed not only the context and format of the festival’s program but how residents and visitors actually use celebration to make a mark on the region’s distinctiveness, which in turn builds its strength.

There appears to be consensus amongst long-term residents on what constitutes the major signposts of the city’s evolution. So, it is useful to be appraised of some of the key elements of the Grafton story, as they certainly provide distinctive connections to annual Jacaranda Festival programs. Residents unashamedly recount significant snippets of the city’s history and are comfortable recalling these moments in times of celebration. Traditions remain strong, as can be seen in the component parts of the annual program. The latter is influenced by the pride felt in the achievements of local arts practitioners who have succeeded in putting Grafton ‘on the map’. Locals believe Grafton is a place that nurtures quality music education and performance, arts and craft at the highest standard and hosts popular eisteddfods and national attractions like Artsfest a series of residential masterclasses. This builds confidence in the capacity of residents to provide vital public entertainments and fortitude against odds to ensure their efforts are appreciated.

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Grafton is located about 40 km due west of the Pacific coast and 625 km north-east of Sydney at the junction of the Pacific and Gwydir Highways. The Clarence River bisects the city. The river proved a barrier to the connection of the city’s centre (situated on the northern bank)
with Sydney for many years. This perceived isolation developed a sense of determination to carve out an independent lifestyle by residents initially through agriculture and latterly through commerce and industry. The Clarence (known to Europeans as the ‘Big River’ until 1840) with its tributaries - the Nymboida, the Orara, the Mann and the Coldstream - constitutes the largest river system on the northern NSW coast. Draining over two million hectares, it contains over one hundred islands including Susan Island that lies between Grafton and South Grafton.

With a population of 18,500, Grafton is the major settlement on the Clarence River and the commercial centre of an extensive agricultural and pastoral district. It is the hub of the Clarence Valley Council which covers an area of 10440klm2, with a diverse population of approximately 50,000 people living, working and studying in rural communities, coastal towns and villages and expanding urban centres. Grafton’s city centre is characterised by wide streets and elegant Victorian buildings. The built environment offers a sense of grace and solidity with a long-standing resident concern with civic beauty.

The fertile river flats have encouraged dairying, sugarcane plantations and mixed farming. Fishing, the raising of pigs and cattle, the processing and marketing of primary produce and engineering are also important (Grafton, 2003). Residents have demonstrated an understanding of natural cycles, through flood, good and bad times in their pursuits on the land. Some families have retained a connection to the district since European settlement and this capacity to maintain long-term commitments is represented in the engagement with the festival. The festival emerges from that traditional sense of thanksgiving for nature’s bounty that agricultural settlers celebrate as exemplified by the short verse introducing the chapter.

The Jacaranda Festival owes much to the town’s heritage. This resonates with Ellyard’s (2003) suggestions for communities dealing with their future in three key ways – through insight into current activity, foresight through imagining a future and through looking back to a heritage that can inform both. Such a derivation destiny perspective satisfies intergenerational support for a popular event for over seventy years. Presently there is a strong sense that residents have stories handed down to them through generations of family engagement with the festival. The suggestion (Crang, 1998) that intergenerational perspectives on the landscape may mould the cultural heritage and inform not only the shared stories, but develop practices that can be embraced not only by residents but can be shared with visitors is demonstrated in this festival.
The township of Grafton was laid out in 1849 and named after the Duke of Grafton who was the grandfather of Governor Fitzroy. The Anglo-Celtic heritage is one that is manifest in the built environment and social recreation by residents. The population, by 1856, had grown to 1069. Wharves were established in the 1850s and Grafton benefited both from its location on the main coastal road to the north and from gold discoveries on the upper Clarence River. It soon became the major town on the Clarence and was declared a municipality in 1859. That same year, Grafton became home to both the Clarence and Richmond River Examiner newspapers and the first National School north of the Hunter River. This vibrancy continues, as locals believe the city is a major crossroads in the region.

Grafton was proclaimed a municipality on June 20, 1859 and a city on March 20, 1885. The early uptake of the formalities of community governance is reflected in the ongoing spirit of city and the citizenry generally. City status gazettal is more related to the siting of the Anglican Cathedral than the more conventional acknowledgement of population numbers. Residents have long felt strong links to the development of the state of NSW as a whole. The European discovery of the district is credited to convicts who escaped from the (Queensland) Moreton Bay penal settlement (1823 onwards). Cedar getters camped at South Grafton, then sheep and cattle grazing developed. Today the sugar industry is well established after a time when there were 30 processing mills. Early stories of misunderstandings between the Gumbaingirr Aborigines focus on several incidents that occurred in the 1850s. A gold rush in 1871 brought 3000 to the Clarence. There was a substantial increase in the population through transport with 1890 boats on the Clarence River in 1842. The river yields flooding - seven years of floods began in 1887! Floods are less frequent in recent times.

The city of Grafton uses the Duke’s Coat of Arms as the city’s official crest. The outstanding, ordered landscape of the commercial centre of the Clarence Valley owes much to the early civic leaders who, in 1866, decreed that ‘it is highly desirable that trees should be planted under proper regulations in the streets and other public places of the town’ (The Northern Star, 2002:12). The lush sub-tropical landscape rewards gardening enthusiasts with flourishing foliage and a congenial atmosphere for outdoor activity. There are some 7000 trees in Grafton and 24 parks. Subsequently the trees and the preserved colonial buildings are a strong feature of interest to locals and visitors and as a substantial element of the city’s image and identity. This built and natural landscape provides the ways and the wares to create the celebration nurtured by this community. The two key elements of the biophysical and built environments and the human dimension demonstrated through the staging of the festival provide a genuine ‘sense of place’ through a unique image brand identity that is regionally recognised. It is in the city’s best interest to develop and maintain a positive image.
for the purpose of appeal to the marketplace, the promotion of goodwill and a feeling of pride by residents. The image of Grafton is that collection of visual memories that a visitor or resident uses to recall or to describe to others the character or personality of the city (Richmond Indiana, 2006).

This chapter uses the research framework to investigate how, in formal and informal ways, a distinctive sense of place and community, clearly defined identity and images and characteristic regional hospitality delivers cultural tourism during the annual Jacaranda Festival hosted by Grafton. What emerges is a snapshot of a community at play and celebrating itself. It observes how this festival has dealt with the delicate balance required to ensure community festivals are not over managed and under led. Through an analysis of the complex elements that comprise this festival it establishes how the festival demonstrates the three key research objectives. I believe these objectives feed into a better appreciation of what comprises community resilience. The rich description presented in this chapter and the following three (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) is exploratory in nature. Implications drawn from the conduct of each festival are discussed in Chapter Eight.

Figure 5.1   Research model for role of festivals in community resilience

The three major areas of the research model (Derrett, 2003) under review here are:

4.1 Sense of place and sense of community
4.2 Image and Identity for destination management and marketing
4.3 Cultural tourism

This chapter explores the relationship that the Jacaranda Festival has with its local and visiting stakeholders. The intersection of residents, place and visitors are demonstrated through a functional representation of typical annual programs hosted in the city. The influences on and the impacts of the festival are drawn out, illustrated, extrapolated and
discussed. They are linked to the festival’s sustainability and how these can assist regional communities more broadly in their endeavours to deal with change.

5.2 Jacaranda Festival and a sense of place and community

The Jacaranda Festival holds deep symbolic and real meaning to residents and visitors. Throughout the city at Jacaranda time it is evident that something important and loved is going on. The vibrancy of the colour purple is hard to dismiss. The trees are blooming in the springtime and conversations refer to the fact that this festival is about things that are local. The loft that is given the landscape by the lilac flowers encourages a freshness in the approach the city and its institutions have towards renewal and celebration. The commitment to a whole of city approach is hard to avoid. There is little evidence of dissent. This doesn’t mean that it is smooth sailing for organisers as we will be shown, but for attendees, it seems that the residents are keen to embrace the notion of ‘our town’ on show and welcome an opportunity to offer hospitality to strangers and revel in the nostalgia of their heritage.

People are familiar with the stories associated with the origins of the festival and these are invoked in the promotional material, media coverage and any controversy that may erupt from time to time regarding the longest running floral festival in Australia or attempts to stage a Jacaranda festival elsewhere. There is a determination to hold on to their festival at all costs. People are quick to defend their ownership of this festival, warts and all. This uncompromising approach is something that can be observed in other aspects of the community’s life. The civic pride that results from what are perceived as successful celebrations provides confidence for diverse groups in the community to tackle other issues and situations. The organising committee, the Council and special interest groups are all interested in undertaking new projects, because of their comfort with their contributions to the festival to date. By observing the roles of various stakeholders involved with the festival, implications can be drawn for other festivals.

**Origins of Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival**
The Jacaranda Festival came from a fleeting knowledge of the festivals of other lands; and from the words of the traditional folk song *Quaint Old Cornish Town*. The idea of how a festival in the flower-bedecked City of Grafton NSW could be established – ‘each one making the most of his chance, all together in the Floral Dance’ came from Helston, Cornwall.
But from the seed sown in Jacaranda Avenue, Grafton on 29 October 1935, will come an equally picturesque traditional ceremonial, with a hope that folklore will establish the truly Australian background to link us with our past so that the future may profit.

So said Alderman Edward Howard (‘Jacaranda Bill’) Chataway who was the driving force for the event. Artist Peter Dawson’s singing of ‘The Floral Dance’ inspired Bill. He enthused others to join him and ignore the skeptics (Grafton City Council, 2003). The role of an archetypal community champion is observed as Chataway’s Festival drew together a community isolated by distance and emerging from an economic depression (de Vaurno, 2000).

Chataway is said to have done much to create and consolidate the festival from its start and he described its character and advocated its sustainability.

So was born a tradition of yearly festivity, when the trees shall bloom again - when song, dance and gaiety shall reveal the Australian capacity of real comradeship in Jacaranda Time in Grafton.

And so, the people of the Clarence were urged (as suggested in an extract from The Apex Clarence Directory, printed 1957) to

celebrate and build into the lives of the Australian communities
the lesson of comradeship and happiness,
the fruits of tradition and the pride of nationhood for
We are the sons of Australia
Of the men who fashioned the land;
We are the sons of the women,
Who walked with them hand in hand!’
(Grafton City, 2003).

The charisma and influence of the founder of this festival is worthy of further consideration. ‘Jacaranda Bill’ demonstrates typical traits that have been explored in the literature review. His strength of personality became an instrument to achieve the goal of enhancing the quality of local life through celebration (Bass, 1990). He demonstrated determination, motivation and co-ordination, which means his leadership in this venture and others in the growing town, is almost legendary. Much of the initial organisational scaffold he suggested is still in place and it may be a measure of the power and simplicity of his vision that much of this continues to resonate with successive leaders within the organisation and the broader community. The security this offers the organising group is a phenomenon that can certainly build the resilience sought in rural communities in times of stress.

The inaugural Jacaranda Queen in 1935 was Mavis Schwinghammer who was attended by twenty maids of honour, eleven pages, flower girls, jesters and princesses! Children by the hundred danced and presented a floral pageant before Myrtle Gentle’s name was drawn from
a golden casket as first Jacaranda Princess by the Festival King, Jim Orr. Organisers raised
two hundred and twenty pounds to be used to fund the next year’s event. The first festival
featured extensive pageantry, community singing, maypole and highland dancing. Jazz
bands and floats still resonate with contemporary attendees at the festival. While more
activities populate the present program, the themes and etiquette initiated in the 1930s
continue to engage residents. It represents a significant level of comfort for locals with their
familiarity with their Anglo-Celtic origins.

For this event to be sustained for over 70 years it is apparent that substantial elements of the
celebration have become ‘the tradition’. The obvious connection between the city and the
trees and the festival content is routinely represented in this tradition. The heritage
significance across the spectrum of landscape and human activity is currently being pursued
through a NSW heritage listing. The trees provide distinctive continuity and contribute to the
character of the streetscape. This translates into the emotional links of the residents to each. A
former Mayor and Member of the 1935 Foundation Jacaranda Festival Committee observed,

I hope the original ideals of the Festival Committee will never be forgotten. They were to sponsor a sincere, spontaneous and as far as possible
impromptu celebration of appreciation of the beauty of Mother Nature
epitomized by the flowering of Grafton’s Jacaranda trees’ (Weiley, 1954).

There is a consistent retelling of the origins of the Jacaranda Festival that readily captures the
imagination of the visitor as well. The character of the event and its place in the local psyche
is unrelentingly represented over the year, e.g. in the 1957 Apex Clarence Directory,
(Clarence Valley Council, 2004), the local press (The Daily Examiner) and successive Jacaranda
Festival programs. Each year at Festival time the committee sets up a museum of
memorabilia of past festivals. The Committee aspired to taking over the management of a
building on Market Square in Prince Street to house its collection of items (de Graaf, 2001,
pers. com.). The fact that families hold onto souvenirs, merchandise, mementoes of any scale
and scope are testament to how locals take their involvement to heart.

Many families have long-standing associations with the festival. Former Jacaranda Queen
and former Grafton Mayor, Shirley Adams, still remembers her crowning as a fantastic time,

That was 53 years ago, but I always say I am a recycled teenager, so I am
very young in mind, but I think that was absolutely fantastic. Yesterday I
went to one of the nursing homes and spoke to all these lovely older men
and women and they were so thrilled and they said ‘yes, I remember when I
did this, I remember when we did that, we wore floral shirts and we wore
off the shoulder blouses and we danced all the time’, it was so lovely to see
there eyes sparkle because of Jacaranda, and you know they live in the past,
but those are the beautiful things that no one can take away from them.
Shirley Adams remembers fondly her four years as festival president, there have been many, many wonderful occasions with the festival. It was through my instigation that we raised the money and put the crown on top of the clock in Prince Street, and every year it lights up beautifully and I say 'that is Shirley Adam's crown' (Jacaranda Festival, 2005).

**Timing**
Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival occurs each year when the blossoms appear on the Jacaranda trees that are distributed throughout the city. There are concentrations of the plantings in residential areas, as well as the Central Business District (CBD). The event has now been set for the last weekend of October to the first weekend of November. It is a weeklong event, though the spirit of the festival is celebrated early for some sporting and community activities and linked as adjuncts to the main event. Images of Jacaranda blossoms appear in the city’s yearlong promotional material of the festival.

Festival organisers suggest that the sublime to the ridiculous could easily describe the mix of artistic talent and madcap frivolity on display over the course of the annual Jacaranda Festival suggests the website (Jacaranda Festival, 2006). The festival bills itself as Australia’s oldest family floral festival and has been staged at the same time each year since 1935.

**Location**
Grafton is at the centre of coastal hinterland axes. The Pacific and Gwydir Highway provide an ‘all roads lead to Grafton’ scenario for visitors. The ‘big river’ has a major east-west trajectory. Grafton has substantial residential and commercial activity on both sides of the Clarence River, linked by the ‘bendy’ bridge. The bridge offers motor vehicles and train access north - south. The river serves as a focus for a number of annual events with vantage points on both sides available to spectators of rowing, canoeing, speedboat and swimming activities. The Jacaranda Festival has developed activities on both sides of the river. The CBD plays host to window decoration competitions, mainstreet parades and Market Square. Market Square is a gazetted community ‘common’ that provides a base for the weeklong program. The Festival Manager is housed in a caravan there and the stage for specific performances is there. The adjacent CWA Rooms is the site for a proposed Jacaranda Festival Museum (de Graaf, 2001 pers. com) that is currently housed in a vacant shop across from Market Square for the duration of each Festival.
Market Square hosts the Jacaranda Festival headquarters. The focal site has numerous mature Jacaranda trees. Various food outlets, mechanical entertainments, staging for performance, public seating, grassed lawns for passive recreation and exhibitions are accommodated in the central location. The integrity of the CBD setting of festival highlights much about the aesthetics of the festival. A positive image of the city’s built environment goes beyond the heritage appearance of the buildings to include a complete fit in the urban landscape at the human scale including the flora providing the festival image and identity.

Jacaranda Festival activities are essentially CBD based. They are also accommodated in parkland areas around the city. Picnics, displays and outdoor workshops provide a relaxed vehicle for special interest groups to use the Festival as an umbrella for annual functions. Specific sites like the grounds of the Grafton TAFE College host the Saturday market and numerous halls and community institutions focus on highlighting their endeavours during the Festival time e.g. woodwork studios, an Antique and Collectables fair at the South Grafton Ex-Serviceman’s Club, an Inline Hockey Carnival, Jacaranda Bowls Carnival, Sports Aircraft Muster at the South Grafton Aerodrome, the Jacaranda Festival of Golf. The main street, Prince Street, hosts the marching parade for youth, the cycle criterium, and the Jacaranda Mile running race. The Grafton Regional Gallery and numerous commercial and community galleries have exhibitions and sales of locally produced work. Other specific built environments house family church services, floral displays, organ recitals, folk and rock and roll dancing competitions, handicraft markets, and youth art awards.

The Daily Examiner newspaper and the Grafton City Council, two key stakeholders of the overall Festival, sponsor the annual Jacaranda Festival Garden Competition. This ancillary event provides residents with an opportunity to showcase the plantings around the built environment of the city. A map of the prize-winning gardens is published and promoted. Locals and visitors are encouraged to view the gardens during the days and evenings. There are also bus tours of residents’ gardens. A centre-fold in the paper allows individuals to drive around the city independently to locate participants and winners of the competition or go on bus tours. There appears to be little conflict between the nature-based appeal of some Festival
activities juxtaposed with the built environment hosting rodeos, parades and riverbank entertainments!

It would appear that Grafton district’s residents and businesses are dedicated to sharing their gardens. The competition exhorts participants to enter sections entitled herb garden minimum five varieties through to container garden, floral front garden and good neighbour garden. The City Council has a scheme to boost the number of Jacarandas through the city by distributing free seedlings. Jacarandas and many other trees also have a profound influence on Grafton art. The value of the lush local landscape to the city’s attractiveness is not lost on planners and developers.

Locations for Jacaranda Festival events include the western end of Pound Street, Grafton and Ryan Street, South Grafton, named ‘Jacaranda Avenues’ and See Park on the corner of Pound and Turf Streets offers an arboretum with many Jacarandas plus ponds, suspension bridge and picnic facilities. Briemba Street is known as ‘Fig Tree Avenue’ as massive fig trees form a magnificent archway over the street. A mighty Moreton Bay Fig stands in Prince Street beside the old Northern Rivers Electricity building. The Memorial Park at the river-end of Prince Street and Market Square are beautiful flower and tree-filled parks. Jacaranda trees now have flowers in maroon and white as well as the popular blue-mauve. Life expectation may be up to 200 years if in private care and the timber is a creamy to rich yellow pinkish colour and may be used for ornamental woodwork (Jacaranda Festival, 2005).

The festival flower, the Jacaranda, is both symbol and decoration. Streets with Jacaranda trees blossom each late October-early November and intrinsically become attractions. Jacaranda Week heralds diverse spectacles. Visitors and residents are invited to see exhibitions of gems and lapidary work at the showground or examine the displays at the Schaeffer House, home of the Clarence River Historical Society. Jacaranda Thursday provides an opportunity for visitors and residents to wander through the streets, view exhibitions, observe the way businesses have decorated their windows and stores in order to be judged worthy of the Gold Cup and the Rose Bowl prizes.
Welcome sign

Simple signage clearly links the trees to the human festivities. The sign demonstrates the city’s hospitality, the mood they wish to engender. The link between the tree and the Festival is overt.

The Clarence River is readily accessible at the head of the main street, Prince Street. It hosts a series of water-based pursuits for Festival visitors. The Jacaranda Festival Power Boat Spectacular is one such event. Hydroplanes are super or turbo-charged provide high speed, excitement and team colour for spectators sitting along the banks of the river. The city is tied to the river.

Across the river in South Grafton shopkeepers and residents also get into the spirit of the Jacaranda Festival. There are various street pursuits, including a pedal car marathon that engages the community. There is an opportunity for visitors to check out the technology and designs used in the sprints, slaloms and road races. Machines are often built from recycled bicycle parts. Participants in the races come from many parts of the state. Also on the south side are art exhibitions in galleries, Fire Brigade demonstrations, square dancing displays and decorations in the shops. The South Grafton Carnival Capers entertainment day has grown over the years. The South Grafton Business Association organises it. Thousands of young people participate in a Festival Parade of youth wearing their school, sporting, social or community colours. Groups carry themed banners for which there is a competition and prizes. Traditional practices continue.

Festival Program

The initial 1935 Jacaranda Festival formula remains much unchanged. The Festival provides an umbrella for a variety of activities that have appealed to local participants over the years there inclusion each year attracts support from special interest groups who recognise the festival as an opportunity to showcase their specific interest to a wide audience. There is pride expressed by members of the Festival Committee (The Daily Examiner, 1995) and the community that the Jacaranda Festival is the oldest floral festival in Australia and that no
matter what one’s personal interests were that there was satisfaction to be gained from participation in the new and old attractions combined under the umbrella event. Jacaranda Festival President June Allen (1998 – 2004) says,

the 70th anniversary celebrations were absolutely fantastic. Everything was well attended and enjoyed by all. There were so many events it would be difficult to say how many people came through the town over the week. If the street parade is anything to go by the visitor numbers must have reached around ten thousand, it was amazing, and people lined the street for ten blocks on either side of the street two or three deep. I feel tired and elated and it was a wonderful finale for my final year as President (Jacaranda Festival, 2005).

Key elements of the Jacaranda Festival program are outlined in Table 4.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1</th>
<th>Generic Jacaranda Festival Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacaranda Ball</td>
<td>Official opening function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacaranda Queen Competition</td>
<td>Crowning Ceremony at Market Square; Junior Jacaranda Queen Contest; Jacaranda Queens’ Party;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacaranda Festival Garden Competition</td>
<td>Participating gardens are open to the public and prize-winning gardens promoted; bus tours to gardens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
<td>Grafton Regional Gallery, Armidale Road Woodwork Studio, Seelands Studio Gallery, Antiques and Collectibles Fair; Clocktower Gallery, Bentleg Market and Gallery, Handiwork Mini Mart; Clarence River Historical Society Museum; Grafton Art Club; Grafton Gem Club Display; Northern Rivers Woodcraft Group Competition, Exhibition and Sales; Youth Art Awards; Festival of Flowers in Cathedral; Clarence Valley Quilters Group; Clarence Valley Cake Decorators Assoc.; Hereford &amp; Poll Hereford Hoof and Hook competition;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor pursuits</td>
<td>Scouts canoe race, Celebrity Challenge in Market Square; Sports Aircraft Muster, Aerodrome; Jacaranda Bowls Carnival; Greyhound racing Club; Jacaranda Mile; Cycle Critereium; Jacaranda Fun Walk; Jacaranda Fun Run; Festival morning at Market Square on Jacaranda Thursday; Venetian Carnival, fireworks on Clarence River; Vintage Motor Vehicle Club display;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parades</td>
<td>Parade of Youth on first Saturday; Grand Float Procession Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Children’s Party, Market Square; Halloween Party; Free Jacaranda Breakfast; Purple Haze Dance Party; Ceilidh;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>Old School House Markets,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous events</td>
<td>Jacaranda Choral Service; Jacaranda Beautiful Baby Competition; Jacaranda Rotary Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performances</td>
<td>Jacaranda Organ Recital; Jacaranda Family Music Festival; Woody’s Jacaranda Rock Concert;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business activity</td>
<td>Shops, offices and staff dress competition;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Festivals expose a locality’s backyard. The nature of celebration is such that it acknowledges its origins from within the host community. This is particularly evident in Grafton where the
community has demonstrated a unique spin to be put onto the content of each program. There are some festival rituals that are hard to displace, the parade for instance. Parades provide entertainment, production values that create spectacle and display heritage in a very deliberate way. In Grafton the overall program offers some flashiness and as well as subdued respect for what makes the host community tick.

While the Jacaranda Festival offers festivalgoers back-to-back entertainment one of the jewels in the crown is the Jacaranda Festival Parade. First-time festival president (2005), Roy Bowling says,

Saturday afternoon is the big procession. Most organisations in Grafton have a float in the procession, surf clubs, fire brigades, you name it and they are in the parade. They put a lot of hours of work into it. The Jacaranda Committee itself has a float that carries the official party, the queen and her subjects. The floats are magnificent. The parade goes for an hour and a half. And afterwards a lot of people go to the showground to the bull-riding championships, and others go back to Market Square where there is live entertainment in Market Square and that goes on into the night (Jacaranda Festival, 2005).

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 5.3  Celtic Heritage

Contemporary entertainment in Market Square demonstrates clear links with the city’s Celtic heritage. Audiences of all ages and participants of all ages contribute to the entertainment. A casual ambience is seen in this photo as local and visiting pipe bands perform.

Each year the Festival is approached with fresh gusto in late spring to ‘build community, comradeship and happiness through the fruits of tradition and pride of nationhood’ (Grafton City Council, 2002). The program reflects an interest in showcasing many aspects of
community life. Each year new elements are included to reflect some sort of connectivity to wider national entertainment patterns. In 1995, ‘the Marching Koalas’, a popular Hunter Valley based marching band lead the Grand Float Procession and later performed in Market Square.

What the festival demonstrates is the growing awareness of the value of strategic alliances in ensuring the program for each festival is a best fit for the regular attendees. Whether formally or informally, there is an identification and research undertaken to see who would benefit from the organisation’s (therefore the festival’s) alignment with new partners and what the relationships can add to the annual festival program. This can involve a move from sponsorship to partnership in a way that minimises the organisers’ need to approach entities with thinly veiled letters for donations and to actively engage businesses and community and special interest groups in active participation in the delivery of the festival. From a historical perspective it means also that there is recognition that partnerships have a shelf life and that there comes a time when there is an amicable break in the relationship at this level. Future opportunities may still arise for collaboration.

These sorts of alliances can also be used to grow the audience for the festival. Each partner brings another network to bear on the relationship. The partnership may generate extra appeal to festival audiences but it may assist in branding the event, the town and the region because of the reach of one of the partners. When looking at the portfolio of stakeholders a festival may have (see Figure 1.1), organisers may wish to emphasis particular suppliers, or commercial entities or the volunteer community sector at a particular point in time to ensure the festival’s needs are being addressed. Getz et al (2007) writes of the scarcity of resources in the non-profit sector and the Jacaranda Festival committee has been quite responsible in locating the in-kind and cash resources they require each year to ensure the program is delivered as planned.

While there is reluctance amongst some locals to embrace too much new, the structure of the festival organisation accommodates new elements for the program. Collaboration arises when elements of the community’s living heritage are celebrated. The simple activity elements of indoors-outdoors, daytime-nighttime, largescale-intimate, paid-free admittance, specialist-generic, urban based-parkland or river based can be noted in the program (Table 4.2). The festival can attract new partners to the event, new audiences and revitalize the traditional perspective. An example occurred in 2006 when Grafton (through the Clarence Valley Council) wished to commemorate its place in world aviation history by recognising the invention, building and first flight of a hang glider. Grafton is the birthplace of the
world’s first weight-shift hang glider invented by John Dickenson and flown by another Grafton resident, Rod Fuller, at the 1963 Jacaranda Festival. It was launched from a ski boat driven by Pat Crowe, also of Grafton.

The Clarence River Tourist Association, the Council, the Jacaranda Festival committee, hang gliding clubs and local aero and gliding clubs all held discussions to develop a suitable means of recognising the invention. The significant aviation event provided a unique opportunity to record living history, a fly-in for hang gliders is proposed and it is hoped that will grow into an international event. Meanwhile, a photographic display at the Visitor Information Centre during the Jacaranda Festival attracted old photographs from residents of the Jacaranda Festival and the hang glider in 1963.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 5.4  The Jacaranda Ball

The opening function of the Festival continues to be the Jacaranda Ball. This is held at the Grafton District Services Club and is opened by the special Festival guest for the year. It has official hallmark features, protocols and rituals that have been passed down over the years. Speeches are made. Anne Zahalka’s Ball photograph (2000) shows the layout of the hall, the decorations and dress of attendees. The image was part of a collection hosted in the Grafton Regional Gallery exploring how communities around NSW celebrate.

The Festival provides an opportunity for the Council to exercise the Freedom of the City of Grafton. This serves to link the present with the traditions of the Anglo-Celtic heritage when, for example the 41st Battalion, the Royal NSW Regiment, based in Lismore were allowed to enter the city. The ritual of being challenged, halt, who goes there? and the responses to ensure the right to pass through the City of Grafton with bayonets fixed, bands playing and
colours flying are enacted. The mixture of heritage and contemporary cultural pursuits is a feature of the annual program.

The Queen competition has been part of the event line-up since inception. A panel of judges chooses the Queen and princess candidates. They use an Olympic-type point score that is allocated for deportment, etiquette, personality, dress sense, grooming and general knowledge. The title is seen to be prestigious and crowning takes place in front of capacity crowds in Market Square in the city’s CBD. Some years there are up to eight candidates for the crown. Fundraising is a critical element of their candidature. The highest fundraiser in the competition wins the title of Holiday Princess and a trip to north Queensland to promote Grafton further afield.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 5.5  Youthful Highland Dancers
The juxtaposition of young local Celtic dancers with spirited commercial food outlets and bouncing castles says much about the mix of recreation locals is happy to incorporate in their Festival.

While the buzz on the street amongst participants is positive, it is interesting to reflect on research into attendee response to the festival experience. Festival organisers are always interested in how their event is perceived by residents and visitors. At the end of the 1990s there was particular concern for youthful behaviours in the streets of the city. Research undertaken by de Vaurno (2000:11) documents the following:
The emphasis on participant and spectator behaviour in these responses across the demographic spectrum indicates the ongoing concern for acceptable levels of public engagement. The public’s perceptions of acceptable behaviours seems consistent with its traditional approach to public entertainments. The fact the festival initially borrowed extensively from the British tradition has seen little change over time to the elements contained within the program. The emphasis is on traditional Anglo-Celtic recreational pursuits.

*The Daily Examiner* (2000:1), too, reported police warnings on anti-social or offensive behaviour. Inspector Arthur Graham was quoted (2000:1)

this year there will be foot patrols out during the day for any offensive behaviour. Anyone caught...will be charged or given an infringement notice.

Officers from the Grafton Police have taken an active role in the Jacaranda Festival Committee offering advice and speaking with students at local high schools along side the President of the Committee June Allen. Mrs Allen was able to put a community perspective on acceptable social behaviours during the Festival.

Many residents see Jacaranda Festival time to be about friendship and fellowship. So when drunkenness and hooliganism began to sour the city’s fun considerable public comment was raised. There are alcohol-free zones in the city that are supervised by Volunteers in Policing (VIPs) to ensure safety for participants. These are local residents ranging in age from 17 to 70. They are selected to assist in public places during the Festival. Editorial in *The Daily Examiner* at the time of the 61st Festival in 1995 urged residents to rekindle the festival spirit by abandoning the negative and engaging with the beauty of the city and the pleasure of the Festival entertainment.
Festivals and Community Wellbeing

The Jacaranda Festival demonstrates a basic tenet of Ulrich’s (1998:157) notion of communities of values. The umbrella nature of the Festival does forge strong and distinct identities for the internal and external stakeholders. Over time it has established clear rules of inclusion and shared information across boundaries. It is difficult to know how new people to town access the committee structure. Membership is ‘open’. The activities provided through the annual program do not preclude participation. The fundraising that occurs at different levels of engagement supports the idea of generating social reciprocity. The Festival allows individual organisations to benefit from the support of disparate groups connected to the whole event. The synergy grows the capacity of small special interest groups. The Festival offers and uses familiar symbols, myths and stories to create and sustain values and managing enough similarity so that the community feels comfortable with the clear building blocks of what is termed community wellbeing (Wills, 2001). Community wellbeing can be described as having such outcomes for residents as livability, sustainability, viability and vitality (Wills, 2001). The wellbeing model assists in evaluating the relative and comparative success of Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival and subsequent festival case studies (Chapters Five, Six and Seven).

Observations outlined below of the Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival experience provides an analysis of how it fares against the criteria. These observations may be compared with other events in the region to give a picture of the impact and the social capital accrued. The results are positive. As suggested earlier there is little that mitigates against a favourable response to community well-being. Festivals have yet to be evaluated in the literature in this way. Table 4.4 demonstrates Grafton’s position.
Table 5.3  Grafton’s Well-being Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Wellbeing Outcomes</th>
<th>Grafton and the Jacaranda Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality</td>
<td>✓ Free outdoor family entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate prosperity</td>
<td>✓ Income from visitors for duration of event, business and tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability</td>
<td>✓ Animates CBD, flowers in bloom, late spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>✓ Events for residents and visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>✓ Brings distinctive family and older generation of visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>✓ Investment sound from Council and business community, volunteer management of established program content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability</td>
<td>✓ Working to maintain community interest, though aging Committee; youth orientated program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The well-being criteria outlined above are at the very least aspirational. They demonstrate inclusive *triple bottom line* concepts that are now the focus of regional development strategic planning. They demonstrate how one can assess the wellbeing of each of the four communities hosting cultural festivals and identify the range of responses across the seven categories. They raise issues and ideas they are often lost to conventional assessment of a community’s needs and measurement of resources required to meet such needs. It would be useful to conduct conversations with various stakeholders regularly with these criteria to ensure festival organisers are satisfying the aspirations of each.

These results are linked to Wellbeing Building Blocks (Wills, 2001 34) that include democratic governance, active citizenship, social justice and social capital. These assist in clarifying how a sense of community and place contribute to regional cultural festivals. They can also demonstrate how such a festival can provide a clearer perspective of the health and connectivity of a community. These criteria have implications for such external stakeholders as government agencies and sponsors as they check this scorecard against the resources they may be called upon to invest in such a community festival.

The desirability of social capital to determine improved quality of life for residents, strengthening communities and for building capacity is demonstrated through the wellbeing building blocks in Grafton. It has implications for festival organisation and community resilience. The Jacaranda Festival expresses the social capital as outlined below.
Table 5.4 Grafton’s Well-being Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Building Blocks Components</th>
<th>Grafton and the Jacaranda Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic governance: Visions, goals, leadership, policies</td>
<td>✓ Community based non profit organisation linked to existing community infrastructure; longevity of delivery has established pattern of Council and volunteer involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active citizenship: Equal political, civil and civic rights</td>
<td>✓ Conservative community-based management group with Council, with sub-cultural groups contribute to program; traditional symbol of host community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice: Human rights, social supports, empowerment</td>
<td>✓ Traditional inclusive approach to program as umbrella and leverage for community cultural activity; program allows diverse elements to contribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital: Interpersonal and organisational trust, reciprocity and collective action</td>
<td>✓ Community collaboration evident through active participation and individual contributions to the annual program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 5.7 Jacaranda Museum
A custodian of the shopfront annual display of Jacaranda Festival memorabilia is ready to meet visitors. Past participants in the Queen competition are presented replete in crowns and sashes. The display includes outfits worn by previous Queens and Princesses, certification and photographic documentation of festivals.

5.3 Image and Identity

The Jacaranda Festival is closely aligned to the place and space of Grafton and the Clarence River. The colour of the flowers is an integral part of the festival’s psyche for participants and visitors. The features of the festival outlined above are key to the images that perpetuate its appeal in the market place. The visual quality of these elements informs general knowledge of the events. There is evidence that attachment to this place and this festival is something acquired over time – hence the appeal of the nostalgic aspects of the program. If a sense of time affects a sense of place, as suggested by Tuan (1977:186), the Jacaranda Festival offers young people a particular experience, distinct from that of older people.
The story of five young Australian rural women vying for the title 'Jacaranda Queen' is explored in the film *Purple Haze* (Hynes, 1998). It is set during Grafton's annual Jacaranda Festival, where winning means everything! The promotion on television and web (Hynes, 1998) suggested the film is about Grafton's 'Miss World' competition, a story full of drama and humour! It is 'Sylvania Waters' (a suburban reality television series) of rural Australia with a dash of the movie 'Muriel's Wedding'. The director, Katherine Hynes, was herself a Jacaranda Queen candidate and in the film she interviews real life candidates of the competition. Such imagery has done a great deal to set clear images of this festival in the eyes of the broader community.

### 5.4 Cultural tourism

Villages a short drive from Grafton have through time scheduled events deemed to attract visitors to Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival. At a charming old community hall in Seelands, fifteen minutes drive west of Grafton an annual exhibition of regional arts and crafts has been attracting visitors for over twenty years. Artists are on site offering demonstrations and workshops. Visitors are able to purchase works in wood, ceramics, glass, fibre, stone and metal. This is basic cultural tourism. This exhibition has attracted visitors from far afield because of the quality of workmanship and the renown of the artists. Many visitors stay longer in Grafton or the Clarence Valley as a result of their contact with Seelands.

The prestigious biennial national drawing award from which work is acquired for the Grafton Regional Gallery’s Collection of contemporary Australian drawing also occurs during the Jacaranda Festival. It is the richest drawing award in Australia and regularly attracts over 40 entrants from across the country. The $10,000 prizewinner is announced at a gala function held at Prentice House, the heritage building home of the Grafton Regional Gallery. This distinctive links with arts practice have provided a niche for tourism marketers.

The Grafton Regional Gallery for example value adds to the festival. It commissioned well-known North Coast artist Jeramie Carter to create an amazing range of jewellery to celebrate the Jacaranda Festival. The Jacaranda tree, flower and pod inspire the designs for the contemporary silver jewellery. Jeramie, is based in nearby Coramba. Jeramie is typical of nationally known artists whose works is locally inspired and who uses community festivals to make sense of place (Grafton City Council, 2005).

The Jacaranda Festival is a time for many local artisans to display their talent and avid collectors to show off their impressive collections (Jacaranda Festival, 2005). These include
Clarence Valley Tourism maintains a significant portfolio of promotional and interpretative material about trips visitors can make to places of heritage and community interest. Half day and daylong trips are encouraged more broadly to shipwrecks, remnants of early agricultural pursuits along the highways and some architectural examples of domestic and public buildings steeped in local relevance. The flat nature of the city and the grid street system encourages visitors to take time to explore beyond the hurly burly of the CBD festivities. Festival websites are used for promotion (e.g. Tourism NSW, 2006) and provide mechanisms to reinforce the festival story.

The beautiful purple-flowering jacaranda trees are an integral part of the image of Grafton, and their flowering is celebrated in the famous annual Jacaranda Festival. Combining the arts, sport, ceremony and fun, the festival, which originated in 1935 is Australia's longest running floral festival and showcases a cross-section of this city's culture and community.

### 5.5 Reflection

I found informal conversations with volunteer custodians at the Schaffer House Museum quite instructional. As long-term residents, they all decried the lapses with tradition in the content of the program and suggested distinctive elements like the maypole dancing by young people were an essential part of the unique selling proposition for the Festival. Many recounted experiences from their youth of their own participation in such public displays. They believed the inter-generational connections could be strengthened through the nostalgia framework. They were mindful of numbers of members of particular local families whose contributions each generation represented youthful participation in particular events, like the Queen and Princess competitions, demonstration in Market Square, leading into business involvement, sponsorship and engagement on the committee. Schaffer House Museum records the names of people in key roles and it is interesting to note the recurrence of family names.
This leads me to issues of succession management. For the outsider, it is almost like a familial heritage. One wonders how new settlers may break into the management of the Festival. While some program elements have changed and new interests are represented, the overall Festival organising committee appears to represent established interests. The organisational structure follows conventions listed in the literature, though Presidents of the organisation committee serve significant terms, eg. six years.

I have attended many Jacaranda Festivals and found the tone of the events reflective of the physical environment. There is a certain gravitas and solidity to the layout of the locations, the activities at each location and the reappearance each year of performances, displays and competitions is indicative of its apparent appeal to locals – tradition. People are having fun and meeting one another in an atmosphere of relaxation and reverie – under the banner of the annual arrival of the lilac blossoms.

The lilac motif is all-pervasive. During the nation-wide celebrations for the 2000 Olympic Games, residents were urged to welcome the touring Olympic Torch to the city streets bedecked in their finest lilac livery. On all civic occasions the lilac of the Jacaranda blossom is invoked. This is carried through into tourism promotional material. In recent times Grafton has been subsumed into an amalgamated arrangement with four neighbouring local government jurisdictions, so there as been a softening of the overt use of the Jacaranda image to embrace the broader landscape, ensuring that Grafton has the Jacaranda, but there are other motifs for identifying the coast, the river and the hinterland.

### 5.6 Discussion

Berg’s notion (2002:8) that we not only inherit culture, but also actively make it is noted in the reinvention that has taken place in the Grafton Jacaranda Festival over its long history. Purple Haze (a documentary video, 1996) explores the connectivity of individuals, families and residents to the Jacaranda Festival through past, present and future scenarios. The film documents the experiences of active participants – particularly Queen candidates and festival organisers. Its broadcast nationally on ABCTV raised considerable comment related to the idiosyncratic traditions maintained into the 1990s.

The film demonstrates how place-making emerges from the festival and how individuals who may have just been concerned with ‘self’ are bound to the festival and its place through nostalgia generated by participation. While each festival is transient, the legacy of
involvement ties people to place and the people with whom they have shared that environment. What becomes obvious is that festivals not only represent and reflect the voices of current key community individuals and groups, but it can also determine future voices that will impact on the festival and wider community. What is clear, however, is that this festival binds the community together. The Jacaranda Festival’s longevity usefully highlights the transitions and realignments over time that are conducive to resilience.

The Jacaranda Festival demonstrates the significance of childhood experience in determining a sense of place. The strong link between people and places is infused with meaning and identity. This is reminiscent of Relph’s work in *Place and Placeness* (1976) and Stedman (2002) revealing the importance of symbolic meanings and personal identification with a setting. Those interviewed at the Festival indicated an ongoing willingness to be involved because they maintained a connection to their youthful memories of the festival engagement and its earlier settings.

This nostalgia for a place and its people, especially a place once known intimately (Stokowski, 2002) has assisted Festival organisers to consistently appeal to tradition. It is evident that many elements of the Jacaranda Festival program have remained faithful to the original intent of community inclusiveness and participation. The location of specific activities has remained unchanged over time and this has contributed to the willingness of residents, particularly, to annually pick up on the connection with particular pursuits and displays. This is noticeable with the use of the Clarence River at the end of Prince Street where people assemble to watch water-based activities revealing the importance of recreational activities in people's connections with special historical places.

There is an authenticity observed from the repeat visitors to the Festival that appears to emerge from the lived experience, and the intangible essence of place (MacLeod, 2006) that comes from an intimate knowledge of the locale. The link between action and place, even in a contemporary context, builds the nostalgia and it becomes part of the heritage tourism promotion undertaken by the Festival. There is an intimacy that is developed through long term connections with this Festival for many participants and so for them there’s a ‘real’ quality to their engagement they find appealing, as distinct from a commercial or globalised phenomenon which they reject.

The organisers have been torn between picking up on the tourism promotion opportunities and the commodification of the traditions to ‘grow’ the Festival and ensuring minimising social meaningfulness to residents. This is a core tension evident in all four festivals in the
study, as the process of alienation for locals and pandering to visitors can engender feelings of displacement or placelessness (MacLeod, 2006:224) for long-term supporters of the Festival. At the Jacaranda Festival, organisers have been keen to build innovation slowly and have used the revival of ‘local pride’ at different times. This is hard work. To try to retain the inherent meanings of the Jacaranda celebrations for locals has meant at times organisers have borne criticism for being ‘old fashioned’. Getz, (1994:313) discusses the impact of visitors on festival engagement on residents. This is an issue for Byron Bay (see Chapter Seven) when observing the different ways residents and visitors experience an event.

The rich traditions demonstrated in the design and conduct of this festival serves to highlight the importance of who owns the festival. By holding the festival close the community’s collective chest, a type of resilience is delivered that provides a buffer in the face of increasing social and economic volatility. Each of the case study festivals has different origins and the models they use to grow their festival appear to influence the levels of resilience evident. The nature and extent of the resilience varies between each and an analysis of the Jacaranda Festival reveals a clear portrait of a successful event through the continuum. This continuum can be represented thus:

1. Participant individual and group appreciation of a sense of place & community that galvanises
2. Level of collaboration that actions the design and delivery a festival that
3. Develops and becomes the engine that drives
4. The festival as a mechanism of building capacity and fun and trust to
5. Ensure core components make a difference in festival and community resilience.

This cyclical framework ensures that the learnings accrued along the way are invested in the next iteration of interactivity. They raise some characteristics that provide predictive tools for organisations and communities to better prepare the most effective resilience model for them (Community Resilience Manual, 1999:12). Such observations within each specific community can focus the process to prioritise and plan more inclusively.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of how residents accept and contribute to a long established community celebration. The straightforward and simple format describes the environmental contexts for the festival, some processes and practices undertaken to deliver the event annually. It represents responses from residents and visitors, documentation held in the public domain and my own participant observation over a number of years. It broadly
outlines the component elements of the festival’s functionality as well as a sense of belonging it offers residents. This framework is employed in each of the case studies to assist in arriving at some consistent conclusions arising from the three key areas of a sense of place and community, image and identity and cultural tourism and how these contribute to organisational and community resilience.

The Jacaranda Festival and the Grafton community demonstrate some of the major components of resilience by conscientiously practicing collaboration and co-operation with a variety of internal and external stakeholders. These partnerships enable the festival to be innovative and risk taking on occasion. The festival demonstrates engagement with local government and major well-established groups in business, sport and recreation, the arts, youth activities and services sector by providing an umbrella function to showcase the strength of each. Leaders of the festival organisation recognise the importance of working with others to enhance the image residents and visitors get of the festival. They encourage participation from all. They create a program of events that are accessible, comfortable and reflect values held by the broader community. The festival feels authentic to participants, for the older settlers and newcomers who recognise the ‘quaintness’ of the event. While there may be resistance to change amongst some people in the community at times, the festival appears to break down the reluctance more with the times.

This chapter outlines how the oldest floral festival in Australia has been sustained over many years. It indicates how it has been revived and refreshed during the seventy years and how its durability has been dependent on the volunteer commitment of individuals and their willingness to make practical their routine relationships for a special purpose. This chapter and the following case studies offer a snapshot of a situation at a given time. They explain connections and relationships and show regional social systems as informal, organic and with little mediation.
Chapter 6: Casino: Beef Cattle Capital

This chapter investigates the annual Casino Beef Week festival. Casino Beef Week commenced in 1982 following a public meeting held to discuss options for an annual festival. The Mayor of Casino, Gerry Kelly, invited former Casino resident and business consultant Michael Zann to assist the town to come up with an idea to promote the town and region. When Mr Zann was told that the local economy was largely dependent on the beef industry he suggested that beef be the focus of a festival.

The rest, as they say, is history.

The first festival was small but introduced the concept that has made Casino Beef Week unique - cattle in the main street (Casino Beef Week, 2003).

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 6.0   Face of Beef Week

This image of a youthful auctioneer calling the cattle sale in the main street of Casino during Beef Week’s community festival day represents the quintessential elements of this community event. The fresh faced, clean-cut industry linchpin draws the crowd to prime animal husbandry. The cattle are sold off after a day of competition between stockowners. Locals and visitors come for the animals. The festival is based on the industry, but the variety of peripheral activities during the five day celebrations suggest that there is more to this event than beef.

I’ve been attending Beef Week celebrations for years. For me the day of the parade each year at Casino Beef Week brings outdoors, into Casino’s CBD, thousands of folk who look alike! The distinctive outerwear for spectators and event participants seems proscribed. It is like there is a uniform comprised of elasticized leather boots, jeans, blue shirts or the more popular checked shirt, the cowboy hat or iconic Australian Akubra in all its distinctive guises. It appears as unisex attire. It is intergenerational attire. Locals and visitors alike appropriate this dress code. It seems to say Casino! It is a standout feature of the photographs included in
this chapter. While visually cohesive, it also suggests comfort with resident sense of identity and image. In fact, advertisements in Beef Week from one business promote itself ‘...are a genuine country clothing store supplying clothes, hats and boots to the Casino area and all over the world’ (The Northern Star, 2005:2). Others wish to break down the stereotype of bad hair, checkered shirts and faded too-tight jeans and have introduced festival events highlighting a more contemporary style.

6.1 Introduction

Casino is a small regional town inland from the Pacific coast in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. It is situated on both sides of the Richmond River. The Richmond River starts in the Border Ranges to the north-west of the town and by the time it reaches Casino flows between high banks. Activities for the annual Beef Week festival are located on both sides of the river. Like Grafton, most activities in Casino are hosted in the central business district (CBD), though the town’s sale yards, abattoir and sporting fields also host specific events.

Casino is a gateway to the region’s wilderness retreats and via the Bruxner Highway to the national parks of the northern tablelands, via the Great Dividing Range to the west. It is also a primary stopover on the Summerland Way, the alternative inland route between Brisbane and Coffs Harbour. This is the country beyond the coast, and some say, ‘the Real Australia’ (Casino, valley of Surprises, 2003). Casino is located 726 km north of Sydney and 228 km south of Brisbane. It is the rail and freight hub for the far north coast of New South Wales and best known as a beef production and agricultural centre with an annual rainfall of 1107 mm.

Prior to European settlement, the Casino district was part of the lands inhabited by the Bundjalung Aborigines. It is unclear how many Bundjalung lived around Casino although one report dating from 1840 talks about a gathering of a 'mob of wild blacks numbering five hundred or upwards' (ibid). The Bundjalung spread across the area and their territory reached as far north as Toowoomba and included the modern-day towns of Tenterfield and Warwick. One of the annual rituals of the Bundjalung people was the movement to the coast during the winter months when the mullet were plentiful. The inland peoples from around Casino brought black bean seeds with them to trade for the fish (Casino Valley of Surprises, 2003).

The first European to discover the mouth of the Richmond River was Captain Henry John Rous who entered the river and sailed about 20 miles (32 km) up river. He subsequently named the river Richmond after the fifth Duke of Richmond. It wasn't until 1838 that a group
of cedar cutters entered the lower Richmond Valley. It was around this time that Henry Clay and George Stapleton took up land along the Richmond River where they claimed 30,000 acres. They named their property 'Cassino' which was named after the beautiful town of Monte Cassino in Italy.

Cedar cutters came early to the lower reaches of the Richmond Valley. The first evidence of a settlement occurred at a place known as 'The Falls' in the early 1850s. In 1855 the Surveyor General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, declared the need for a town in the valley with suburban allotments and a proper subdivision. This was the site of 'The Falls' which was renamed Cassino. Why the spelling was changed from Cassino no one knows. It was in 1855 that the town was officially gazetted (Casino Valley of Surprises, 2003). Robert Dawson, who arrived in the area in 1870, described it as 'a drab little village though there were some buildings of fair pretensions' and observed that 'roads were almost non-existent, only rough bush tracks being available' and that 'nowhere on the Richmond were there any banks, churches, newspapers or telegraph lines' (ibid).

Today, Casino has a population of around 12,000 (shire-wide population, 20,369, ABS 2001). It is a thriving rural centre that relies heavily on the region's cattle and local timber industries. To appreciate the scale of the local cattle industry it is worth noting that over 120,000 head of cattle are sold at the Casino Livestock Selling Centre each year. The Beef Week festival responds to an industry that is well established in the host community psyche. The shire wide population includes the smaller villages of, Broadwater – 408, (Casino – 9522), Coraki – 1159, Evans Head – 2614, Rappville – 115, Rural areas - 5941 and Woodburn – 513. Residents of these small communities have their own endemic events, but recognise the emblematic nature of Beef Week for the whole Shire.

This chapter uses the same research framework applied to each of the four case studies. The annual Beef Week Festival hosted by Casino residents is explored below. The working class town is proud of the festival that developed over 20 years to represent the image and identity of its residents. Implications arising from the rich description presented are analysed in Chapter Eight.

The chapter explores the relationship Beef Week in Casino has with residents, place and visitors. The influences and impacts are drawn out, illustrated and discussed.
6.2 Casino’s Beef Week and a sense of place and community

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 6.1  Direct line
Notice the juxtaposition of the key element of the Beef Week festival - cattle in the main street. This image highlights the stakeholders in the festivities, the primary industry, the value adding in the CBD retail outlet and the visitors including international tourists.

Origins of Casino’s Beef Week
The annual Casino Beef Week held in late May each year is one of the premier pastoral events on the Australian livestock calendar with exhibitors from all over eastern Australia. The town has a robust year round recreational and sporting calendar of events. However, the major community events are Beef Week and the agricultural show. Both of these are reliant on strong links to the cattle industry and like many volunteer community based organisation vulnerable to the shifts in community and industry.

It was late in 1981 that the idea of staging an annual event, celebrating the town and the industry so vital to its existence first became a reality (The Northern Star, 1993:19.) The Casino Municipal Council at that time received advice from a consultant and made the initial suggestion to a group of Casino citizens who then took up the challenge, forming the first Beef Week Committee.

That initial Committee organised events and garnered sponsorship for the first Beef Week held in May 1982. The success of the first Beef Week exceeded all expectations. The enthusiasm for such a celebration came from many people in town and the surrounding countryside involved in various aspects of the beef industry. Beef Week’s popularity grew as the number of community-based organisations seeking to be part of the program grew. The
festival provided an umbrella for diverse pursuits to entertain the locals and showcase their particular interests. The Committee, renamed the Beef Week Promotions Group, moved toward incorporation in 1986.

The Committee initially relied heavily on sponsorship from the Municipal and Richmond River Shire Councils (later combined to become Richmond Valley Council), many businesses, shops, banks, newspapers, local radio and television stations. Service clubs gave generously of their time and efforts to man food outlets for many of the Beef Week functions. The local meat processing company was integral to the scope of the event. A majority of the events on the annual program have maintained sponsorship from the same organisation each year. Amounts have not increased markedly over the years. It has been more of a donation that a contractual partnership that can ensure financial viability for the organisers.

The Beef Week Promotions Group had twin objectives, the promotion of Casino for investment and tourism and the beef industry. Linking beef to the identity of the town for promotional purposes from the beginning was critical for the branding that has subsequently delivered notoriety for the event and the town. With Casino as the hub, urban and rural citizens became involved with the celebrations. The breadth of each annual program seeks to reflect a coming together of many interests under one banner – Beef!

One time President, Col Sullivan remarks,

it should be called a celebration of the beef industry rather than a promotional exercise. It demonstrates public enthusiasm and increasing participation (The Northern Star, 1993:19).

Over the years individuals and groups in the community have been drawn into a series of public activities, many centred on the CBD and showcasing specific local interests. A community committee was established with personnel like inaugural President Thomas George and Secretary, Verla Hayes maintaining management positions in the organisation for many years. Verla’s long experience in the agricultural show area stood her in good stead to establish links with the cattle industry. Verla was in the role for over 15 years. In recent times, Sandra Humphrys and Sue Serone have been dedicated Festival co-ordinators funded from donations and fundraising for the event.

The Beef Week festivities annually raise the debate about whether Casino is indeed the ‘beef capital’ of the country, as it seeks to promote itself. Rockhampton in Queensland also lays claim to the crown, basing this on the huge numbers of cattle within its district. The Rockhampton festival is held every three years and focuses more heavily on industry through
trade fairs and conferences. Casino is satisfied now with using the beef cattle theme for its community celebrations. Competition is also now coming from other inland regional centres like Dubbo, NSW. Casino recognises that with the changes to land use in the Northern Rivers, much of the cattle produced locally has slowly moved west. Friendly exchanges are often reported in the media between Rockhampton and Casino over which centre holds the title of beef capital of Australia. Brahman breeder and Casino Beef Week Queen for 2003 attended celebrations in Rockhampton and claimed the atmosphere up north was not at ecstatic and the community not so involved as demonstrated in Casino (Elsley, 2004:4).

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 6.2 Catching up
Bales of hay are placed in the main streets encouraging attendees to stop and chat. Beef Week provides many informal ways for neighbours to catch up with one another.

Visitors to the town notice the window decorations. Rae McLean (pers.com. 2004) spent many years working in a local stock and station agency and annually decorated her business’ window with the dedicated theme and encouraged her colleagues to ‘dress up’ appropriately. Since her retirement, she has taken a position on the organising committee to co-ordinate this distinctive feature of the business community’s involvement with Beef Week. Most businesses in town participate. It provides humour, colour and movement and an opportunity for good-natured rivalry amongst business houses.

Schier (2004:7) reports on a family who have participated in the staff dress up every Casino Beef Week. The theme for 2004 was books and the family that runs Nance’s Shoe Store decided on King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Irene Hamilton reports that each year children line up at their shop to see the elaborate costumes of the staff. ‘We love
being part of Beef Week. Casino is my hometown and it’s a great promotion for our town’ (quoted in Schier, 2004:7).

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 6.3  Street beef

The image of beef from ‘gate to plate’ is exemplified as the cattle exhibited in Walker Street are tethered outside a butcher’s shop! A wide variety of beef cattle breeds are lined up for an educational public display on the main day of the program. The cattle are moved, along with their accoutrements, in time for the annual street parade on the Saturday afternoon.

The signature aspect of Casino Beef Week is having animals in the main street. Animals in the main street have not been unknown in rural towns – especially in parades and harvest celebrations. During Beef Week, though, the main thoroughfare of Walker Street is noticeable for the absence of motor vehicles and the corralling of high quality beef cattle in preparation for judging and auctioning. Owners speak with visitors as their animals are temporarily tethered in the centre of the wide street. Thousands of spectators watch well groomed animals led by owners and handlers, including school students from agricultural classrooms across the state, in a street parade. The parade includes champions, class winners from the stud beef bull and heifer show judged earlier in the festival. There are formalities borrowed from the agricultural show circuit with white coated placard bearers walking in front letting the public know the names of each breed. This exposure of animals to the community gaze is a distinctive feature of the festival. It provides headaches for organisers, the vigilant Occupational Health and Safety supervisors and for the event insurers. There has been no evidence over twenty years of protests from animals rights activists.

Timing
Casino’s Beef Week has not always been a week-long event. Over the years it has been extended into a twelve-day festive expression of an industry and a town at play. In 2004 the
organising committee shortened the duration to one week as it was felt that existing human resources could not manage the drawn out program. As well, the needs of visitors were taken into account. A more compact program was seen as addressing their needs. Beef Week has occurred annually at the end of May since 1982. The timing is due more to pragmatic choices in terms of climate and extending visitors’ stays than a connection with the beef industry per se.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 6.4  Beef Week Office

Beef Week is managed from a shopfront office during weeks prior to the actual celebrations. This helps in raising the profile of the event in the locals’ minds and encourages interaction for last minute administrative activities like entries for competitions, sale of merchandise etc. At other times of the year the paid co-ordinator and volunteers are engaged irregularly.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 6.5  Beef Week staff

The friendly Beef Week Committee Secretary and support staff is busy in the festival office dealing with day-to-day organisational matters.
**Beef Week Program**

The annual program is published and distributed widely within the host community and throughout the region. Beef Week maintains a comprehensive expose of the local beef and agricultural industries. Some activities take place in the centre of town (especially on the parade day), as well as the Regional Livestock Selling Centre at Nammoona on the northern outskirts of Casino. Workers at the Northern Co-operative Meat Company participate with activities on site, at the sale-yards nearby and at the Breakfast with the Butchers. Trophies are awarded to cattle producers for specific breeds and quality production. Breakfast with the Butchers takes another angle on the industry and regularly attracts thousands of people for a free, healthy start to the day. A milking competition is staged in the main street and is sponsored by local dairy company, NORCO.

These elements of the program demand substantial logistical collaboration. The community is not averse to rallying together to place vehicles, equipment and hardware in public places to encourage participation in events that are part of the umbrella – Beef Week. This demonstrates resilience, as each year teams of people from across the community deliver this back up for the festival. As well, this experience has had positive implications for other major community activities.

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**Figure removed due to copyright restrictions**

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**Image 6.6  Audience engagement**

*People of diverse ages sit to watch street entertainment prior to the Parade.*

In planning and delivering the annual program organisers include attractions that fit the local demographics. Precincts are set up on kerbside and roadways in the CBD offering commercial fairground amusement rides and merchandise beside service clubs serving fast food. This element of the main day is not unlike the family mix apparent at Grafton’s Jacaranda Festival. Specialist competitions like the wood-chopping or the display of shining
cars and bikes are clustered elsewhere. Beef Week is embedded as a social institution in the town and the pace of activity is quite slow as friends and neighbours engage in conversations. Some activities are replicated year after year in the program indicating there is little challenge to the status quo. In fact they reinforce Casino’s cultural distinctiveness. The introduction of Beef on Barker a food-featured event that flagged a different approach to connecting beef with the public was conducted for three years is discussed below. The generic festival program is outlined in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1  Casino Beef Week Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parade</td>
<td>Street parade beef, horse, community groups, music; street stalls; competition categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business activity</td>
<td>Window judging and staff dress up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performances</td>
<td>Battle of the Bands – high schools; Dinner Theatre (visiting artists); Gala Dinner dance; Casino Beef Week Country Music Talent Quest; Fancy Dress Parade;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street activity</td>
<td>Breakfast (‘the Big Brekkie’) with the Butchers; Beef on Barker; Cattle Auction; Beef Carcass Expo; Casino’s wireless outside broadcast;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor activity</td>
<td>Casino Race Day; Horrie Bone Memorial Rodeo; Family Day at Casino Showground; Country Bus Tour; Annual Kennel Club Competition; School Busking Competition; Cattle dog trials; Draft horse Field Day; Riding Club Hack Show; Trotting Gymkhana; Pet Display &amp; Animal Nursery; Woodchp Program;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Activity</td>
<td>Casino Beef Week Quilting Fair; Fashion Spectacular; Kids Corner; Casino Beef Week Assembly of Arts Exhibition; ‘Mr Beef’ competition at RSM Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Miss Casino Beef Week Queen; Casino Rural Lands Protection Board’s Student Story and Picture competition; Celebration of Thanksgiving by Casino Christian Community; Beef Producer Workshop; Open Days on beef properties; Home Brew Competition; Kids and Cattle Day series of workshops; U-Beaut Ute Competition;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 6.7  Beef street auction

At the intersection of Walker and Barker Streets a sales enclosure is established on the main day of the program. Sawdust is laid down and cattle are paraded and auctioned. The key focus of the beef industry is clearly an attractor and this aspect of the event is very popular. People are seated and concentrate for hours as the business of beef is transacted.
One of the significant cultural aspects of Beef Week each year is the Queen competition. Major cattle breed groups endorse young women who vie for the title of Beef Week Queen. There is a crowning and prize giving function to which the special festival guest is also invited to crown the winner and to undertake other profile raising tasks during the event. Young women from 18 – 25 are encouraged to participate in this key activity of Beef Week. Breeders of such cattle types as Angus, Brangus, Hereford, Murray Greys, Poll Hereford and Santa Gertrudis support women who are students or locally employed residents. This feature of the festival attracts the most ridicule in the wider region gauging responses on talkback radio. However, it is reminiscent of the popular post-war practice in community festivals Australia-wide, when queen competitions were seen as worthy community engagement. In Casino, like Grafton, money initially raised in the conduct of the Queen competition went to charity, but now organisers maintain they would not receive any nominations if this were a condition of participation.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

**Image 6.8  Industry engagement**

Young people are encouraged to engage with the industry side of the festival. Serious competition exists between young aspiring cattle breeders. They groom their animals assiduously for exhibition and sale. Schools from the local district and across the state compete with beef cattle during the festival.

The Queen competition has always sought entrants with a broad knowledge of beef breeds. ‘We get girls of all shapes and sizes; all possessed of outstanding personalities and all are outstanding ambassadors for Beef Week’, Sue Serone Casino Beef Week Co-ordinator in 2004 said (Merton, 2004:5). While entrants continue to be rural, their association with beef breeds appears to have diminished over the year and their interest suggests Ms Serone. Merton reports that the 2003 Beef Queen, Stacey Clark has always had a part in Casino Beef Week. As a kid she watched the street parade and as she grew she became involved in the junior rodeo, showing cattle and Beef Week organisation. Then she decided to see the other side of Beef Week and entered the Beef Week Queen competition, representing Brahman cattle (Merton, The Northern Star, 2004:5).
The float for the Beef Week Queen gets attention prior to the 2004 street parade. It leads the parade. Over the years the parade has featured community groups in themed floats, people of all ages in costume from schools, service clubs, business and industry representation from Casino and the broader Richmond Valley district. Floats are eligible for prizes.

Clark, in a Letter to the Editor, comments on her experience as she passes on the crown and her feelings about a year as Beef Week Queen. She comments

I can honestly say that it has been a privilege to be crowned as the 2003 Country Energy Miss Casino Beef Week Queen. …Casino Beef Week is known everywhere. Congratulations to the community of Casino for making each Casino Beef Week a memorable event for all…the annual festival is enjoyed immensely by locals and visitors. I have promoted the beef industry, the Casino community and been an ambassador for Beef Week whilst representing the Brahman breed (The Northern Star, 2004:21).

The winner in 2004, 17 year-old Karen Trustum, also represented the Brahman. Hicks (2004:8) reports Ms Trustum impressed judges with her extensive knowledge of the breed. She had long aspired to be Miss Casino Beef Week. She expressed a preference for working with cattle rather than going out to a party, ‘you get more out of cows than drunk people’ (Hicks, The Northern Star, 2004:8). This hasn’t stopped the introduction of a whimsical agenda for the festival. ‘Mr. Beef” has seen a male version of the glamour aspect of the festival feature as a cabaret competition with a growing following especially amongst the young crowd at the Returned Services Memorial (RSM) Club.

The program addresses important elements of local recreation in a heightened celebratory atmosphere. Sporting events provide a significant contribution to the overall Beef Week program. Large crowds turn out for the Beef Week Cup part of the horseracing schedule and for those who follow greyhounds, the Casino Greyhound Racing Club conducts a meet.
Strong interest was demonstrated, with nominations received for each event. There have been fun runs, over three distances, 1.5kms, 2.7kms and 7 km in nine separate categories. The course for each takes participants out of the CBD and around the Jabiru-Goonoboinga Wetlands and to North Casino.

Community spirit is demonstrated in competitions like the Tug-O-War that allows groups like the drinkers at the Cecil Pub to challenge the Teachers. The scheduled rugby leagues game on their home turf allows the Casino Cougars to take on another regional team with a positive local audience. The Rugby Union code also tries to schedule a game during Beef Week. Wood chopping is a popular sport and entertaining spectacle. It is generally held in Barker Street in the CBD in front of the Tatts Hotel. Demonstrations of sports like archery, held on street level in the CBD and snooker held at the Casino Returned Service Men’s Club continue to be popular.

A number of regular features attract strong local participation. The Beef Week Hoedown is a popular social and musical event. The ‘toe-tappin’ entertainment is held at Queen Elizabeth Park across the river from the town’s CBD. With a distinctive country and western flavour the event hosts local and imported celebrity singers, line dancers and bush poets. This type of entertainment builds on the proliferation of buskers taking part in the annual main street competition for prize-money.

The Casino Beef Week Car and Bike Show provides a static display of vintage, street machines, sports and hot rod cars and motorbikes in Canterbury Street. Hundreds of enthusiasts inspect each vehicle, vote for their favourite and engage in detailed conversations with owners and other spectators. Models are sparkling. Photographs and substantial documentation accompany many of the vehicles. There is a presentation of trophies completes this discrete, focused element of the overall festivity. A subset of this group, over forty year old members of the Ulysses Club of motorbike enthusiasts, gather for a meeting to discuss how they can uphold their motto, *grow old disgracefully!*

On the big day it seems many specific activities occur adjacent to a pub. There is drinking on the streets as spectators of the square dancing, rock and roll dancers, whip cracking or the wood-chop events regularly return to the licensed premises for refills. Outside the Tattersalls Hotel where the woodchop competition is staged the juxtaposition of the Country Women’s Association hot cup of tea stand seems to clearly demonstrate the breadth and depth of local involvement in the events.
In 2004, the shape of Beef Week changed. It became a weeklong festival again (having started out that way in the early 1980s). The compact program was seen by long time volunteer Iris Cruickshank as a way to better negotiate tourists. She stated that

Beef Week has evolved over the years. It is a unique festival. At what other festival will you find stud cattle worth thousands of dollars on show in the main street of the town? People can come right up and pat the cattle and talk to the breeders right there! (in Jack, *The Northern Star*, 2004:4).

Like other members of the organising committee Ms Cruikshank has been involved with a specific aspect of the festival’s program. She had been an organiser of the Miss Beef Week quest that started in 1983. She also highlighted the break with tradition as the Queen crowing ceremony was moved from its original outdoor, open-air mainstreet location to inside the local Returned Servicemen’s Club.

There are numerous families with long-term connections with the festival. The family ambience of the celebratory program is reflected in the involvement of different generations in the organising of Casino’s festivities. The Serone family is one such family.

**Vignette**

The Serones have had a hand in the organising of the festival since its inception. Terry, who holds a job at the Casino abattoir, has served as President of the organisation since 1998. His wife Sue became the administrator of Beef Week in 2004 for the first time. Their daughter Mandy Gray was Beef Week Queen in 2002 and shows ‘led steers’ while Sue’s brother Garry has a sponsorship role and his wife Sheryle is a Beef Week office assistant (*The Land*, 2004:13). Sue has been involved with many aspects of the festival’s program over the years including the fashion parade, children’s activities, stud cattle and led steer judging as well as managing the family’s Santa Gertrudis stud farm and holding a job as an administrative clerk at the Casino abattoir.

In the Beef Week office for the 2004 festival Sue’s support staff included Janet Caban and Marion Frame who had experience in managing aspects of regional agricultural shows. The office at a street front location allows for a busy exchange with officials, visitors and guests of the festival. Ms Caban, who has a long association with Beef Week would like to be remembered as ‘a gofah – that’s what we call people who go for this and go for that’ (*The Land*, 2004:13).

A snapshot of Beef Week provided by the Arts Northern Rivers study (Anderson and Talmacs, 2006) acknowledges the propensity of free events, with only four events ticketed. The 2005 audience is estimated to be between 16,000 – 20,000 with 44% repeat visitation. Over 20% of respondents to the survey stayed between 2 – 4 nights with 20% staying in paid accommodation. The cattle in the street on the day of the street parade were the favourite
aspect of the festival for 48% of respondents. Perceptions of the event as a family event were 26% and 19% considered a balance of family and arts activity.

**Beef Week and Richmond Valley Council**

Strong support for Casino Beef Week from the outset came from Casino Municipal Council. Successive Mayors, Jim Dargaville, Dr Senthil Vasan, Col Sullivan, Charlie Cox have worked closely with promotions Committee Chairs Thomas George, Col Sullivan, Terry Serone and Sandra Humphrys and Secretaries, Verla Hayes, Sandra Humphrys, Sue Serone and Jan Caban. In the early years the minutes of the Committee meetings were regularly tabled at Council meetings. The Minutes of Council meetings during the early years were instructive for me as I sought to understand the complex links between community groups and a Council initiative. Council records provide comprehensive coverage of a relationship that involved direct financial assistance, assistance in kind, promotional support, participation and leadership during events held in Beef Week and involved delegates from Council on the festival Committee. It appears residents trusted local government involvement because it was ‘closer to the people’. This reinforces the traditional view of local government as a service provider.

Council owns the logo used by the Promotions Committee (Council file 55.17.3 p 67 - 22.1.87). It was designed/commissioned on September 27, 1982. The Casino Chamber of Commerce was initially authorized to use it until it assigned its interest to the Casino Beef Week Promotions Committee Inc. Council continues to take responsibility for logistical support, bunting, street closures, barricades and some promotion. Now there is a financial figure attached to the ‘in-kind’ support offered. Council regularly contributes a float to the parade with elected members and staff on board. The Beef Week Promotions Committee wrote to Council (7 November, 1985) Council for suitable office space in centre of town at street level. Council was unable to assist.

There is no record of a Development Application being required for the Festival during the first 20 years. A tradition has developed whereby by an annual request comes from the organising committee to Council for logistical support for street closures, parking, waste management and staff support on sites. As Council began to evaluate its involvement with Beef Week and other events amongst their constituency, a more formal relationship has occurred since 2000.
### Vignette

Casino Council was a gold sponsor in 1989 and were entitled to have passes to a number of functions. Council was formally represented at the Beef Week Ball, Pre Ball Cocktail party, Beef Week Fashion Spectacular, Country and Western Hoedown, Champagne Dinner & TAB Race Meeting. (Casino Municipal Council, 9.5.89 – Council Minutes 55.17.3 p 212).

In the Mayor’s Message, Jim (JL) Dargaville Mayor, thanked the community for its support for Beef Week. He noted that the people of Casino and the region have shown extremely enthusiastic approach towards displaying and participating in the annual event. Bigger and better this year, with a very active committee and a receptive public. (Casino Municipal Council, 31.5.89, 55.17.3, (1) p 226)

Sandra Humphrys, a Board Member of the Casino Beef Week Promotions Committee (2003) was the Co-ordinator/Treasurer is a Councilor on Richmond Valley Council. She suggested (pers.com. 2003) that the organisers and Council work hard to make contact annually with all groups and individuals throughout the shire, especially with Casino residents. Schools and community groups from the outlying communities are all invited to contribute to the festival parade.

Council has adopted an Event Strategy. It outlines the potential relationship each community based and private festival or event can have with Council. Funds are allocated annually for distribution amongst applicants that believe their event will support the objectives of Council in providing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. In recent times Richmond Valley Council has employed an Events Co-ordinator to specifically enhance the district’s event capacity with a specific focus on the Caravan and Motorhomes Association that has committed a substantial investment into Casino. They will bring substantial numbers of travelers to Casino annually who require engagement (Richmondnet, 2003). A monthly event update is provided on the website. In 2006 Council employed a culture and events Co-ordinator.

While there has been criticism about how well Council connects with local events, it is interesting to note the emergence of the Casino’s Olive Festival based on the growing horticultural sector within the region. Richmond Valley Council has taken this event into its portfolio of festivals linked to their Valley of Surprises promotion. Once again there are enterprises keen to brand Casino as alert to entrepreneurial activity. An opportunity has been identified to link both olive and beef for the experience of prospective regional gourmets who are keen to support a food festival away from the coast. Inevitably it will be the management and leadership of such a collaboration that will come under scrutiny. No shortage exists of residents or locals willing to participate in the programs both the beef and olive events offer.
Council is particularly interested in governance issues. Organisational resilience is tested when such eventualities as financial loss is incurred. In 2006 the Beef Week Committee announced it had lost $21,000 and was faced with choices like abandoning the event or conducting it every second year. The Mayor, Charlie Cox, called on the community to work with Council and the Committee to ensure the event had a future. Gardner (2006:7) quotes Cox you have to recognise the importance of the festival and its connections with industry and economy. Council has supported it from its inception and we have always been there. Beef Week definitely has a future, but if it needs additional funding I urge the wider community and business houses to get behind it.

**Wellbeing Factors**
Community wellbeing can be described as having such outcomes for residents as livability, sustainability, viability and vitality (Wills, 2001). The wellbeing model assists in evaluating the relative and comparative success of Casino’s Beef Week.

Observations of Casino’s Beef Week experience provides analysis of how it fares against the criteria and these observations may be compared with other events in the region to give a picture of the social capital accrued. It provides an examination of quality of life indicators that reflect social and cultural capital. These dimensions are explored in table 6.2 below in relation to the distinctive features of traditional cultural activities represented in the Beef Week Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.2 Casino’s Well-being Dimensions</th>
<th>Community Wellbeing Outcomes</th>
<th>Casino and Beef Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality</td>
<td>✔ Free outdoor family entertainment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate prosperity</td>
<td>✔ Income from visitors for duration of event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability</td>
<td>✔ Animates CBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>✔ Events for residents and visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>✔ Brings distinctive agri-business visitors, enhanced family friendly street life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Precarious now after years of effective appeal, previously sound investment, volunteer/professional management required, diversification of content or new niche focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability</td>
<td>Previous hard work to maintain community interest in disarray and management and content through programs like Beef on Barker required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The well-being criteria outlined has been modified in the course of the research. As is explained below a substantial commitment by the community to the celebrations is currently not matched by the capacity of a volunteer committee to deliver. So, in line with the proforma
of this exercise, the community aspires to access a viable festival compatible with a self-image of pride in a local industry, but currently the mechanism to best deliver this is under pressure. Nonetheless, it contributes to the community resilience baseline data required for ongoing planning.

The desirability of social capital as a means of improving the quality of life for residents, strengthening communities and building capacity is now part of the robust public discussion underway in Casino. Over time Beef Week has clearly demonstrated the social capital as outlined below. This is based on a community with cultural and linguistic diversity representing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders = 5.5% of population and 89.8% of population = born in Australia, 5% of population = born overseas and 1.5% of population = who speak a language other than English and 0.2% overseas visitors. The indigenous population of the Richmond Valley LGA has increased from a total of 898 persons in 1996 (4.3%) to 1124 persons in 2001(5.5%). This is significantly higher than the State proportion of 1.8%, (Richmond Valley Community Profile, 2003).

In comparison with other Local Government Areas (LGAs) on the North Coast, the Richmond Valley LGA has a relatively small proportion of people from culturally diverse backgrounds 5.3%. Of those born overseas, they are from mainly non-English speaking countries 2%. The implications for the festival program is what is seen as a typical Aussie set of entertainments grounded in what are felt traditional bush pursuits. Single parent families have increased from 17.7% in 1996 to 21% in 2001. Two parent families without children have also increased from 32.7% in 1996 to 36% in 2001. Two parent families with children have decreased from 47% in 1996 to 41% in 2001 (ABS 1998 Regional Profile).

Table 6.3: Casino's Well-being Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Building Blocks Components</th>
<th>Casino and Beef Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic governance: Visions, goals, leadership, policies</td>
<td>After years of sound community based non profit organisational links to Council &amp; existing community infrastructure, a need to evaluate future management options evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active citizenship: Equal political, civil and civic rights</td>
<td>Inclusive community based group with Council, beef industry support, sub-cultural groups contribute to program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice: Human rights, social supports, empowerment</td>
<td>✓ Provides forum to celebrate local industry and leverage community cultural activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital: Interpersonal and organisational trust, reciprocity and collective action</td>
<td>✓ Community collaboration evident in the past, trust and confidence now required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3 Image and Identity

Casino’s contemporary image owes much to Beef Week. Outside the town, in the region and through the media much is made of the connection with the cattle industry. Inside the community there has often been a feeling from residents that Casino is the poor relation in the region as a working class, hinterland destination. The links with the beef industry however are substantial emotionally and practically. Beef Week has played a significant role in reinforcing the connectedness of residents, their employment and dependence on the sector. The town’s relative isolation within the region and its spirit of independence and confidence in its way of life have become distinctive features of the annual celebration. The economic dimensions to the investment by residents, business and Council over time has sustained the event and in turn become a driver for promotion of the town for tourism purposes. While elements of the program have been the butt of media ridicule, for example the role of princesses of specific beef cattle breeds, the same media are quick to pick up on the whimsy (of say, Mayor Charlie Cox’s bovine effigies used to decorate civic buildings) and heartfelt ownership by locals of particular aspects of the festival program.

**Beef Week Marketing**

In *The Northern Star* advertising feature Casino’s Mayor, Dr Senthil Vasan suggested,

> the town’s sixteenth Autumn Carnival, Beef Week, has something for everyone as the whole town seems to come alive with each family either participating or being spectators. The primary purpose is the exhibition of beef cattle (1997:36).

In 2003, Festival co-ordinator, Sandra Humphrey indicated that the program reflected the interests of the residents and therefore elements could change in keeping with levels of community interest (pers.com, 2003). Each year organisers believe they have prepared a program that will meet the needs of potential attendees. The way in which important marketing messages are presented to the marketplace fits most marketing conventions, but aesthetically the design elements are limited.

Each year there is a printed program for Casino Beef Week clearly documenting a sequence of activities. The organising Committee secured sponsorship annually for the publication of the Program. In 1999, *The Land* (national) newspaper sponsored the publication. The distribution of the program is extensive, throughout the region, interstate and nationally and much of it targeted to those with an interest in the cattle industry. The program is also printed in a feature published in the local paper, *The Richmond River Express Examiner* and in the regional
newspaper, *The Northern Star*. Each of these papers also sponsor the festival, the latter holding the naming rights to the event for a few years.

The program is printed in A4 format in a booklet containing advertising from local businesses. A smaller DL sized program provides a short hand direction to the events during the festival with contact details like location, phone numbers, organisers and prices. An analysis of the forty-two advertisements in the program indicates a substantial exposure to the beef cattle industry and an expectation of industry involvement in the event. It also indicates the willingness of the industry to contribute to an event that reflects its importance to the host community and visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.4  Beef Week Advertising Distribution example 1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Livestock general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific cattle breeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of exposure further afield a number of different strategies are employed. TV coverage by network television has allowed for editorial, news items and community contact segments. National television programs, like *Hey, Hey, It’s Saturday*, reported with celebrities at the festival in the later 1990s. Channel Nine has been a sponsor. Beef Week has become part of the tourism promotion by Richmond Valley Council and opportunities provided regularly by Northern Rivers, Northern Rivers Tourism and calendars prepared for broad distribution by *The Northern Star* and *Arts Quarterly*.

The website (Casino Beef Week, 2006) provides the global exposure to the event on an annual basis, but with links to Richmond Valley Council. Over time Casino marketed its festival as the longest week in Australia. Casino is part of the Richmond Valley jurisdiction and so it links its promotion with the Valley of Surprises brand (Richmondnet, 2006). The increased use of web-based promotion is evident from the contact attracted through the email address, info@casinobeefweek.com.au from interested people around the globe with enquiries about potential participation.

Beef Week is unapologetically billed as an opportunity to share in a major economic sector of the district, the beef industry. The festival is perceived by all partners to be tied to the land. The agricultural themes are represented in the community events and incorporated in the program. As well as showcasing current processes and practices, the event provides an opportunity to refashion the industry and educate the town community and visitors of the economic value and extent of the beef industry.
Beef Week exemplifies the investment in economic development as a means of sustainability in regional communities. Festivals like this one are seen as a vital vehicle for community cultural development. The regeneration anticipated as a positive outcome for such a festival involves engagement with a cross section of residents. Many residents have a close association with the beef industry through tradition, employment or through recreational pursuits. Although not everyone in the host community is interested in the beef industry, there is an understanding of the importance of the industry to the local economy, as well as its connection to individual and family heritage. The distinctive nature of the industry is attractive to the ‘grazers’ of the festival and market circuit in the region. The overt, obvious trappings of the industry are on show and so some visitors are comfortable with their superficial encounter with the event. Those more intimately involved are satisfied by their ability to meet people from the land, gain a better understanding of conditions in the sector and come away with an authentic experience from their encounters at the festival. The event is seen as a mainstream feature of life in Casino.

The values of the traditional Australian man on the land seem embedded within the program of the festival and also have appeal to a niche market. This emerging niche market is seen to be those drawn to the dress and the music that is associated with country and western images in Australia and the United States. The festival is seen by tourism operators to be attractive to young people who attend the rodeo, the dance functions at the clubs and drink at the pubs where there is live music. The cowboy culture may appear faddish but there are fashion statements to be carved for some local entrepreneurs in the clothing and entertainment sectors. The working life of the cattle industry readily translates into the conspicuous consumption of young people willing to pay to be part of the image projected by the festival. It is less like the music presented at the famous Tamworth Country Music Festival and more aligned with the traditional agricultural show.
**Beef on Barker**

The Beef on Barker gourmet food celebration was initiated 2002 to attract a new market segment to the host umbrella festival - Beef Week. An innovative opportunity was identified to link beef with the production of other value added produce grown in the region through a gourmet experience. Surveys conducted by the organising committee (2003) drew responses of 96% of visitors enjoying their Beef on Barker experience. While beef is the focus, chicken, pork, ox, cakes, vegetables, coffee, tea and beverages are available to visitors to the marquee erected on Barker Street in Casino, a major thoroughfare in Casino’s CBD for breakfast, lunch and morning and afternoon tea. Umbrella programs in community festivals lend themselves to the introduction of ancillary activities. In this case an opportunity to showcase other areas of the local economy was well received.

The idea of a festival within a festival is interesting. It provides an opportunity to offer a distinctive environment, contrasting with the surrounding CBD ambience on the final, major day of Beef Week. Features distinguishing this element of Beef Week celebrations include the gourmet food focus, the sit down atmosphere, the specific market segment not previously represented in the overall Beef Week focus and the use of a streetscape (on Barker Street) that has been previously under-utilised. The provision of a three hundred place sit-down element of the event is the largest such area represented at any Northern Rivers food festival. The undercover nature of the experience means that there is protection against rain and extreme
sunshine. The event is only a daytime feature of Beef Week, but its presence could be extended.

The increased interest in food festivals throughout the region has grown a support market that Beef on Barker is keen to exploit. Most visitors (62% - 2003 survey) had not attended the event previously. These people attend the food festival, A Taste of Byron, in Byron Bay or the Northern Rivers Herb Festival in Lismore or weekend markets but have been reluctant to venture to Casino in the past. The final day of Beef Week allows existing festival attendees to have a relaxed fine dining experience. This is particularly important for the family orientated market that would like to introduce children to such an environment.

The rationale for this event differentiates what is available from existing menus at food and beverage outlets in the Casino CBD during the festival. These businesses are invited to contribute to the concept within the parameters of the site. A large white open marquee covers cloth-covered tables which have been set with a placemat and cutlery. Meals are served on china. Visitors to Beef on Barker purchase a token to the value of $2.50 at the entrance to the area that has been roped off from the adjacent footpaths. Tokens are exchanged for portions of meals. Each is entrée sized. The menu includes diverse, simple as well as complex dishes that have been prepared especially for the event. Visitors are encouraged to use local produce to develop similar menus at home. Primary producers and value-added products are both available to the visitors as well as meals for consumption on site. Stallholders are able to market test new recipes or products.

The relationship between the visitor, the producers and the regional marketing campaign being developed to promote regional cuisine is celebrated in this sub-event. There is more of a soft sell, rather than a hard sell advertising message as visitors are able to indulge in local food prepared by people on site with whom they can engage on a personal level if they wish. The food producers acknowledge Beef on Barker as a valuable and uniquely personal marketing opportunity. A connection with beef is maintained while visitors are introduced to a wider selection of local products.

Another important connection is the involvement of the local TAFE and secondary school students who assist in the delivery of the meals. They utilize their hospitality skills to gain credit points towards their academic studies. The youth component helps provide a relaxed atmosphere for the showcasing of local beef. Thus the setting and the variety of food scored highly amongst respondents to the survey.
During the three years Beef on Barker operated as part of Beef Week, it was managed by Council’s Tourism Officer at no cost to the Beef Week organisation. In fact, it made money. Each year profit was donated to the Beef Week Committee (pers. com. Rod Caldicott, 2007). Such a food fair now provides an opportunity, in a rejigged event, to maintain the community’s focus on the beef industry, while addressing the growing interest in other regional produce and value added cuisine. Organisationally, as well, it provides a useful and successful template for community engagement.

### 6.4 Cultural Tourism

Andersen and Talmacs’ research (2006) identifies that 22% of the audience of Beef Week in 2005 heard of the festival through television, 21% through word of mouth, newspaper contact 7% and the Beef Week website 3%. Those attending were mostly from the Richmond Valley and the wider Northern Rivers region. Interestingly the audience who came from north Queensland came predominantly from Casino’s rival beef capital, Rockhampton! Motivations for attendance included an interest in the town’s heritage as well as the cowboy culture whose appeal has been spread by word of mouth particularly amongst the youth.

Accommodation businesses develop tourism packages and tour companies are now partnering Beef Week in promotional activity. The amalgamation of Casino and Richmond River Councils into Richmond Valley Council brought a dedicated Council employed Tourism Officer to the project. Their brief includes the integration of Beef Week into local and regional promotion. Visitors are drawn mostly from the regional and domestic market, though increasing media exposure has relayed details of the event overseas (Casino Beef Week, 2006). In recent years up to 20,000 visitors have been attracted Beef Week functions (The Land, 2004:10).

Regularly Council’s tourism staff looks for ways to introduce visitors to a closer appreciation of the host community. Home hosting has been considered to cope with the influx of visitors during Beef Week. The home hosting opportunity drew together Casino Quota Club, the Casino Business Enterprise Centre and the Casino Tourist Information Centre to canvass support from residents for the idea. The Beef Week committee and major sponsor NBN television hoped to overcome a shortage of accommodation in the town during the festival in this way. A bed and breakfast scheme is successfully implemented in Tamworth at the time of major events in that regional city and was seen as a model. However Casino residents have not responded sufficiently to implement a similar scheme.
6.5 Postscript

The *Northern Star* front page headline (February 2, 2007:1) came as a shock to locals and regional audiences. ‘Casino’s Beef Week Chopped – on the eve of its 25th year’, it read. The iconic festival folded. A decline in sponsorship and a lack of volunteers was blamed for the Committee’s decision not to go ahead with the festival in 2007. The paper ignited significant media and community speculation about the future of the festival. Editorial comment suggested that ‘the demise of the Casino’s Beef Week is not just a blow for that town and the beef industry, but it is bad news for the entire region’ (Saunders, 2007:10). Saunders’ editorial drew on issues raised in this thesis as he suggested that there are tourism implications as one less attraction becomes available in the region to draw visitors. He identified the relationships such events have with businesses and residents who contribute time and money to ensure annual festivals are available to communities. While he acknowledged that there was there is ‘burn out’ for volunteer organisers of the festival, he emphasized the value of the festival in bringing the community together to have fun (ibid). He recognised the changing times in terms of the regional agricultural economy and the drought and the impact the festival’s image had for Casino being placed on the national consciousness.

The organising committee’s president, Terry Serone, was quoted (*The Northern Star*, February 2, 2007:4)

> it’s been a heart-wrenching decision for everyone involved. Everyone on the board is committed to doing what’s best for Casino and Beef Week, but in the end we felt we had no other option. Continual pleas to the community over a number of years for more people to help run the festival have failed and it has reached a stage where a very small number of people were doing all the work. That simply could not be sustained. And, unfortunately, despite being a major attraction for Casino, the committee found it increasingly difficult to attract sponsorship for the event that costs around $90,000 to run.

A correspondent to the newspaper, the Northern Rivers Echo, challenges the lack of volunteers, as an explanation for the demise of the festival. Gates (2007:15) believed that there was evidence of vigour and enthusiasm from the numerous other organisations dependent on volunteers in the district and they have managed to maintain successful events. He suggested that Richmond Valley Council has a particular role in ensuring Beef Week and other events thrive. He apportioned blame on to the Richmond Valley Council and was critical of Council’s lack of support for two other significant district events, with which he had been associated. He believed Council was losing the trust of its constituency.
My work supports the notion that a lack of understanding of effecting workable relationships with partners has led to the committee’s 2007 decision. Goldblatt (1997:129) succinctly addresses the importance of quality leadership for staff and volunteers. He highlights the need for mutual goal setting. In Casino, there was a deal of blame shifting as to whose responsibility it had been for the event’s 2007 demise. Prior to the announcement, evidence from the community at large indicated satisfaction with the community nature of the Festival events and most elements meet with positive support. Regular attendees had no warning of the impending decision to cancel the 2007 event.

So, it comes down to who will lead and who will manage this community event. Council has a role and has called meetings with the Committee. Partner community groups have a claim to the event’s future and are looking for ways forward. Momentum is gathering with the regional media. Their observations (Jack, 2007:7) of the potential for community events picks up on what is patently problematic – the people involved! The complex nature of festival management requires policies, procedures and practices that match the aspirations to the resources and the audience. In the Northern Rivers it seems time for event managers to collaborate to ensure successful strategies utilized by some are shared with those less successful. The media intervention may provide just such a stimulus. It remains, though, the residents’ and their representatives’ responsibility to address the internal community relationships and issues on the ground.

Casino’s Mayor, Charlie Cox recognised ‘the festival had done enormous things for the spirit of Casino’ (The Northern Star, February 2, 2007:4) and ‘I’m feeling pretty hollow over the announcement. Every community needs an event. Seven hundred people are directly employed in beef here and there are 1500 producers. The product runs into the hundreds of millions’ (The Northern Star, 3.2.07:9). The State Member of Parliament, Thomas George said ‘it was a sad day for Casino and a sad day for the beef industry’ (The Northern Star, February 2, 2007:4). The Chairman of the Northern Co-operative Meatworks, Peter Carlill stated in that article, ‘we are very disappointed, but our commitment to the event remains. Beef Week means a hell of a lot to the town. It is a major event’.

Local residents are quoted with telling comments in the light of the growing discussion on community and organisational resilience. The comments include (The Northern Star, February 3, 2007:9),

if you are out to make a living from the land you are flat out. Rural people can’t keep digging into their pockets to support Beef Week. But its loss is a shame.
Another offers,

Beef Week was a good thing and it was good for the economy. But volunteers are spread thin. Previous generations were more inclined to volunteer. The younger generation is more inclined to want to be paid.

A local industry worker argues,

I work in livestock sales at Kyogle and Murwillumbah. But I’m too busy to volunteer my time. I’m 21 years old. A lot of people my age are just too busy. It’s really hard to find time for any volunteer work. By announcing Beef week’s cancellation, it may jog some people into putting their hand up.

Another correspondent (Shier, 2007:11) raises issues concerning previous well attended community consultation, funding received from the Tourism NSW Flagship funding program and the Council’s recent declaration of Beef Week as the signature event for the town. All of these were dependent on the development of a business plan by the organising committee to ensure the festival made positive moves for the future. She was frustrated by inaction in this area of governance. The Council events cultural liaison officer suggests it is vital that Beef Week is revamped.

There is a lot of community value in the event. But it is like any business. Beef Week turns over more than some companies in Casino do in a year, so there needs to be a business approach to the event; there’s also an issue of sustainability (Jack, The Northern Star 2007:7).

When comparing the four festivals, Beef Week’s origins and management over time has been most dependent on the business model, but such a focus has let the festival down ultimately. Negotiating typical challenges like under-funding, under-trained staff and volunteers and understanding the intricacies of leadership have not been met with lasting solutions. The hiatus caused by the present situation provides Casino with an opportunity to address the motivations of community partners in delivery of a quality celebration. This Casino story starts and finishes with external consultants. As a result of meetings an external consultant will work with the community to resurrect Beef Week for 2008. Jack (The Northern Star, 2007:5) suggests that volunteers are queuing up to work with the Sydney based consulting firm to work through a solution to management difficulties.

Small communities like Casino are subject to not only internal pressures to achieve their own futures, they are also vulnerable to the outside pressures that can come about when commodities generated are subject to national and global markets. So, while people work hard to secure their shared goals and visions, sometimes the bigger picture and strategic plans fail to get appropriate attention. Individuals involved with volunteer community based organisations have limited time and experience to recognise the faltering steps they take to deal with these dimensions to conducting large public events. Agencies like local government, business interests and community members recognise that considerable skills
and attention to detail is required for effective leadership, innovation and co-ordination through the stages of a festival’s lifecycle. They often don’t take the time to deliver either ‘running repairs’ or to pause and commit to some serious planning. This is evident to me in relation to the Casino case.

Prior to the festival’s axing, Richmond Valley Council and some other key stakeholders worked with the Beef Week committee to prepare a business plan to ensure a viable future for the event. Internal governance events, it seems, overtook the attempt to consolidate a well-established event and identify a workable way forward. Community consultation acknowledged the changing community expectations, increased planning needs, regulatory obligations and a sound understanding of holistic marketing practices related to the image and identity the festival had carved out for Casino over 20 years. Numerous suggestions were forthcoming from those attending the public meeting chaired by local MP, Thomas George, a former Beef Week president. These included (Richmondnet, 2006) an expanded food festival, industry seminars, a ute muster and a Bachelor and Spinsters’ Ball, a valley food festival. A Casino food festival involving local chefs, butchers, eating places that could eventually become a roadshow to showcase local produce in other destinations, greater engagement with the beef industry, the aero club offered to hold an open day, live commentary at the breakfast with expanded events, plan for national media coverage, package and sell TV promotion to all networks, an Aboriginal national music competition, re-design the brochure, shorten and modernise the names of some events that still have appeal within the program and re-visit the sponsorship system.

Attendees (pers.com 2007) indicated the meeting enthusiastically embraced change, with ideas to be taken to the Beef Week Annual General Meeting. The mood was buoyant, as the Richmond Valley Council announced its endorsement of Casino Beef Week as a ‘signature event’. Richmond Valley cultural and events coordinator Peter Byrne suggested Beef Week had a lot of potential but needs reviewing. ‘Don’t think inside the box’, he urged, ‘don’t just think about what’s happened for the last 25 years.’ Richmond Valley Mayor Charlie Cox said Council’s support was not cash but ‘in kind’ support. ‘It’s an assurance by Council that we support the event in its present format,’ he said ‘concerns that Council was becoming too demanding were to do with risk management’ (Richmondnet, 2006).

More recently (Burdon, 2007: 12) the spirit of an old time bullocky and bush poet Jack Axford was invoked to pay tribute to those who had contributed to the strong communal memory of the festival. Jack led the parade for decades. His passion for bullocks prevailed long after it was fashionable or economical. It is symbolic the press connected Jack’s recent death with the
demise of Beef Week. The Mayor suggested ‘the community has lost something very precious, a best friend and lost one of its greatest ambassadors. Beef Week burnt its brand on Casino’ Burdon, 2007:12). While residents have had profound emotional responses to the passing of the festival, little has been suggested in the next stage for the town signature celebration. The Mayor identified the simplicity of Beef Week celebrations, ‘without fireworks or glitz, just people enjoying each other’s company and preserving the country charm, that reflect good, solid values.’ (Burdon, 2007:12). It will be interesting to see what emerges from the ashes.

Council staff involved with event management and tourism is keen to work on better reporting mechanisms and accountability in line with Council’s Strategic Plan (pers.com. Rod Caldicott, 2006; Burdon, 2007:13) A series of indicators has been developed for community festival organisations to better connect with funding agencies and the business sector as well demonstrating efficiency of resource use and improving their accountability to their members, their partners and the communities they serve. The Chamber of Commerce is keen to ensure the event is not completely ‘put out to pasture’ and is investigating ways to salvage elements from the program and the local Returned Services Memorial Club will convene a weekend program at the Festival’s usual scheduled time.

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Image 6.11 Volunteers assist
Members of the local Bush Fire Brigade assist in the dismantling of temporary street infrastructure to prepare for the annual Street Parade.
6.6 Reflection

Casino Beef Week festivities are staged in a number of locations about the town. On Parade Day most activities are within walking distance of the three key streets, Walker, Barker and Canterbury. The latter two bisect the broad main street. There’s a hub at the Mafeking lamp memorial at the centre of the roundabout at the Walker-Barker Street intersection. Here auctioneers are in command. They spruik loudly and confidently as prime cattle are led by, winners congratulated and the attentive audience are accommodated on bails of hay set up just outside the metal fence separating the core business from the interested guests.

At the conclusion to the cattle auction sale, members of the local SES and Bush Fire Brigades assist in dismantling the temporary structure to prepare the main street for the parade. Over the years this has become a slick operation and demonstrates broad association with the event by special interest sections of the community. Members of these agencies also assist with the marshalling of vehicles, individuals and groups that take part in the parade – once the sawdust is removed from the bitumen.

People participating at Beef Week celebrations are involved in activities they appear to value and that reflect their personal interests. I observed locals to be satisfied that there is sufficient enjoyment as they meet family, friends, neighbours in public places. There is evidence that people of all ages enjoy the levels of participation and spectatorship with which they can engage. Another level of social participation occurs when workplaces demonstrate their cooperative behaviours through special activities when windows are decorated or staff dressed to match annual Beef Week themes. These activities provide a source of community identity.

People are friendly. Some attend on their own, mostly though they relate to familial or special interest groups also attending the events to pursue their attachment to animals, cars, arts and crafts or general community frivolity exemplified by the street parade. Below the local Country Women’s Association shows their commitment to community service by delivering traditional country hospitality – outside a pub!
Members of the Casino CWA deliver hot drinks and cakes in a traditional show of solidarity for community events. This stall is outside a pub in Barker Street and mediates the inside drinking and those drinking on the street while watching the wood-chopping events. Each woman has been involved with providing this service for many years. One woman is knitting!

There do not appear to be significant barriers to festival participation for residents or visitors. Attendees, indeed many delivering the broad variety of festival services, vary in demographic terms of age, gender and income that reflect residential patterns. Access to most elements of the program is free. Some activities occur early in the morning, like Breakfast with the Butchers that allow the business community access to the festival, as well as extra opportunities on Parade Day. Children contribute to the art exhibitions, the colouring-in competition (see below), on floats in the parade, in the whip cracking displays and competitions on the street. Child-care could be a barrier at some festivals, but Beef Week is clearly geared to family involvement. It appears to nurture safe environments for movement and participation. The Indigenous community has heightened its presence in recent years. The gallery and retail set up in their Walker Street headquarters allows for increased access and promotion of support amenities for youth and artists.

Adult attendees browse beside a display of children’s poster colouring-in contributions (and sponsorship).
In 2005 Beef Week had a markedly smaller program. There was a feeling amongst attendees that this festival was one about the residents’ own backyard. There appeared to be fewer visitors and greater emphasis on activities that introduced neighbours to one another. There was a distinctive feeling that the festival satisfied personal needs of all generations of locals and the free activities attracted people to their comfort zone and allowed a spirited and unfettered use of the streets.

Interestingly at that time regional media commented on how Beef Week exemplified rural lifestyle choices and how metropolitan journalists just ‘drop in and takes the mickey out of us’ (Northern Star, 2005: 12). The Letters to the Editor that followed, particularly from secondary school aged people, drew on the drawbridge mentality evident to the researcher attending the festival. Comments from local young people included:

I disagree strongly with the city people who come to criticize the town and to laugh at us because we have dressed up and are having fun. ...Why can’t they come and join in the fun with us? (SL, The Northern Star, 2005: 13).

I live in Casino and have been to Beef Week. I think it is very good for the economy of the town. It gets everyone out and everyone is happy, with no negatives. It is amazing how everyone puts away their past and gets along to have a great town-loved festival. (AL’E, The Northern Star, 2005: 13).

I think it is a great idea to have Beef Week because it promotes businesses in the small town with the window decorating and dressing up shops.

My favourite event is the car show and wood-chopping competition because of all the cars they have on show. (WG, The Northern Star, 2005: 13)

I think Beef Week is an excellent source of money for Casino, but sadly it is getting less exciting each year. My parents believe they should just call it off. The parade isn’t as big as it used to be and the farmers don’t bring in as many cattle for display. Some of the city slickers have no right to laugh at us. At least we are having a go. (MW, The Northern Star, 2005:13)

Beef Week is a special time of year for all of Casino. It is a time when people come and take part in a parade, the cow showing, Breakfast with the Butchers and the shop dress-up. Beef week is a great time for Casino as people come and see that for a small town we are a great community and can do some great things when we work together. (ED, The Northern Star, 2005: 13).

These youthful sentiments raised the concerns that emerge in a discussion of community cultural festivals as providing a measure of community and individual’s wellbeing. They reflect a limited understanding of the nature of economic benefits accrued by delivering festivals. They demonstrate defensiveness, almost a siege mentality when confronted by outside questioning of the existing program.
6.7 Discussion

Dobson (Vancouver Citizens Committee, 2006) argues that a largely overlooked cause of low levels of citizen involvement is the internal dynamics of all-volunteer groups. In the case of Beef Week, in the light of recent announcements, it is worth reflecting on what can go wrong inside a group. This is indicative of countless grassroots initiatives that wither and die without achieving anything. He suggests that

many citizens groups drive away their most able members. In a typical arc, a new member will step forth to work with others on some public issue, last for a relatively short time, then disappear back into private life, never to be heard from again.

The significance of the demise of the existing Beef Week festival for the current study is the phenomenon that Dobson (ibid) observes as emphasising the organisation at the expense of the original mission. By hoping to become more organised, many small groups create little bureaucracies that drain everyone's energy. Often so much effort goes into maintaining the organisation there is little left to pursue the reason for creating the organisation in the first place. His suggestion to combat the fragility of the community based organisation includes minimizing the number of meetings to encourage more action as most people would prefer to act on something concrete rather than sit at a meeting wrangling or trying to ‘reach consensus’. This reinforces the notion that often there is too much discussion and too little creativity. This is an important consideration for community festivals where the residual for participants is the colour and movement of their engagement and expressions of appreciation of their efforts by consumers of the results of their labours.

Beef Week’s committee is not the first to have to contend with the mismatch of their resources with objectives. It is an ongoing cri de coeur in the not for profit sector that demands that personnel recognise the importance of planning. It involves recognition of the importance of committee size, the number and quality of paid staff, how communication is massaged between stakeholders before burning themselves out. Successive Beef Week committees have actually demonstrated memberships that represent the demographic characteristics of the wider Casino community. Attitudes and interests of people from many walks of life have been accommodated in a formal meeting structure and had sub-committees dedicated to the preparation and delivery of specific sections of the program. So how can the community recover the positive experiences of 25 years’ history to allow a phoenix to rise in the interests of the broader community? It is evident that there’s a commitment to place and the cattle industry by residents. It is now left to those pursuing this commitment to resurrect an event
with local appeal. The lifecycle theory needs to be revisited to ensure the learnings are applied as the community deals with the aftermath productively.

Getz et al (2007) draw attention to the phenomenon of relationship management as a key to what he calls resource dependency. When investigating why festivals fail Getz (2002) suggests that event organisers need to understand whether their resource needs are material or intangible and how some of the relationships they have cultivated over time can satisfy the need for alternative sources of scarce resources. Beef Week managers have not demonstrated an understanding of active stakeholder management and hence have forgone opportunities to draw from different and many sources, stored resources for hard times, switched to new resource suppliers, reduced the need, tried to influence providers, especially in political terms or worked with other regional organisations trying to satisfy similar needs (Getz et al, 2007:104). So by investing in the stakeholder relationships required for the festival’s long term viability little attention has been directed to monitoring the choices the organisers have made in growing, developing, maintaining or abandoning less helpful partnerships. The organisers cannot produce the event in isolation, so the lack of understanding of the implications of robust relationships between internal and external stakeholders has now impacted on the event’s future. Casino’s Richmond Valley Shire promotional byline is *Valley of Surprises*. The recent Beef Week surprise is probably not what destination managers had in mind.

It could be timely for the Council to look how its brand accommodates the disparate natural, coastal and hinterland, pioneering and contemporary environments. It may now be opportune to broaden the focus of community celebrations to more broadly embrace these themes. The evolutionary nature of festivals can be said to mirror the changes noted in land use and population pressures. The festivals in this study reflect the optimism of the communities and the region wherein they are hosted. The Northern Rivers Regional Tourism Organisation over time has struggled to implement a consistent image it wished to project of the region to potential visitors. Festivals have indeed become part of the regional tourism marketing portfolio. They have been acknowledged as a new form of interpreting the region for visitors. This responds to an emerging value held by consumers for hedonism, where diversionary activities include festive leisure (Gilbert, 1989:42).

What is under review by residents from within Casino now is whether the changes made to the duration and program of each festival over time were acceptable, and whether the Committee’s leadership was trusted. Circumstances change. If the Committee listens to its constituency and is influenced by what they hear something better may emerge. On paper the festival committees satisfied most of the measures that constitute best strategic management.
practice (ASAE Foundation, 2001, www.asaecenter.org/). It is the human capital and its social implications for growing community resilience that require further attention.

6.8 Conclusion

While the description of the nature and role of Beef Week details the peculiar inputs from individuals, internal and external groups to a substantial and loved community celebration, the subtext is rife with concerns for issues of governance, leadership, volunteerism and participation and partnerships with other regional stakeholders. This chapter has outlined sequentially some of the festival’s evolution in light of the study’s broader questions. It demonstrates how important it is to have an appreciation of residents’ sense of place and community and the value they place on a community celebration to build their resilience. All of these elements impact on the resilience of the festival organisation and ultimately have implications for the town and region. Leaders need to come forward, extensive community consultation and planning need to take place and confidence restored amongst residents, that they could deliver celebrations for themselves and visitors.

Casino’s Beef Week demonstrated a substantial number of the essential components of resilience for over twenty years. The community now is well placed to reflect on the successes of past festivals to grow the community’s capacity to deliver what the residents want from celebrations in the future. Most respondents to the festival’s current predicament want a phoenix to rise from the ashes and expect that there will be some learnings from the past experience to inform better practice in the future.
Chapter 7: Nimbin: Celebrating the politics of pot

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Image 7.0 Nimbin signage

Students at Nimbin Central School developed this sign. Like the sign, this chapter places a lens on the small community of Nimbin and examines how residents celebrate their connection to place, each other and the world. There is no mention made of the annual Mardi Grass festival on the sign. The close up does identifies the majestic Nimbin Rocks and indicates the lush sub-tropical landscape in adjacent rainforest.

7.1 Introduction

Nimbin’s Mardi Grass festival provides a useful exemplar for the powerful position that can be assumed when masks, costumes, banners, effigies and rhetoric overtly embellish particular perspectives on law reform in public places. The legalization of marijuana is the focus of this particular event. My interest in the street as a stage is satisfied through observing how the annual Cannabis Law Reform Rally offers special prizes to participants for best imagination, message, attitude and outfit. The use of humour exposes and ridicules contrary perspectives. Such celebrations bring about change. The Cannabis Law Reform Rally is more commonly known and promoted as ‘Mardi Grass’ and demonstrates an exchange between polemic and performance, of public places – parks and streets – of enactments and participation by residents and visitors in a co-mingling that is increasingly captured electronically for global transmission by visitors.
This chapter provides an insight into a singular event. This festival annually develops strong links with its indigenous community. Most festival programs start and finish with reference to the Bundjalung heritage. This chapter, likewise, starts with stories of the past and leads into current practice. It links the key research objectives to the evolution of a festival dedicated to political, social and cultural change. It uses the voices of locals and the influence of external forces to explore wellbeing, sustainability and prosperity. I appreciate the perspectives of key informants, residents in Nimbin and its environs, for their contribution to the discussion.

* * * *

According to the legend of the Nimbinjee (nyimbunje – a small, wise, hairy tribal elder with supernatural powers) Aborigines, the sleeping warrior of the Nightcap Range still lies in watch over Nimbin. Before European settlement, the Northern Rivers hinterland area around Nimbin was inhabited by the Bundjalung, Nimbinjee and Whiyabul/Widjabal Aborigines (Walkabout, 2003). It has been suggested that the town’s name comes from the Nimbinjee people. His form is the Nimbin Rocks that are under the custodianship of the Bunjalung tribe. He is said to have looked after his people’s welfare and protected their sacred sites (HEMP Embassy, 2000). Nimbin, the adjacent township is 30 kilometres from Lismore, the regional centre that has a population of over 46,000.

Europeans arrived in the valley in the 1880s settling to take advantage of the cedar and farming opportunities and the retail establishments which went on to thrive into the 1930s. In 1933, in an eight kilometre radius of Nimbin, there were 146 farms, two sawmills and successful banana plantations (Rogers, 1998). Forty years later the rural industry declined and the once robust cultural life, like the town’s economic base, was dying.

Nimbin village is small. On the edge of the village are Nimbin Rocks that are of significant importance to the indigenous community. Since its inception the Mardi Grass rally has engaged with the indigenous community. There has been a marked increase in attention to engagement with the Nimbin Rocks’ site (the opening ceremony is held there) and with individual elders as the festival has developed. This differentiates this festival from the other three festivals under scrutiny. The region’s Bundjalung population is not seen to feature strongly in any of the other case study festivals. They are not excluded particularly, as each festival presents itself as open to all comers, but in Nimbin considerable effort is been taken to include indigenous heritage throughout the festival journey.
The values held by a substantial number (but by no means all residents) of the host community generally are overtly presented during the three days of the event. The smaller scale of the host community disproportionately highlights the aging of the dominant festival participants. The older age group represented in the festival’s street parade reflects the culture of marijuana of the activists who initiated the festival. This is where they belong. These are the people they belong with and Nimbin is the place they belong in. This sense of belonging extends to their acceptance of new and old settlers in the valley. Many have worked to achieve cohesion through their diverse engagements with village life, e.g. through social action, welfare activities, educational developments and village-wide economic revitalisation. Spectators to the event however tend to be younger visitors.

This chapter uses the research framework to investigate how, in formal and informal ways, a distinctive sense of place and community, clearly defined identity and images and characteristic regional hospitality delivers cultural tourism during the annual Mardi Grass Festival hosted in Nimbin. The material presented is exploratory in nature. Implications arising from the rich description are discussed in Chapter Nine. The chapter explores the relationship Nimbin’s Mardi Grass festival has with these three areas of investigation. They are a result of the intersection of the fundamental fields of residents, place and visitors. The influences and impacts are drawn out, illustrated and discussed.
The street parade is a significant feature of the festival. Ganga Fairies, a group of women who come together specifically to contribute to the parade, take months to prepare their costumes and performance routines. They take their preparation and participation seriously with rehearsed choreography and enthusiasm.

7.2 Nimbin’s Mardi Grass and a sense of place and community

Historical Context

Kevin Soward (The Northern Star, 1998:8) claims the perception that Nimbin was nothing until the Aquarians arrived distorts the truth. ‘In the 1970’s the area was in the midst of a rural
depression but it was always going to recover because of its natural tourist attractions’ he said. This doesn’t acknowledge that without the alternative lifestyle population, many of the natural attractions of the rainforest would have been milled and consequently lost. It was the environmental work that the alternative lifestyle population did that saved the trees, and their politicisation of environmental issues that had the forests gazetted as world heritage. Without them, these natural wonders would not be as they are now. However, trees alone have not created Nimbin as a tourist destination, it was the uniqueness of the alternative lifestyle village that gave Nimbin the edge over its competition (Murray, 1999).

The improvement in transport links between New South Wales and Queensland’s Gold Coast (the ribbon development of the coastal strip between Brisbane and the New South Wales border) has had a significant effect on the development of Nimbin (Roberts, Hallett, Balderstone, Nelson, pers. com., 1999). The encroachment of the Gold Coast tourist strip triggered a change in the pattern of tourism, with more tourists coming across the state border on day trips from Queensland. Cross border tourism marketing efforts increasingly focus on the World Heritage listed properties of the CERRA (Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia) adjacent to Nimbin village. Nimbin is set to become a significant hub in the promotion of drive tourism through the rainforest to encourage a greater appreciation of the natural and built environments in the region. Transport links to Nimbin have improved since the beginning of the Aquarian migrations (discussed in the next section) to the Northern Rivers area in the 1970s. Transport and communication linkages provide greater penetration from the more central populated areas into the periphery. The New England, Mt Lindsay and Pacific Highway upgrades have increased the connections between Queensland and the Lismore hinterland.

Tourism both impacts upon how the transport system works and is itself heavily influenced by the transport system. Nimbin is situated off the main roads. It is a 30km detour to get to Nimbin from any of the larger towns nearby, like Murwillumbah, Casino or Kyogle, or from Lismore city. Transport between Nimbin and these centres tends to be school and commuter buses, and not necessarily travel either at a time of day or in the direction that suits tourists who are dependent upon public transport. Day trip tour operators based in Byron Bay however, provide a distinctive service to move hinterland visitors to the coast and vice versa like the Rainbow Tours or Jim’s Alternative Tours.

**Nimbin’s Alternative Heritage**

The small village of Nimbin put the region in the national spotlight in 1973 when it hosted the Aquarius Festival. Nimbin was the site for a two-week celebration of alternative cultures,
technologies and youth cultures. It drew people from all over the country (Cioacetto, 1992). Dunstan (1994:5), Director of the 1973 Aquarius Festival, notes

The northern rivers was chosen as the region for the 1973 Aquarius Festival because it was as far north as we could go (and we wanted warm weather in May) without going into Queensland where the National Party in true proto fascist style, were winning votes by beating up student protesters and banning demonstrations. We weren’t looking for that kind of bother.

The region had already established itself with a reputation as a counter cultural Shangri-la as the result of some communal settlements near Mullumbimby and the surfies at Byron Bay on the coast.

Nimbin and most of the region had been in deep economic recession and depopulation since the European Common Market closed off the dairy industry’s butter exports in the 1960s. Promises were made that the Aquarius Festival would ‘recycle’ the town and bring back young people as settlers and a public meeting voted overwhelmingly in favour of hosting the Festival.

One of my first actions as a Festival organiser in Nimbin was to acquire the old and closed RSL club in the main street. I purchased it, furniture and all, for $500 in a deal which had to be negotiated on the steps of the Lismore RSL because of dress rules. This building became our headquarters and was renamed the Media Centre. A legacy of the Aquarius Festival, the building continues as a community access facility. Now called the Nimbin Healing Centre it houses Birth & Beyond (home birthing and post natal care), the Nimbin Apothecary (a dispensary for herbal remedies and over the counter health advice) and the Nimbin Environment Centre (Dunstan, 1994).

After the Aquarius Festival most participants went back to their campuses and jobs and anguished over the question, after Nimbin what? In suggesting the spirit of Nimbin outlived the Aquarius Festival, Dearling (2000:81) cites Peter Cock’s comments in Alternative Australia (1979) regarding the sense of (an alternative) movement was not seen by the general public until the AUS (Australian Union of Students) Nimbin Festival. Johnny Allen suggests, ‘in a Revolution there are no spectators – only participants and the prevailing mood was of participation’ (Dearling, 2000:81). This supports Dunstan’s (1994) view that a lot of participants stayed on in the Rainbow Region after the festival, experimenting in communal living, rituals, spirituality, a tribal culture and where drugs became central to what the name Nimbin meant in the national psyche.

The new settler culture influenced the establishment of a number of volunteer community service organisations - the Nimbin Community School (a parent-teacher primary school alternative to the state system); Birth & Beyond (the homebirthing support unit and pre and post natal service); The Rainbow Region Homebuilders Association (the advocacy group for
In 1978 new settlers in the nearby Terania Creek Valley challenged the NSW Forestry Commission about logging the fifty-hectare patch of forest at the end of the valley. There were many cultural differences between the pioneer white settlers who came to the Northern Rivers in the 1880s and the new settlers who came after the Aquarius Festival and none were so radically opposed as in the attitudes towards trees. While the pioneer settlers had come and cleared the rainforest, the new settlers were ‘green’ and committed to conservation of forests and wilderness areas. The new settler activism resulted in protests in the forests as loggers supported by police came to go about their business. Eventually state politicians intervened and the Terania Creek area became a national park and logging was banned within its confines. The spirit and environmental practice demonstrated at this site became a model for other interventions across the region. Many of the participants at that protest remain in the region and continue their engagement with contemporary issues.

To understand Nimbin one has to go deeper, into the hills where the people who care for the environmental ideals so passionately are building, raising families, tending gardens, occupied with livelihood and making a future. These citizens, the doers, the makers of culture as against the consumers, do not have the time or inclination to hang about in the streets. Dunstan (1994) suggests that given the bad press of the protests it is appropriate to acknowledge some of the extraordinary legacies of the 1973 Aquarius Festival including the re-population and economic revitalisation of the Northern Rivers hinterland. At the time of the Aquarius Festival the region like other rural areas was in steep economic decline. Enterprising people, young people in particular, left to seek their fortunes elsewhere rather than work to make things different at home. Once productive dairy farms became agistment for beef cattle and there were many empty farmhouses and much cheap land to be had.

Nimbin’s revitalisation is therefore attributed to the 1973 Aquarius Festival. According to Kevin Elsley, (1994:47) Nimbin became known throughout the world and the town’s economic woes were turned around. The post Aquarian settlers wanted to house themselves cheaply and live more communally on rural land and they fought for a new zoning regime to provide such opportunities. There are now some one hundred and twenty Multiple Occupancies (M.O.s) in the Northern Rivers region, 60 in the Lismore local government area.
alone, and the ‘laid back lifestyle’ reputation of the region, which is such a powerful attractor for tourism to the region, has much of the hand-made houses and idyllic landscapes of M.O. communities like Bodhi Farm, Tuntable Falls and Billen Cliffs.

The Aquarius Festival innovatively demonstrated the diversity of cultural influences that were shaping the future and it welcomed all, regardless of appearance, race, education, class, religion, recreational drug habit or health. Tolerance and compassion became key values in the community life created by the new settlers. With these attitudes towards their neighbours and a strong sense of community within, the new settlers sought to by-pass the prevailing, rigidity conformist, and social structure of the region. The residual of these influences is still felt today, through the differing senses of community expressed by residents.

During the 1990s some residents of Nimbin initiated contact with the arts community in Woodstock, USA. Lismore City Council’s Tourism Office facilitated the interaction. A formal governance through a sister city model was not sought, but exchange took place of personnel, artworks and performances. Roberts (pers. com., 1999) suggests that like many such opportunities emerging from this community, individuals took the lead, including Benny Zable, David Hallett and Graeme Dunstan. Ongoing exploitation of links based on a sense of place and community has been sporadic. Observations made by travelers regarding the ‘look’ of both villages post their iconic events (Woodstock ‘89 and Aquarius ‘73) indicated substantial differences. Visitors expected Nimbin to look like it did in 1973 and found it is much unchanged, while Woodstock has become quite sophisticated in its revitalization. For some Nimbin residents their dream is sustained by maintaining the outward facades of the village. The murals in the main street have been repainted in the original ’73 style.

Roberts comments (pers.com. 1999)

an interesting aspect on how Woodstock has compared to Nimbin over time involves the community being very proud that they had maintained that side of the dream. They believed that there could be opportunity for exchanges in knowledge from their perspective as well as the commercial aspect that Woodstock has managed to create. Any sort of leadership or willingness to commit to an organisation to keep things going is the other side of dealing with Nimbin. It is such a diverse community; it’s sort of like a microcosm of the Northern Rivers. You can walk up and down the main street and get 100 different and distinctive messages. On the one hand you do deal with the Chamber of Commerce and on the other hand you are dealing with more like that alternative side and I think that somewhere in the middle of that there is a merging of ideals or the realisation that this alternative side is creating a tourism industry, but how far outside that they agree I’m not sure.
Nimbin village sister-city link with legendary Woodstock in the United States of America brought visitors Koenig and Lipton (2003) from Woodstock. They wrote

we were delighted to observe that Mardi Grass was a family affair, not just a stoned out party. There was fun and laughter and a pleasantly surprising family atmosphere. There was nothing to hide. In fact, when we asked young children if they smoked, most said no, that’s for adults. When I asked about heroin, they would say in effect, ‘No way, who wants to be like that.’

While the village of Nimbin is located just 30 kilometres from Lismore there is little public transport, an inadequate road network and a low level of car ownership amongst residents. Many people live in excess of ten kilometres from the village. In addition to its physical isolation, the Nimbin community experiences disadvantage on a number of other levels. Nimbin has the second highest proportion of households with no vehicles, 11.8%, and the equal highest proportion of households with one vehicle, 47%. Combined there are 58.8% of households with one or no vehicles, second only to Lismore, which is an urban area (Shantz, 2004:xxxvii).

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 7.4 Nimbin’s hotel in the main street
Nimbin’s only hotel is situated on the intersection of the mainstreet and the street leading to the festival’s rallying point. The red building next to the pub is the Hemp Embassy, home to the Mardi Grass’ organising committee’s meeting room and retail outlet for the organisation.

The population of Nimbin is a source of debate, as the real population does not appear to be reflected in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data. Anecdotal sources indicate a much greater population than the census. According to the 2001 ABS census the village itself has grown from a population in 1996 of 319 to 338. The surrounding area has, according to the census, 1,212 people, giving a total population of 1,550. The anecdotal information suggests that the population is closer to 4,000 (1998 Doctor’s Surgery books). It is thought that the population is under-enumerated, given some of the isolated properties, numerous multiple occupancy dwellings and many long-term visitors (Shantz, 2004:xxxvii).
Shantz (2004:xxxviii) further acknowledges that the village of Nimbin is the service centre for a much wider catchment population. As Nimbin borders rural Kyogle and Tweed Council areas a proportion of people from there utilise services in Nimbin. The Nimbin community has struggled to maintain their medical services. From four doctors a couple of years ago, the last doctor left town in May 2003. Health services have received an investment from the state government and a multi-purpose hospital has been constructed as a result of public activism. The area surrounding Nimbin Rocks on the southern entrance to the village has particular significance for Indigenous Australian persons.

In terms of community amenities, the Nimbin Community Development Association (NCDA) opened premises in the main street in 1998. Interested residents keen to ensure there were social and cultural amenities available for the whole community established the NCDA. They fundraised and bought the old school buildings and transformed them. The NCDA Centre provides a wide range of services for the people of Nimbin: meeting rooms, youth activities, neighbourhood centre, and a cafe and art space. The NCDA has become a major focus for community services and development in Nimbin. A skate park has been built in Peace Park, adjacent to the NCDA. Other Sporting facilities in Nimbin include a swimming pool, soccer field and tennis courts.

The community centre workers suggest that most common causes of homelessness in Nimbin are drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness and in some cases, domestic violence. It is said that in Nimbin there is a lack of affordable housing, no emergency accommodation, no adult refuge or supported accommodation or childcare facilities (Shantz, 2004:xxxviii)

In building the picture of life for residents in Nimbin the community profile (Shantz, 2004) indicates that the median age in Nimbin and rural surrounds is 39. The largest proportion of the total population is, by far, the 40-59 year age group with 35.2%. This significantly affects the role and nature of the Mardi Grass celebrations. The proportion of the population aged between 0-14 is 21.2%, 15-24 is 12.3%, 25-39 is 16.9% and 60 years of age and over is 14.4%. Interestingly, there are three people aged 100 years and over in the village. There were 17 persons who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
Image 7.5  Nimbin Street Code  

*In an off-mainstreet alley adjacent to the Nimbin Museum is a street code that emerged from those who regularly frequent this area of the village town. The influence of the local indigenous residents is evident in the text.*

The family structures represented in Nimbin village (Shantz, 2004) include - Couple Families with Children 25 (32.9%); Couple Family without Children 20 (26.3%); One Parent Family 28 (36.8%); Other family 3 (4.0%) The household types represented by the number of persons usually resident in Nimbin village include - Lone person household 50 persons (25 of these are 55+); Two persons 39; Three persons 14; Four persons 11; Five persons 7; Group Households 13 (7 two person), (3 three person), (3 four person). The mean household size is 2.1 persons. Family Structures represented in the surrounds of Nimbin include - Couple Families with Children 97 (31.3%); Couple Family without Children 98 (31.6%); One Parent Family 115 (37.1%).

The median weekly household income in both the village and the surrounding rural area is $300-$399, well below the poverty line. The median weekly family income for both areas is $400-$499. The proportion of households with an income of $25,948 per annum and under is 58.3%. Those with incomes between $26,000 and $51,948 are 19.6% and over $52,000 is 10%.

The Lismore City Council (2004) Community Profile records that in the village and surrounding area 47% of the population fully own their house, while 18% are being purchased and 19% are renting in the private sector. Of the semi-detached/terrace house none are owned outright, 19% are being rented from the Department of Housing and 66.7% are being rented in the private sector. The predominant form of housing is single dwelling houses. An interesting figure is that of 91 unoccupied dwellings are in the rural area and 19 in the village. One possible reason for this could be that people did not respond to the census collector, as it is highly unlikely that there would be that number of vacant houses. There are 106 separate houses in Nimbin village and 523 in the rural surrounds. Combined there are 43
‘other dwelling’ which includes caravans, cabins, houseboats, improvised homes, tents, sleep outs, house or flat attached to a shop, office, (Shantz, 2004:xxxviii).

These data inform the evolution of the community cultural events that are outlined below. They highlight what Police Superintendent Lyons calls

a complex town...no other town in Australia has shops that, as part of the furniture, have a stretcher so that when someone overdoses they are able to say ‘stretcher’ and they come out and put this poor person on a stretcher and wheel them down to the hospital (Macdonald, 2006).

Eldridge (2006:10) reminds readers in the regional newspaper, *The Northern Star*, that the students who arrived in Nimbin in 1973 sparked the most significant local cultural change since white settlement. While they and those who followed brought a youthful ‘pot culture’, ‘they also brought a strong sense of play, of broadminded social mores, of innovative ways of living, of concern for the environment, of concern about nurturing world peace’ (ibid).

His sentiments reflect feelings of Mardi Grass participants as he suggests that

without their contribution, the region would not have the remarkable social diversity, and it would not have the relatively unspoilt quality that makes it special (2006:10).

**Origins of Nimbin’s Mardi Grass**

For a small town we're running a big program of educative, informative and fun events. We're gathering together in a spirit of peace, fun and friendship, but also with a serious and responsible intent. We're trying to help create a saner, more just and more compassionate world. Together we'll make this beautiful world we were born to nourish and to protect a better place... From the 1997 Nimbin Mardi Grass Program (Some Children, 2006)
The peacebus comes to town

Community champion Michael Balderstone working the crowd during the parade at Mardi Grass. Lanterns had been made during pre-festival workshops for community members and the peacebus.com brought another group to the celebration. The parade brings together diverse groups raising the political and legal issues associated with marijuana prohibition and community issues.

A characteristic of community-based organisations generally is the lack of documentation of their history. In the case of Nimbin it is significant that many people involved with the development of the political advocacy and the evolving festival have provided substantial commentary in the public domain (Nimbin Mardi Grass, 2002). It provides a useful archive from which to grow social and cultural capital and represents an articulate and worldly population committed to engaging in community dialogue. There are other manifestations of this willingness to openly discuss issues of community interest dealt with in the chapter.

Nimbin’s Mardi Grass festival emerges from a political movement. Cannabis became inextricably associated with the newly arrived counter-culture participants of the 1970 (Hopkins, 1996). Nimbin’s media image became overwhelmingly one of a drug culture. As Nimbin moved from rural hamlet to a position on the mainstream tourist trail, the new settler’s rejection of the prevailing social norms became a contentious issue for older residents. Controversy continues with media coverage of divergent views (The Northern Star, May 2003) from drug law reform agendas, the promotion of drug abuse, community celebrations of achievements and hopes of residents and a distorted image of the village being represented.
Editorial (Byron Shire Echo, 2006:12) commented on the broader path to cannabis law reform from former NSW Premier’s Drug Summit of 1999 through to political rhetoric to be ‘hard on drugs’ demonstrated clichés on both sides of the debate. It suggests that the stereotyping that comes from the colourful street parade reinforce images of a fringe culture of radicals turned hippie baby boomers has little bearing on the realpolitik of drug legislation.

Where the Nimbin festival is stronger is in tackling law reform issues in forums. Those seeking cannabis decriminalisation or legislation rightly point out that its use and abuse is a health issue, not a criminal issue. Demonising and persecuting its users does little for community wellbeing. …All drugs are potentially dangerous. Life itself is dangerous – no one gets out alive. Learning to face the dangers through education is preferable to wearing blinkers on the hard issues (Byron Shire Echo, 2006:12).

Such sentiments are represented amongst the thousands who attend the festival’s annual program. Many attendees are not ‘users’ but recognise the phenomenon as a significant part of contemporary life and wish to take advantage of the entertainment as well as the educational aspects of the festival. There is a feeling at the event that there is widespread support for such legislation.

Cannabis was a sacrament for the hippies (Hopkins, 1996). The hardy plant was simple to cultivate in the prevailing subtropical conditions in the surrounding hills of the village. Nimbin’s reputation as a destination for accessing cannabis grew. Hopkins suggests that what started as an outlaw fringe of alternative locals at the Rainbow Café turning their few plants into car registration, new shoes for the kids and maybe extensions to their shelter, gradually metamorphosed into the hard bitten, highly competitive street hustle. The dynamic changed on the street with the arrival of outside dealers attracted by media coverage. Concern expressed by residents about the increasing trade in white powders, as distinct from cannabis, was evident. Concurrently and ironically there appeared to be a flourishing of conventional businesses with the influx of visitors (pers com Balderstone, Hallett, 1999).

Motivation to develop a community celebration (pers com Roberts, Nelson, 1999) came from the tolerance and commitment residents demonstrated as they progressed their permaculture gardens, alternative energy systems, community recycling works and land-sharing communities. This success they experienced with diverse pursuits encouraged the collaboration that was required to develop a festival. Each of these independent projects demonstrated certain resilience and it was felt this prepared participants for a major community event. The Nimbin Environment Centre and Nimbin News, alternative schools, community health networks, the Nimbin Museum, diverse local enterprises emerged parallel to activities dedicated to putting an end to the drug trade. Drug laws were an issue for some
residents and subsequently visitors. Hopkins (1996) claims that authorities found ways to hinder, harass, raid, intimidate, fine, jail and generally maintain a state of undeclared war on the vision of a whole and healing community lifestyle envisaged by the hippies.

In 1988, the first active drug law reform group, Nearly NORML Nimbin, started proposing drug law re-evaluation and review along with an immediate re-legalization of cannabis as a means of healing the growing disrespect on the streets (Hopkins, 1996). Nimbin HEMP (Help End Marijuana Prohibition) was formed (to later become Nimbin HEMP Embassy, the organisation responsible for Mardi Grass) and ran sporadic but successful political campaigns, maintained a media tactical response unit, held some great dances and other gigs, and developed a reputation as outrageous political players. With a growing support network and an increased public awareness of the issues, Nimbin took the lead in the NSW push against prohibition (Hopkins, 1996, Zable, 2003).

The Nimbin HEMP Embassy decided to hold a public rally to provide ordinary people with the opportunity to express their opposition to the drug laws in a peaceful, festive and non-confrontational atmosphere after a series of incidents involving local Police. May 1st (May Day) was designated and so the Mardi Grass was born. Despite a lack of police participation and the opposition of the local Council, who refused the organisation the right to march in the streets and use of the local park, over 1000 people, mainly local, participated.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Photo: Peter Derrett, 1999

Image 7.7 Members of the Older Women’s Network lead the annual Mardi Grass Parade
In 1999, Members of the Older Women’s Network lead the annual Mardi Grass Parade. Each year a different sector of the community is invited to lead the parade.
**Festival Organisation**

The festival evolved into a three-day event. From the initial movement a variety of stakeholders observed and supported the political celebration. Hopkins (1996) notes the difficulty with engaging local Council. However, co-operation between organisers and the Police grew. They ensured the traffic continued moving on Parade day but they otherwise kept a low profile during the festivities. The event passed without any trouble in terms of violence, vandalism and any serious shows of interpersonal or environmental disrespect. Local businesses in the early days responded positively to the increased custom.

When the Nimbin HEMP Embassy employed Graeme Dunstan as Crowd Controller for the 1999 Nimbin Mardi Grass he took a developmental approach to the task (*Nimbin Good Times*, February, 1999:4). With expected crowds of 10,000 he decided that a two-day crowd managers training session would be a valuable resource for the community. He and Sgt Neville Plush, of Nimbin Police, led the program for residents and visitors interested in working through harm ‘subsidized’ approaches. As well, fifteen undergraduates from Bond University’s criminology course participated in the practical course. They received course credits based on their written reports of the experience.

The Jungle Patrol Community Safety Inc. now provides regular community safety services in Nimbin to support numerous community events. The initiative is subsidized by a grant from the NSW Premier’s Department dedicated to conducting patrols seven days a week for two years. Regular training is undertaken for volunteers in this service. During the 2003 Mardi Grass a volunteer street beat operated, providing behaviour observation, crowd control, visitor information and emergency first aid support. This group, dedicated to non-aggressive, non-confrontational and non-judgemental community safety is conspicuous in bright orange T-shirts. The collaboration between this group, the Nimbin HEMP organisers and the Police has ensured a safer and more ambient environment for residents and visitors during the festival.

Organisers publish visitor information to ‘Keep Nimbin Nearly Normal!’ (*The Nimbin Good Times*, May 2003:8). Included are suggestions that visitors respect the village and its locals. Parking and camping issues are explained. Nimbin streets are alcohol and glass free. Mardi Grass is a cannabis harvest festival. It warns visitors to be careful with drug consumption, especially cookies and details locations for assistance. It asks for no loud drumming after midnight and no dogs.
Nimbin HEMP Embassy was established in 1995. The Embassy’s prime activities are promoting drug law reform by educating the community in general and promoting a more tolerant and compassionate attitude to people in general. The Embassy supports other community groups. Supporters see the HEMP Embassy as representative of the values held by many influential community figures (Nimbin HEMP website, 2002) The HEMP Embassy bunker is the venue for weekly meetings in preparation for each festival. Here there are deliberations on program content, strategies for dealing with crowds, parking, toilets, and promotion.

An alternative way of contextualising an event with its host community and its visitors is asking attendees to tell their stories. Organisers of Nimbin’s Mardi Grass and Cannabis Law Reform Rally are keen to document the first time pot-smoking experiences of visitors (Balderstone, 2002). They expect to collate them for publication. The festival website is used for this purpose. Attendees have been party to regular surveys by local university students who regularly investigate what makes this festival tick (Derrett, Dimmock, Prosser, 1997).

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 7.8 Colourful participants

The colour of the parade picks up on themes used elsewhere in community identification. The rainbow features in costume and banners. It resonates with links to hippie culture, the tourism rainbow connection and the circus. The motif of the marijuana leaf is found on most costumes and accoutrements. There is street dancing as the parade progresses along Cullen Street.

Timing

The Nimbin HEMP Mardi Grass Cannabis Law Reform Rally is held annually at the end of April, but more generally early May to coincide with the May Labour Day holiday long weekend gazetted in Queensland. This time also represents the traditional harvest season for
locally grown marijuana. It is a three-day event, Friday to Sunday. Some peripheral activities occur from the Wednesday prior to the event.

**Mardi Grass Program**

![Figure removed due to copyright restrictions](Photo: Peter Derrett, 2003)

**Image 7.9  Children and indigenous community hand in hand**
Children have been a feature of the parade. The parade is a community parade and is an important element in the street celebrations for Mardi Grass. Often dressed in the colours of green for the marijuana leaf or rainbow colours, they, like other age groups are encouraged to participate. The local indigenous community is invited to head up the parade. In this photo Bundjalung elders and their constituency are leading the parade.

Over the years a pattern of backbone events has emerged. The Pickers Ball is held on the Friday night and each year a new beneficiary of funds raised is selected. Like other community festivals once a formula appears to be working, this becomes the program core and it is replicated annually. The major features of Nimbin Mardi Grass festivities include local and visiting entertainers in local venues.

**Table 7.1  Nimbin's Mardi Grass program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Kombi Konvoy</td>
<td>A convoy of Kombi (VW) vans leaves Lismore CBD (having come from the coast at Byron Bay) and travels to Nimbin. Associated with this is an opening ceremony that includes the lighting of an eternal flame to remember victims of drug prohibition policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEMP Olympix</td>
<td>Competitive events include bong throw and yell, joint rolling, pass the joint relay, a grower’s iron man event carrying fertiliser and water up steep hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemp Fashion Show</td>
<td>A parade at Nimbin Town hall of Nimbin designed hemp fashion garments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEMP Harvest ball</td>
<td>Friday night at the Nimbin Town hall, known as Pickers Ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardi Grass Market</td>
<td>On Saturday and Sunday at Headers Field, stalls, performance, soccer and the HEMP Olympix, seed swap, the Cannabis Cup,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafe Cabaret</td>
<td>Starting Thursday night at Nimbin cafes and restaurants, local musicians, poets, dancers and performers, movies,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemp Trade Fair</td>
<td>On a need to know basis!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon Lantern Parade</td>
<td>Saturday night, through town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEMP Talks</td>
<td>Conferences, forums, discussions each day in Town hall. Special Legal Advice sessions. Industrial, medicinal and political pot issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardi Grass Parade</td>
<td>Main tourist attraction of the Festival, on the Sunday. Colourful and zany parade features the Big Joint, costumes, flags, floats, music leading to a rally with speakers and music in Peace Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Image 7.10  Political satire

Political satire is annually on parade. In 2003 much had been made in the regional media of the use of sniffer dogs in the policing of the drug trade. A member of the HEMP Embassy leads a dog in the parade ahead of a float (with a fox number plate!) carrying revellers.

Mardi Grass’s theme emphasises cannabis drug law reform. It is a political rally delivered by the HEMP Embassy in a community known for its tolerance of diversity. The alternative lifestyle choices of residents are on display during the event. The versatile hemp theme is exploited in terms of its various applications to health, fashion, food and civil rights for example, in 1994, Beyond Prohibition; in 1996 Peace for Pot Mardi Grass; in 1999 Good medicine; and in 2000 Freedom of Choice.
It takes all sorts

The parade provides an opportunity for people of all ages, mostly from the host community, to simply demonstrate a continuum of celebratory tools, ritual, excess, colour and movement, intellectual curiosity, sound and silence, music, theatricality, nostalgia, collaboration, humour and fun.

Mardi Grass Organisers

The Nimbin HEMP Embassy is a non-profit association incorporated under the name ‘Nimbin Hemp’. The finance and management structure of the organisation is in accord with its statutory obligations. The organisation’s operations are based at 51 Cullen Street, Nimbin in the Tomato Sauce building that has been kept in good repair with regular renovations undertaken. The Hemp Embassy and Mardi Grass headquarters is wallpapered with posters and newspaper articles, that make it an historical site for drug law reform activism in Australia. There is close to 24-hour presence on the property for security. The HEMP Embassy generates some of its operating costs by running the Hemp Embassy Shop. The shop supports local artists and craftspeople in the retail outlet it conducts.

The individuals involved in the event organisation are volunteers and come with a variety of team building and activism skills. Some learned these on-the-job, others are involved in the many other social, cultural and environmental activities of the village. This local knowledge allows for collaborations through resource sharing, open communication with other stakeholders and effective use of the local media to promote the major thrust of each event. Management of this event has a very practical orientation. All members of the committee who come together annually to facilitate the festival are charged with specific tasks. Some
specialist jobs are outsourced to other groups in the community. A few members of the committee are charged to be spokespeople for the organisation.

The committee looks to ensure public street safety and security. The Hemp Embassy actively monitors the street for disturbances and emergencies. Emergency medical equipment is kept on the premises for treating and transporting drug overdose victims. A phone service for drug, education and referral is provided (Nimbin HEMP Embassy, 2002).

**Nimbin Business Community**

With community festivals recognising the importance of partnerships to ensure a broader acceptance of such events, Mardi Grass’ relationship with the business community has been problematic through the years. Nimbin Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey of member businesses (1999) asking enterprises to indicate whether business profit over the Mardi Grass weekend was higher, unchanged, lower; and whether businesses were open or closed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of business</th>
<th>Open/closed</th>
<th>Business profits</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bazzana’s Farm Supplies &amp; Produce</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Lower, loss of local custom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP Petrol Station</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Unchanged, though we worked for no wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush Theatre</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Loss of local custom; carpark full of illegal campers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charters Hardware</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Lower, loss of local custom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choices Cafe</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Café Oasis</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashioning</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEMP Embassy</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kays Hairdressing Salon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Crafts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Maxxted Gallery</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsagency</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Marginally higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightcap Real Estate</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Candle Factory</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Carpark full of campers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Craft Gallery</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>A little higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Gallery</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Backpackers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Hot Bread</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Post Office</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Ill prepared for stall holders who required change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Bowls Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Bakery</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Caravan Park</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Lifestyle Real Estate</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Closed because of Mardi Grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Motors &amp; NORTHERN RIVERSMA</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Name</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Organic Fruit and Veges</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>20 – 30% up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Post-Aquarius Museum</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Apothecary</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Environment Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin rainforest Nursery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Tourist Connexion</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Much higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Village Pharmacy</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Emporium</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Turnover up, overheads up, net profit unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbin Trattoria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptio’s Bookshop</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phantom Possum</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Power Company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Retreat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick’s Café</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>No profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanjay’s Restaurant</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summerland Credit Union</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>ATM up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuka Trading</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Best days of the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cage Café</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cottager</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Saturday unchanged; Sunday 30 – 40% up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Freemason’s Hotel</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rainbow Cafe</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Village Washouse</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above has varied over the years. An increasing number of shops have opened, while a more robust market situation has emerged in the grounds of the Nimbin Community Development Association grounds to cater for small enterprises wishing to sell their wares.

The Chamber of Commerce’ commitment to and involvement in discussions of Nimbin’s image and identity has also varied over the years. External funds from the Department of State and Regional Development have been invested in community economic development. An interest in increasing the number of visitors to the village has been demonstrated by a plan to enhance the entrances to the village, some main street embellishments and the development of some marketing initiatives including a TV campaign, brochure and website (Naylor, 2003:6)). Lismore City Council collects a rate levy imposed on commercial premises. These funds provide leverage for further investment by government agencies for the implementation of a plan that is determined to improve the village’s image. Life long resident and Chamber president, Kevin Soward, notes that there has been change. ‘I grew up in this town and it’s nothing like it was when I was a kid but these initiatives may smooth it out a bit’ (Naylor, 2003:6).
Festivals and Community Wellbeing

The wellbeing model (Wills, 2001) assists in evaluating the relative and comparative success of Nimbin’s Mardi Grass. Nimbin’s Mardi Grass experience for diverse stakeholders examined in this chapter provide insights into how it fares against the criteria and these observations may be compared with other events in the region to give a picture of the social capital accrued. Nimbin demonstrates significant distinctive features that satisfy the quality of life sought by many residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Wellbeing Outcomes</th>
<th>Nimbin and Mardi Grass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality</td>
<td>✓ Free outdoor family entertainment, relaxed atmosphere on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate prosperity</td>
<td>✓ Income from visitors for duration of event; black economy particularly associated with drug exchange, food stalls prosper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livability</td>
<td>✓ Animates CBD, provides entertainment and food outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>✓ Events for residents and visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>✓ Animated village, though drug induced atmosphere distinct from alcohol revelry, a distinctive vibe!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>✓ Dependent on spontaneous volunteer management and interest of one specific community group; fragile situation amongst residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability</td>
<td>✓ Greater interest from out of town to consume than from host community to organise; diversifying content through seminars and political action; police action in recent times changes emphasis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results are linked to Wellbeing Building Blocks (Wills, 2001 34) that include democratic governance, active citizenship, social justice and social capital. These assist in clarifying how a sense of community and place contribute to regional cultural festivals. The desirability of social capital to determine improved quality of life for residents, strengthens communities and for building capacity is demonstrated through the wellbeing building blocks in Nimbin. How Mardi Grass expresses the social capital accrued as a result of its position in the community calendar is outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Building Blocks Components</th>
<th>Nimbin and Mardi Grass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic governance: Visions, goals, leadership, policies</td>
<td>✓ Community based non profit volunteer organisation with political agenda; places strain on internal community relations and tensions with regulatory agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active citizenship: Equal political, civil and civic rights</td>
<td>Community based group for social and political action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice: Human rights, social supports, empowerment</td>
<td>Provides forum to celebrate harvest of illegal plant, political action, and gives voice to alternative approaches to lifestyle choices and leverages community cultural activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital: Interpersonal and organisational trust, reciprocity and collective action</td>
<td>✓ Provides opportunity for collaboration; though tensions between sections of host community; security and waste management models developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3 Image and Identity

It would seem that Nimbin does not have to do anything anymore to attract public attention. Word of mouth and the media, too, influence perceptions of Nimbin’s coastal neighbour Byron Bay. They have become iconic with the broader Australian national imagery. Both centres have become playthings of local and national media being portrayed almost as stereotypical destinations for special interest visitors. And also home to dysfunctional residents. There is the external story and the internal lived experience. Roberts suggests (pers.com. 1999) that

outside of this immediate region the perception of Nimbin is much more an image that they love, than for the people that live here. People I am involved with through regional management boards as well as a lot of local community residents don’t have a very good impression. They don’t understand or appreciate what Nimbin is for to their community. I’ve always had to tackle those comments about promoting Nimbin on a regional level as well as a local level. When speaking to anyone from outside the area, and you say you are from near Nimbin, their eyes light up, they say they have this whole mental image of what it’s all about. I think that that is probably part of the problem. The locals know the whole story too well. The visitors are confronted with it when they arrive and they either love it or they hate it.

She reflects on the global appeal of Nimbin and its street life,

it’s like world travel within the region. When you arrive there the locals are not going to be speaking the same language, wearing the same clothes, doing the same things that you did just on the other side of the border. You know, it’s like Amsterdam or countries in Europe where there’s actually that little process that you have to go through to arrive there and you know that you are going somewhere different. So, by just arriving in the village of Nimbin and the Rainbow Café (in the main street) for example, it is just like another world. The whole Nimbin thing is quite cosmic. You get currents of energy in certain places in that street, I think Michael (Balderstone, owner of the Nimbin Museum) has picked up on a lot of that at his museum, and next door, the Rainbow Café is amazing. You may be from anywhere on the planet, but nowhere else feels like this. You almost need a passport to get into it! There appears to be some sort of barrier that you feel like you are getting through, that you are going to somewhere completely different. In fact, many tour operators from south-east Queensland travel through the village with commentary suggesting Nimbin is a human museum.

It’s a sign of the times that you speak about the age group that gets out there (to Nimbin’s Mardi Grass). It is this whole movement of the baby boomer era that’s getting to the age where they are running around with stories for 60 Minutes. They are the ones who are editing newspapers and sitting in parliament and becoming magistrates! I think that in a way it adds a bit more legitimacy to the event, and it will be interesting to see as the next decade unfolds who we’ve got sitting on our Council as well.
**Nimbin and Local Media**

There is increasing attention paid to Nimbin, not only at Mardi Grass time, but also in terms of presenting a perspective that addresses issues faced by numerous community stakeholders in the village. Roberts suggests (1999, pers.com.),

in Nimbin one thing that the journalists love is the Bowling Club right next door to the Rainbow Power Company right next door to the pub sort of thing. It gives them a great thrill to see people out there in their whites bowling the ball down while, just a stone throw away all these people, co-exist, but to sell it is a really hard thing. The goal and direction of the Council is to continue building up this regional centre approach for Lismore and adjacent is a distinctive whole lifestyle thing. Marketing the diversity is a complex exercise. It's a challenge. It's not like being at Tamworth (home of a country music festival)!

The village’s cultural diversity is regularly represented in national and local media, the Internet and through personal exchange and documentation. Roberts reflects (1999, pers.com.) have you been in the main street when the belly dancers are in the hall or when they are doing choir practice? It’s just so beautiful. I love that concept that Nimbin is like live theatre up and down the main street at any time of the day or night. It could be some guy talking about religion or someone trying to sell you drugs, but it’s like walking along a dream world and having Daffy Duck come up behind you. I really love getting out to those Blue Moon Cabaret nights where you would sit in the café, and all the different artists walk around from café to café and you get the guitarists singing and then you would get some of David Hallet’s poetry and you get the feeling the energy in those creative areas is really good.

**Representation of Nimbin in local print media**

Nielson (2001) records research undertaken in the preparation of a Tourism Plan for Nimbin that tourists often use local newspapers to find out what is happening in the region that they are visiting. These local newspapers also play a major role in communicating major issues and events to the local population. The analysis outlined below represents how Nimbin is dealt with in the local press. All articles mentioning Nimbin in three local newspapers, *The Northern Star, Northern Rivers Echo* and the *Byron Shire Echo* were reviewed. The search resulted in 148 articles being identified over the twelve-month period between June 2000 and May 2001.

Each article was analysed with regard to:

- Its general attitude (positive or negative)
- The issue at hand (e.g. business, community group activities, festival and events etc) and
- Group represented (e.g. community group, business, school etc)
Only *The Northern Star* and the *Northern Rivers Echo* produced news stories on Nimbin (122 and 27 respectively). The *Byron Shire Echo* newspaper only included two promotional items on Mardi Grass, so any further discussion relates to the former two papers.

**General Attitude of Articles**

A review of *The Northern Star* revealed a much higher percentage of positive news articles than the *Northern Rivers Echo* (84% compared to 67%). Issues receiving the highest percentage of positive representation were Personal Accolades, Community Groups Activities and Events/Activities, while the Hash Cafes and the Cannabis Raids were represented with significantly more negative press. Over the 12-month period, only during May 2001 was there a significantly higher percentage of negative press.

**Major Issues**

A wide range of issues was represented over the twelve-month period. Nelson (2001) reports that the most frequent issues were Community Group Activities, Events/Activities and Business. Over the twelve-month period, as can be seen in Table 7.5, several of the major issues received consistent representation, while others were varied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Hash Café</th>
<th>Personal Accolades</th>
<th>Community Group Activities</th>
<th>Events/Activities</th>
<th>Cannabis Raids</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Mardi Grass</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2001</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Groups Represented**

There was a wide range of groups being represented throughout the articles including Community Groups (29%), News (27%), Businesses (13%), HEMP Embassy (9%), Police (9%), School (7%) and Other Groups (6%). Community Groups were associated with significantly more positive than negative press, while the Police were associated with significantly higher percentage of negative press usually associated with drug issues.
While drug culture issues such as cannabis raids, hash cafes and Mardi Grass do represent a significant proportion of articles they do not dominate the coverage of Nimbin from a frequency point of view. However, they are probably issues that would be more likely to reach the front page and be represented in other forms of media (e.g. TV, radio etc).

In 2004, *The Northern Star* chose to comment by providing for and against columns relating to the staging of Nimbin’s Mardi Grass Rally. Gilmore (2004:6) and Aliento (2004:7) raised predictable concerns to support or castigate such an event. No doubt motivated by a subsequent enhanced Letters to the Editor page their comments presented standard arguments. These may represent the polarized views held amongst the constituency, alternatively the community may have moved on and the paper perpetuates the stereotypes! Price (2004:11) reminded Gilmore that ‘Mardi Grass represents the cannabis culture with a sense of humour and seeks to protest against the prohibition of cannabis in an artful, funny and peaceful way’. She suggested that ‘few villages can boast the level of co-operation required and given to plan a safe civil disobedience event like the Mardi Grass’. Singh (2004:12) reflected that the Mardi Grass festival was ‘not a fight against the so-called straight society’.

Residents of the region are significant users of the Letters to the Editor columns of local papers to share their interest and concerns about issues connected to this study. Hopkins (*The Northern Star*, 1994:6) draws attention to the law reform manifesto of the HEMP Embassy. A specific instance he refers to occurred on April Fools Day (April 1, 1994) where an act of civil disobedience received considerable regional and national media coverage. The Mardi Grass Rally is an extension of this law reform agenda.

A letter from Scott (*The Northern Star*, 1994:6) raises alternatives approaches for Nimbin to better deal with the connection between drugs and tourism. The street scene is a cause of concern to residents and visitors. He suggests that true Nimbin culture lies somewhere between the Street Scene and the Permaculture Scene. The latter represents the innovations emerging from those choosing an ecologically alternative lifestyle. He suggests that hippie residents have substantial interest, knowledge and experience to provide some models to better manage the destination.

*Nimbin Community*

Nimbin Community Forums have provided a useful mode of exchange in the village. The monthly participative gathering at the Town Hall grew from community consultation workshops conducted by Robert Theobold in 1999. Over the ensuing years, relevant topics
were advertised and members of the community could attend the open meetings to discuss issues of interest. The Nimbin Mardi Grass featured on a number of occasions in the context of festival organisation generally, as well as part of tourism development and the annual event as a specific focus.

A formal approach is taken in the meetings. People wishing to make comments on the issue have five minutes to present responses to the Forum. In 2000, Lismore Tourism (Lismore City Council) contributed as appropriate and researchers from Southern Cross University spoke about Mardi Grass as a tourism attraction on one occasion. Attendees are broken into groups to deal with ideas, issues and examples in depth and after an hour and a half report back to the whole group from points documented on butcher’s paper.

This mechanism receives great community support and provides event organisers with an opportunity to receive feedback on their efforts; input into programming and attendant services and a better understanding of how the community feel about the festival that attracts large numbers of visitors to the village. Few communities have embraced such a simple forum for attending to community business in a non-threatening manner. While there are regular differences of opinion shared in robust debate, it seems to embody and sustain the spirit of the new settlers.

Survey data revealed that thirty-six percent of people attending Mardi Grass are local residents, while sixty-two percent of attendees did not stay away from home, and thirty percent visited from South-East Queensland. The visitors to the festival are regular attendees and in 1997 over seventy percent indicated they would return the following year (Derrett, Dimmock & Prosser, 1997). Such patterns have remained stable (Balderstone, 2002, pers.com.). So the festival is largely a local event.

A group called the Ganja Faeries makes a significant contribution to the colour and movement at each year’s Mardi Grass Cannabis Law Reform March. These residents are seen as injecting humour into the debate. Up to 100 people (mostly women Faeries and a few male Goblins) attend workshops prior to the event to practice dance steps, prepare music and develop costume designs for individuals to wear in the March. Participants are urged to be ‘the ones who tickle your funny bones and make you laugh and dance with you along the way, then appear in your dreams. They share a collective wisdom of living with cannabis’ (The Nimbin Good Times, May, 2003:8). The street theatre they bring is complete with music, chants, ideology and whimsy. The diversity of age and shapes of participants who
enthusiastically pursue their moves makes their section of the parade attractive to the spectators on the sides of the main street.

Resident
Residents become vocal in regional media when the village comes under scrutiny. Mardi Grass leader, Michael Balderstone wrote ‘Nimbin has become a refugee camp from the war on drugs…the problem is prohibition. It will just get worse and worse, like the Al Capone days of the illegal alcohol in America. Regulation and education is the way to go, not more jail (Balderstone, 2006:14).

Politicians and police seek to address the drug issues with increased numbers of police. Regularly residents respond to press assertions that assaults and ‘problems’ in the village are ‘typical of the type of people who live in Nimbin’ (Bates, 2006:11). Offences committed in the village are attributed to drugs and clearly there are residents who resent implications that all residents are involved in the drug trade and are therefore contributing to anti-social behaviours.
Residents are active in their pursuit of social and political issues (other than drug law reform). It is during events such as Mardi Grass activists raise the profile of their particular project. The Timbarra gold mine near Drake west of Nimbin excited a great deal of controversy and passion that found its way to the streets of Nimbin during Mardi Grass 2000. The banner here is in front of a hand painted façade of Nimbin Town Hall. The Aboriginal design above the Town Hall street awning is part of another distinctive feature of Nimbin’s main street, a series of mural painted atop each retail building. This phenomenon was commenced by artist and activist Benny Zable in 1973 to coincide with the Aquarius Festival. Spectators have assembled to await the festival parade.

The Mardi Grass celebrations provide a forum for the airing of many contemporary issues. Residents use the occasion to demonstrate their concerns on arrange of social, cultural and political and environmental issues. Residents feel comfortable and confident that the festival can accommodate diverse perspectives on issues they would like to have discussed in the open. The rally after the parade each year generally canvasses a broad range of issues of social, cultural, environmental and political interest.
Mardi Grass is the biggest event in Nimbin, so it swamps the village. It’s absolutely appalling for the rednecks who have resisted drug law reform and wanted to close down the methadone program. These people live in la la land. I mean the tide of opinion has passed them by. They all drink down at the Club and affirm their culture. You can understand their outrage when we close off whole streets, saying this is what we’ve got to do. We rope off the parking, saying no parking, otherwise it’s worse. You just have to trust, and the police have supported us. The process then for a big event is that it creates alliances, collaborations, elaborations, and divisions, and this is all juice in the pudding of community. If you keep doing it - collaborations cross over divisions of the next process. It becomes a kind of ferment of community and champions pop out (Dunstan, pers com 1999).

Dunstan comments on the dynamics at play when residents prepare for the annual festival. Hallett (pers com. 1999) suggests there has been a lot of antipathy about resident support for festivals like Mardi Grass. He recalls the evolution of festivals. He recalls, it’s strange that after the first Festival that they had here in 1973 they tried to do the ten year after Festival in 1983. There was a lot of opposition to it and interestingly there was a hell of lot of opposition to it from Tuntale Falls, the Coordination Cooperative, which was the supposedly the quintessential hippie commune set up after the Aquarius Festival, yet a lot of them didn’t want it and didn’t want visitors and it was like we helped them out and we don’t want them here. So I think there’s a good deal of that. I think the annual Mardi Gras has a bit of that effect as well, because people are saying that we are expecting 10,000 visitors this year. It’s too many. Where are we going to put them? Where are they going to stay? Where are they going to park? What are they going to do?

He puts another view on the other side of that is, if you want to be practical about it, it’s hugely beneficial to the town, but for other people, there’s the cringe factor there. The fact is we don’t have to attract people to Nimbin. People come anyway. They are coming all the time and it is the same with Byron Bay because the backpacker thing is such a massive word of mouth international phenomenon.

Many rural communities have expressed an interest in attracting whoever they can get as visitors. That isn’t so in Nimbin. There is increasing involvement by the business community in a strategic approach to attracting visitors being taken by Council’s Economic Development Officer. Conflict within the resident community has been aired at special forums dedicated to discussing ways of dealing with the management of street festivals (Nimbin Forums, April and November, 2000).

Hallett (pers.com.1999) suggests that many of the concerns are related to law and policing. He also raises such factors like the Mardi Grass wishing to use other community amenities, like the local showground.
The grounds’ trustees, the A. & I. Society do not want to have camping there. They do not want to have parking there. This represents significant division in the community. It’s a bit of the ‘them and us’. He finds it surprising. You’d imagine the showground trust people would be most happy to get finance and tourism and investment into the area. Yet they are the ones that don’t want what they feel are ‘those sort of people’ coming here, whereas they are coming anyway. I think a lot of the feeling is that ultimately it’s a one street village and it just sags and bulges and nearly explodes when these big things happen and inevitably it rains then as well which makes it a mud heap and a lot more difficult!

We don’t have to advertise the Mardi Grass because people will come anyway. We don’t have to push it as people are going to come. If someone like Triple J comes, it makes it even more difficult and more people come. I don’t know where residents get a meeting ground, because they are caught between the two things, on the one hand they want the tourism, some ask, what’s in it for me? Others say, all they are doing is wrecking my roads


Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 7.15  Leaf motif
The marijuana leaf motif is picked up in numerous forms during the festivities. They are props, body decorations, banners, and costumes for young and old participants and spectators.

Nimbin has a very anti authoritarian underbelly which has made it very difficult and most of what you call the champions of the community have either gone or have gone and come back intermittently. Graeme Dunstan, Paul Joseph, Benny Zable, even Michael Balderstone and myself come and go. It’s very much a town where if you are going to stick your nose out and be seen to be a pro-active person, to be an ideas person, you will of itself create a lot of antipathy to what you are doing. Partly to the fact that you are doing something and partly to the fact that it’s you. So, it’s a difficult thing (Hallett, pers com. 1999).

Hallett suggests (pers. com.1999) that some of the original ideals are still there. ‘I wouldn’t be there and I think that’s still very much the sort of quasi-spiritual thing that attracts people
here’. Nimbin provides a cultural reference point for discovering what constitutes an alternate society.

What you see on the street doesn’t necessarily represent what is happening in the town and many people I know virtually do not come to town. Many people have their base out in the hills. They have been there for years and they have their farming, their music or their art, their craft, their performance are the things happening out there. I think in terms of the cultural tourism, you’ve got to put the drug tourism in there as well. It’s a huge factor, particularly with Nimbin, and probably with Byron Bay as well, but particularly here, I mean people come out here, they may come out to have a cappuccino but they also come out here to buy some pot.

To be in Nimbin during Mardi Grass is to experience the exhilaration, chaos and serendipity of artful revolution. To be in Nimbin during Mardi Grass is to know the creativity and power of the people. Nimbin during Mardi Grass is a cauldron in which cannabis culture is cooked, magic is made and enduring myths take form. Holy smoke! (Words from a street poster)

7.4 Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism’s anthropological underpinning (Woods, 1993; Picard, 1996; Trotter, 1999) of visitors wanting to experience the essence of a community’s culture and ‘way of life’ is well represented in Mardi Grass. The festival demonstrates sub-cultures within cultures.

The Nimbin Mardi Grass is an integral part of the character of the Northern Rivers. That applies whether or not you support cannabis use. We who identify ourselves as belonging to Northern Rivers society in 2006 are shaped by the subculture that generated Mardi Grass 14 years ago’ (Eldridge, 2006:10).

Visitors are keen to see how this small community ‘ticks’ and to see how it hosts diverse festival-goers.

Cultural tourism has been done here since way back, since the markets started. I think the markets here were one of the crucial things in getting cultural tourism going. It gave something to the visitors to be, to feel, to buy, to drink, but it also gave more inspiration to a lot of the locals. They were either doing things in the way of arts, crafts, food and fabrics, and they saw more people doing more markets. Where there was once the Channon Market (in a neighbouring village), now everyone now has got a market. Virtually every village of any decent size offers an outlet for those who want to sell goods and the two things fed on each other. The tourists needed to have these large events so they weren’t just walking up and down the footpaths and the people involved in the arts and crafts needed the outlets for their industry and I think those two things have gone hand in hand (Hallett, pers.com, 1999).
It’s surprising that the markets here have come and gone over the time and it’s really part of the fact that Nimbin is a one street village in that everything happens in Cullen Street so that even doing something down at the Header Sportsground, 200 metres off the mainstreet was too far away. The absolute ruthless convenience of the car and people’s need for immediacy comes into play. I mean they are going to be here for three and a half minutes, so do it for me here, which is why the new Aquarius Fair that they’ve started is in the Community Centre of the village (Hallett, pers com. 1999).

The participants of the ‘Kombi Konvoy’ an unlikely ancillary aspect of the festival, come from all over the country. Number plates on the Volkswagen (VW) vans attest to drivers coming from Western and South Australia, as well as the east coast of the continent. Each year up to 60 vans assemble, firstly in Byron Bay and travel inland to Lismore to collect more aficionados of the distinctive vans. The gathering in a central car park in Lismore provides a rallying point for vehicle enthusiasts reminiscent of regular motorheads’ swap meets. The camaraderie evident is then taken on the 30 kilometre journey to Nimbin on the Saturday of the Mardi Grass weekend. Many participants are repeat visitors to the event and to the village. Each year more and new participants arrive. The hundreds of people involved in this one aspect of the festival not only represent visitation to the event but its diverse content.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

*Image 7.16  Kombi Konvoy leaves Lismore for Nimbin*

Kombi van enthusiasts from across the country, include overseas visitors who commence a pilgrimage to Nimbin from Byron Bay via Lismore. Diversity is represented here, as well as at other elements to the festival’s program exhibitions, demonstrations, performances, stalls and merchandising.
Nimbin and Tourism
Lismore City Council’s tourism promotion slogan, The Rainbow Region, adopted in the early 1990s, provides an insight into how the mainstream tourism sector has accommodated the diversity of the alternative community represented by developments in Nimbin over the past three decades. Tourism has thrown up challenges to Nimbin too!

Care has been taken by residents of multiple occupancy properties (like Tuntable Falls Co-operative) to resist the temptation to transform their specific land use and lifestyle choices into a tourism commodity. The commodification of a way of life has serious implications for elements that underpin Nimbin’s sense of place. How residents acknowledge attitudes, personal and communal values, trust and perceived sense of safety afforded by the community, participation in community decision making, diverse social practices and openness to change and experimentation are all vulnerable if the residents feel obliged to enact a perceived role for visitors (Dunstan, Roberts, 1999, pers com.). There is resentment felt for being treated as a hippie exhibit.
The politicisation of the environmental debate coincided with the changes experienced by the residents of Nimbin as migration to the district increased and an interest in saving natural heritage areas became formalised. The resistance, along with the modification and transformation that occurred in this community on environmental issues is replicated in areas of welfare, health, education and cultural development. The new age and the old hippie movements have created a dynamic desire to protect and preserve what the settlers came for.

Disproportionately famous for its small population (approximately 600 people including surrounding area), the colourful little village attracts more than 100,000 visitors per year, including more than 20,000 backpackers who join tours from Byron Bay to visit Nimbin. Some visitors come to experience something different or the alternative dream, while others come to see and participate in the very public illicit drug trade (Nielson, 2001).

Attendees at the 1997 Nimbin Mardi Grass were surveyed regarding their perceptions of the event, including the main reason for attending. It is worth noting that over 70% of these respondents felt the atmosphere of the 1997 Nimbin Mardi Grass was the most positive aspect of the event, with safety being a major factor. While a majority of respondents were local residents, 20% had travelled from other parts of Australia and 2% were from overseas (Dimmock & Tiyce, 2001).

![Photo: Peter Derrett, 1999](Photo: Peter Derrett, 1999)

**Table 7.7 Reasons for attending 1997 Nimbin Mardi Grass**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To have fun</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Appreciation</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Image 7.19 Evaluation of Mardi Grass – student researchers**

*Southern Cross University students in Nimbin’s main street undertake research on visitation to Mardi Grass. Results from interviews are canvassed in the text.*
The Nimbin Tourism Development Plan (2001) involved the whole community in discussing the most effective strategies for identifying the best fit between what the community wanted to offer visitors and who to target. The next iteration is due in 2007 with further participation in the decision-making anticipated. Has the host culture, the community’s sense of itself remained more or less the same since Nimbin 1973? Murray (1999) suggests that sub-cultures can demonstrate resistance, modification and transformation. The evolving nature of the annual Mardi Grass also represents these processes. It was recorded at a Nimbin Community Forum, June 2001, (cited Nelson, 2001) that ‘the diversity of culture from the indigenous through to the alternative expressed through art: A culture of learning, a culture of healing, a culture of sharing, a culture of unlimited possibilities’ should underpin any tourism planning for the village.

Contemporary travel writers have identified Nimbin as a preferred destination for backpackers. Lonely Planet and Rough Guides have been influential in the media image-making of a mecca for those seeking a hippie lifestyle, access to cannabis and alternative approaches to technology and agriculture. Observers note (Murray: 1999) that Nimbin is packaged and presented as the hippie town. The alternative culture in Nimbin becomes another commodity and is marketed and sold to visitors. This raises questions as to whether this will distort the community’s sense of itself and whether an inferior product is being offered. The Nimbin Mardi Grass is set in heart of the new age/old hippie movement (Dunstan 1994; Murray 1999). The new age causes emerging from the Aquarius Festival, such as alternative medicine, health foods, education, technology and eastern philosophies are represented in the annual event.

The murals above shops in the main street initiated during the Aquarius Festival of 1973 are depicted in commercial postcards produced locally. They frame the parade that is a substantial feature of the festival’s program. They also feature in the video and movie footage shot on parade day at Mardi Grass by visiting domestic and international media, freelance and web based journalists. The active, colourful street life attracts a market with a clear understanding of drug tourism. While Mardi Grass focusses attention on cannabis there is considerable concern by all in the community about the perception and reality of a drug induced tourism market.

The Strategic Tourism Plan (Nielson, 2001) identifies a range of strategies to develop Nimbin’s tourism industry in an ecologically, culturally and economically sustainable manner. All of the strategies require ongoing attention and monitoring if they are to achieve full success. Strategies have been developed for a tourism management and monitoring
structure; positive tourism relationship building within the community; suggested specific tourism ‘experience’ development; tourism training and education strategies; visitor management; community benefits; tourism marketing; visitor package development; and festival and event management. For the latter, Lismore City Council officers provide support through Council’s Economic Development Unit.

The factors influencing the effective implementation of these strategies include, community (resident and business) attitudes towards a coordinated and strategic approach towards tourism planning and development; the willingness of appropriate community and tourism representatives to take positions on the Tourism Management Committee or other suitable coordination structure; availability of funding for a Tourism Manager and the dominance of any specific single issue. There are formal levels of exchange through the establishment of committees emanating from the Chamber of Commerce and the Community Centre. A Tourism Action Group was established as a result of forums in 2000 and 2001 and in conjunction with the Community Development association successfully attracted funds initially to prepare a Tourism Plan for the village (2001) and subsequently to implement it through a Community Economic Development Officer and a part-time Tourism Officer (2002)). Market research was seen as an important starting point for its success, in conjunction with extensive community consultation.

Nimbin has looked to respond to specific markets and develop appropriate and sustainable tourist infrastructure. The Internet has played an important role in shaping and sharing the community’s sense of self and place with the outside world. Mardi Grass, through HEMP have been enthusiastic uses of the new technology to describe, inform, persuade and remind potential visitors of the attractiveness of their event and its connection to the host community. Nimbin has a big presence on the net (Murray, 1999) With the internet being beyond the editorial control of the major tourism and media infrastructure, Nimbin people get to portray themselves in their own words. Nimbin residents have embraced web technology. Mardi Grass reaches a global audience through its effective presence on the web. The community wants to be in control of the messages received outside the village about the real situation inside. The Community Economic Development Officer and the Visitor Information Centre are tracking the contact.

Nimbin’s annual calendar of events, markets, festivals, shows, sporting activities, indicates a community willing to come together regularly (sometimes spontaneously) to celebrate sub-sectoral matters of interest. A significant number of musicians, artists, technicians are willing to collaborate for the sake of a festive event. Fundraisers form a substantial part of this
calendar. The community has raised substantial amounts of money to invest in a piano for the Town Hall (for example) and the initiative to conduct the Visions of Nimbin event in 1997 to counteract the negative connotations of Mardi Grass raised sufficient money to purchase the old Nimbin Public School and transform it into the Nimbin Community Centre with a loan from Lismore City Council.

The Visions of Nimbin was a cultural and trade fair attempting to avoid the stereotyping of the ‘seedier’ aspects of life portrayed in the media and by visitors of the drug trade tourism. Held at Easter at the village showground in 1997 it was successful in attracting a strong regional contingent of visitors to engage with the local alternative industrial and technology based economy. The 1998 Visions of Nimbin provided a more formal tourism driven approach to the community’s interest in showcasing local performing artists. It attracted fewer visitors; down from 7,000 to over 2,000. There were no further attempts to pursue this event model. Subsequently there has been greater investment in arts based events to highlight production of candles, glass, felt, painting and photography that has considerable following in the village and throughout the district. There are fashion shows, performances and exhibitions. The Community Centre hosts a rainbow regional gallery to showcase local creative production.

Monthly markets in nearby The Channon and in Nimbin at the showground provide opportunities for the alternative lifestyle economy to be a regular attraction for visitors. An addition to the calendar has been the Aquarius Fair that is based at the Community Centre in the main street along side the Rainbow Regional Gallery that showcases local visual arts and crafts. Entertainment, stalls, children’s activities and speaker’s corner are an extension of the daily activities based at the newly acquired centre.

Merchandise leaving the village demonstrates the skilled artisans living in the district are part of the promotion of the alternative community. Postcards are a significant element of the marketing artifice. They are cultural products. Images of the natural local landscape, like the Nimbin Rocks and World Heritage national parks reflect the commitment by resident and visitor to the biophysical environment. The extensive murals over the awnings of businesses located in Cullen Street have been represented on postcards on sale in the village. A range of different images of these murals, many painted and repainted over the years by Benny Zable, have found their way onto commercially available postcards. The issue of compensation for the artists, or at least a contribution from each sale for the mural update, has been mooted. The community is attempting to place an alternative spin on fundamental issues of ownership and rights to participate in the enterprise economy that tourism represents.
Establishing a Visitor Information Centre for the village has been problematic over the years. Lismore City Council has at different times provided such a service, although there has been political reluctance by some Councillors to identify Nimbin as a tourism destination and thus promote the village. Consultation with the community over time has recognised local management of such a service was financially unviable. Opportunities like the conversion of the old school into a community centre and individual entrepreneurs taking advantage of a national visitor accreditation scheme have been tried. Residents have looked to secure a centre that would be distinctive, one that would allow Nimbin to interpret its development and values in a safe environment. This would encourage people to walk through the door and get a full appreciation of what the community is about. It would facilitate people’s enjoyment of the main street. Numerous retail outlets on the main street have also taken on the tourism information-sharing role, e.g. the Nimbin Museum and the Hemp Embassy.

The primary goal is to get visitors to have the confidence to walk into the shops because it is an entire education process. We don’t really want to change the style of things out there, but we do know anecdotally how much money the town is losing by tourists not feeling comfortable enough to enter the shops and buy things (Roberts, 1999, pers. com.).

Promotion of Nimbin and Mardi Grass
Bob McKay (cited in Murray, 1999) suggests that tourism is not working for most of the businesses in the village. He points to the negative consequences of Nimbin’s reputation as ‘the drug capital of Australia’.

Mardi Grass is now one of Eastern Australia’s classic underground events. Despite minimal advertising or promotional publicity, we’ve always attracted big crowds, earned strong support and received wide and comprehensive media coverage. [We receive] constant demands for information and accommodation bookings from all over Australia’.

The media play a substantial role in sharing images of Nimbin to the district, region, national and internationally. Community members are comfortable with avenues of sharing information with one another in formal and informal ways. Local papers come and go, though the Nimbin Good Times has been operating continuously since the Aquarius Festival (1973). Special interest groups distribute regular newsletters. Notices are placed on boards and posters are attached to power poles. Word of mouth is a significant characteristic of village life. The active street life ensures that messages are rapidly passed from person to person. Like most places, the mobile phone and attendant technology is ubiquitous.
Nelson (1999, pers com.) notes that when the international media attends something like Mardi Grass, they find a big story. It scores like you wouldn’t believe. How can you lose! It’s so in your face, so outrageous and I’m sure concurrent with it is this sort of why aren’t the police there, what’s their role? I like Neville Plush, the sergeant there, he said he plans to retire there, whether or not he’s been subverted by people I don’t know, but he’s very good.

**Nimbin Mardi Grass and Lismore City Council**

Nimbin is under the Lismore City Council local government jurisdiction. Lismore City Council has an Events Strategy (Derrett, Dimmock, Prosser, 1998). It suggests that Council should ground its policy in an exploration and expansion of the city’s character and context to generate significant tangible and intangible benefits in the interests of the long-term development of the city. The same mechanism can be applied to Nimbin through consultation to ensure ownership of its application.

The Strategy states that the cultural policy, into which the festival and events policy articulates, needs to enhance and augment the distinctive identity of the city and its sense of place. It should foster a positive civic identity. It should demonstrate the development of cultural tourism. It should generate an invaluable and meaningful cultural heritage that fosters understanding and appreciation of identity, history and aspirations for generations to come. It should generate a sustainable framework for care and conservation of cultural heritage. Nimbin has much to celebrate. Mardi Grass is just one of the cultural events developed in the village community. It is one of the longest lasting endeavours of its kind to share its values. Festivals and events offer local government (Derrett, Dimmock, Prosser, 1998; Trotter 1999; Wood 1993) opportunities for artistic development, cultural vitality and economic growth. They endow a vibrant and vigorous artistic texture; make for a stimulating and enjoyable place to live and work in and to visit. Festivals can provide models for the pursuit of excellence in community cultural development.

Mardi Grass organisers recognise the inter-relationship between cultural and social activity and demographic trends. On the small scale they operate with, they have tried hard to deal with such infrastructure concerns as transport, safe streets and appropriate civic design to accommodate locals and visitors. Community interest in heritage creation, recognition and preservation is represented in their festival and event management. Issues of community wellbeing and social capital (Cox, 1995; pers com Roberts, 1999; Wills, 2001) are also being addressed.
The Rainbow Region sub-brand employed by Lismore fits Nimbin’s identity well. The rainbow region image and logo has been selected for tourism and corporate promotions and the award winning marketing strategy of the Lismore Visitor and Heritage Centre due to the astonishing coincidence of links with rainbows in the area. Aboriginal legend of the Bundjalung tribe names the "Rainbow Serpent" as the creator of the caldera area. The HMS Rainbow was the first boat to discover the mouth of the Richmond (now Wilsons) River. The Aquarius Festival of 1973, which placed the Lismore area in the spotlight, used ‘rainbows’ as its theme, forging a colourful image on the village of Nimbin. The location of the Lismore area at the base of several mountain ranges has contributed to Lismore's unique link with rainbows. The high humidity of the area produces large numbers of rainbows in the region. Helen Wilson’s anthology of cultural perspectives in the region was aptly titled Belonging to the Rainbow Region, (2003).

7.5 Reflection

Much of the data referred to in this chapter derives from responses from individuals with a connection to the place and to the community. I have attempted to capture the spirit of the village and the tone of the festival through the voices of the locals. The openness of their thoughts to questions of the nature of the event, the social and cultural capital evident to them and the appeal of the village to visitors offers great scope for interpretation by residents and visitors. What is documented is the formal and informal responses to people’s engagement in the day-to-day life of the village, as well as their contact with the Mardi Grass festival. As a participant observer their comments reflect my experience with the festival over many years.

Attending the annual event provides one with immediate and concentrated exposure to the issues and aspirations raised above. I’ve found the sensory atmosphere during Mardi Grass to be palpable. The sounds, the smells, the excitement expressed between people, the dynamics of the parade and post parade rally reflect the regular activity in a heightened form. Participants readily fall into using language enriched by connotations of ‘hippiedom’ or cosmic auras or politicisation. Few people simply reflect on a good day out, or a family experience, or a great musical experience – however each of those descriptions is available.
As there is obviously a great deal of cannabis on the street and in the hands of attendees, there is a mellowness associated with proceedings. In fact, many would contrast the festivities with those involving substantial consumption of alcohol and recognise distinctly different festive atmospheres. There is little aggression, in fact the ‘laidback’ atmosphere has become attractive to the mostly baby boomer visitors whose romantic view of the events generate a human zoo feel to their participation.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 7.20  Police on parade

Increased police presence in 2006 came under media and community scrutiny and criticism. Issues of drug use on the street during the festival are under scrutiny each year. In 2006 media prior to the event emphasised the determination of the Police to continue a high level of policing. The protest agenda that ignited the festival in the first place is still invoked in the 14th rally in 2006. Organisers met with Police with each acknowledging crowd safety as a priority.

We ask all protestors to show their usual tolerance of police and anyone blowing smoke in their face or not respecting the law in their presence will obviously get into trouble. This is Nimbin’s biggest community event and we are expecting a bigger crowd than ever to descend on our village with the beautiful weather we are having. This is a peaceful and magical little corner of the world – we will make our message about ridiculous cannabis laws and the damage they are doing to our community, heard through laughter and song, Michael Balderstone (The Northern Rivers Echo, 2006:1).

7.6  Discussion

One interesting element of Mardi Grass is the travel patterns of the activists committed to the legalization of cannabis. The use of word of mouth and the Internet has been significant in
attracting a global audience for an event in a small village in regional Australia. Despite negative media coverage locally, each year more participants are attracted. Mardi Grass demonstrates the collective gaze that Urry (1999:284) writes of where Nimbin provides an aura of excitement in the presence of other protesters. Here the protester is not only a spectator but also a participant in a ‘carnival of dissent’ (Roberston, 2006:275).

The photographs in this chapter in themselves have become an essential part of the protest. It is noted that international visitors, particularly, document and celebrate their participation at Mardi Grass and images are transferred via the Internet before the weekend event is over. Its politicization and its mainstreaming as a media event are complete. Those living vicariously through the political movement and those experiencing the event first hand collaborate in repackaging the event for broader consumption. The convergence of these responses serves to highlight the key cerebral and creative elements of the celebrations - the spectacle, the humour, human exchange and the political dissent.

Tensions have been noted between a number of festival stakeholders. The village however is noted for its tolerance of diverse ideas and practices and the festival has become a manifestation of these. The design and delivery of this event annually requires engagement with residents in the first instance. There have been internal and external interventions into the management of street life and tourism promotion over time that have highlighted the very underpinning, the raison d’etre of the festival. Every year, as some prepare for the festival, the community is obliged to revisit its vision for itself. This does not happen in every case study destination. The rigorous soul searching is consistent with consensus seeking of local community leaders across the breadth of community engagement, for welfare, youth and aged service provision for example.

The festival celebrates an illegal substance and while it has a political brief, the way the drug debate is handled annually affects the way the festival is understood in the marketplace. The festival is not widely promoted, for like Byron Bay, it iconic status ensures that sub-cultural communication is sufficient to inform interested people of the opportunity to join the political campaign.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has extensively used the voices of residents to locate a better understanding of how village life is reflected in the annual Mardi Grass festival. The distinctive features of this event, conducted in a small physical area, focus on the capacity of individuals to come together to put a political view centre stage and build celebrations around it. The festival is

Chapter 7
testament to the creativity, leadership and community resilience of residents that clearly represents key themes of the study.

What emerges is a community well tuned to the idiosyncratic historic and contemporary ways Nimbin’s community responds to change. Since 1973 particularly this small community has worked hard to manage the public good in ways they believe best reflects values held by residents. The openness to innovation by residents, their encouragement of participation in activities of mutual interest, their characteristic questioning of internal and external relationships, their willingness to collaborate with one another, their regard for the natural environment and active responsiveness to social challenges has become almost the alternative code for resilient festivals and communities. They do not always get it right, as demonstrated through overt resistance to Mardi Grass in some quarters, like the business community and police service. What is interesting to observe is the less than obvious boundaries that exist between old and new settlers, youth and baby boomer advocates of liberalization of legislation, the urban and rural residents, the employed and those underemployed. All this occurs before the first visitor comes to town.
Chapter 8: Byron Bay: Reclaiming the streets

8.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses characteristics of the community, landscape and festivities in Byron Bay. One of the things that makes Byron Bay unique, as Craig McGregor has observed, is that public pressure has halted both Club Med and McDonald’s from moving in; the green-dominated Byron Shire Council has banned drive-in takeaway food outlets from the town centre; buildings have been restricted to three storeys in height; and a moratorium has been placed on high-density development until the sewerage facilities catch up (Byron Bay, 2004).

Drew (1994) identifies Australians as ‘veranda people’ with five out of six people living within fifty kilometres of the coast where a ‘great natural veranda’ looks out to the sea and the world. His suggestion that the coast, not the central heart of the continent, has shaped the Australian identity complements comments made by Malouf (1988:9) in the 1998 Boyer Lectures about the island continent contained and containable owing a great deal to the ocean. Both these observations resonate in the Northern Rivers and affect the emergence of the four case study festivals.

McGregor (1999:16) suggests Byron Bay is the nation’s first successful attempt at a sophisticated urban culture outside our cities. The town offers an opportunity to create an alternative urban culture. He, too, suggests the influence of the Aquarius Festival on Nimbin provides more broadly based alternatives as new settlers moved to the region. He offers the ‘ferals’ in Byron Bay as the latest version of the hippie invasion. He acknowledges the difficulties that are posed by taming the bush for congenial habitation.

Byron Bay began suggests McGregor (1999:16) as just another poverty stricken farming and fishing hamlet, with blood from the abattoir being pumped into some of the best surf on the east coast, is being transformed into a genuinely metropolitan culture by the flood of artists, writers, designers, architects, filmmakers, technocrats and media people - the privileged elite of the new information society - which has migrated there in the ‘80s and ‘90s.

He goes on to suggest that the community of Byron Bay is now a heady and explosive cultural mix: everyone from alternates to entrepreneurs, surfers to celebrities, greens to glitterati, documentary filmmakers to street poets to backpackers, plus the wave after wave of tourists which wash into the town every few weeks.
In those actions lies the heart of contemporary Byron Bay. The festival under investigation in this chapter speaks overwhelmingly for the concern residents have to safeguard the future of the town to satisfy their expressed aspirations. There is ample evidence that civic action can be mobilized to ensure diverse voices are heard. The struggle that occurred to retain control of the streets on New Year’s Eve is one example of community engagement with celebration. Byron Bay is a hugely popular destination that has attracted refugees from city living. This identity has, historically, been associated with the alternative lifestyle movement of the 1970s and seen as an upmarket get-away-from-it-all retreat for wealthy southerners not wanting to mix with the hoi polloi who inhabit more vulgar coastal townships like Coolangatta and Tweed Heads (Byron Bay, 2007).

Residents of Byron Bay have a love-hate relationship with the New Year’s Eve celebrations. Most of them want the freedom to choose whether they go to the town centre, the beachfront and special venues to celebrate. A Council Committee undertakes the management of NYE activities in the streets, town parks and beachfront. Each year’s attempt to entertain and disperse crowds of up to 30,000 strong has met with some sort of criticism. Each year thousands of people pour onto the main street in the early evening hoping to be entertained. Many sit in folding chairs and listen to bands performing on stages at both ends of the street. At the water’s edge many settle in for a long night of music and dance.

*Figure removed due to copyright restrictions*

**Image 8.1  Jamming at the beachfront**

*Early in the New Year’s Eve celebrations, revellers congregate outdoors in the parkland at the beachfront of the Byron Bay township to hear musicians jamming. The most easterly point of Australia is in the background, as people settle for a long night of celebrations.*
On the beach front as darkness encroaches fire twirlers informally entertain those assembled. This is the unscripted part of community engagement. Later, in the dark, this display attracts the bulk of the audience who can hear the music and watch the fire. Fireworks are still a feature of the program and depending on the bands playing on the beachfront, there is frenzied dancing.

Byron Bay is a township at the most easterly point of the Australian continent. Recent estimates put the numbers of tourists visiting the destination at 1.75 million with a projected low growth scenario forecast to increase to almost 2,020 million in 2007 and 2,327 million in 2012 (Byron Shire Council Draft Projections 2002). Recent and on-going upgrades to the Pacific Highway linking one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, South East Queensland, to the far north coast of New South Wales, and the perceived safe haven status of Australia by international tourists is likely to translate into increasing numbers of tourists traveling to Byron Bay.

Byron Bay is located 790 km north of Sydney and 173 km south of Brisbane. The town is 27 kms north of Ballina and 70 kms south of the NSW/Queensland border. The Byron Shire, covering an area of 566 square kms, is 180km south of Brisbane, 800km north of Sydney. There are a number of towns and villages in the shire, which has a population of 30,724 (Source: ABS, 2004), 30% living in rural areas. The annual growth rate is 2%, with a rate base of 13,800. Income for residents is sourced largely from tourism and agriculture. Thriving home-based businesses focus on alternative, cultural and knowledge industries, with a growing population of artists, writers and filmmakers (Byron Shire Council, 2003).

Byron Bay is on the rim of the remains of the ancient volcanic caldera that has Mt Warning as the volcanic plug. This physical icon can be seen from numerous strategic positions around the town. Mt Warning dominates the landscape and its early geological activity, the anthropological heritage and the spirit many feel in the region because of its presence are now an integral part of the attractiveness of the location to tourists. There are extensive remnants of sub-tropical rainforest in easy reach of the coastal beaches. These physical attractions have become synonymous with the tourism boom of recent years. Over 400,000 visitors annually make their way to Cape Byron Headland, a conservation and recreation area. Most of these (cited McTavish, 1997) are day-trippers or on bus tours.

In the development of our regional case study communities, distinctive markers influence the emergence of the festivals under scrutiny. In Byron Bay, a conventional rural, coastal working
class community was shocked into action when the means to control their quality of life was challenged.

I think the biggest change to Byron Bay came with close of the Meatworks and that, if you want a marker point, that’s the one, that’s when the town had to decide what it was going to do with itself, and that period drastically changed the community, changed the whole community ethos (Wynn-Moynan, pers.com, 1999).

Following the closure of the meatworks during the 1980s, a series of movements developed. These were from within local government – an amalgamation, or more broadly focusing on investment in rising property prices and the influence of what was known as the ‘white-shoe brigade’ of Gold Coast entrepreneurs looking south for the ‘next big thing’. Tourism developments like a proposed Club Med enterprise became a major concern for many residents. Then came another wave of settlers who took up residence and wanted to ‘close the gate’. Emerging ‘green’ local politicians influenced the melting pot that now exists in Byron Bay. This amalgam had implications for resident and visitor sensitivity to place and community. Such dynamics also affect the sorts of celebrations that have engaged the locals.

This chapter uses the research framework to note a distinctive sense of place and community, clearly defined identity and images and characteristic regional hospitality delivers cultural tourism during the annual New Year’s Eve celebrations hosted in Byron Bay. The material presented is exploratory in nature and draws of diverse data sources. Implications arising from the rich description presented here are discussed in Chapter Nine. The influence and impact of each are drawn out, illustrated and discussed as they demonstrate the community’s capacity for resilience.

8.2 Byron Bay’s New Years Eve celebrations and a sense of place and community

The observance and celebration of the final day of the year’s transition into a new year (according to the Gregorian calendar, December 31st) – with its reflection on ‘out with the old and in with the new’ – is replicated around the world. In Byron Bay at the height of the summer season for visitors, community festivities have provided an opportunity to also demonstrate a distinctive sense of place. The attractiveness of the beach side holiday ambience, long sunny days, summer heat and water recreation all contribute to what is appealing not only to residents but to visitors. Because of the pressure of visitors at this time of the year the plight of the locals is sometimes lost. In recent years it has been a struggle for the locals to reclaim the streets and bring a sense of proportion to street activities, during the
day as well as the special night of New Year's Eve. How the community has dealt with managing its popularity as a destination, its propensity to party, and to socialise in safety is at the core of the discussion that follows.

**Historical context**

Byron Bay has the distinction of being one of the many places along the east coast of Australia that was named by Captain James Cook as he sailed up the coast in 1770. Writing in his ship's log on 15 May 1770 Cook recorded

> I named Cape Byron ... a tolerable high point of land, bore north west, distant three miles. A remarkable high peaked mountain lying inland north-west by west from it may know it. Inland it is pretty high and hilly, but near the shore it is low; to the southward of the point the land is low, and tolerable level... (Byron Bay, 2003)

Cook named the 'high point' Cape Byron after Vice-Admiral John Byron who was the grandfather of the famous 19th century poet, Lord Byron. It is possible that Cook's vessel was observed by the traditional owners, the Bundjalang Aboriginal people, who knew the area as 'cavaba' (in an early map this was spelt 'cavvanba' and, for a brief time, it was known as 'Cavanbah') which some claim means 'meeting place' (ibid).

Through the 1880s early European settlers cleared the land and to their delight found that the rich soils were capable of growing virtually anything. By 1890 crops of bananas, pineapples, corn, potatoes, all manner of vegetables and herds of horses and cattle were common throughout the valley. The town of Byron Bay became a reality in 1886. Town lots were sold and general stores, hotels and blacksmith's shops appeared. Two years later a jetty was completed and in that same year a Post Office was established.

In 1890, the town got its first policeman and four years later the name was officially changed from Cavanbah to Byron Bay. This was also the year the railway arrived. In 1895 the town's continuing existence was assured when Norco (an abbreviation of North Coast Fresh Food and Cold Storage Cooperative Ltd), a company producing a range of dairy and meat products, opened a major factory. By 1925 it was the largest butter producer in Australia. The town's evolution was slow. As recently as 1938 there were still only 1750 people living in Byron Bay. The establishment of the Cape Byron lighthouse (1901), the building of the new Court House and Police Station (1921), the arrival of electricity (1926), the removal of the jetty (1947), the cessation of whaling off the coast (1962) and the closing of the Norco Butter factory (1975) were features of twentieth century life in the coastal village.
The close-knit community worked hard on the edge of the continent. They amused themselves with recreation and cultural pursuits common in Australia during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Community celebrations involved the seaside as well as the townscape. There were activities on a pier that went into the sea. There were festivals with parades and stalls and street entertainment. Now, the key festivals that populate the community’s calendar include the renowned Byron Bay Writers Festival conducted by the Northern Rivers Writers Centre; the East Coast Blues and Roots Festival with international and national musical acts, attracting over 55,000 people each Easter; the Easter Art Classic; rock music’s Splendour in the Grass, A Taste of Byron, an open-air fair for regional cuisine and local purveyors of retail and wholesale foods; numerous sporting events like the Winter Whales; surfing events and rugby competitions. Each of these taps into not only resident interest but reflects the region’s sense of itself.

Byron Bay is seen in contemporary policy and planning documents as a coastal lifestyle destination by researchers of the ‘seachange’ phenomenon (Gurran et al, 2005). From being a compact, almost homogenous working class community, Byron Bay has become a popular location for the substantial internal migration from the metropolitan areas to rural coastal destinations. Festivals appear to satisfy characteristics identified by the National Sea Change Taskforce for destinations that attract new residents and visitors for their lifestyle, leisure and tourism appeal. There is rapid population growth. There is significantly higher median ages than Australia overall and unemployment is high at 14%. Socio-economic indexes are lower than in Australia overall (Gurran et al, 2005:5). These high levels of socio-economic disadvantage can risk significant social polarization within sea change communities and at the regional scale the gap widen s between ‘cashed up’ newcomers from the city and existing residents (Gurran et al, 2005:7). Byron Shire Council is a contributing Council to the National Sea Change Taskforce and has been keen to address issues associated with community wellbeing through identifying, in particular low cost housing.
Festival origins - Byron Bay and New Years Eve

Image 8.2 Preparing for the parade
Youthful lantern makers participated in the 2000 street parade. People of all ages were engaged with lanterns, either through creating their own or carrying light for others.

The festivities that occupy one night in the annual social calendar of residents in the coastal town of Byron Bay exemplify the tensions that have come with prosperous sun-belt development and attendant layers of migration. Residents are comfortable about sharing their place with visitors in summer, however the pressure on the public CBD spaces in recent years has activated community interventions. The present New Year’s Eve (NYE) celebrations demonstrate how communities that wish to reclaim control of decision-making and create safe community events for themselves need to carefully organise and manage events. Providing deliberate, substantial entertainments in train in the main street and beachfront has modified the hazardous social practices of drinking, drug taking and vandalism in the streets in 1993/4. Other significant strategies involving traffic into town, security at venues and restrictions on the sale of alcohol have met resistance at times, but have encouraged an event which now presents itself in quite a mainstream manner. The transformation has come about through the emergence of community leaders, awareness raising campaigns and collaboration between key stakeholders.

The local Rotary Club delivered an early community event, the Oleander Festival, in Byron Bay for 25 years in the mid twentieth century. The Oleander Festival was created when Byron Bay was a meat works town. Through the 70s Byron had a cultural revolution. Young people, surfies, hippies, mystics, healers, vegetarians, musicians, drug dealers, counter culture-ists of all descriptions made Byron a home or their favourite holiday destination. Byron Bay became Australia’s best-known east coast backpacker holiday destination. But the Oleander organisers, the old guard of Byron, resisted all approaches from the new people to incorporate their cultural interest and organising skills into the Festival. In 1992 the Oleander Festival lacked support from its host community. The Byron Echo records the demise of
organiser and spectator interest, especially in the parade. The Rotary Club decided to allow the Oleander Festival to die.

Malloy comments on the content and development of event tourism in Byron Bay.

When I first came here in 1985, we had but one special event that was a thing called the Oleander Festival, named after that famous noxious weed. It used to be a parade that went from one end of Jonson Street, from the beach end down through the CBD and up to the oval where they had a sausage sizzle. That sort of died under its own momentum a couple of years later. We now have a formal calendar of events that basically means that any given month in Byron Bay there is some major event, be it sporting, cultural, on or near the coast to Byron. There’s something happening all the time now (Malloy, pers. com, 1999).

Interestingly, while each of the four case study festivals has significant parades as part of their program, in 2002/3 Byron NYE organisers had difficulty attracting participation in a parade. For the millennium NYE celebration in 1999/2000, there was no such shortage. Thousands of people took to the streets in outstanding costumes. Nearly 2000 drummers participated in pre-festival drum making workshops and created original music along the parade route to the beachfront. It has been difficult for organisers to predict participation in the parade feature of the program each year; and some years spectators have been disappointed in the scale and variety of entrants in the parade.

Not all residents are confident that increased visitation that Byron Bay’s NYE event now draws is in the best interests of the locals. Vaughan (2003:8) highlights the journey the town has come along since the 1993 drunken massive crowd when the host community paid a massive price. He invokes the efforts of two community champions, Annie and Rory O’Halloran and their Committee who strove to change the directions of the NYE celebrations. He suggests they were

a marvelous example of residents exerting control and taking back their own town from local commercial interests who are exploiting the youth market for every buck it can reap and devil take the consequences.

He adds that

our town is to be besieged by 40,000 backpacker ‘patrons’ for a 4 day and 4 night bacchanalia, with every drunken lout from Grafton to Gympie dragged in here to boost numbers.

He outlines the types of concerns of Byron Bay residents have expressed elsewhere in surveys on the social impacts of NYE (Lawrence, Derrett and McKinley, 2003) that included, traffic is to be stopped, with congestion for days before and after. Garbage will flow up to the gutters. People’s gardens will be trampled and all the usual behaviour you get when you cram 40,000 people into tight space, fill

Chapter 8
them full of drugs, without enough accommodation and proper toilet facilities (Vaughan, 2003:8).

Celebrations for New Years Eve in Byron Bay have traditionally involved holidaymakers sharing the beach side amenity with locals with some sort of street entertainment. The location of Byron Bay as Australia’s most easterly point and the time in the middle of the summer school vacations have linked a strong family involvement to festive recreation into the night. The increasing pressure on Byron Bay as a playground for mobile young people from the south east corner of Queensland has meant a skewing of emphasis from a leisurely family orientated regime, to the specific needs of active 15 – 25 years olds.

Annie and Rory O’Halloran were instrumental in gathering a coherent community response to the dangers that were perceived or experienced by residents as increasing numbers of young people arrived especially on NYE to party. Annie’s passionate response demonstrates this,

Last Night First Light (NYE title) actually became the name associated with the celebration side of the safety strategies because we were looking at a name that actually personalized the event. We couldn’t keep calling it safety strategies. We couldn’t actually apply for funding unless we were actually starting to formulate ourselves into an events structure. The Safety Committee was of course born out of three public meetings that brought together the largest group to emerge at a public meeting in Byron Bay’s history. Those three sets of meetings were basically about venting people’s outrage. There was outrage that the town had been trashed in their (resident’s) absence because what had happened was 1990, 1991 and 1992. Things were getting out of hand here but nobody was acknowledging it
least of all the police and the retailers. The police of course didn’t want to send out the message, that things are really bad here and we’re still very under resourced because that’s like a red rag to a bull, and we were seeing different things at different levels of the community. For instance, I worked in health services in those years and we basically saw things get so very out of hand. We spent 12 hours wiping blood off walls and were just really quite sick at the way humanity actually chose to celebrate. This was at odds with what we saw the next day in the papers. You’d open the papers to see that the burghers of the community and the police and various other levels of the community were saying, despite unprecedented crowds being drawn to Byron Bay, or coming to Byron Bay, that it was a fairly trouble free night which was just nonsense. Psychologically and socially the cost was very high because people in this community chose not to come into their own public spaces, they ran and hid (pers.com, 1999).

In festival organisational terms the response was an immediate safety issue. The establishment of an event co-ordination role came later. This is distinct from the Casino experience where a purpose built event was generated. The locals in Byron Bay knew the interlopers were from Queensland. Annie O’Halloran (pers.com. 1999) reveals that the evidence was from,

documentation from individual film-makers who would go and do vox pops on the day and actually ask where do you come from and what are you here for? It was clearly evident from the interaction police were having too, because you see that was the problem, it was less than a day’s drive away. It was a day trip for people who hadn’t contemplated where will I go and what made arrangements will I make?

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 8.4   Parade marshall

Street parade participants prepare at Railway Park. Each year an eclectic mix of locals and visitors join the celebrations with floats, music and costumes.

Following the notorious 1993/4 NYE incidents the Byron Bay Community Safety Committee (BBCSC) was galvanised. The town had been branded with a reputation for disarray, damage, harm to individuals and chaos. In January 1994 a series of public meetings were convened as a response to resident outrage at the anti-social behaviour exhibited earlier in the
month. It was identified that the festivities had not been ‘managed’ and the personal injury
and property damage that had taken place resulted from unstructured activity that had
developed over previous years.

There were limited resources committed to the event and the media reported the perception
of lawlessness that prevailed in the seaside town. The Northern Star (January 3, 1994, p 2)
reported on the arrest of fifty people and eighty-six charges being laid. Police officers were
injured. Alcohol was being consumed in large quantities in public places and reportedly
young men from South East Queensland were intent on ‘getting drunk and trashing the
place’.

From Annie O’Halloran’s perspective,

at the time that Last Night First Light initiative started, there were no public
celebrations for celebration’s sake in the streets. There were large gatherings
from time to time but they all were for protest, for example, Club Med, or
something to do with anti uranium protests. They were the only large
gatherings in public spaces. There was no annual event to celebrate, to come
with celebratory intent and to be satisfied by whatever was done in that
public space. So in those first years you probably saw Rory (her husband)
sort of looking very heavy standing with his hands on his hips at
roadblocks at the entrance to town and security people stretching far into
the distance and basically there was only one advertising campaign and
that was - don’t come to Byron Bay (pers.com.1999).

In the early days of destination management for this event many things were tried. There
were vehicle stickers for non-resident visitors for example. The aim of the BBCSC was to give
back confidence to the community so they could come out onto the street to celebrate NYE
with their family and friends. And in 2000 they did. They came en masse because they had
paid for it through extensive fundraising all through the year. They felt they had reclaimed
ownership of this night. The resentment felt by locals that they had to start each year from
behind closed doors diminished. The impact of having to clean up after visitors on NYE was
psychologically damaging for a tourist town. The Last Night First Light initiative offered the
community a sense of achievement. Even though those who were working to transform the
situation were not professional festival managers, the initial experience offered these people
an opportunity to regroup and document what they did right and what they hadn’t tried yet.

The BBCSC set itself the task of restoring some order and attracting a more family oriented
base for the activities it provided as entertainment in subsequent years. The Committee
formulated strategies and community-based solutions to problems as they arose. Concerns
expressed by residents are open meetings and subsequent Committee meetings involved
discussion of the benefits accrued to the community of a reduction in pollution, noise, crime
rates and improved provision of health services to attendees and participants. The dilemma facing those interested in finding a solution was establishing a balance between public law and order issues and the freedom and flexibility sought to deliver an entertaining event. So, the observation made earlier that the functionality occurred in less than conventional ways makes for an interesting model in festival management.

**New Year’s Eve Program**

Last Night First Light is the brand used at times to describe the New Year’s Eve festivities each year in Byron Bay (December 31 – January 1). Street celebrations commence late in the afternoon and continue through to the early hours of the next morning in the central business district and shoreline of the coastal township. Preparations for the street parade floats involving the community are undertaken in preceding weeks. This event forms a keystone of summer holiday visitation for holiday markers.

Byron Bay’s New Year’s Eve celebrations are conceived as a family street festival. At times a parade has been a significant feature, as has the fireworks display and the countdown to midnight. In 2003 the parade was poorly patronized and not well received by attendees, while in 2000 it was a major feature (Lawrence & Derrett, 2003). Significant features of the event include:

**Table 8.1 Byron Bay New Year’s Eve Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parade</th>
<th>Assembling at Woolworth’s carpark and ending at the beach along Jonson St; Individuals and groups participate; Hare Krishna presence significant;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fireworks</td>
<td>At beach front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages</td>
<td>In Lawson St and at beach end of Jonson St; local and visiting musicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street performances</td>
<td>Individuals and groups invited to busk; performances in Railway Park and at beach front;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>Art and Craft market on beach front;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business involvement</td>
<td>Pubs, restaurants open with entertainment;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1999, the objectives for the three-day event included (O’Halloran, pers.com. 1999) encouragement of the local community to be involved in the event through volunteer participation and local sponsorship. Care was to be taken to provide quality security to ensure safety for attendees at all times. Other objectives influenced the functional themes of the event. These were to minimize traffic in the CBD, to minimize the number of people attending NYE celebrations through a ‘no marketing’ strategy and to provided entertainment with high security, especially behind stages. The parade and the static music stages provide the best opportunity for ‘themes’. For the millennium celebrations the emphasis was the story of civilization through time, in which floats and individuals dressed in costumes representing different periods of time.
Perhaps the major theme of successive NYE events has been the Byron Bay Community Safety Committee’s commitment to a *harminimisation* strategy developed over the preceding years. During recent festivities there has been an emphasis on the street presence of Police, Security and State Emergency Services staff. Creatively the Committee has over the years looked to substantial participation in lantern making, costume creation for parades and art marketing events on the beachfront. Fire twirling displays, burning effigies of Old Father Time and Oceania at night on the main beach provide spectacle and prove to be extremely popular. Stages in the street and at the beachfront with world music have participants dancing through the night.

**Figure removed due to copyright restrictions**

*Photo: Peter Derrett, 2003*

**Image 8.7  Environmental messages**

*Environmental messages – here minimising street cigarette litter – become part of the parade mix. This reflects on the broadly held views of residents for environmental sustainability and social consciousness.*

**Key Partners**

Typically the celebrations on the street and beachfront impact the business community. Many are involved with the hospitality sector and the sale of alcohol has been problematic. There have been numerous attempts to restrict the sale of alcohol. Some years major hotel liquor outlets have closed completely in an attempt to support the Committee’s efforts to minimize disruption during the celebrations fuelled by alcohol consumption. Council has played an integral role in ensuring the Safety Committee are supported by the police and businesses and in recent times, staff and elected members have taken a stronger role in the design and delivery of the event.

Service clubs like the Lions Club have been active in provided street amusements and food. There has been experimentation with market stalls, food outlets and amusement rides in
adjacent parklands. The local community radio station, BayFM has been an active part of the organisation, taking responsibility for a dance party. Funds raised by these community agencies have been reinvested in community infrastructure, like the library and park amenities.

Essentially it is the individuals who come forward to contribute their time and energy as volunteers who see the celebrations through to fruition. There has been external investment from state and regional authorities at times when the organising committee recognised how their scant resources could be leveraged and the resulting program could be enhanced for the thousands of people who turn up.

**Byron Bay Residents’ Response to New Year's Eve Celebrations**

Results of research undertaken by the Centre for Regional Tourism Research (CRTR) at Southern Cross University (Lawrence & Wynn-Moylan, 2002) for the Byron Shire Council Committee responsible for managing New Year’s Eve (NYE) event activities confirm that there is continued support for the style of event activities that have been part of the program during the twenty-first century.

A random telephone survey of three hundred Byron Shire residents sought to determine residents’ attitudes to the New Year’s Eve event in Byron Bay, their views on its impacts and what event activities Byron Shire they would like to see planned for the 2002/3 event. This survey was designed as a scripted questionnaire with multiple-choice responses and was part of a four-stage evaluation process of event activities within the Shire.

Findings demonstrated that overall the majority of Shire residents (60%) believed the New Year’s Eve events were worthwhile. Results also indicated that 82% of Shire residents accepted that there was a need for crowd and traffic controls in Byron Bay for New Year’s Eve celebrations. There was a strong belief that the New Year’s Eve events prevented crowd disorder and made the streets safe and regular users of Byron Bay claim they were not inconvenienced by the NYE events.

In terms of the Byron Bay New Year’s Eve event program, those with experience of attending the New Year’s Eve events agreed that programming was suitable for families with children and for teenagers to attend without parental supervision. Paying an entry fee to celebrations was acceptable to the majority of respondents only if the money raised was to go to local community and charity groups. There was strong resistance to being asked to pay if it was to become a private profit-making venture.
With regard to specific event activities respondents supported the idea of a community parade. In fact, the inclusion of a parade had its strongest support from those who had attended the 2000 NYE events with their families when the parade was at its grandest. The inclusion of a fireworks display was popular across all demographics with the under 20s giving it a huge 94% net approval.

Concerts were supported by the frequent attendees of the events and were highly regarded by every demographic. The use of buskers received high support across all demographics, but particularly by the attendees at the 2001 and 2002 NYE events. The inclusion of fairground rides received moderate support, however there was clearly support by parents of children under 14 years. The inclusion of market stalls was endorsed. Byron residents supported a street dance party, with 65% in favor of the dance party. Those who predictably supported the dance party were under 35 years of age and also those who had attended the last two New Year’s Eve events.

Results of the research indicated continuation of the current composition of event activities: buskers, concerts, fireworks display, market stalls, parade, fairground rides and a dance party. In terms of crowd management, results indicated that those who have attended NYE events in the past were aware that event activities were scheduled to better manage the impacts associated with large crowds of people in the CBD streets of Byron Bay on NYE. The report submitted to Council on research undertaken at NYE celebrations (Lawrence and Derrett, 2003) recommended that

the Committee carefully consider the location and timing of event activities in the Byron Bay CBD area to ensure a consistent flow of pedestrian traffic and ensure the safety and security of people and property. There was also an understanding by residents of the continued need for traffic management controls for NYE events. The Committee should ensure adequate written and verbal communication of traffic management goals and strategies to security and traffic personnel responsible for traffic control for 2002/2003.

The event is a community based cultural festival. It is evident that residents would support paying for event activities if monies raised were given to local charities. The Committee should consider identifying and involving key charity groups within the Shire who would be interested in assisting with the operation and management of certain event activities.

The report recommended that the Committee and its Coordinator should investigate other sources of funding for NYE events by initiating strategies for partnership and sponsorship with the community for the effective delivery and production of NYE event activities. It is further recommended that the NYE Coordinator position become an on-going investment by Council in order to effectively plan and implement future NYE events. It suggested that the NYE event planning, management and production
phases be documented so that future Committees and their staff have access to information.

It recommended that Council’s commitment to this event be consolidated by the development of a Shire-wide event strategy. The NYE event can be viewed as a part of a portfolio of events currently staged in the Shire. This strategic approach should involve study and management of other events within the Shire and findings linked to the Byron Shire Tourism Plan. It recommended regular monitoring of all aspects of the NYE event in terms of planning, management and marketing processes with comprehensive evaluations every two years.

Byron resident David Leser suggests that community is about what we preserve or dispense with or celebrate or retain or rebuild. It’s about sense of place, spirit of place, genius loci as some now call it (2003: 22). ‘My sense of community is one of being kept in a childlike state of surprise (2003:25). Byron Bay and community for him are difficult to define, but he suggests that the ideas he values of creativity, diversity, inclusivity and sustainability are held by others in one place at one time (2003:22).

Research on the social impacts on residents of visitation to Byron Bay identify that residents believe their town is still the best place in the world to live in and they can understand why everyone wants to be here (Lawrence, Derrett & McKinley, 2003). This does not mean a code of behaviour acceptable to locals couldn’t be distributed to visitors so that they can know what is expected in the CBD and residential areas. Locals recognise that the ‘peak’ holiday time is no longer confined to the summer holiday time – that the town attracts visitors over longer periods each year.

The changes residents noticed between the way they go about their daily activity within peak holiday times in Byron Bay and ‘normally’ is different to what was recorded in research undertaken in in the 1990s. Key findings from focus group studies (Lawrence, Derrett & McKinlay, 2003) and a survey completed by 85 residents at a public meeting in Byron Bay in 2003 to discuss issues of concern for residents in relation to tourism activity in their residential areas revealed predictable concerns amongst residents about traffic, shopping, increased hustle and bustle, environmental pressures, loss of ambience and impacts on residential areas.

Residents’ ability to negotiate the increased traffic meant they avoided entering the town’s CBD, or industrial estate and sought refuge by parking in back streets. 20% of residents surveyed at the public meeting stated that they avoided town during peak tourist times. The pressure on parking close to shops caused concern and many people expressed a reluctance to travel out of town more frequently. Shopping for essentials had become difficult and many
found they went shopping early (before visitors rose), and used this time to catch up with other residents. Some households stocked up in preparation for peak seasons, particularly school holiday times, and confined their personal shopping to the off-peak periods. There was considerable economic leakage to the seaside town of Ballina to the south for food shopping as residents avoided the often low supplies in Byron Bay. In fact, 20% of those residents who attended the public meeting said they shopped away from Byron Bay during busy tourist times.

There was agreement that crowds, parking and abuse or overuse of facilities modifies residents’ behaviour. People felt it was easier to go home and relax than stay in town and get ‘overtaken’ by tourists. Personal and household security concerns were expressed by residents with 17% of residents surveyed admitting to modifying their behaviour at home, for example, closing doors or windows to shut out noise or resorting to structural modifications to their homes to feel more secure.

An increase in entertainment and nightlife was attractive to locals. While they might be forced to avoid some favourite surfing spots, and they have to book for popular restaurants, they enjoyed the variety of social activity they accessed because of visitors. ‘People watching’ was seen as a cheap alternative to expensive activities. Young people, however, felt their options continued to be limited.

Concern was expressed about rubbish generation, dune incursions, mis-use of facilities with frustration by residents with visitors not respecting the Bay with bad attitudes, a ‘taking’ mentality and lack of cleanliness on the beach and parks. 45% of residents surveyed cited concern over the increased amount of rubbish in the town and impacts on the environment with some residents (7%) collecting litter themselves (Lawrence et al, 2002).

The local way of life valued by residents was generally regarded most at risk during peak tourism periods including school holidays and festival times. There were lots of young visitors on the streets, some creating mischief, fights and vandalism that discouraged locals from venturing on the streets, especially at nighttime. Over 25% of residents expressed concern over drunken and offensive behaviour in the streets of Byron Bay at night. The ambience represented by the relaxed, alternative lifestyle was jeopardised by visitors who didn’t appreciate what the locals liked about their home town.

Residents acknowledged more organisation and advanced planning was required in their daily life to get around crowds, leave the house half an hour earlier to get through the traffic
and avoid the noise from late night venues, and a major concern were rowdy parties in residential areas from visitors renting short term accommodation. Not surprisingly, 59% of residents at the public meeting raised the issue of noise as a key concern relating to tourism activity in their residential area. 16% of residents specifically stated that they were missing sleep and many claimed to use “ear-plugs” as a coping mechanism for sleep deprivation (Lawrence, Derrett & McKinlay, 2003).

Vignette

Byron Bay is the most easterly point of the Australian mainland. Byron boasts some of the best coastline in the world with surf breaks to boot. A stunning century old lighthouse stands on a hill that offers some of the most breathtaking views known to man.
So why blame hundreds of thousands of tourists and backpackers who flock to Byron in a permanent ‘busy’ season. It is my home.
The local radio station Bay FM ran a competition for a slogan to greet visitors. The winning entry was ‘Go Away!’
Byron has its pitfalls. Imagine living in paradise but having to share it with hundreds and thousands of tourists. The cost of living due to the mass tourism is almost higher than Sydney.
Byron has an ever-growing commerce and the main source of income for business is tourism and surf.
The town has about 30 surf merchandise shops but not a decent library. Byron has about eighteen cafes but limited hospital facilities.
Byron has two main lifestyles. One is the old hippie foundation and the laid back surfies. These contributed much to what Byron is today. My dad is an ageing hippie and ‘wannabe’ surfer!
There is also the yuppie movement where the nouveau rich class is seeing the value in a place like Byron and are moving here to live and work. This yuppie movement is one of the reasons why Byron Bay’s real estate values have increased nearly three-fold in the past five years.
The high school has a very beautiful placement right next to the beach with the sound of the beach sometimes heard in class. A high fence topped with barbed wire also surrounds it.
In many ways this is a metaphor for living in Byron’.
Toby McMahon
Comment from Byron High School student (Byron Voice, The Northern Star, School Newspaper competition, November 8, 2002 p 22)

New Years Eve and Byron Shire Council

Byron Bay is in the Byron Shire Council area. The seat of the Council administration is in Mullumbimby. Mullumbimby is situated to the west of Byron Bay and is a comfortable, quiet, rural location. A tension exists within and between communities in the Shire about informed responsible decision making by Council and the impacts of the distance and representative nature of particular points of view. The provision of adequate resources to meet the needs of the residents in each area is often questioned. The need for better road access, adequate infrastructure like sewerage, lighting, and security, footpath cleanliness is issues being raised.
Byron Bay sees itself as a cash cow (from tourism especially) for the Mullumbimby (hinterland) headquarters of the Council.

In 2003, the newly appointed General Manager, Pamela Westing suggested finding common ground in the diverse community of Byron Bay as a significant challenge for Council (The Northern Star, May 13, 2003:4). She acknowledges major problems facing Council include planning, sewerage, rubbish and finances. Council has long sought to determine mechanisms to enhance its cashflow as a result on the increasing numbers of visitors. Councillor Wilson lamented the fact that tourism is worth millions to the town and Shire with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) going directly to the Federal Government, while local government is obliged to pay for and provide infrastructure to support the visitation (Turnbull, 2003:1).

Byron Shire Council to trialled a Coupon Parking scheme for the town centre. Residents could access free parking stickers, while twenty retail outlets and some street machines dispensed coupons for parking spaces in the town’s centre. A six-month trial in late 2003 received mixed responses (The Byron Shire News, December 30, 2003:5). Business owners and workers who were not residents believed they were marginalized. Visitors from across the region who feel they are not visitors, but as attached to Byron Bay as a place as residents complained. Many residents expressed delight at the improvement in the availability of parking. The income accrued for Council is an incentive for the process to be maintained. This model has not been pursued. Specific CBD sites are now revenue raisers for Council as paid parking has been implemented. In 2006 – 7 Byron Shire Council earned $1.1 million dollars (The Northern Star, Turnbull, 2007:5), the highest in regional NSW for issuing parking fines. Another parking issue was debated in 2006 when the focus was on reciprocal parking benefits for residents of the neighbouring Ballina Shire, in exchange for Byron Shire residents having privileges at the renamed Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport that is in Ballina Shire. This airport is the source of a growing influx of visitors.

Council has a number of relevant policies for event co-ordinators, accessible via its website (Byron Shire Council, 2005). Guidelines for councils and organisers have been prepared in collaboration with state government agencies like the NSW Department of Local Government, the Police Service, The Environment Protection Authority and the former Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. Council’s Busking Policy (No 5.57) is relevant to NYE festivities as the Council has jurisdiction over the numerous entertainers performing in public places during the celebrations. There is recognition that there’ is a tradition of busking in the Shire, invoking ‘a sense of place’ as an integral part of the cultural life of the Shire reflecting styles, values and issues.
Social impact issues are acknowledged in Council’s (Major and Special Events Planning) documents through definitions indicating that Council is concerned about an analysis of how its policies and actions affect social wellbeing. The effects and implications of festivals on individuals, groups and communities have informed the policy decisions of Council. Festival organisers have had to run the bureaucratic gauntlet each year to ensure Council was not only aware of potential activities for NYE, but that all the protocols have been observed.

The overwhelming impression for residents of the wider Northern Rivers region is the tone of media coverage of local government activity in Byron Shire. Spirited exchanges in the local press on development issues that come before Council, pressures on senior management from elected members and community initiatives attracting national and international attention, but no strategic frameworks from Councillors are all grist for the regional media mill. The Council has long been prone to tensions in terms of individual ideology and political aspirations and the pro-development challenges versus the green-conservation agenda. Such dilemmas are replicated in coastal tourism hotspots worldwide. These external perceptions of the Council deliberations and outcomes that impact on such cultural capital as New Years Eve celebrations are addressed in a Letter to the Editor from a former councillor with Byron Shire Council. Ermacora (The Northern Star, 2004:13). He writes of the ‘extreme polarization and dysfunctionality of the Council reflecting the conflict ridden community’. He rails against another local paper suggesting that ‘the malcontents and maladjusted are given oxygen and legitimacy’.

**Festivals and Community Wellbeing**

Community wellbeing (discussed earlier from Wills, 2001) can provide a framework to assess a destination’s livability, sustainability, viability and vitality for residents. The wellbeing model assists in evaluating the relative and comparative success of Byron Bay’s New Year’s Eve celebrations. Byron Bay has provided a gateway to considerable domestic migration into the region. The dynamics of the new populations have influenced the community’s capacity to cope with the resultant changes to pressure for accommodation, work and recreation. The constraints placed on infrastructure particularly has impacted on the psyche and the daily lives of residents and had implications for how the town deals with visitors. All this is particularly noticeable when the NYE celebrations arrive each year. The burden of costs, the increased crowding, and the demographic mix all find a way to influence the outcomes of the celebrations. These elements have implications for cultural avoidance and the economic rationality that creates tension in a small community.
Observations of Byron Bay’s New Year’s Eve celebration experience provide an analysis of how it fares against the criteria and these observations may be compared with other events in the region to give a picture of the social capital accrued.

**Table 8.1  Byron Bay’s Well-being Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Wellbeing Outcomes</th>
<th>Byron Bay and New Year’s Eve celebrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality</td>
<td>✓ Free outdoor family entertainment – pay for dance party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate prosperity</td>
<td>✓ Income from visitors for duration of event that falls in high summer tourist season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability</td>
<td>✓ Animates CBD and beachfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>✓ Events to residents and visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>✓ Brings distinctive youth and family visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>✓ Volunteer management committee of Council requires increased links to resident community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability</td>
<td>✓ Working hard to maintain community interest and consolidating performance based content in discrete location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This framework assists in our interpretation of a community’s capacity to cope with events like NYE. The desirability of social capital to determine improved quality of life for residents, strengthen communities and for building capacity are demonstrated through the wellbeing building blocks in Byron Bay. New Year’s Eve celebrations express the social capital as outlined below. Throughout its recent evolution the NYE festivities have sought to focus on bringing activity back to the residents.

**Table 8.2  Byron Bay’s Well-being Experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Wellbeing Outcomes</th>
<th>Byron Bay and New Year’s Eve celebrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality</td>
<td>✓ Free outdoor family entertainment, colour and movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate prosperity</td>
<td>✓ Income from visitors for duration of event, business and dependence on tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability</td>
<td>✓ Animates CBD, move to seafront, scaled down in recent years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>✓ Events to residents and visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>✓ Brings distinctive family and youthful generation of visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>✓ Erratic management shifts between Council volunteer management of established program content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability</td>
<td>✓ Working to maintain community interest, though family orientated program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With an annual influx of visitors in summer the NYE celebrations has attracted many young people. Council has worked through community groups to encourage resident involvement. Businesses are also keen to ‘de-market’ the celebrations and offer support for family orientated activities. Music still attracts large audiences. There have been distinct moves to reclaim the streets for locals. Press coverage has lauded the demise of drug-fuelled antics and praised organisers for responding to feedback from locals.
8.3 Image and Identity

Byron Bay as listed as the sexiest beach in Australia by the international travel magazine, Condé Nast, 2006. The lighthouse at Cape Byron has long held a place in regional branding. Byron Bay enthusiasts seek to have its name on the next iteration of an Australian Monopoly board (!) Meanwhile, serious negotiations have been undertaken by local government over time with regional and state government authorities to minimize the connection between the region, tourism and the town. There is no doubt the town is popular through images of beaches, the lighthouse, award winning restaurants showcases in national media, the adjacent marine park and the word of mouth from thousands of backpackers who arrive each year. There is confusion about how best to massage these images for the destination planners and managers.

Coastal images of Byron Bay provide a collectively inherited unconscious idea of subtropical holiday destinations. This has not diminished as change has overtaken the urban and residential development along the east coast strip in the north east corner of the state in recent times. Photographic representation of the town in tourism promotion emphasizes the landscape – the lighthouse, the beaches and the backdrop of the caldera and Mt Warning. The urban streetscape, the outdoor dining ambience, water based recreational pursuits, the festival throngs, high profile arts consumption, lush tropical vegetation fuel the impression of an idyllic animated lifestyle. The less pleasant social and environmental underbelly is represented through typical issues of social marginalisation, homelessness, unemployment, disaffected youth, drug abuse, urban sprawl, beach erosion and parking problems are only vented when the community or media wish to recognise the need to attend to the pressures that accrue from the spurts of uneven development.

Media exposure

Words used in media headlines in local papers reporting the New Year’s eve events of 1993-4 included, ‘blitz, Byron Bay, car parking, chaos, committee, Council, court, crowd, drinkers, expert, ‘feeling used’, fun, greed, hangover, holiday, hooligans, hope, lawlessness, laws, mayhem, meeting, mess, moderation, New Years Eve, peace, penalties, plan, Police, reclaim, residents, revelers, riot, rioters, rock festival, solutions, stickers, town, traffic, trouble-free, undermined’. The content analysis of local print media by Blomfield, (1994:36) used The Northern Star, The Byron Echo and the Byron News clearly suggests a community under siege.
New Year’s Eve in Byron Bay became a management problem for the host community when thousands of revelers arrived for New Year’s Eve 1993, up to 25,000 people filled the streets (Sydney Morning Herald, 3 January, 1998:8). Local media reported fewer people, with 3,000 within the town centre, 3,000 at the Rock Concert and 1,500 at the Epicentre Dance Party (Byron Shire Echo, 5 January, 1994). The crowd (aged from teens to early 20s) that gathered in the town centre was the focus of problems reported in the media. After hotels closed their doors at midnight, the revellers filled the streets looking for entertainment. A tap burst at 12.30 a.m. and the crowd reacted. Minor scuffles and fights broke out, people jumped from nearby buildings into the crowd, while 55 police officers and security guards struggled to control the crowd. The crowds blocked the main street. Minor injuries occurred, most associated with broken glass. By 4.15 a.m. Police had dispersed the crowd. Most revellers were identified as visitors from Queensland (The Northern Star, 3 January, 1994:2).

Direct costs resulting from NYE incident (Byron Shire Echo, 3 January, 1994:1) included Council clean up bill: landscaping, $2300, repair to water systems, $900; signage repairs, $1200; miscellaneous, $500; preparation and cleanup, $8305; traffic control, $1000; security, $4936; cleaning of public WC, 1000; with a total of, $25141. Indirect Costs included the cost of court cases for the 58 arrests; medical costs of treating 44 casualties (The Northern Star, 3 January, 1994:2); recovering the image of Byron Bay as a family holiday destination, due to media portrayal as a violent, riotous party town (Byron Shire Echo, 4 January, 1994).

Feedback from coming from the community (Doherty, 1994:5) suggested the Chamber of Commerce was supportive of an initiative to hold five night markets during the Christmas period in an attempt to reclaim the town for family style entertainment. Such attractions would host street stalls, street entertainment and business houses would also trade. Such suggestions came as a result of meetings with experts from outside the region. Local publican, Tom Mooney expressed concern for the lack of co-ordination of the 120 security personnel on the streets of Byron (NYE 1994) while the street situation was out of control.

A report prepared for Byron Shire Council and Tourism NSW in 2002 was withheld till the end of 2003. It identified risks for the township in its management of the 1.7 million visitors annually. It suggested Council address visitor and resident concerns for better management of roads, traffic and parking. The weight of numbers challenged the Council services available to the community (Turnbull, 2003:1). The Northern Rivers Regional Tourism Organisation’s Rainforest Way strategy to distribute coastal visitors more broadly through the region has Byron Bay in its sights. Council looked to the township’s seasonal peaks and troughs and encouraged major events at peak times to reposition itself (Turnbull, 2003:4).
The media recognised festivals as offering visitors diverse options. Positive media coverage increasingly recognises the balance festivals provide the visitor experience while accommodating resident wishes.

### 8.4 Cultural tourism

Byron Shire Council’s understanding of cultural tourism is quite sophisticated. There is reference to it in the Cultural Plan (2003). The private sector is active in promotion of galleries, entertainments, events and heritage sites. The indigenous community has signed off with state authorities on Arakwal sites within the Cape Byron area and along the coast. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) monitor specific sites. Agreements ensure indigenous direction for development and interpretation of heritage. Local entrepreneurs have developed niche businesses focusing on loops and trails for visitors on cycles, motorcycles and through bus tours that direct them to distinctive built and natural attractions. The daily bus run from the coast to Nimbin embraces a number of specific locations that inform visitors of the natural environment, heritage and cultural developments of the region.

Thousands of people are drawn to the town for arts festivals that draw attention to the visual arts, e.g. the Easter Arts Classic and the professional Forty Eight Hours of Visual Arts (FEHVA) that is held in June. The Byron Community and Cultural Centre provides evidence of a collaborative campaign to establish quality recourses to host local and touring performing arts and to host conferences and exhibitions. Many people are attracted to Byron Bay particularly because of its cultural diversity and dynamism. Others are attracted to the natural features of the landscape and readily find the food, the alternative spiritual retreats, the medicine and learning opportunities complement their initial interests. This is in keeping with tourism research globally.

**Byron Bay and Visitors**

Day-trippers from within the region and southeast Queensland and longer stay visitors are find Byron Bay a destination of appeal. It offers benefits of an urban ambience juxtaposed with a distinctive landscape and the influence of the surfing and alternative cultures These manifest themselves in the street and beach life that make Byron Bay the fastest growing tourist destination in NSW. The busiest periods are December/January and the Easter holidays, though festivals have done much to minimize the troughs in visitation. The towns
centrally located Visitor Centre introduces the region through a broad range of cultural experiences. Festivals are just one diversion of growing interest.

Tourism has been prominent since the earliest days of settlement by Europeans. Ryan and Smith (2001:125) cite advertisements from the early 20th century using the term ‘resort’ and evidence that the local groups like the Citizens Association and the Progress Association raising money to enhance the amenity of the town. They suggest there was much to do to make the town attractive for tourists. There was unease about environmental health matters as a result of contamination, a legacy of industries such as mineral extraction, dairying, canning, whaling and meatworks. In recent times an active environmental lobby maintains a vigil over development applications before Council.

The tourism marketplace in Byron Bay has experienced considerable growth. The new northern expressway draws extra visitors in very quick time to the region. There is greater recognition of its gateway status to nature-based opportunities in the hinterland. The acrimony of successive community debates regarding coastal development including the Club Med enterprise ensure that there is ongoing interest by residents and the media. Media interest in successive waves of immigration by sub-cultural groups of indigenous people, surfers, religious sects, Californians, hippies, backpackers, ‘ferals’ and the ‘cappuccino set’ is juxtaposed with the seachange phenomenon demonstrated by recent arrivals to the town.

Malloy (pers com, 1999) suggests that

for two weeks, especially at the peak time, visitors want to take off their shirts and put on their board shorts and the daggy t-shirt and wander around and pretend. Before they go back to their air-conditioned high rise in Melbourne or Sydney, they want to be like they live in Byron Bay. That’s why we’ve got the huge demand accommodation wise for people to stay in houses. A lot of private houses are rented out to visitors They want that sort of accommodation, so that they feel like they are an active part of Byron Bay by not staying in a motel, which immediately brands them tourist. They are staying in a house with a clothesline.

Green (1995) investigated resident perceptions of the town’s character. Research undertaken into resident responses to tourism activity by Brown and Giles (1994) has been replicated to determine any changes (Lawrence, Derrett & McKinlay, 2003). These studies synthesised resident values and collective image of place. Long-term residents are feeling the strain of their residential amenity being ruined by holidaymakers partying till all hours and showing no respect for the local community (The Northern Star, 30.12.03). Oral history is well documented in McTavish’s (1997) study of the development of tourism in Byron Bay in the past 100 years.
Earlier, a study by Taylor (1994) of the impact of backpackers on the Byron Bay economy had identified an average of 428 backpackers stay in the town each night at the six hostels. He suggested 144 backpackers arrived daily contributing to the $7 million boost to the local economy. The supply side has doubled in ten years, and the impact of this segment of the market and the day-tripper market from South East Queensland has done much to raise concern to local residents.

The dynamic socio-cultural impacts of increased visitation is demonstrated by the community’s capacity and willingness to change; the specific historical triggers which included, the domestic and international interest in surfers of the 60s; the impact of the hippie movement of the 70s; the closure of meatworks and whaling sectors of the local economy over a generation; the arrival of metropolitan investment, e.g. Cornell family in the 80s; the overseas investment in coastal tourism development of Club Med in the 90s; the rise of action groups like Byron Business for a Sustainable Future; the emergence of harm minimisation strategies of the increasingly popular New Year’s Eve celebrations and the pyrrhic victory resulting from conflict over segmentation of the tourism market. Interestingly, while there was heated attention in the town and the media regarding the expressed interest of developers like Club Med, twelve backpacker enterprises were established and dramatically altered the visitor mix.

It’s very hard to sum it up why people come to Byron Bay. I think everyone comes here for different reasons. Some people come here for the surf. Some people come here because it’s slightly alternative, some people come here just because of the climate and the weather, it’s not too hot, it’s not too cold, it’s not like going to far north Queensland where it’s likely to be humid, where you can’t swim in the water because of the stingers. Byron Bay is one of the last frontiers if you like of that laid back small beach town culture. At Christmas time you wouldn’t know that because of the traffic. I’ve never been able to define why people come here, (pers com Malloy, 1999).

He continues,

People come and stay for three months. There are people who come for a week. There are day-trippers, overnighters. It is very hard to define when you say how many people come to Byron Bay. A lot of people book in year by year over the summer period. Certain visitors book on the same caravan park site for 20 years, like at Clarke’s Beach.
8.5 Reflection

It is easy to understand why residents and visitors like being on the edge of the continent. The landscape is spectacular as one takes in the headland hosting the lighthouse at its most easterly point. One can scan the Julian Rocks just off shore in the Pacific Ocean home to an array of marine life attractive to scuba divers from around the world. And to the north-west the shape of the volcanic plug of Mt Warning looms. It is all quite spell binding. In the mid summer ambience comes an opportunity to join others in this idyllic setting to celebrate New Years Eve. Residents have come to terms with the natural environment. They have been less enthusiastic about sharing it with others in recent years.

It is critical that as tourism development is embraced host communities need to decide what type of tourism they wish to present to visitors. This will ensure there is a more positive host guest relationship. Healthy tourism need not necessarily be about authenticity, but it is becoming more about meeting visitors’ expectation as they come together with locals. Tourism needs to be enjoyed by local people (Wood, 1993:4). When communities become disenchanted and feel exploited, they tend to fail as hosts. It can be argued that if tourism is designed for local as well as visitor use, it is likely to be more sustainable as it becomes about communities sharing experiences, rather than selling them.

While Byron Bay appears rich in powerful tourism objects, icons even in terms of images, landscapes and heritage, it provides locals and visitors an opportunity to inform the nation’s identity as well as its own. This chapter has identified some of the significant aspects of the local and visitors experience through the delivery of New Year’s Eve celebrations. These celebrations make a place memorable - not just for the festivities, but for the place that accommodates them and the people engaged with during the shared experience. The celebratory process allows participant to come away with stories that underpin cultural tourism. On the occasions in recent years that organisers have themed the event to empower participants through workshops and local interaction it has meant that local culture is not just consumed but celebrated.

It has been fascinating to observe how the community deals with the challenges of satisfying the needs of various stakeholders. This chapter has identified some of the key issues as locals seek to maintain some sort of control over their recreational opportunities. However what emerges is the reluctance of these same people to come forward to craft some sort of practical solution. The organisational imperatives that require co-operation, leadership and application of common sense to solve logistical issues have been problematic. There has been less
evidence of large crowds bent on disrupting a quaint seaside village in recent times, however, it appears to be difficult to marshall the resources required to ensure residents’ simple aspiration of reclaiming the streets for local celebrations are met.

The Byron Bay community is highly creative. When they have embraced the task of providing a program of community based activities for New Year’s Eve attendees have benefited from some simple innovations for family engagement. They have included free displays, market stalls, street entertainment, big stages for musical performances, beachside fire entertainments and an opportunity to meet with neighbours in a secure environment. This provides the content not only of the celebration but also of tourism. These are the aspirations of community cultural celebrations worldwide.

8.6 Discussion

Linnell’s (2004) insights into organisational leadership, especially the role of founders come to mind in the examination of the Byron Bay NYE dilemma of 1993/4. The contribution of both Annie and Rory O’Halloran demonstrate such people are sparked with a fury and a zest about a cause, a mission, an idea, and who (unlike most of the population) have the energy and the wherewithal to do something about it. Annie suggests that not only do they see an injustice and feel inspired to fight it, but also they almost always think they can win. These are the no-barriers type people whose righteous passion often catches others up in their beliefs. They take a cause, turn it into a mission, and build the people support and basic nonprofit structure to hold the flame of their passion. By nature, these are people with strong mental models of what’s right and what’s wrong. But it is these strengths of character—insight and vision, a sense of justice, a hopefulness, an ability to take risk, determined purposefulness, and the ambition to succeed for mission’s sake—that can also be their downfall over time.

Succession management in community based festivals organisations requires some strategic thinking. The willingness of the organising committee over the years to encourage wider regional engagement is worth commenting upon. Southern Cross University students were invited in 2000 to participate in the preparation of the 2000/2001 NYE celebrations. The theme was ‘Community in Unity’. It was designed as a low-key, safe, community event. There was involvement of a wide range of community groups in a parade through town on the evening and the usual, but pared down entertainment on the streets and a fireworks display. Under the guidance of Annie O’Halloran, the preparation of a Crime Prevention Plan was formulated in association with the NSW Attorney Generals Office. Council sought
funding from the State Government to assist in the organisation of the event. There was support from the business community to assist with the entertainment and management. There were good experiences for management of such a vexed activity; but always lurking was the position of the management committee and its leadership.

In other parts of the calendar year, Byron Bay’s residents have demonstrated a capacity to address major issues of concern. There continues to be a tug of war between Council, the Chamber of Commerce and individuals whose profile attracts media coverage of their views. NYE has been a difficult experience. In 2005 the Mayor, Jan Barham, who had served on earlier iterations of the Safety Committee, took the lead to rein in the scope and scale of the celebrations and gained Council support for a more street friendly human scale event directed to family involvement. Though there was immediate media skepticism, for two years the formula has proved to be widely acceptable to residents wanting their ‘place’ back and keen to make it attractive to visitors.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of a community coming to terms with hosting strangers. While the celebration of New Year’s Eve has universal appeal, on the ground in a coastal community particular aspects of the interaction place a significant strain on how residents demonstrate a sense of themselves and the place they’ve chosen to live in. A holiday destination implies a transient population, so it is interesting to observe how resources are marshalled to ensure that the locals and their landscape are treated with respect, when familiar sites are inundated. There is a feeling that the current format for celebrations has the balance right, but it requires constant vigilance – an exemplar of resilience.

We have seen how NYE celebrations are under pressure every year in terms of who will take responsibility for designing and delivering appropriate entertainment. Stakeholders one could anticipate in other more stable communities to collaborate in the interests of the festivities don’t come together as readily as they do for other aspects of the community’s social, political and environmental agendas. The business community has demonstrated ambivalence to the festivities. They are potential economic beneficiaries, but with a testy relationship with local government the volunteer sector feels obliged to provide the glue required to ensure some sort of functionality is delivered. Resilience, then, in the sense of this study where learnings inform future capacity to cope with change is quite fragile in Byron Bay.
Chapter 9: Conclusions and Implications - resilient community celebrations!

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the investigation into regional festivals. My intention in this study was to examine the social meaning of four festivals staged in contemporary regional Australia. By building up highly contextualized histories of each festival, independent and interdependent behaviours of individuals and agencies were observed to interact and overlap. The thesis offers an interpretation of how we nourish ourselves through celebrations in communities. It focuses attention on the roles played by festivals in growing the capacity of communities to deal with change, sustainability and wellbeing.

An important finding of this study is that festivals can foster community resilience through their design process and delivery. It is central to our understanding of the organic relationship between residents‘ sense of community and place, the way they represent their identity and how they share their festival with others.

The chapter presents an overview of how the initial model used in the research informed the formation of a new template for recognising the cyclical nature of festival making and its implications for the host community’s capacity to adapt to change. The study clearly exposes the nature and roles of festivals that emerge in an environment of creativity that are not linear, as is often portrayed, but generate a cycle of culture that provides engagement through three streams, (1) participation, (2) governance and (3) the nature and context of events.

The chapter emphasizes key aspects of the model by mining the rich description of four case study festivals outlined in Chapters Five to Eight. Research questions are addressed in turn by both comparing and contrasting festivals to establish indicators for how festivals nourish resilience in communities. These are examined through:

- The relationship of festivals to their place;
- Festival partnerships and stakeholder roles in festival resilience;
- The significance of community champions
- Sense of community and wellbeing
- Image and representation of identity through festivals
- Cultural tourism; and
• Recommendations for further related research.

The following quote by Taylor (2007) encapsulates the significance of the festival experience that was demonstrated in the four case studies. It recognises many of the forces operating at festival making time and the residual impact festivals have on individuals and communities. This study identified the concept that resilience that emerges from the cultural collaboration transforms the lives of participants.


It seems to me that a diverse, rich, and vital cultural ecology in any city, state, or country fosters opportunity for every citizen to inform these elements of their existence. a creative life -The opportunity to make something from nothing, or transform fragments of objects or thoughts into a cohesive whole, is an ennobling and empowering thing. Everyone should have the option to do so, no matter what their stage of life, circumstance, technical ability, or training. an expressive life - Finding your voice and having an opportunity to be heard is an essential quality of being alive and aware in the world. a connected life - The interpersonal and social sharing of meaning is the connective tissue between loved ones, community members, and civilizations. While the arts are not the only means to this sharing, they are among the most powerful and enduring. a remembered life - The accumulated actions and artifacts of our expressive lives are our most vital threads to who we were, who we are, and who we might become. Beyond our children, they are the most compelling evidence that we ever existed at all. Andrew Taylor, (Arts Journal, 2007).

Through participant observation, interviews, media and document analysis, surveys, and photographic images, the thesis suggested that simple social, economic and environmental festival management issues currently presented in the literature required greater deconstruction. The research provided, for the first time, a scholarly investigation to enhance understanding of a significant social agenda in regional communities. Festivals add value to communities. They creatively embed culture. They offer a subtle balance of local community content through authenticity, interest, quality and entertainment to provide the content of the tourism experience. Simultaneously, these festivals can be celebrations of community resilience.

9.2 Resilience indicators for festivals and communities

The study recognised the nature of the human ecosystem that emerges from an analysis of festival preparation, production and promotion. Festivals satisfy an instinct for community.
Regardless of the transient nature of such experiences, their value is that they induce and sustain a shared sense of occasion and excitement. This connectivity helps build resilience. This glue is demonstrated in three major ways.

These celebrations demonstrate belonging and community resilience through:

1. Participation
2. Governance; and the

It suggested that by ensuring each domain is attended to effectively and inclusively, the resulting social/cultural wellbeing, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity the host community aspires to will contribute to resilient festivals and communities. The integrated nature of festival making needed to be felt by all stakeholders. Indicators for the connection are examined in Table 9.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.1</th>
<th>Indicators of Nourishing Resilience through Community Cultural Festivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implications</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Participation</td>
<td><a href="#">Participation</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration &amp; co-operation</td>
<td>Partnerships provide intrinsic and extrinsic synergies for positive social action to increase individual and collective capacity to develop and share practical, respectful and spiritual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity, adaptability, innovation</td>
<td>Growth of personal and community capacity to accommodate change, generate festivities with unique creative characteristics that satisfy participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactivity &amp; engagement</td>
<td>Offering opportunity for volunteerism, social entrepreneurship, storytelling and trusting networks for open dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Governance</td>
<td><a href="#">Governance</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudence, preparation &amp; planning</td>
<td>Grow the understanding of ethical design and delivery of festivals for the ‘common good’ reflecting the ‘way things are done around here’ to the best extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; advocacy</td>
<td>Encourage community champions with strong commitment to participative decision making and thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility &amp; learning</td>
<td>Stimulate ownership of festivities through provision of life long learning options for joining in and interacting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of environments</td>
<td>Develop alertness to the dynamic social, political, technological, economic, environmental, global influences on local activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Capacity building</td>
<td>Ensure timely investment from broad stakeholders into hard and soft infrastructure to enhance capacity of residents to reflect and determine their values, interests and aspirations through effective, well resourced management systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and evaluation</td>
<td>Monitor ongoing activity within community and festivals to ensure responsiveness, durability and best practice to revive and refresh and to replicate success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derrett, 2007 after [www.bettertimesinfo.org/7habits.htm](http://www.bettertimesinfo.org/7habits.htm) and Community Manifesto, 2003
Participation
Partnerships are seen to be a valuable aspect of festival making. The active collaboration and co-operation that can be brought to bear enhances the creative and innovative options available to the festival. They are seen as positive aspects of community development. By taking initiatives in the public domain for a common good, individuals and groups can demonstrate personal and professional skills that can be translated into other aspects of community life. The communication that takes place and the mutual support offered through teamwork are valuable characteristics of resilience.

Governance
Leadership can provide guidance and management to individuals and groups set on a negotiated course. Successful festival management offers a litmus tests for organisers’ skills. Strategic and tactical planning, management and marketing decisions influence, not only festival outcomes, but also direct application of the learnings into other parts of community life. By engaging with people committed to planning worthwhile celebrations with care and attention to detail, organisations are able to handle the responsibility of developing festivals that encourage relationships that are able to deal with challenges both internal and external to the task at hand. The responsibility taken up by leaders, managers and partners in line with legal statutory obligations as well as nurturing good corporate practices are further characteristics of resilience.

Nature and context of event
An appreciation and an understanding of the circumstances in which festivals are developed provide valuable knowledge for organisers. This knowledge interprets and explains the need for sensitivity to partners’ needs and aspirations. It has implications for the resources required to ensure the festival can be delivered systematically, in a timely fashion with characteristics that can be replicated and that satisfy the host community and visitors.

These findings are further explained in the following discussion. Each builds on the notion outlined in Figure 9.1 that resilient people with healthy coping skills through clear self-knowledge, optimism and comfort with strong community relationships are best equipped to lead organisations through the challenges that are thrown up when festivals are developed. This model suggests that by keeping the objectives of the organisational team in perspective and through practice in problem solving, a robust organisation will emerge. They will be better placed to deal with transitions that occur when multiple partners are involved in future collaborative decision-making.
9.3 Research Model

The study was well served by my original theoretical model (see Figure 9.1). It showed the interface between the core elements of residents, place and visitors. The sense of place and sense of community, the image and identity and cultural tourism provided a fundamental framework for the investigation into community cultural festivals. These elements emerged from pilot studies and have been substantially scrutinised in peer reviewed presentations and publications (see page vi). The framework provided an effective lens through which to investigate the festival phenomenon and to provide meaning for those who celebrate in communities.

![Figure 9.1 Original research model]

What is exposed is the catalytic nature of community cultural festivals. The interactive role of festivals for community resilience is recognised. This is indicated (in Figure 9.1) through the multiple, fluid networks that exist in communities as they experience challenges to resilience. This confirms the mutually beneficial circuit of culture model developed by du Gay et al (1997).
Stakeholder groups in the study communities demonstrated the best and worst of the interaction that occurs when a festival is made. Some demonstrated levels of exclusivity and hierarchical management limiting capacity to generate social capital and wellbeing. They also provided evidence of significant benefits accrued from co-operation and collaboration, leadership and advocacy, research, encouragement of participation and partnerships, innovative approaches to funding, technology and increasing infrastructure and capacity building. The research suggested that communities and festivals are more vulnerable to the risk of unsustainability if these positive elements are not in place.

Figure 9.2 builds on the original research model. It shows the relationship between festivals and their host community. It indicates the multidimensional interaction and the key aspects of festival operation that influence levels of resilience within the festival organisation and the community as a whole when celebrations are held. The springboard stories collected from key informants from each host community have shaped Figure 9.2. These people energised their communities and revealed the capacity of individuals and groups to be social entrepreneurs in both professional and amateur ways and deliver resilient communities.

Figure 9.2  Festivals and communities demonstrate resilience

Derrett, original, 2007
The arrows in this figure indicate the interconnectedness of relationships and their implications are explained in this chapter. The critical factors to ensure festivals contribute to their own resilience and that of their broader community are an engagement with participation, governance and an understanding and appreciation of the nature and context of the event. The robustness of these elements will inform the capacity of the festival organisation and its partners to use both positive and negative experience to ensure resilience in a broader context. Disparities between the case study festivals serve to highlight the fragility at all levels of festival making. For example, the tension that can exists between individual contributions in each domain and corporate responses to decision making. This is at the core of the model and is explained below.

**Wellbeing component**
The disparate nature of research done on community celebrations to date indicated that it was timely for a study to focus specifically on how community based festivals celebrated ‘belonging’ for residents and visitors. The literature surveyed during this study identified key roles for community-based groups that included the social connectedness that festivals provide. The study demonstrated that with high levels of participation from residents and visitors, festivals give a voice to locals who are brought together by a common interest. Festivals are seen to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of residents through their shared interactions and by providing a place for people to participate and take some responsibility for celebrations.

Throughout the study, the concept of resilience emerged as a quality aspired to and demonstrated by the participants in festival organisations. Organisations’ members indicated that their festival had implications for broader community development. A sense of place and community help construct resilient communities and networks of people to design each festival. Despite evidence of stresses within communities represented by specific interests, power struggles, differences in aspirations and levels of participation, economic pressures, festivals provided a level of confidence to function within the internal and external environments. Festivals demonstrate a degree of harmonious partnership and cohesiveness, offering residents’ life meaning (Markus, 2005). They provide interaction or reciprocal relationships between all the determining factors. Festivals show how some things can be worked out through openness and collaboration.

The study demonstrated that place based governance of community cultural festivals may sometimes not succeed in all its objectives, but it is close enough to its constituency to get immediate feedback and can remediate in full public gaze. Such festivals also demonstrated
that they fulfilled a strategic planning function for regional communities by protecting and enhancing community values, encouraging social cohesion, equity and diversity and care for sacred places. **Community resilience** becomes viable when a robust festival is shared amongst residents.

**Resilience component**
The case studies demonstrated that **resilience** is essential for **community wellbeing**, for its capacity to deliver an appropriate quality of life for residents and a level of sustainability for community development. Figure 9.2 shows how **resilience** is formative and summative, dynamic and responsive to the contexts that arise when communities come together in a shared experience. The strength of the ties between festival stakeholders affects the durability of the networks beyond the festival making. A number of internal variables from these relationships, like trust and reciprocity, influence not only the durability, but the meaningfulness stimulated by the festival making. This can extend the trust and the loyalty within the festival organisation and between festival partnerships beyond the delivery of the festival.

Festivals as collaborative entities protect against risk inherent in day-to-day interactions between people. They provide participants with an opportunity to show what they can do rather than feeling restricted as to their options as active residents. This resilience feeds into the wellbeing framework explored within each case study festival. These frameworks promote the building and nurturing required by communities to address sustainability and productivity from a position of strength and innovation. Festivals offer participants at all levels, opportunities to know what resilience feels like and encourage others in the community to build on it (Benard, 2004). The festival structure and content used in the case study festivals, in turn, influenced the capacity residents have to deal with structures around their daily lives.

**Examples that demonstrate the implication and application of these findings include:**

**Participation**

- Role of the media to encourage volunteerism and celebrate those actively involved in festival making;
- Collaboration that emerges at Jacaranda is replicated during the horse-racing season where hat making and decorating workshops are held in the Regional Gallery, shops decorate windows;
• Engagement when other events external or internally generated, e.g. the Olympic Torch Relay in Grafton encouraged residents to line the street in lilac colours, special activities held in conjunction raised the profile of the city for media coverage – and were applied to another international festival, the Philosophy, Science and Theology Festival;
• Use of local artists encouraged - used at other events after getting opportunity to debut at case study festival;
• The impact of the festivals encouraged subsets activities that have gone on to be independent - art and craft market on beachfront at Byron Bay;
• Confidence to take on management of discrete activities independently in the public domain, rallies, street parades, carnivals and fetes;
• Introduced greater numbers and broader audiences to specialist activities - dog show at Casino.

Governance
• Recognising the value of learning - Nimbin using university students and young local people to train as marshalls for Mardi Grass and subsequent local events;
• Showing leadership to transfer knowledge for further activity - in Byron Bay when other festivals require volunteers and partners, like Taste of Byron, people are alert to how it works;
• Role of local government in encouraging planning - Casino investing in the development of a business plan for Beef Week committee;
• Local government employs events officers (Clarence, Richmond Valley and Lismore) who support quality control, offer training programs and effect project management in collaboration with organisers;
• Experience of advocating a point of view, like legalisation of marijuana in Nimbin, enabled others in community to join together to deal with process required for ensuring the Skate Park would finally deliver service to youth of village.

Nature and role of event
• Use of specific research to inform organisers and broader community of characteristics and trends – Byron Bay & Grafton. Important that such info is used in enhancing future activity;
• Use of arts and cultural practices in festivals involved with community social activities at other festivals workshops, demonstrations, creative promotional tools;
• Choosing locations for community activities that may improve access after festival has trialled its use – Byron Bay, Nimbin, Grafton;
• The development of calendars of events for distribution to promote within and outside the region through the media, through ArtsNR;
• Use of recycling food and beverage utensils at events has been transferred to wider community use.

**Festival tourism component**
Community wellbeing is important when addressing how residents share their destination with visitors. While in community development terms a subjective interpretation is placed on the festivals through participant observation, it is evident to me that wellbeing is a tourism asset (Beeton, 2006:80) when hosts are hospitable. This wellbeing results from the networks that operate in communities in diverse forms. It is evident that networks can have boundaries that are, in a temporal and spatial sense, open and closed, vertical or horizontal with the community or across the region. This represents a substantial aspect of the complexity of this investigation into festivals.

Through direct contact with each festival the study revealed how characteristic regional hospitality delivers **cultural tourism**. Cultural tourism is taken to be the art of participating in another culture, of relating to people and places that demonstrate a strong sense of their own identity. It is concerned with the ways of life of a place (Wood, 1993). It is doing what the locals do. The region’s economy in which these festivals reside thus seems amorphous, complex and dynamic, challenging the conventional paradigm of the market economy. No two festivals are identical. However, some consistent patterns emerge to allow comparisons to be developed. These patterns have their own advantages and disadvantages and it is evident success or failure is not linked to a particular model for such festivals. This is where the study generates new knowledge.

All four festivals demonstrate such characteristics as ritual, the showcasing of culture by affirming heritage, active participation by attendees, revelry through excess and exchange of information. A heightened sense of **festivity** emerged from the communities they served and was captured for the duration of the event. Each left a positive residual. Each picked up on festive characteristics that best fit their audience including **harvest, feasting, holidays, carnival atmosphere, gala functions, diverse entertainments, competitions, games, exhibitions, ritual, spirituality**. These are attractive to visitors as well as locals.

**The relationship of festivals to their place**
Chapters Five to Eight detailed the way each festival utilised the physical resources of their communities. It showed how important the traditional use of the town’s physical landscape was for siteing elements of the event. This generated comfort and safety for locals. The use of
the towns’ CBDs, community parklands, special amenities and public squares dominated the study. Seasonality was also a significant element to festival acceptance. Celebrating features of the local landscape are of particular interest to visitors. A distinctive ambience is generated by the riverside in Grafton, the beachfront in Byron Bay and in the Peace Park surrounded by tropical vegetation in Nimbin.

Observations at each festival demonstrated that the biophysical environment in each place – the landscape, climate, topography and natural heritage contribute substantially to the context for the festival and are generally recognised as important by residents. This physical capital invested in each festival contains much of the infrastructure required to develop accessible events. Each location ensured festival attractiveness for visitors and became part of the representation of distinctive local identities.

The profound connection that attendees have to place confirmed earlier findings (Derrett & Mitchell, 2005; O’Neil, 2002) indicating the capacity of events to enhance a community’s quality of life from varying perspectives. These personal responses are reflected in the dimensions festivals demonstrate in their specific locations on a personal, emotional and social level. The mood and spirit shared amongst participants influenced their further engagement with the economic and political life of the community. When enterprise development was observed at festivals through sale of locally made items, innovative services, there appeared to be greater levels of active citizenship that built social capital and resilience.

**Festival distinctiveness**

An interesting perspective on the origin of each of the four festivals is that they celebrate an introduced species! The Jacaranda Festival is clearly linked to the ornamental deciduous Jacaranda *mimosifolia*, originally from Brazil; while Nimbin’s Mardi Grass draws attention to *cannabis sativa*, native to Central Asia, the use of which is prohibited; Casino’s beef industry focus provides a variety of introduced beef cattle species to the region. In Byron Bay, while the New Year’s Eve celebrations are designed to allow residents to reclaim the streets, the festival has become more a destination management mechanism during the summer influx of visitors.
9.4 The nature and role of four community festivals

The series of indicators (in Table 9.1) contributes to a better understanding of a host community’s capacity for resilience. Optimism, problem solving, reconciliation, broad public interests, collaboration, tolerance, trust and respect become subsets of the domains outlined. Each case study festival highlights the diverse challenges within its constituency for organisers. Festivals are not the solution to every community’s problems, but an analysis of the role of such events allows for a greater appreciation of the values, interests and aspirations of the hosts. An assessment of the impacts of the interaction between stakeholders involved in the preparation and delivery of such festivals provides a useful barometer for evaluating a community’s wellbeing, image and identity and hospitality. A significant aspect of these festivals is the fact they are planned public events. This public exposure means that all involved are accountable and there are heightened levels of accountability and transparency required by organisers and consumers.

The personal skills, traits, attributes and behaviours of festival organisers that contribute to resilience are readily exposed to the public gaze. Small regional communities know what is going on and people easily become alert to how effective festival management is. They recognise the festival management’s capacity to communicate well with the broader constituency and not be isolated from potential partners, maintain a sense of humour and be creative in response to festival logistics and be flexible and adaptable in times of stress from internal or external factors. The cliché that runs, ‘what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger’ is often how resilience is seen. From a festival perspective, communities and organisers need to recognise that the challenges they face as their annual festival is prepared provides learnings for all who are touched by it and each can grow from that experience.

The demographics and lifestyle characteristics of each community help explain the forms of popular cultural, recreation and leisure pursuits in the Northern Rivers region. The range of activities included in the study festivals indicates the willingness of locals to participate and/orspectate at discrete individual events within an umbrella festival. There is a comfort zone that endorses some activities, like Queen competitions, sporting pursuits, parades, markets and so on that satisfy a demand for local cultural interest and participation. This comfort emerges from continued exposure to similar activities at other times in their community life, as well as the festivals, and are symbols of distinctiveness that signify a clear connection to place and community. By pursuing culture owned by local people in public spaces festival attendees actively demonstrate celebration as an act of belonging.
A simple, single ‘measure’ of how festivals demonstrate a sense of place or social capital concepts such as community, network or organisations is not easy. This study however identified a number of elements that contribute to establishing a clearer picture of the connections and their impact. A composite measure that reflects both the breadth and depth of individuals staying informed and participating in community life through festivals has been canvassed. The participant interviews reveal that community links such as the informal or ‘hidden’ contributions by residents are important, rarely captured in evaluations of festivals and often undervalued. In and identified numerous internal and external pressures on key stakeholders of each festival.

The combination of quantitative, qualitative and comparative methodologies used in the study informs the following observations. These are in response to the multidimensional nature of festivals in place and space. Each festival registers different levels of trust, civic engagement and community involvement. These measures are seen to be key indicators in other research (Putman, 2000; Onyx and Bullen, 2000). Event organisers believe their festivals add value to the social networks of their communities and enrich the sense of place and community. The challenge is to not just measure how much connection there is between the festival and its place and community, but to observe the quality of the experience for various stakeholders. Their satisfaction level of the nature and the form of the celebration will influence the festival’s longevity.

How key stakeholders register, monitor and react to specific benefits that flow from community connectedness, information sharing, governance and wellbeing is outlined. The collective action that takes place when a community based cultural festival is developed can foster further networks that satisfy particular stakeholders. Festivals provide an opportunity to observe how well embedded in the host communities these key characteristics are. Some of the connections are institutionalized in regional agencies, local government and special interest group associations. Others involve the take up of relationships between these organisations and more directly the involvement of individuals committed to festivals that show that strangers (visitors) are welcome to share the belonging the residents feel is delivered. This contributes to the survival of each festival.

Comparison of four festivals
There were times during the research where a spectrum of performance of each of the four festivals seemed an analytical option. What presented itself initially was the longevity of Grafton and Casino festivals as corner stones for conventional best practice and appeal to residents. Nimbin and Byron Bay provided greater complexity by virtue of demographics
and community engagement. As each domain listed below (Table 9.4) was compared the variables kicked-in. Overall, there is evidence that residents are happy to have access to entertainment options provided by festivals. Less acceptable in Nimbin and Byron Bay has been the physical impacts of increased numbers of people coming to join in the celebrations.

In terms of organising the events for many years, the festivals in Casino and Grafton demonstrated consistent support from individuals and groups. They enjoyed local government interest, investment and in-kind support. The business community recognised festivals as an adjunct to the economy and related positively to engagement. This business connection is not always exploited for as much mutual benefit as could be extracted. Sponsorship more often looks like a donation and the finessing of target marketing is yet to be embraced by all festivals and businesses. This is growing respect for this in Grafton where new business relationships are being explored. The Casino experience becomes a useful source for analyzing where the nexus for full community engagement and festival management success resides. The organisers found it increasingly difficult to work with the business model and became ineffective in their management decisions. This led to confusion within the committee and in the wider community. The latter was not aware of the imminent demise of the 2007 festival.

Nimbin and Byron Bay have had significant contact with state government agencies. NYE attracted support from the state law enforcement agencies when requests came to sort out the safety issues that come from the pressure of numbers in confined spaces, when alcohol and drugs abuse and law and order issues needed to be addressed. Festival activities were seen as therapeutic for the community as a result and funds were forthcoming. Nimbin’s media profile, police interventions and the political interests of parliamentarians have influenced close scrutiny by state government, particularly through increased police surveillance and repositioning the village through tourism marketing campaigns. Each of these has attracted state government funding.

All the festivals have markets as part of their program. Small-scale traders have found the festival circuit a useful outlet for their products. Most aspects of the entertainment in each festival are home grown. Byron Bay has brought in bands from outside the region on occasion. Service clubs use the festivals to fund raise. Food is often the area in which they contribute most. The greater cosmopolitan nature of the Nimbin and Byron Bay festivals attract interesting global food options. The Casino experience of ‘Beef on Barker’ (Chapter Six) provides an entre for any future regional cuisine based enterprise for public functions. This experiment was well received by visitors but not embraced in a strategic sense by the committee or the community.
The inclusion of a process or parade is a feature of the four festivals. The rituals that accompany this element of each program reflect the inclusive nature of the events. The parades are open to any individual or group in the community who wishes to contribute to the theme and can become part of the mobile spectacle. By their nature such parades draw a wider cross section of community spectators. They are held in exposed public places, like main streets and provide a dynamic animation of CBDs surrounded by business premises. They energise community interaction on a grand scale ensuring anonymity for some or cultural cohesion for others. The floats that emerge as part of the artful parades in the case study festivals are generally the result of the sort of collaboration seen as an important aspect of the community’s vision of itself. The imagery represented in the parades reflect the symbols and stories known to other residents, often presented with humour and beauty. There is also an opportunity to highlight heritage valued by residents and entertainment that lifts spirits.

It is obvious that each of the festival organisations acts independently within their host communities, but it is the capacity of each to reach across the different factions that exist in these communities that differentiates the festival effectiveness in addressing this study’s questions. Grafton and Casino (initially demonstrated community support for collaboration to offer a consolidated program). There seems to be a clear understanding of where the resources reside and how they can be best shared in the interests of the festival.

In Nimbin, there is a level of spontaneity in the festival’s organisation. It seems Mardi Grass just creeps up on the community and there is suddenly energy to source appropriate support for the forthcoming event. Its simpler structure and fewer program elements allow this to be acceptable. Byron Bay continues to struggle with determining an effective model for ensuring it will be alright on the night. There is an understanding of what is required, but each year a reluctance to take some leadership. The organisational structure has remained consistent for ten years, but the interpersonal politicking that goes on restrains any coherent approach.

Table 9.2 A broad comparative overview of the formation and functionality of the four festival cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grafton</th>
<th>Casino</th>
<th>Nimbin</th>
<th>Byron Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Late October/early November annually—Jacaranda blossom time</td>
<td>Last week of May annually (2007 festival cancelled)</td>
<td>First weekend of May annually—coincides with Labour Day holiday</td>
<td>New Years Eve annually—height of summer season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Originally 12 days (now 5 days)</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origin</strong></td>
<td>1935 Folk festival in English tradition, peaks and troughs in interest, post WWII increased attention, recent institutionalised &amp; link to tourism and community development</td>
<td>1981 Deliberate local government, beef industry, community initiative administered by volunteer community based incorporated body</td>
<td>1991 Committee from HEMP Embassy with community input in tradition of Aquarius alternative experience</td>
<td>1993/4 Section 533 Council committee in response to event chaos; community input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destination distinctiveness</strong></td>
<td>Residential &amp; light industrial city on both sides of Clarence River, inland of Pacific Hwy, Jacaranda trees</td>
<td>Inland, transport hub to tablelands, town on both sides of Richmond River, access to hinterland, beef cattle significant industry</td>
<td>Inland ex-dairying village, close to World Heritage Rainforests, Tumbable Falls, Nimbin Rocks, lush vegetation, quaint alternative village</td>
<td>Most easterly point in Australia, coastal and urban landscape, edge of caldera, see Mt Warning, whale watching, surfing heritage and contemporary arts &amp; café culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Government</strong></td>
<td>Clarence Valley Council</td>
<td>Richmond Valley Council</td>
<td>Lismore City Council</td>
<td>Byron Shire Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic migrations</strong></td>
<td>Indigenous settlement, agriculture, river trade, retail, light industry, education &amp; health professionals</td>
<td>Indigenous settlement, agriculture, transportation employees, food processing, Caravan and Motorhome residential hub</td>
<td>Indigenous settlement, farmers, new settlers, artists, multiple occupancy &amp; new technologies</td>
<td>Indigenous settlement, primary producers, surfers, hippies, entrepreneurs, baby boomers, backpackers, ‘ferals’,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location of festival</strong></td>
<td>CBD, riverside Market Square, assorted parks and halls</td>
<td>CBD streets, civic buildings</td>
<td>Main street, park and village buildings</td>
<td>Jonson &amp; Lawson CBD streets, beach front park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other significant events in town</strong></td>
<td>Jacaranda, Festival, river events, Horse Racing, Agricultural Show, sporting events, Regional Gallery annual program</td>
<td>Annual Agricultural show, rodeo, sport</td>
<td>Annual Agricultural Show, monthly markets, Aquarius Festival 1973, annual Arts Festivals, Blue Moon Cabarets</td>
<td>Oleaneder (historically), surfing, sporting events, East Coast Blues and Roots, Writers Festival, Splendour in Grass, Taste of Byron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Festival Aims and Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Self esteem, image making, traditional community celebration, entertainment</td>
<td>Economic driver, profile raising, tourism brand</td>
<td>Political rally through community celebration</td>
<td>Safety issues in community celebrations – to reclaim the streets for residents - demarketing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Program**
- Inclusive (umbrella), broad, indoor and outdoor entertainments; some free, some fundraisers for community groups, parade, decorated shops
- Inclusive (umbrella), indoor/outdoor industry based themed events, community group fundraisers, substantial parade, business community involvement
- Special interest activities based on political rally focused on legalizing cannabis in park, exhibitions, seminars, simple, inclusive parade
- Street entertainment, CBD segmented, mostly music, dance, some stalls, parade lessened in importance, past arts workshops,

**Theme**
- Jacaranda’s lilac, flowers, spring, floral and nature, showcasing disparate aspects of community life
- Beef industry, re-shaping economic activity, community engagement
- Political pro-legalisation of marijuana and focus on other hemp uses, whimsy,
- Community family style celebration in safe environment

**Host population**
- 20,000
- 10,000 (20,000 Shire)
- 600
- 9,000

**Attendees**
- >10,000
- >15,000
- 7,000 – 10,000
- >40,000

**Organisational structure**
- Incorporated not for profit community based committee
- Incorporated not for profit community committee – strong link to Council
- Incorporated association trading as HEMP Embassy
- Section 355 Council Committee with community /Council representation

**Management**
- Volunteer committee, paid part time coordinator
- Volunteer committee, paid part time coordinator
- Volunteer committee
- Volunteer committee and paid part time coordinator

**Local media**
- Radio 2GF, Newspaper Daily Examiner, 4 free to air TV channels
- Community radio COWFM, Richmond River Express Examiner, commercial radio (in Lismore 2LM/ZZZFM), 4 free to air TV channels
- Community radio NIMFM, Nimbin Good Times newspaper, the Northern Star regional newspaper, 4 free to air TV channels, in Lismore 2LM/ZZZFM
- Community radio BayFM, Byron Shire Echo weekly, Byron Shire News, 4 free to air TV channels, in Lismore 2LM/ZZZFM

Source: original, Derrett (2006)

I question where the resilience resides. If longevity is a resilience marker then Grafton clearly demonstrates a community’s capacity to sustain a connection to their community festival. The links that are important to ensure the ongoing appeal of the Jacaranda Festival appear to be readily activated on other civic occasions beyond the festival period (represented in local, regional and national environments). This network approach to resilience suggests that some connections lay dormant till required for events of common good or crises. While there is no clear indication of how connectivity is related to resilience, it appears to provide a mechanism for attending to activity in the public interest in regional communities. These social systems
can’t be managed in isolation. The multiple partnerships that exist in each of the festival communities appear to embrace governance practices that are adapted to their own circumstances.

The diligence and co-operation demonstrated within the festival organisations has implications for relationships among diverse cultural providers, between cultural providers and other community-based organisations, and between artists and cultural providers who all play important roles in the existing community’s cultural system. In the Northern Rivers *cultural participants* through the variety of their community engagement often are the only connections between institutions. Similar findings are noted by Stern and Seifert (2002) indicating that although artists and other cultural workers move frequently between for-profit and not for profit cultural organisations, there are few institutional links between these sectors. This study finds that festivals can act as a catalyst to improve the flow between these structural holes in existing community cultural systems. It can be argued that the strength of these networks of relationships is often more important that the organisational strength of individual providers. This supports the ecological model of community culture that has been identified that enhances cultural and community resilience.

Stern and Seifert suggest the community cultural ecosystem includes a variety of agents that operate under the radar (2002:8). The nature and role of festivals demonstrably encourages those hidden human and cultural resources in communities to be revealed in formal and informal ways. It seems only when risks like the demise of Casino’s Beef Week emerges that resilience is evident. The small sample of this study only serves to highlight the variables that influence the adaptive capacities of communities. These adaptive processes include ensuring the widest possible reach is secured across a community’s interest groups, and this is where the engagement of festival partners becomes important.

### 9.5 Festival partners

It is evident that festivals play multiple roles in people’s lives. For key stakeholders, these include such factors as enhanced communal memory, increased willingness to work collaboratively, embedded organisational traditions and experience influenced resource availability to conduct successful festivals. All four communities accepted their festival. There was buy-in by local and regional stakeholders. The nuances of stakeholder relationships are exposed through a multiple perspective approach. By identifying the patterns, structures and meanings of the situations that festivals represent, readers are better informed of the full and complex entities of the human experience. This more robustly described in Figure 9.3.
Most of the festivals take advantage of trusting relationships between multiple enterprises that generally exist independently of one another yet for a festival are mutually interdependent. This places substantial responsibility on each of the players involved in the collaboration. The process of evolution and change is observed in each festival. These are driven by individuals and agencies looking to exploit new opportunities.

The openness to collaborate is seen as a positive trait in organisations’ leaders. In the host communities this leadership can come from within or outside the festival organisation. What leaders can recognise is the value of connections with partners who can extend the organisation’s reach, enhance its program and networks and energise its process and practice. This study found that some leaders, though not all, have personal skills and relationships that take the organisation forward through their understanding of connections with strategic partners. All festivals have confronted change inside their organisations and external to it, and as Kanter (1999) suggests some react defensively and ineffectually. When Casino’s Beef Week Committee faced change compelled by crisis, through the Committee decision to defer the 2007 festival, leadership behaved as if it were a threat, rather than an opportunity. By building coalitions from amongst festival partners, the resources, knowledge and the political clout can be mobilised to make things happen in the best interests of the festival. The organisation of Byron Bay’s NYE celebrations is likewise determined by these personal responses annually.

Key partners identified in the case study festivals include local government, strategic alliances with regional and state government agencies, the local business community, special
interest groups in destination communities, regional and local media, individual community champions, festival organisers, residents and visitors (see Figure 9.3). The emphasis and level of participation by each partner in each community varies. The interaction is influenced by the individuals involved, the organisational structures in place, traditions inherent in each community’s socio-cultural exchange, the history of public engagement by public authorities and the appeal of the region to potential visitors. Their interaction becomes a distinctive feature of the region, noted by visitors. This is particularly true of volunteers. Community festivals are collaborative phenomena and in these cases are managed by volunteers. Volunteers are recognised as essential for their sustainability.

Getz, Andersson and Larson (2007) highlight the importance of networking with festival partners and acknowledge the roles each can play in festival management. They have sought to categorise such stakeholder roles as regulator, facilitator, co-producer, supplier, collaborator and audience. In this study it is interesting to reflect on how various partners in fact demonstrate a number of roles in effectively delivering a festival. As the social, economic and political contexts are modified, the longevity of the relationships accounted for and the changes in internal and external organisational contexts examined, the practical implications of the partnerships become clearer. Figure 9.3 refreshes our recognition of who the key festival partners are.

Each festival’s program represents a sum of the interactions between the partners. Festival organisers spoke of collaborative opportunities (Humphrys, 2003; Balderstone, 2003; de Graaf 2001). There is recognition of the fluidity over time of contacts between some of the key players. They suggest that it is difficult to sustain some relationships given the constraints that come from part-time volunteer staff. With Grafton and Casino festivals particularly providing an umbrella mechanism, the nurture and maintenance required to link balance and engagement was a severe test of governance, negotiation and leadership. In Nimbin and Byron Bay the relationship between organisers and Council was often tested as was patience and good humour!

These partners can sustain local networks after the festival experience. The networks activated can breakdown other community infrastructure, bureaucracy or negotiation for the common good. They can promote local solutions to local problems by supporting the establishment of local self-help mechanisms and local community leadership. It also has implications for inter-community or regional collaboration. Table 9.3 notes the involvement of government, business, and non-government services. Healy, Hampshire & Ayres, (2003) suggest the role of social networks between local communities and other communities and
key institutions is largely unrecognised in contemporary policy approaches to promoting community resilience and serves as an area of potential further research.

Partnerships that support the host community’s sense of itself and its place through festival investment whether in-kind, by sponsorship deals, by sharing resources or offering media promotion help build confidence in the life of the festival and ultimately the community. The diverse inputs identified below in Table 9.3 demonstrate the influence of the relationships and how they enrich the efforts of organisers and encourage local support for each festival. The formal and informal links become known to the potential audience for each event and help consolidate the impression of widespread awareness, satisfaction and value derived for each contributing partner from the relationship.

Sustainability is an issue that has long been part of the Northern Rivers regional rhetoric. The Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, (2001) and a series of Regional Roundtables (2005-6) raised the question and its implications as a major aspiration for the region. The region of villages concept is grounded on the notion of robust holistic systems to deal with predicted change. These changes include issues of the demographic mix, climate change, coastal and urban development, transportation issues and the capacity to earn a living, that all impinge on festival making. The quality of life elements of this discussion have included the importance of minimising dysfunctionality that can emerge when parties don’t collaborate for a common purpose. Festivals are often cited as building a community’s social capacity.

In this context, social capacity is recognised for the practical opportunities festivals provide for enhanced community communication – meeting neighbours face-to-face in a celebratory atmosphere, developing resident’s skills’ levels through participation in organisation, bringing various parties together for collective decision-making, improving infrastructure and liveability and confidence. This discussion is also informed by a philosophical resistance to some aspects of globalisation and the pervasiveness of popular consumer culture that actively works against the distinctive features of regional life.

Key partners identified in the earlier chapters (especially Chapter Two) and their connectivity to case study festivals demonstrate the principle of active participation, belief in quality of all cultures and the notion of diversity as a social asset (Adams & Goldbard, 2001). The density of civic participation as seen in the four case studies can readily be associated with regional economic development. It suggests that social capital is not only a product of the region’s economy through the exchange of good and services, but connected vitally to bureaucracies, special interest networks and on a communal level through strong, shared identity (cited in Rolfe, 2006:8).
These stakeholder relationships need to work whether partners are challenged or during times of positive interaction. Community resiliency processes are represented in the column headed ‘role’ and suggest that a collective response for festivals is not only sought, but that parties understand the importance of their shared ability to negotiate and navigate the trials that may emerge as a solution is sought to a problem. This experience can then be translated into other formal and informal ways to assist community development in the future.

Table 9.3  Stakeholder roles in festival resilience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Role in Partnerships in Northern Rivers community festivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Host community – the impacted audience, paying customers and sometime special guests</td>
<td>• Produce and consume festival • Act as host for visitors • Free access to most of festival as audience • Contribute and celebrate cultural diversity • Traditional and new settler exchange of rituals, volunteer support and &gt;75% of participants • Interest in creating a legacy • Target market supporting image of festival and identity for its promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Champions - facilitators</td>
<td>• Individuals providing vision &amp; leadership, generating enthusiasm, delivering advocacy and attracting respect and loyalty from organisation members and wider community • Bringing goodwill and external recognition to festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer co-workers – internal stakeholders</td>
<td>• Demonstrate active participation in community life • Establish and consolidate networks • Local problem solving • Personal skills development and empowerment • Greater understanding of local beliefs, attitudes and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival Organisation – internal stakeholder, producers, volunteer and paid staff</td>
<td>• Formal structure emphasizes identity and connection to host community • Offers safety and security for participants • Membership comprised of local community • Succession strategies • Community profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government – regulators, sometime co-producers, facilitators</td>
<td>• Policy and planning frameworks • Events officers and project management personnel and infrastructure support • ‘In-kind’ and financial investment • Improve amenities for residents and visitors • Facilitate regional and government alliances and investment • Support tourism marketing initiatives • Reflect community traditions and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and Federal government – often regulators, sometimes facilitators as grant givers</td>
<td>• Provide funding to support elements of festival programs and value-add to economic initiatives and harmonisation challenges • Ensure regulations (e.g. alcohol in public places) are adhered to • Arts funding for performers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Alliances (agencies and organisations representing sectoral interests), collaborators, facilitators</td>
<td>• Desire to respond to locally agreed agendas • Offer financial support and advice • Encourage initiatives with regional outcomes, e.g. collaborative tourism promotion, arts development, regional cuisine, entrepreneurial initiatives • Some e-technology support • Consolidate communication through networks • Provide elements of programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business community (local and regional), suppliers, vendors</td>
<td>• Be open during festival! • Provide feedback to organisers on economic impacts • Provide sponsorship – ‘in-kind’ or financial • Collaborate in packages and promotion • Active involvement during event highlighting local products and services • Social responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The roles and interactions evident in Table 9.3 reveal that the impacted audience plays a significant role in the success of each festival. The audience can comprise representatives of the various stakeholder groups identified above and those suggested by Getz et al (2007). They draw attention to the nature of internal and external stakeholders. The multiplicity of roles some individuals and some agencies hold in the design, management and delivery of each festival requires sensitive management. The interaction between each at various levels of and at distinctive junctures of a festival’s development needs to be understood by festival organisers. So, for example, local government can be a regulator, a facilitator and a collaborator or partner (according to Getz et al typology, 2007) simultaneously. The four case study festivals demonstrate the importance of formal and informal networks amongst stakeholders for the strategic planning necessary for effective festival management and for tactical, operational activities.

Each festival initially had strong links with their respective communities, but the growing number of visitors brings stress on infrastructure, pressure on internal relationships and resentment about the influx of outsiders. Issues of community carrying capacity become a concern to organisers, Council planners and businesses (Beeton, 2006; Dredge, 2003). Again,
the spectrum across the four festivals reveals differing levels of response to these issues. A number of interviewees commented on the way the festivals contributed to a social multiplier through increased understanding of organisational activity and skills development in project management, leadership, public and private collaboration (Dunstan, 1999; Roberts, 1999).

Organising a major festival takes a lot of individual and collective effort. To get the job done the organisers have to be able to give a lot of time personally and be able to call in a lot of favours and/or inspire volunteerism. Celebration can bind a community and it can also be the instrument that keeps community a fresh and constantly renewing experience, an elixir that keeps community relevant and responsive to the needs of the times. Annual festivals create a community of witness that marks the passage of time, notes the changing of the guard as new power relations arise and old ones change. Kanter (1995) suggests in organisational terms that communities need to have both *magnets and glue*. Magnets broaden community horizons, attract and expand skills and attract external resources. Leaders, festival spirit and experience can be the glue that bring people together through social cohesion, with joint plans and agreed strategic goals. Festivals fulfill this role.

The festivals provide service clubs, community special interest groups, local government and businesses with opportunities to raise funds. Some fundraising involves new money from visitors and offers benefits such as investment in infrastructure for residents. Some investment in the promotion of the destination using the festival themes adds to the image and identity developed in each community. The destination-marketing dollar is increased at times connected to the festivals. These in turn influences greater visitation and increased expenditure by visitors, visiting friends and relatives (VFRs) hosts and local business anticipating the influx.

The current level of resilience in each of the host destinations can be established by assessing the experience, resources and time invested in each festival. Each year festival organisers can revisit the baseline assessment to ensure errors are avoided and successes replicated. Intellectually each organisation recognised that the collaboration that takes place in festival making assists community communication and provides a framework for structured and focused approach for planning. However, not all were able to translate this into practice effectively. This mismatch placed stress on management. Strategic and tactical planning for effective operation of the organisation and the implications for the festival’s impact more broadly was not always well understood. None of the organisations had generated a community portrait and documented steps in a process to benefit all stakeholders. Much
planning was ad hoc. I recognised an opportunity for skills development amongst organisers to enhance sustainability of event management.

**Significance of community champions**
In each community key individuals worked to ensure each of the case study festivals appeared on schedule. There was evidence of volunteer burnt-out, but also individual and corporate resilience. In each case, articulate, committed and experienced personnel came forward to assist with driving the festival’s agenda. While individual’s capacities varied, the core characteristics required to inspire, lead and deliver such festivals were readily recognised. In some festivals the leadership actually came from partner agencies, while the festival remained the focus for all parties. Individual skills do not have to reside in one person, but one person may have to elicit the elements from a team to make the festival happen. Leadership characteristics observed in the festival organisations included providing efficient, predictable use of resources, motivating a team to engage in problem solving and setting, enforcing and prioritizing actions.

There was evidence of social entrepreneurship. The individual festival champions involved demonstrated valuable insights, experience and skills in the preparation and delivery of the festivals. Interviewees offered success stories of entrepreneurial initiatives, fund-raising, marketing and management undertaken within festival structures. The terms *community champions* or *social entrepreneurs* are contested but the festivals demonstrate tangible outcomes by the considerable number of *acts of community* (Thompson, 2000) provided by individuals within the festival organisation or the broader host community.

### 9.6 Sense of community and wellbeing
Festivals offer host communities and visitors relationships within and between groups. The collective action of festivals is what Cox’s (2002) calls a *social auditing* process. The relationships demonstrated in the festivals allowed for interactions highlighting trust, conflict resolution, shared values and formal and informal networks. More work is being undertaken in measuring the social capital process but certainly the four festivals demonstrate attributes such as individuals and groups showing interest in things going on outside their immediate circle of activity.

The festivals provided a substantial vehicle for participation through engagement as audience or as a contributor to festival programs. Individuals used their personal and professional networks to enhance their contributions to the festival making. The safety and
security inherent in community cultural festivals is an attractive incentive for participants to trust others. Those working on the festivals contribute to a process that encourages trust within institutions on a small scale and through the organisation to broader partnerships that allow for change to occur. Participating in a festival allows residents, particularly, to comfortably gain an insight into social structures, political institutions, and legal systems. It allows them to make formal the sorts of relationships that exist in small communities, where the expression of mutual exchange, ‘you owe me one’ is translated into the sort of serial reciprocity where neighbours help one another on a grander scale.

The confidence that is garnered when residents come together is demonstrated in the festivals. It is evident that over time festivals have been delivered and people feel comfortable that it is as it should be! For residents who aren’t directly involved, it may seem the festival appears spontaneously, but most recognise the effort that goes into providing the event. They recognise that the program is comprised of various suppliers, mostly local groups who are aware where individual’s strengths and community resources are. The festival provides an opportunity for a division of labour amongst partners that takes into account skills, experience and interests.

I contend that social capital in the four case studies is more likely to develop through active and willing engagement by residents of a community with a strong sense of internal identity and boundary as suggested by Onyx & Bullen (2000); Cox, (1995); and Putnam, (1995). I argue that while rural communities in the Northern Rivers may be socially isolated, some demonstrate more conservative attitudes and others tolerance of difference but these characteristics don’t intrinsically deliver low levels of social capital. Mission Australia research (2006) found that the redistribution of Australia’s non-metropolitan population through migration is creating the growth of larger regional centres in rural areas and surrounding capital cities. There is growth in coastal areas with high proportions of older people and younger people on low incomes. Many rural communities are ageing and the increased proportions of younger Indigenous people living in smaller towns and remote areas have lower living standards and less opportunity. Festivals contribute to increased levels of arts practice and work to preserve and lift the contribution populations make to the growing strength of their communities.

Each festival relied on local cultural/arts content for its programming. Regional Arts NSW (2007) suggests that cultural programs are an indispensable component of a community’s ability to sustain vitality and attract and retain population and services. Access to, participation in and development of the arts contribute to what has now been recognised as
an important policy initiative – the development of social capital, often described as community wellbeing. Australia Institute research shows that for a high proportion of Australians wellbeing is in decline, with only a quarter of the population believing that life in Australia is improving and four in ten believing that it is deteriorating. Significantly, this research also reveals that ‘community’ rates high amongst indicators that contribute to personal happiness – far above indicators of financial or career success (Hamilton & Rush, 2006).

The social impact observed in the case studies was defined as a measure of ‘the efficacy of arts and cultural participation in achieving other social outcomes’ where ‘arts and cultural activity intersects with other areas of public concern such as education, crime prevention, community identity and development’ (Cultural Ministers’ Council, 2004:4). It has been differently considered as a gauge of strength, in which a community’s key resources ‘operate in networks of mutual support, reciprocity and trust suggests Edwards (2004 in ABS Information Paper no. 1378.0) Key markers for how a community is sustained by arts practice also differ across studies, but generally include categories that measure impact on a range of personal, social and community attributes, including cognitive skills and educational attainment, community pride/identity, crime prevention, mood, self-esteem, social behaviour, cohesion and health (Edwards, 2004:18).

The activities that demonstrate social capital or social networks in the case studies included the voluntary service provided by SES or Bush Fire Brigade personnel to assist with marshalling or crowd control at parades, or the service clubs who voluntarily provide food and beverage for participants. Email database lists were exchanged between particular partners to assist in the promotion of elements of an umbrella event. End of festival debriefing parties allowed for social interaction that has longer-term implications for people involved with their community’s public life. The number of festival organisers who are significantly involved with other community-based pursuits, for example, can represent social capital.

The four festivals demonstrated that Cox’s concept of the civil society (1995) and social capital (2002) contribute to sound community relations. A spectrum developed to identify which festivals best demonstrate social capital characteristics follows in Table 9.4. Evidence was captured from participant observation, existing data sets, and secondary data in media, organisational records and interviews.
Table 9.4  How festivals demonstrate levels of host community social capital.

H = high; M = medium; L = low

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Casino</th>
<th>Grafton</th>
<th>Nimbin</th>
<th>Byron Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in people</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in institutions</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to resolve conflict civilly</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>H – Concern at recent demise of festival; previous active participation and pride and satisfaction across community; greater demographic homogeneity</td>
<td>H - Consistent comfort level with community interaction, though some civic disturbance at some events; acceptance of traditional approach to celebration, substantial demographic homogeneity</td>
<td>M – while festival delivers satisfaction for participants and visitors, some resident unrest continues; demonstrates capacity to approach</td>
<td>M – Most inconsistent levels of participation and responsibility taking from broad range of demographics amongst residents/visitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community wellbeing can be described as having such outcomes for residents as livability, sustainability, viability and vitality (Wills, 2001). The wellbeing model assists in evaluating the relative and comparative success of each festival. It is difficult to measure in a quantitative sense, but to communities it feels like a tangible asset. Any assessment represents a community’s sense of confidence and control over their future. These systematically represented below in Tables 9.5 and 9.6.

Table 9.5  Northern Rivers Community Wellbeing Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Wellbeing Outcomes</th>
<th>Grafton</th>
<th>Casino</th>
<th>Nimbin</th>
<th>Byron Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conviviality,</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adequate prosperity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Income from visitors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Income from visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liveability</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Congestion, tension</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not totally embraced by all community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vitality

Animates CBD, colour & movement
Brings distinctive agri-business visitors
Spectacle
Night celebrations distinctive, street dance, Hare Krishnas

sustainability
Investment sound, volunteer management required, Council support strong
Confident volunteer management required
Problematic Camping, parking, amenities, social impacts, though volunteer management remains enthusiastic
Volunteer involvement, investment in infrastructure required; and ownership issues within community

viability
Financially sound, public interest and support
Hard to maintain committee though community interest and diversifying content now promised
Problematic Less stable financial commitment & ongoing social tension
Annual revival of committee

The features upon which these outcomes are built are represented below. To work consistently over years to deliver effective and engaging festival organisers need to have buy-in from others in the community. These building blocks need to be apparent in other parts of community life and not the exclusive domain of festivals.

Table 9.6 Northern Rivers Community Wellbeing Building Blocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Building Blocks Components/Features</th>
<th>Grafton</th>
<th>Byron Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic governance: Visions, goals, leadership, policies</td>
<td>Sound structure, representative inclusions</td>
<td>Intermittent enthusiasm, current Council leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active citizenship: Equal political, civil and civic rights</td>
<td>Long serving membership, cooperation with other community stakeholders not always easy</td>
<td>Community based group encourages involvement/participation, annual reluctance on part of residents to get involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice: Human rights, social supports, empowerment</td>
<td>Seen simply as a traditional recreational cultural event, demonstrates ownership in many community sectors</td>
<td>Community collaboration aspires to minimise harm to residents and visitors on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital: Interpersonal and organisational trust, reciprocity and collective action</td>
<td>Opportunities for personal and collective involvement</td>
<td>Opportunity to showcase local talent, provide entertainment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.6 Northern Rivers Community Wellbeing Building Blocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Building Blocks Components/Features</th>
<th>Grafton</th>
<th>Casino</th>
<th>Nimbin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic governance: Visions, goals, leadership, policies</td>
<td>Sound structure, representative inclusions</td>
<td>Situation being revisited</td>
<td>Clear understanding of principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active citizenship: Equal political, civil and civic rights</td>
<td>Long serving membership, cooperation with other community stakeholders not always easy</td>
<td>Community based group, Council, beef industry &amp; business need to reassess support</td>
<td>Grounded in equity and access, special interest group seeks collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice: Human rights, social supports, empowerment</td>
<td>Seen simply as a traditional recreational cultural event, demonstrates ownership in many community sectors</td>
<td>Could provide forum to celebrate local industry and leverage community cultural activity.</td>
<td>Political rally, creates tension in community, attracts media interest and substantial visitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital: Interpersonal and organisational trust, reciprocity and collective action</td>
<td>Opportunities for personal and collective involvement</td>
<td>Community collaboration experienced break down and opportunity for revitalisation</td>
<td>Encouragement of social activism and fun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These matrices allow a significant insight into how regional cultural events reflect a distinctive sense of community and place. The earlier discussion underscores the disparate manner in which each goes about celebrating itself.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

Image 9.1  Personal and public interest served by ‘the big joint’
The politics represented in the Mardi Grass festivities take centre stage in the street parade as ‘the big joint’ is carried high.

9.7  Image and representation of identity through festivals

The universal elements of the program of each festival can be differentiated from other festivals within the region. Each of the case study festivals massaged the content of its annual program to ensure that it represented local interests and aspirations. This caused a tension with visitor anticipation of sameness amongst such leisure and tourism experiences. On a regional level there is an opportunity for each festival to distinguish itself from other events. The distinctiveness of a local host destination, as well as the wider regional environment requires vigilance otherwise both become less attractive to the cultural tourism marketplace.

Participants appeared satisfied that in the festivals the identity of each host community was well represented by the content and conduct of each festival. The program reflected the lifestyle choices of residents. The outdoor components were consistent with the mainstream representations of the region in promotional publications. A local feeling was expressed through residents’ involvement or lack of it in each festival. Participants seemed to take from
each festival elements consistent with their own image of their connectivity with the destination. As most festivals attracted up to 75% of their attendees from the local community, it provided visitors with confirmation that it satisfies locals, and for those visitors who want to see locals at play, it represented the sense of community and place they wish to experience.

Each of the four events has substantial outdoor components to their programs. Access is always an issue for attendees, as they wish to take advantage of street activities. The location of parking, their access during emergencies, availability of infrastructure like toilets, shade, seating, sealed pathways were all considerations. Access to free events had great appeal. Climate played a significant role in determining what was organised and how it was shared with spectators or participants. The timing of each festival allowed for reasonable seasonal weather conditions. Organisers identify factors that satisfy a need for order for seating, shelter (against inclement weather), suitable sites for fireworks and other static or mobile spectacle and sometime an attractive site for media coverage (de Graaf, 2001, Brophy, 2002).

There was satisfaction that the place in which each of the festivals was staged in both natural and built environments, demonstrated residents’ proclivity for safe, healthy and easy living. Both residents and visitors commented that each festival provided an opportunity for enjoyment and reflected how people in each community lived well together. The repeat visitation and local participation recognised further satisfaction. Attendees responded to word of mouth that recognised that the festivals had been going long enough to have sorted out any problems, so each year brought returning visitors as well as new attendees.

The parades during each festival provided a showcase of how the locals wanted to be seen. The parades offered an opportunity for residents to present an annual snapshot of their community at play. Floats became a statement of how the community dealt with new residents, new ideas and issues of local importance. These were delivered in a satirical or serious manner to best represent how locals felt. This provided timely community mechanisms to deal with internal controversies in a public way.

In a formal sense the tourism destination brand employed in the region fulfils the generic definition of a brand. Individual destinations had used a sign, a symbol, a design or a combination of these elements to identify the festival for potential customers and differentiate it from its competitors (Kotler et al, 1999:284). The host communities connected the festivals to their corporate, tourism and internal marketing campaigns.
Image 9.2  The rainbow motif

*The rainbow motif is replicated in dress across the spectrum at street parties like Nimbin’s Mardi Grass. Visitors join with locals in street festivities.*

The promotional material of each destination emphasises the appeal of local hospitality, friendliness and the access to the local amenity contributed by festivals. There was increasing attention given to the effective management of events that have the potential to attract more people to the region through the positive word of mouth promotion. Investment by Tourism NSW into regional flagship marketing of events had not touched the case study festivals until Casino’s Beef Week attracted funds in the year of its demise! Each maintained its promotional integrity through the strong word of mouth and repeat visitation. The emphasis is on local responsibility for promotion rather than a corporate regional focus.

In recent years images of the festivals have found their way through technological advances to a global audience. This happened formally and informally. Those attending the festivals captured images or compiled text about their experience and distribute it worldwide through blogs on the Internet. At Mardi Grass, the international press was an obvious participant through their recording of the event, some material was instantly beamed via satellite to websites and media transmission in Europe and Japan. The lack of mediation of this material by event organisers is an interesting dimension to how images and identity of the host communities are seen.

**Festivals connect the Northern Rivers**

An holistic approach of behavioural geography includes absorption of impressions, knowledge, emotions and hosts’ values. Visitors come to each of the festivals independently or in groups and the stereotyping of these market segments (explored in Chapters Five to
Eight) required festival organisers to understand how each person’s image of a particular place is comprised of unique memories or their interaction, not only with the program of the festival but its location.

While some people have narrow special interests, the growing number of people engaged in exploring their diverse personal interests through cultural expression with others is manifested in the four festivals. There appeared to be ‘unity in difference’ (Robinson, 1999). The umbrella nature of the festivals and the activities contained within the program of each allowed for specialists to be satisfied by engaging in the familiar while accessing something new at the margins. These regional festivals provide a way to represent the quality of life valued by residents and a mechanism to bridge any existing cultural divide. There was evidence of substantial repeat visitation to each festival. The layers of migration evident in the preparation and presentation are represented in the photographs documenting distinctive town images of the dress, décor, streetscapes, program components.

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions

**Image 9.3** The formal and informal in action at Mardi Grass
*The laidback ambience is a characteristic of outdoor regional festivals. This concert and marketplace ambience in Peace Park in Nimbin contributes to the entertainment content to the Mardi Grass. The weather in May can be warm and comfortable. People can communicate in small intimate settings within a larger open rally atmosphere.*

The fact that each festival is community created rather than imposed from outside the community and the region allows both residents and visitors to readily observe what binds the community. Festival organisers worked to strengthen residents’ identification with the community through providing umbrella features to the festival structures. Independent community groups participated at their own levels, pace and scale. An example is how Casino and Grafton encourage business participation through window dressing and themed staff costumes. Byron Bay NYE organisers encouraged not-for-profit community organisations, like radio station BayFM to provide services for attendees, raised their profile and earned funds. There are implications for the management of festivals through
engagement with specific community groups, e.g. the use of SES or Bush Fire Brigade for security services, there is a socio-cultural implication expressed through the collaborative spirit that exists more broadly in the region.

The levels of homogeneity in Northern Rivers’ communities were reflected in the composition of organisational structure and program content in the festivals. Management, leadership and decision-making processes appear to reflect patterns of community behaviours in other sectors. Grafton, and Casino festival committees demonstrated resilience that in turn appears to be related to stoic community identities. Voices of participants resonated with historic ties belonging to traditions connected to agriculture for example. Survival on the land was mirrored in festival organisation management practices. There were strong links between the festival organisers in Casino and Grafton and their community’s agricultural show colleagues. Such links reinforce the active citizenship evident throughout the region and lead to significant engagement through letters columns in local papers.

The four festivals provided a useful gauge of short term, long term and cumulative socio-cultural change that has occurred within the Northern Rivers region particularly since the 1970s. Lismore and Byron Councils have been discussing Social Impact Assessment (Kanaly, pers com. 1999; Shantz, pers com, 1999 & 2003; NSW Cabinet Office, 1997; Vanclay, 1996; Lismore City Council, 1996). There is ongoing discussion in the region regarding sustainability criteria and environmental standards (Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, 2000; Far North Coast Nature Based and Ecotourism Plan, 1995). Collaboration and partnerships have been raised as policy and planning issues within the region. A regional Festival and Events strategy identified by the Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Tourism Plan, (1996) provides an opportunity for the transfer of resources, support for the fragile mostly volunteer resources through skills development opportunities and employment generation and integration into other regional initiatives.

Each event reflected distinctive demographics for their specific location, especially in terms of the migrations to the region. Of interest to attendees of events staged in the Northern Rivers is the management of waste, the healthy condition of the site, minimization of adverse ecological impacts and concern for noise from residents (Derrett, Dimmock & Prosser, 1997). An active ‘green sector’ in the region has undertaken extensive education and advocacy regarding the environment. There was a heightened awareness of the cultural landscape with particular reference to indigenous issues. There was a demonstrable understanding of the connectedness of the well being of the environment, the economy and society through regional media and community activists.
**Destination Marketing**

The relationship between festivals and a destination’s prosperity, identity, tourism image and marketing strategies can be explained through the roles festivals and events play as attractions and markers in the tourism system. A destination is a place that has a story to tell (Kelly, 2003:2). Regional festival attendees become repeat visitors after their satisfaction with the experience they gained. The expectation of destination marketers is that satisfied consumers will tell others of their positive experience (ibid).

**Image 9.4  International visitors keen to document their experience**

*International visitors have become an significant part of the visitor profile for regional events At Nimbin’s Mardi Grass many young Japanese visitors are drawn by the drug culture and are day trippers, staying overnight at Byron Bay*

The case study festivals played a number of significant roles in each town and the region. As Getz (1991) identified these festivals were lauded by stakeholders as positive mechanisms to address the community’s tourism aspirations. While negative impacts are generally acknowledged in the media, lengthy public discussion has ensued in each community in efforts to minimize negative outcomes. The communities appear comfortable with the staging of each festival. This ensures a smoother passage for the destination marketing messages local and state government tourism agencies develop. The more closely identified with the image and identity of the host community, the more readily accessible is the connection between the festival and the promotional message, e.g. the Jacaranda city, Casino the Beef capital.

The case study festivals link landscape to lifestyle in simple and complex ways. They introduce the human dimension to animate static spaces. They encourage further use of that space at the end of the festival, like Market Square in Grafton, or the beachfront at Byron Bay. The provision of amenities close to the sites for public celebration that are of a lasting nature
become an attractive aspect of community investment in events. Events require physical settings in urban or rural areas, in forests, by rivers, in open fields and purpose built amenities. Events entertain locals and provide recreational activity in and out of season for visitors. Sometimes the festival actually provides the ‘season’, as in late spring in Grafton. Media coverage events generate assists destinations build confidence and a positive image in the tourism market place.

Festivals are attractive to communities looking to address issues of civic design, local pride and identity, heritage, conservation, urban renewal, employment generation, investment and economic development. The pressure that comes with crowds influences planning decisions by governments. Some temporary structures introduced for festivals have been translated into permanent amenities for residents. In the Northern Rivers it appears that the more an event is seen by its host community as emerging from within rather than being imposed on them, the greater that community’s acceptance of the event will be.

9.8 Cultural Tourism

This section of the chapter observes how the four case study festivals deal with the tourism phenomenon to share the sense of community and sense of place. It brings together all the elements discussed in earlier chapters identifying how the four festivals engage visitors. The festivals show off, not only to visitors, but also to other towns in the region that they are adding value to the whole of the region’s attractiveness to visitors. They are pulling their weight, as if they have something to prove in inherent regional competitiveness terms, by providing programs that lift the bar on innovative ways to attract not just spectators but participants.

This study offers an insight into the exchange that occurs when celebrations of a deliberately local nature become engaged in the broader tourism milieu. The social and cultural contexts of the place and its people are under represented in the literature as well as in the policy making of governments at all levels. While visitors are expecting to see and experience local landscapes and cultures, the degree to which the quest for authenticity is satisfied is difficult to know. This is recognised in Dunstan’s earlier observation:

When people are asked what it is they like best about the northern rivers lifestyle, they speak most commonly about the delights of its cultural diversity. So many different kinds of people living so many different kinds of lifestyles. This is now regarded as a major cultural tourism asset and it has its roots in an extraordinary tolerance to social diversity that in itself is just another cultural impact of an extraordinary festival which took place in one small village over 20 years ago (Dunstan, 1994).
Opportunities for visitors to see locals at play, mix and meet locals and learn about their lifestyle and culture are available. The festivals provide opportunities for individual involvement and varied experiences some providing education and personal growth as well as pleasure Brokensha and Gulberg, (1992:iii). The umbrella nature of the festivals allows for exposure to popular culture, sport, recreation as well as arts practice.

International visitors in the audience mix are still quite limited in the case study festivals. Photographs included in this study indicate a growing interest in overseas visitation, particularly to Nimbin and Byron Bay. Byron Bay attracts the most substantial international numbers, though it also hosts many such visitors who are day-trippers to Nimbin for Mardi Gras. Thus it is difficult to distinguish whether the primary motivation for being in the destination at the time of the festival was to specifically consume the ambience and activities of the festival or an incidental by-product of a broader experience. This is captured in the Northern Rivers with the development of links between galleries, performances in pubs and special interest pursuits in open spaces like the car rallies and rodeos.

Each destination is open to the market potential of cultural tourists. The commercial benefits of this type of visitation vary because of the timing of the festivals, their duration, location and the attitude of local business people to their staging. It is shown that Byron Bay retailers and Nimbin shopkeepers have at different times demonstrated different attitudes to the hosting of the festivals. Hostility is generated by the businesses at peak festival times as they perceive their enterprises are not going to capture their usual target markets.

The Northern Rivers region has been attractive to visitors for generations. In fact, it is evident that some time visitors become residents and subsequently attract their friends and relatives as visitors to join them in local leisure and recreation pursuits like festivals. While many would consider this to be a substantial injection into the regional economy, it also provides an opportunity for destination managers to engage with host communities to raise awareness of the value of tourism to the cultural and social aspects of their lives. The quality of life that is delivered through contact with friendly visitation, as distinct from the hostility that can be generated by the term ‘tourist’, has become a distinctive feature of the community based tourism that has resulted from at least two of the case study festivals, Casino and Grafton. This is still problematic in Nimbin and Byron Bay.

Assertions made as the destinations find a shorthand way of marketing themselves are now automatically linked to the host community. A recent review of the VFR market in Lismore

Chapter 9
and Richmond Valley Council jurisdictions indicate that there has been a substantial climb in locals hosting visitors. Mitch Lowe from Lismore Tourism (pers.com. 2007) says 65% visitors are VFR, up from about 33% in 2000. This has much to do with sea and tree change migrations. This is different from the coastal experience. Byron Bay’s VFR is considerably less. It is critical each festival garners the support of locals to ensure a positive experience will be shared more broadly. When the festivals invoke the image that destination managers seek to have stored in residents’ memory, it will encourage repeat visitation, VFR markets can provide needed word of mouth communication

Byron Bay is well known for its iconic coastal landscape and its attractiveness to international and interstate visitation, especially in summer. The popularity of the town’s New Year’s Eve celebrations have, since 1993 particularly, been cause celebre in regional and national papers and local people have worked hard to develop a local solution. Nimbin has hosted a political rally based on the ending of prohibition of marijuana with festive elements for over 10 years. The village hosted the Aquarius Festival (1973) and now accommodates a diverse and tolerant community dedicated to exploring alternative approaches to numerous socio-cultural tensions. The event annually attracts 10,000 people over 3 days in May. The Jacaranda City, Grafton, hosts the annual Jacaranda Festival and has done so since the 1930s and Casino, the Beef Capital of NSW conducts a vital series of community festivities under the title Beef Week.

There is increasing attention given to the effective management of events that have the potential to attract more people to the region through the positive word of mouth promotion. In Casino, Grafton, Nimbin and Byron Bay there is acknowledgment of the impacts of special events on the host community. Southern Cross University’s Australian Regional Tourism Research Centre has undertaken festival research for local government and festival organisers (Mackellar, 2005; Derrett, Prosser & Dimmock, 1997; Lawrence, Derrett and McKinlay, 2003). Conclusions from these data have contributed to this study.

Some festival attendance is of a special interest nature. While many visitors seek the local in their festival engagement, many are keen to become familiar with like-minded people, rather than having a particular connection to a place. The festivals have used, the arts, motor vehicles, food, youth activities and politics to attract these people. The concern for a quality experience through contact with locals and their culture allows festival organisers to develop packages in the tourism sense. They seek to exploit the distinction between the consumer of a culture and the in-depth participative visitor. Casino and Grafton festivals do attract busloads of tourists. Sometimes they are special interest tourists – for example Harley Davidson bikes
in Casino and veteran cars in Grafton. All four festivals readily embrace the Free and Independent Tourists (FIT) who emerge from the mass tourism experience.

A festival culture can emerge in each of the destinations and visitors play an integral role in establishing the sense of place sought, however temporary by having parades as part of the program an opportunity exists for residents to actively participate. It has been more difficult for Byron Bay to attract local residents to such an important element of ownership and cultural representation, while Casino and Grafton certainly deliver the ‘local’ identity.

The capacity of any of the four destinations to absorb the demands upon it by visitors and the broader tourist industry depends on the interrelationship of numerous, complex factors (Mathieson & Wall, 1982:22-3) including the natural environmental features and processes; economic structure and economic development; social structure and organisation; political organisation; and level of tourist development. Capacity issues are particular relevant to the Nimbin and Byron Bay situations. Pressure from visitors in confined urban spaces may excite some participants, but provide discomfort for some residents keen to go about their regular business. In both centres there is pressure not only during the moments of active celebrations, but also during times of rest, use of amenities for toilets, accommodation and food.

The authentic experiences visitors seek through cultural tourism allow the tourism industry to become active in facilitating the community’s aspirations. Tourism businesses may be economic beneficiaries of event tourism, but more are becoming interested in the capacity of community to maintain their identity, integrity and quality of life. Business people are residents too. Chambers of Commerce in all destinations are keen to contribute to the tourism debate at festival times. In Byron Bay there is regularly a discussion about parking pressures. Initiatives like ‘park and drive’ and street security are raised and strategies implemented.

Each of the festival organisations work to create the synergy that best represents the host community and can ensure harmonious development by both private firms and public agencies. While this can encourage existing structures and revitalise the cultural heritage and the spirit of the host community not all parties demonstrate the skills to effect this communication. This cultural heritage that emerges from the hosting of the festivals offers reasons for reflection by residents and visitors. Organisers argue that the festivals improve the quality of life for the hosts and cultural exposure and enjoyment for tourists. So, while cultural tourism may be a new term, it is not a new phenomenon.
The host community’s willingness to offer hospitality to visitors requires understanding and nurturing by planners. How to engage public opinion in an effective manner to assist in determining how to best deal with the increasing interest in cultural tourism within the region has been taken on board by agencies like the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board, Northern Rivers Tourism, and local government. Planning models being developed in other areas of local and regional development can be useful. The principle of public scrutiny requires co-operation and communication between sectors of the community. Elements of the community’s culture and their hospitality can be utilised to advantage in the planning process. The Cultural Plans each Council develops recognises the tourism dynamic.

Community cultural tourism offers a model for the future of the industry as a whole. Tourism is vulnerable to change. The tourism resource base, natural and human can be irreversibly lost through degradation, exploitation and entrenched practices. The challenge to a region’s cultural capital is intimately linked to the needs, expectations and perceptions of all stakeholders. Festivals can provide a vision for destination planning. They can provide particular meaning for the visitor through exploring what lies behind the image of the tourism brochure. These four festivals can assist the individual visitor decode the images, establish patterns through their experiences that assist the residents reinvest in the creative process as well as offer hospitality to people who appreciate what exists in the host community. Festivals allow the empowerment of the artists and invigorate the cultural capital that currently exists. It enlivens what may have been a dull service sector of tourism and offers a dynamic that adds value and identifies a contemporary culture to be attractive to the special interest visitor (Wood, 1993).

A community cultural festival converts a host culture into a tourism attraction. What was demonstrated by Picard (1996:182) - that it is only after the Balinese came to consider their culture as capital, as a source of financial transactions that they came to regard their culture as worthy of safeguarding is being addressed in the four destinations through the festivals. Attractions drive the tourism industry and the community festival has become a tool to encourage longer stays in regional destinations.

**Challenges for regional cultural tourism**

There are limits to acceptable cultural growth through tourism. Central to this research is whether the collaboration between the festival stakeholders and tourism provides for trivialisation and commodification of one and diminution of sustainability in the other. Festival partners attempt to address the balance between responsiveness to the hosts’ sense of community and the need for survival in both sectors. With tourism overlapping several different sectors of society and the economy, planning can provide guidance to bypass
unexpected and unwanted impacts. Butler (1991) recommended caution in communities attempting to rely on local initiatives, uncoordinated planning and self-regulation that can characterise the development of a festival culture. He cautioned that there were less than secure implications for the tourism industry or the environment in which it operates.

**Summary of findings**

The thesis uses four regional case study festivals to draw three significant findings. By explaining the nature and roles of the festivals a clear link is established to indicate how each contributes to fostering resilience in host communities. It demonstrates the importance of the relationship of festivals to their place and community. The study shows how festivals represent the identity of residents that they share with visitors.

The thesis delivers a new template to better understand how resilience indicators can be interpreted. Three major indicators identified as participation, governance and the nature and context of events provide a comprehensive framework for observing how festivals nourish broader community resilience.

The thesis addresses initial questions of stakeholder involvement in festival making by recognising the value and importance of partnerships, community well being and economic prosperity through cultural tourism.

**9.9 Reflection**

I believe that one of the best ways to investigate and understand ‘community’ is to observe people at play through performance in various contexts. It exposes behaviours in a heightened form. This public expression has the power to transform. People can reinvent themselves in an atmosphere of triumph or accomplishment or pretense and frivolity to divert themselves and others from what they do ordinarily. Play is distinct from work. How a community goes about its work, its interest in generating economic prosperity or environmental sustainability can benefit from an enhanced understanding of what comprises the portfolio of attributes assembled when a festival is hosted. The purpose or function festivals offer active participants is ‘an experience’. How can this experience be transformative?

When people reflect on the component elements of festival engagement for all stakeholders, I argue that these elements are complementary to those that sustain the realities of their lives. People feel safe in their communities at festival time to exploit their own and others’
vulnerability. This can be fun. The congenial distractions offer ongoing comfort. This feeling
can be applied when the community is required to reach a solution for some specific problem.
The tools of creativity, innovation, risk taking, consideration of options and actions can be
applied in the economic, environmental and social spheres.

The capture and then transfer of a potent immediate interaction consolidates the key
elements of this thesis’ contention, that the celebration that occurs when people wish to
reflect on their connection to place and their numerous partners in a broader locality brings
about heightened resilience through communal action. I have attended these festivals for over
20 years. So have many others, in fact, the annual opportunity to commune has sustained
some valuable regional relationships. My time to sit down and catch up!

The photographs that are featured in this thesis are dynamic reminders of my time amongst
the locals at play. Each image reminds me of stories overheard, smells smelt, conversations
enjoined, old friends met, seats to be sat upon, food to be consumed, international visitors to
be engaged with, skills to be learned, arts practice to be dazzled by, bargains to be haggled
over at stalls conducted by local identities, parades to charmed with, laughter percolating
across parkland, energy expended in competitions of physical competence, youthful dance
steps, cups of tea and someone having another ale, fireworks over the water, loud music,
avoiding yet another camcorder capturing the nostalgia, empassioned political rhetoric from
the stage and so it goes. There are pictures taken of me at these events too (but not in the
thesis) and they represent an archive of how the people and the place offer indelible images
of the identity of the hosts on me.

Contribution made by this thesis
This thesis has, for the first time, drawn together thinking on festivals and resilience. It has
generated a new model to connect the value, aspirations and experiences of residents in
regional communities offering them increased capacity to deal with change. The resilience
demonstrated in festival making is recognised as a significant contributor to broader
community wellbeing. The social constructivist nature of festival preparation, production and
promotion is highlighted by the study.

9.10 Recommendations for further research

The study canvases diverse disciplines as it focuses on the central issues of community
celebrations. From the case studies three areas of future investigation become obvious. They
are (1) concerns of festival organisations in the community not-for-profit sector; (2) the
pathology of success or failure in festivals and their organisation; and (3) the creativity associated with pulling together appropriate, relevant and transforming festivals that meeting expectations and aspirations.

1. Community groups have problems with governance, most have difficulties in funding, and many have difficulties in engaging with government and even with other community groups as they try to generate celebrations for their host community. The community and local government sectors are keen for further research into the dynamic elements that emerged in this study. These include the following opportunities:

- There is a need for informed, adequate local government policy options to deal with issues of governance that the not-for-profit sector face when attempting to design and deliver resilient festivals.
- There is a need for greater understanding of the value of work undertaken by community controlled volunteer participative groups.
- For community groups to remain vital, as seen in the Casino case study, there is an opportunity for research into how these groups can remain relevant for future generations and how they can address succession issues and enable younger generations and diverse community members to participate as members and leaders.
- The whole area of community leadership has been mentioned within the festival management sector, as well as amongst stakeholder partners. There is a need to develop better governance, so an understanding of what constitutes strong leadership and how it can be nurtured and protected and succession management be better prepared is important.
- An investigation is required into the best ways for community organisations to build capacity through infrastructure and shared resources will deliver positive outcomes for their host communities and sustain the services they provide. Such investments, including new funding models, access to technology and in-kind support offer a significant research opportunity.
- The key relationships between government, business and the community sectors are open to new thinking. On the edge of this study is social network theory. The contribution of networks to policy and practice, particularly in the area of tourism planning and marketing is worth greater scrutiny.
- The internal dynamics of organisations is often under scrutiny in the literature, but there is much to learn about how best to render respect for diversity. The tension between volunteers and paid workers in community organisations can be a fraught struggle, why?
2. In terms of festival management there is a need to engage with the pathology of success and failure. There appears to be no systematic exploration of the incidence and causes of failure (Getz, 2002:209; Lade and Jackson, 2004:1). Such data would assist those involved in preparing festivals, particularly in the public and not for profit sectors, to avoid pitfalls. While this study has identified some of the stressors, the connection of strategic planning, its articulation into broader, local and regional social and economic plans, seems to be a mystery for less experienced committees of management.

3. My overwhelming interest is to investigate the need of individuals and communities to celebrate in a distinctive way. Few have developed this connection in the literature. This study goes some way to raise awareness of the importance to design and facilitate celebrations that publicly address a community’s sense of itself. There are opportunities for future research into the elements of celebration that take a community forward and demonstrate resilience from a creative perspective. Cameron’s (2004) work is important in this regard to connect ritual, ceremony and celebration to ensure consideration is given to the creation of festivities that recognise the plurality of experiences for participants.

9.11 Conclusion

Festivals are open to personal interpretation. The study reflects on the changes individuals experience as they participate in community cultural festivals. Exposure to the exchange that occurs when festivals are hosted in regional communities encourages greater communication within the host community and personal rewards for individuals through their involvement with festival organisation and contact with other cultures through visitors. At the core of the investigation is an analysis of how the process of nourishing resilience by making inclusive celebrations unleashes relationships between many stakeholders. Each participant contributes to the program, traditions, cultural practices, impact and reach of events with differing voices and emphases.

Through a systematic analysis of data the study significantly contributes to our understanding of the character of community festivals. Rich and quilted description of the festivals informs this research providing grounded scholarly investigation. This approach leads to a greater understanding of significant social and cultural agendas in regional communities. Festivals add value to communities. They creatively produce and embed culture. They can be viewed as celebrations of resilience.
The resilience sought by festival organisations in regional communities comes from the interaction between three key aspirations - social/cultural wellbeing, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. These outcomes result from a greater understanding of the mechanisms that need to be engaged with to ensure a profound sense of place and community is addressed, a realistic image and identity of residents in their place is promoted and that cultural tourism responds to the authentic representation of the hosts.

Individuals and groups involved with community cultural festivals demonstrate strengthened civic pride, social activism and a sense of community. The festival content they manage enriches local understanding and helps the community focus on future development. Festivals become tourism attractors by introducing locals and visitors to traditional and emerging local cultural heritage. In turn this enhances the image of the host community in the perception of the wider world. The implications for cultural tourism include visitor interest in longer stays in the region, repeat visitation, increased expenditure and word of mouth promotion of both the destination and the event.
Appendices

Appendix A

The region
The Northern Rivers Region stretches from the Queensland border in the North to the Southern end of the Clarence Valley and from the coastal plains in the East to the Great Dividing Range in the West.

The Local Government Areas that make up the region are Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley and Kyogle.

With a current population of 271,056 people, the Northern Rivers Region has one of the highest rates of population growth in an Australian region outside the capital cities. New residents are attracted to the array of lifestyle opportunities and an increasingly sophisticated regional community with new opportunities in areas such as tourism, the arts and creative industries.

The Northern Rivers Region is culturally and environmentally diverse. Crossed by three major river systems - the Tweed, Richmond and Clarence - it is renowned for its warm subtropical climate, rainforests and coastline. The region also has a rich Indigenous cultural history and is renowned for its creative communities and high concentration of artists and cultural activity.

The rich culture of the region is influenced by the Indigenous Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr heritage, a rural and agricultural past, the traditions of the New Italy settlements, the alternative cultures introduced by new settlers after the Aquarius festival in Nimbin in 1973 and the surf culture and university students, and the newest wave of sea-change settlers relocating from the metropolitan centres.

Major cities in the region are Tweed Heads, Lismore, Grafton and Ballina. It known for its tourist icons such as Byron Bay and Nimbin, and loved for its coastal towns and traditional rural towns and villages.

Regional Development is fostered by the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board. Key features of the regional economy are:
over A$364 million in agricultural commodities produced per annum
flourishing niche agricultural sector in commodities like coffee and tea-tree oil
manufacturing sector turnover A$813 million per annum
the creative industries are developing as a significant economic driver and employing
over 4% of the local work force. The creative industries are particularly well
developed in the Film, Television, Music & Entertainment sector and the Visual Arts
sector.

Tourism is a key industry for the region with many attractions. These include:
- clean beaches and unspoilt coastline
- towns like Byron Bay, Nimbin, Bangalow
- colourful weekend markets
- major cultural events such as the popular East Coast Blues and Roots Music Festival,
  held around Easter each year, the Byron Bay Writers Festival, the Wintersun Festival
  and the Lismore Lantern Parade
- National Parks such as Mount Warning, and the Bundjalung and Yuragir National
  Parks, and natural attractions such as Minyon Falls, Mount Warning and the vast
  rivers of the region.

Population
With a current population of 271,056 people, the Northern Rivers Region has one of the
highest rates of population growth in an Australian region outside the capital cities. The
region’s population has grown by 17% in the last 10 years. The Northern Rivers Region is
expected to continue to display robust population growth and is forecast to grow by around
1.20% per annum over the next 20 years (source: NSW Department of Infrastructure,
Planning and Natural Resources – 2002, 1996-based population projections recalibrated to
2001 Census data).

There are a total of 7 local government areas in the Northern Rivers Region with a total
population of 271,056 and a total land area is 20,895.0 square kms.

The Seven Local Governments of the Northern Rivers Region
Tweed Shire Council - www.tweed.nsw.gov.au
Byron Shire Council - www.byron.nsw.gov.au
Kyogle Council - www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au
Lismore City Council - www.lismore.nsw.gov.au
Richmond Valley Council - www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au
Clarence Valley Council - www.clarence.nsw.gov.au
Appendix B

Interviewees
The writer wishes to acknowledge the valuable input to the study over time by the following individuals.

The individuals from each community interviewed were friendly, co-operative, authoritative and willing to share time and information of their community and commercial experience. They all indicated willingness for their names to be used for direct quotes within the text. They were:

From Nimbin - Michael Balderstone, Graeme Dunstan, David Hallett, Stephen Nelson, Andrea Roberts, Diana Roberts, Gerald Taylor, Louise Barry, Mitch Lowe
From Byron Shire - David Kanaly, Michael Malloy, Ian Oelrichs, Annie O’Halloran, Rory O’Halloran, Tricia Shantz, Peter Wynn-Moylan, John Brophy, Meredith Lawrence,
From Casino - Rae McLean, Sandra Humphrys, Rod Caldicott
From Grafton - Anne De Graaf, June Allen, Brendan Smith,

Focus Groups
Byron Bay
Phoenix, Deslie Daniels, Mandy McKinlay, Jemma Braden, Fran Vidgen, Peter Wynn-Moylan, Veda Turner, Meredith Lawrence

Nimbin
Nimbin Forums (observations/recording), Mardi Grass workshops
Festival Forums, Nimbin Festival, Nimbin Tourism Development Plan Advisory Board Meetings, Visions of Nimbin Committee

Casino
Col Sullivan, Sandra Humphreys, Rod Caldicott, Rae McLean, Verla Hayes

Grafton
Susi Muddiman, Bill Day, Heather Roland, Anne de Graaf, Marc Brown

Lismore
Destination Marketing & Events Workshop, Invercauld House, Goonellabah March 23, 2001
Graham Brown, Ros Derrett, Liz Shepherd (Ballina TIC), Judy Hill (Ballina), Karen Hanna (Norsearch), Julie Burton (Norsearch), Louise Barry (NR Herb Festival), Annie Hart (Lismore TIC), Rod Caldicott (Richmond Valley Shire, Jill Eddington (NR Writers’ Festival), Jenny Ellenbrook (NRRDB Regional Cuisine),

Focus Group: Jyllie Jackson (Lismore Lantern Festival), Jenny de Greenlaw (NRRDB), Nancy Bain CVTA, Maclean), Kerran Law (Yamba), Peter Wynn Moylan (NRRCTO) Byron Arts), Lisa Murphy (Lismore VIC), Kerry Greedy (Ballina), Nikki Fuda (ABC), Dove (Aquarius Fair, Nimbin), Rose Wright (Tweed Mainstreet)
Appendix C

Example of Letter sent to interviewees

SCHOOL OF TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY
P.O. BOX 157, Lismore, 2480 NSW AUSTRALIA

Ros Derrett, Lecturer
Telephone (02) 66203150
Facsimile (02) 66222208
email:rderrett@scu.edu.au
11.6.99

Dear ______________
Re: Doctoral Research

I am a doctoral student of the School of Humanities at Griffith University (QLD). I am undertaking a study entitled Tourism culture and cultural tourism, - a changing landscape which uses the northern rivers NSW as a case study environment to generate an appropriate policy and planning model for development and management of sustainable cultural tourism. It has the following objectives:

1. Investigate the impact on regional culture of tourism
2. Investigate the impact of regional culture on tourism
3. What are the limits of acceptable cultural tourism?
4. What policy mechanisms are likely to be effective in bringing about sustainable cultural tourism development.

I am keen to interview selected individuals who will be able to provide informed observations of the changes occurring in their community (1960s - 90s). I have determined that both Nimbin and Byron Bay offer an opportunity to document a regional experience and may provide useful data for further research, and better inform future policy, planning and management.

I would appreciate if you could make yourself available for one hour at a time I’d like to negotiate with you by phone shortly. At that time I will discuss your interest and availability. The two-page attachment may assist your preparation for the interview.

I look forward to your involvement.

Go well.

Ros Derrett.
Appendix D

Guided discussion paper with interviewees

Regional Community Cultural Tourism and Tourism Culture - A Changing Landscape (1999)

Outline for discussion with interviewees

This study, entitled Tourism culture and cultural tourism, - a changing landscape uses the northern rivers NSW as a case study environment to generate an appropriate policy and planning model for development and management of sustainable cultural tourism. It has the following objectives:

1. Investigate the impact on regional culture of tourism
2. Investigate the impact of regional culture on tourism
3. What are the limits of acceptable cultural tourism?
4. What policy mechanisms are likely to be effective in bringing about sustainable cultural tourism development.

Craik (1995:94) suggests research into generic and specific patterns of impacts and changes which require customised attention. The key cultural indicators suggested for inclusion in a stakeholder enquiry include,

- the degree of the community’s dependence on tourism;
- the distribution of economic benefits across a destination community;
- the degree of public involvement and consultation in planning, policy making and management;
- the degree and forms for commercialisation and commodification of the destination culture for tourists;
- the perceived environmental degradation, significant loss of amenity or unacceptable modification of the destination site; and finally,
- sense of autonomy, self confidence and cultural identity or the destination community.

Sustainable tourism can create wealth for Australians if:

1. We realise that tourism is a discrete form of human activity like art, agriculture or medicine, which has its own language, content and culture; that it is an immensely powerful cultural force which can either nurture or destroy our environment and communities.

2. We realise that content, not services, generates tourism. Tourism marketing must therefore concern itself with penetrating content, not facile images.
3. We must treat the generation of the content of tourism as a creative act and enjoy doing so. We must adopt a thematic approach to the content of tourism.

4. Community, the custodians of the content of Australian tourism, must be enabled to participate in tourism by forming its content. Only if Australians are involved in tourism will it survive.

5. Local government and regional development authorities - the most powerful and best organised entities, must take an active role in identifying, co-ordinating and nurturing local assets, which may be unique companies, interesting people and places and exciting stories and ideas. Local and regional governance must adopt a creative, not just a regulatory role.

Wood, Christopher
1993, Package Tourism and News Tourism Compared, Community, Culture and Tourism Conference, National Conference, Melbourne

During a one hour interview I would like to canvas your observations of the changing cultural and tourism landscape of your community.

After you have read the material above, you may like to consider the key markers (internal and/or external interventions) which have influenced this change.

Have there been any community champions who have made a significant contribution to this change?

Can you observe any trends in either/or the sectors of culture and tourism and what impacts they may have on your community?

Are there any implications for the northern rivers region (from the Qld border to south of the Clarence) in terms of policy, planning and management?

If you have any documents you would be willing to share with me, so that I might better understand your community, I would welcome access (borrow, copy or buy).

I look forward to meeting with you.

Ros Derrett
School of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Doctoral student of Griffith University
ph 02 66203150
fax 02 66222208
email:rderrett@scu.edu.au
Appendix E

Discussion guide - Observation of cultural tourism change in communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Power base</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Degree of impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Smith (1989:44) “with the creation of a tourist realm various social interactions are set up between tourists, their hosts and organisations and societies they represent”.

Coltman (1989:253) suggests that such host/guest interactions create degrees of change in a tourism environment, “...when two cultures come into contact for any length of time, each becomes a little bit more like the other through borrowing, a process known as acculturation”.

Issues which may arise in discussion:

- Who are hosts/guests?
- Investment from outside community
- Profits leave town
- Local landowners and developers
- Incremental change, fewer newcomers
- Impacts dispersed or concentrated
- Size or scale of activity
- Type of development
- Degree of interaction between hosts/guests
- Occupational redistribution
- Seasonality of employment
- Transformation of values
- Language impacts
- Long term consequences of planning decisions
- Monitoring of community response
- Carrying capacity of tourism infrastructure, e.g. accommodation
- Acceptable host community standards
- Multiplier effect
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural resources
- Skills base in arts, heritage, education
- Cohesion & direction of C/T management
- Information & marketing
Appendix F

An example of a Local Government Event Strategy

Lismore City Council

Events Strategy (1998) Guiding principles
Lismore City Council should ground its policy in an exploration and expansion of the city’s character and context to generate significant tangible and intangible benefits in the interests of the long term development of the city.
The cultural policy, into which the festival and events policy articulates, needs to enhance and augment the distinctive identity of the city and its sense of place. It should foster a positive civic identity.
It should demonstrate the development of cultural tourism.
It should generate an invaluable and meaningful cultural heritage which fosters understanding and appreciation of identity, history and aspirations for generations to come.
It should generate a sustainable framework for care and conservation of the city’s cultural heritage.
Festivals offer fundamental opportunities for artistic development, cultural vitality and economic growth. They endow the city with a vibrant and vigorous artistic texture; make the city a stimulating and enjoyable place to live and work in and to visit.
Festivals can provide models for the pursuit of excellence in community cultural development.
Local governments’ involvement in cultural policy-making highlights its:

- Statutory or discretionary involvement
- Partnership opportunities emphasising what unites rather than what divides a community
- Generation of mutual confidence and respect
- Positive attitude backed up with practical support
- Interest in joint training options
- Demystification of processes and practices
- Recognition of the inter-relationship between cultural and social activity and demographic trends with concerns for transport, safe streets.
- Recognition that the culture sector constitutes a series of industries and can create employment and enjoyment.
- Key concerns for creation, recognition and preservation.
Council’s Cultural Policy can be best realised in co-operation and consultation with individuals and groups. Lismore City Council can apply planning, technical advice, advocacy and project sponsorship. Festivals and special events assist with the development of community respect by drawing on lessons from the past and talents of the present to encourage hope in the future. They develop cohesion and mutual respect between groups in the community and generate an important bank of shared memories and recollections which will be enjoyed for many years by participants.

The Cultural Policy needs to reflect the values held by its constituency. These include

- Integrity - moral uprightness and honesty
- Customer Focus - staff and services to be focused on the user
- Continuous improvement - a constant and unremitting endeavour for achieving higher standards within agreed resource constraints
- Accessibility and equity - ensure reasonable availability and treat all people in a fair and open manner
- Responsiveness - demonstrate sensitivity through behaviour and change
- Involvement and Partnership - encouraging consultation and participation in a relationship that fosters trust and shared decisions
- Accountability - responsible government with an obligation to account for the Council’s conduct and perform to a level of satisfaction

Policy formulation needs to link with Lismore City Council Strategic 2020 Plan to ensure integration on issues like cultural planning, community access/equity/social justice, resources, funding and sponsorship, facilities, networking, training, information, promotion, creativity and excellence.

- Fundamentally, local government can
- provide an opportunity for partnerships between local government authorities, community interests, the private sector and individuals;
- protect the essentially unpredictable quality of festivals;
- provide enabling support rather than prescriptiveness.
- encourage an open attitude to cross-disciplinary work
- assist with the provision of professional administration - volunteer work is indispensable but professional help greatly enhances the festival’s development aims.
- dedicate a pool of money to support large scale event based promotions from time to time.

**Lismore City Council’s Festival and Special Event Strategy**

**Aim:**
- To assert Lismore’s position as the region’s premier location for quality festivals and special events.
Objectives:

- To satisfy the interests and needs of residents to celebrate their culture, heritage, lifestyle and meet their recreational needs.
- To encourage partnerships with the community, commercial sectors and regional agencies to enhance the attractiveness of Lismore as a destination known for festivals and special events.
- To increase awareness of the economic benefits accrued from festivals and special events and increase the value to the regional economy of hosting these.
- To establish a Festival and Events Secretariat.

The Lismore Visitor Heritage Centre, as part of the Council’s Business and Enterprise Group Section, should auspice this Secretariat. It will provide two levels of professional services for event organisers; (a) at a shopfront location support will be offered complementing the LVHC’s current advisory services with user pays options, assistance with funding applications, encouragement of collaborative marketing and (b) employment of a professional person to actively seek events - e.g. conventions to Lismore, maintain regional strategic relationships for policy and planning and facilitate training for event managers.
Appendix G

An example of a destination’s portfolio approach to festivals

Lismore City Events for 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>The Return of the Rainbow Circus, New Years Eve Dance Party at Lismore Rugby Grounds.</td>
<td>Edward Missingham on 66226440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – V8 Dirt Modified – Mr Modified Rnd 3, AMCA’s Support at Lismore Showground</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>“Platoon” – Tribal Fruits at the Lismore Turf Club.</td>
<td>Craig Truslove on 0755646366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 7–10</td>
<td>Far North Coast Under 12 Cricket Carnival at various grounds in Lismore</td>
<td>Gail Foran on 66222305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – Stadium Moto X at Lismore Showground</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – V8 Dirt Modifieds, Club Sedans &amp; support at Lismore Showground</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Australia Day Celebrations at Lismore City Hall, Citizenship Ceremony, Flag raising, Australia Day Award winners.</td>
<td>Sue Wade on 66250500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – Productions, AMCA’s and support at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – V8 Dirt Modified 100, club Sedans and support at Lismore Showground</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6–25</td>
<td>Lismore Art Club &amp; Craft Exhibition Theme “Postmarked Lismore” at Lismore Regional Art Gallery.</td>
<td>Joan Cussack on 66242912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>International Women’s Day</td>
<td>Lismore &amp; District Women’s Health on 66219800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9–13</td>
<td>NSW High Schools Girls Cricket Championships at various ovals in Lismore Park.</td>
<td>Col Fisher on 66235938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Paul Kelly Cup is for primary school children in Years 5-6. Gala days are 12 a side, modified AFL Games at Mortimer and Roder Oval.</td>
<td>Glen Waide 0419688445, 0407663562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – Sprintcars, productions, AMCA’S plus support at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Lismore Poultry Club Young Bird Show – Poultry exhibition of birds under 12 months of age. 9 am start at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>John Kendall on 66278052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – Productions, Club Sedan NSW Title, AMCA’s plus support at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10-12</td>
<td>Northern Star… Under the Big Top. Energetic mix of over 2000 dancers, singers and musicians from more than 100 schools across the region at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Leanne Clark on 66228147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – V8 Dirt Modified Easter Trail, Litre Sprints, Club Sedans and supports at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24 &amp; 26</td>
<td>Southern Cross University Graduation Day for the Schools of: Commerce &amp; Management, Multi-Media &amp; IT, Education, Law &amp; Justice, Social &amp; Workplace Development, the College of Indigenous Australian Peoples and the College of Management at SCU.</td>
<td>Jenny Austin on 66203000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2, 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Mardigrass &amp; Cannabis Law Reform Rally at Nimbin</td>
<td>Inez Price on 66891842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6 – 7</td>
<td>John Farnham - The Last Time at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Ticketek 7 1300 552 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9 – 11</td>
<td>Under 17 State Hockey Championships at Hepburn Park, Goonellabah.</td>
<td>Bruce Kelso on 66246310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9 – 11</td>
<td>2003 Apex Executive Training Seminar at Lismore Workers Club</td>
<td>Kevin Poole on 66252322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Lismore City Speedway – Super Sedan East Coast Grand National, V8 Dirt Mods, Productions and support at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Greg Coombes on 66432207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11 – 18</td>
<td>CMCA Solos Pre Rally – Motor Home Group at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Ian Mulligan on 66213460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7 – 8</td>
<td>Lismore Poultry Club Annual Show – the longest consecutive running country show in Australia at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>John Kendall on 66278052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12 – 14</td>
<td>Primex (Primary Industry Exhibition) At Casino.</td>
<td>Bruce Wright on (07) 55314600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18 – 20</td>
<td>Rural Lands Protection Board Assoc Annual State Conference at Lismore Workers Club.</td>
<td>Lee MacKenzie on 63913450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21</td>
<td>Lismore Lantern Parade – An award winning Regional Community event featuring Workshops in dance, percussion, lanterns, costumes, masts etc in weeks leading up to the event in the Central Business District.</td>
<td>Jyllie Jackson on 66226333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 24 - 25</td>
<td>Custard Apple Growers Association Convention at RSL Sports Club, Goonellabah.</td>
<td>Rebecca Rogers on 66281246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 18, 19 &amp; 20</td>
<td>4WD Caravan &amp; Camping Display at Lismore Showgrounds</td>
<td>Howard Atkinson on 66214274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 3</td>
<td>Annual Static Car Display – Summerland Sports and Classic Car Club at Clyde Campbell Car Park, Lismore.</td>
<td>Brian Sidney on 66214676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>Caroona Annual Fete in the grounds of Caroona Age Unit.</td>
<td>Lindsay Doust on 66213047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13 – 17</td>
<td>Sustainable Industry Expo – A unique opportunity to hear some of the regions leaders in the fields of Sustainable Agriculture, Water Management, Permaculture, Sustainable Living, Renewable energy, Environment law, Sustainable Forestry at the City Hall</td>
<td>David Julian on 66213123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 16 – 17</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Herb Festival – a vision of regional cuisine, youthful entertainment, herb education, industry activity and cultural uniqueness to be held in Heritage Park, City Hall and surrounds.</td>
<td>Louise Barry on 6622 1036 or 0438 171 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 9 – 11</td>
<td>Far North Coast PSSA Softball Championships – the primary schools PSSA Softball Championships for girls ages, 11, 12 and 13 years at Albert Park, Keen Street, Lismore.</td>
<td>Col Fisher on 6623 5938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13 – 21</td>
<td>Spring Garden Competition – Visitors are welcome to see gardens in different areas of Lismore and country</td>
<td>Emily Betteridge on 66215293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15 – October 3</td>
<td>Lismore Music Festival – Established in 1908 - the 91st Festival to be held in the City Hall.</td>
<td>Val Axtens on 66216015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>Lismore Cup – Biggest one day social event of the year in Lismore at the Race Course in Lismore.</td>
<td>Michael Timbrel on 66213176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26 – 28</td>
<td>Masters Games III – The 3rd Lismore Rainbow Region Masters Games is a multi-sport event catering to mature age at various sporting location in Lismore.</td>
<td>Leanne Clark on 66228147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27 – 28</td>
<td>Nimbin Annual Country Show including Championship Dog Show, Beef Cattle, Whip Cracking contest at Nimbin Showground.</td>
<td>Janelle Robinson on 66891373 or 66890373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30 – October 3</td>
<td>NRDWBA Annual Carnival – Bowls – 46th Annual Carnival Teams from Queensland to Central Coast enter to be at all Bowls Clubs in Lismore.</td>
<td>Lois Mawter on 66242932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 3 – 6</td>
<td>Race Around Lismore – Film Competition. Over 500 prizes with categories including Best Film (open &amp; Under 18) best drama, best environmental film, best documentary, best comedy at various locations in Lismore and surrounding area.</td>
<td>John McPherson on 66215444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>Lismore Rugby Bullride – this Rodeo is officially sanctioned by the National Rodeo Association of Australia and will carry championship points at the Rugby Grounds, Lismore</td>
<td>James Donaldson on 66218569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 15 – 17</td>
<td>North Coast National – the biggest agricultural show in the region with Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, Ring Events at Lismore Showground.</td>
<td>Ian Mulligan on 66213460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Reclaim the Night in the Central Business District.</td>
<td>Lismore &amp; District Womens Health on 6621 9800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>Carols by Candle Light at Southern Cross University</td>
<td>Northern Star on 66200500.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H

NR Cultural Tourism Plan

Northern Rivers tropicalnsw

Australia’s Creative Edge

Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation Cultural Tourism Plan 1995

Vision
The diverse and unique culture of the region will set a national example for artistic excellence and cultural authenticity while recognising the opportunities for economic growth and development.

NR Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation
A partnership of cultural and tourism industries for sustainable development. It can develop robust links between arts and tourism enterprises in the region known as the ‘creative edge of Australia’.

Aim
• To integrate and co-ordinate cultural tourism activity so as to promote the growth and quality of the vital culture in the region.

• To develop an organisational structure that will encourage co-operative marketing of cultural activities and provide the support facilities for viable cultural tourism industry development.

Background
Northern Rivers Tropical NSW, Nature based and Ecotourism Plan prepared by Manidis Roberts had a component addressing cultural needs. Principles, strategies and actions were detailed and developed by Ros Derrett, Peter Wynn-Moylan and Joanne Ballantyne. It was obvious that a more substantial document focussed on the cultural and tourism sectors was required.

The NRRDB auspiced a series of meetings and workshops around the region from the Queensland border to south of Grafton on the Clarence. Meetings were conducted in Lismore, Suffolk Park, New Italy in Richmond River Shire and Murwillumbah to meet with
interested people from cultural enterprises, tourism operators, local government delegates and community event managers to discuss issues of common concern.

A search conference was professionally facilitated to build a realistic plan for establishing a regionally focussed organisation to satisfy the key outcome of earlier draft aims and objectives. Subsequently meetings of a steering committee representing various sectors were held in Kyogle Shire, Lismore, Ulmarra Shire on the Clarence, Byron Arts and Industry Estate and Duranbah in Tweed Shire.

The Committee comprised Ros Derrett, Chair from Southern Cross University, Peter Wynn-Moynan from NORART (Regional Arts Organisation) and Byron Arts Council, Niki Gill, Councillor from Kyogle Council, Grey Wilson, Councillor from Lismore City Council, Tony King from Tweed Arts Network, Deirdre Lane from Casino and Richmond River Shires, John Breckenridge from Gurrigai Arts and Crafts at New Italy (indigenous network), John Harrison, Clarence Multicultural Network, Liz Terracini, G.M. NORPA (Northern Rivers Performing Arts) and Irene Nowell from the Clarence Valley.

The organisation became incorporated. It now has a membership base. Annual fees are $50. It is considered important to consolidate regional strategic links. NRRCTO is now on the Board of NOREDO (Regional Economic Development Organisation); it has links with the NR Regional Tourism Organisation; the NR Regional Development Board with a delegate from each of these organisations on the Management Committee. One of the NRRCTO’s team is on the Board of NNETA (the Northern NSW Ecotourism Association).

**From the Cultural Tourism Plan:**
Three major strategies of policy, planning, management and marketing; training or community and cultural sector professionals and local government liaison will facilitate sustainability, appropriateness and authenticity through

- industry collaboration,
- integration with other tourism operations,
- advocacy,
- policy making, e.g. regional festival strategy, indigenous cultural strategy
- community information sharing,
- provide training opportunities
- maximise existing resources and
- plan appropriately for future activity
### Strategy Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP &amp; MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>INDUSTRY TRAINING &amp; DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>INDUSTRY POLICY &amp; PLANNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Peak industry body (forum)</td>
<td>2.1 Improve business training</td>
<td>3.1 Integrate Cultural Policy into local government strategic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with RTO; NRRDB, NNETA</td>
<td>opportunities for artists and</td>
<td>Highlight economic advantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>cultural tourism operators</td>
<td>Appropriate partnerships and resource sharing &amp; reporting systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve co-ordination and</td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiate orientation programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding of culture;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify appropriate enterprise</td>
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<td>development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Marketing Plan for Cultural</td>
<td>2.2 Improve training opportunities for community based organisations managing attractions, special events and festivals.</td>
<td>3.2 Include Cultural Tourism in regional tourism plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use ESD principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop brand image - Australia’s creative edge!</td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish a regional festival strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Indigenous</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attract visitors to area -</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>distribute collateral effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Provide Information</td>
<td>2.3 Improve community knowledge and understanding and attitudes to Cultural Tourism</td>
<td>3.3 Contribute to any policy at any level of government which will impact on quality of Cultural Tourism to be delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Services</td>
<td>Improve visitor service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist with product distribution/packages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>User friendly electronic systems</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The establishment of a peak cultural tourism industry organisation with an appropriate management structure and an operational secretariat with marketing expertise will ensure that areas of opportunity such as cultural tourism become a economically sustainable source of industry development.

The strategy development process has identified research as being a fundamental element in the development of cultural industries. Research in areas of training, marketing and impacts on host communities will identify the real needs and issues of cultural development that can then be addressed in planning and management strategies.

These three strategies recognise the important partnerships necessary to encourage sustainable cultural tourism development. They offer consolidation of cultural tourism infrastructure, marketing, community interaction, liaison with all levels of government,
industry training and profile raising of the unique cultural opportunities which will encourage extended stays and repeat visits to the region by interstate and international travellers.

The Regional Cultural Tourism Organisation seeks to ensure (broadly) the provision of

- guidelines to achieve sustainability of cultural resources
- good quality, well designed and manufactured products and services that offer value for money
- distinctively Australian products and services
- portable products and services
- repeatable products and services
- niche market, high quality, expensive (high yield) products and services for connoisseurs.
- product diversification yet coherence as distinctively Australian
- guarantee for the authenticity and integrity of products and services including the acceptability to local communities and producer groups.

The cultural assets of the Northern Rivers Region provide the resident community and the visitor with a distinctive sense of place. The ability to sustain this uniqueness will depend upon the effective management and co-ordination of these cultural resources.

Maintaining the integrity of a culture that is rich, diverse, develops dynamic partnerships, sustains lifestyle choices, responds to the natural environment and develops artistic excellence has led to the formulation of this Cultural Plan that recognises three major strategies.

Possible barriers include

- vision/creativity/enthusiasm replaced by bureaucracy/accountability/ patronage
economic controllers/fragmentation of responsibility mindset
- regional planning body overcoming management of organising the individual participating units for effective implementation and operation
- lack of co-operation
- lack of integration obvious need not one easily accomplished
- fragmentation of efforts, needless overlapping, wasting limited resources
- lack of financial and other resources; knowledge of appropriate resources
- inconsistent images contributed/perpetuated by members of R(C)TO
- rivalry and competition
• variety of agendas being pursued by constituency/outside influences
• prevailing pragmatism of tourism sector towards cultural products

Opportunities include
• identifying where tourism and cultural industries’ intersect - e.g. trend to mixed function attractions, partnerships & joint ventures, e.g. work with RTO, NORART, ACE, DSARD, ABL, NRRDB
• development of a festival strategy
• co-operative regional marketing, information sharing, ticketing, education
• employment of a regional marketing development person with assistance from NSW Ministry for the Arts, TNSW
• employment of regional cultural tourism personnel for commercial and community enterprises
• collaborative funding strategies
• participation in national projects highlighting profile of regional cultural diversity, e.g. Cultural Landscapes, DoCA
• collaborative regional advocacy; consolidation of existing cultural audit
• packaging and merchandising of cultural events, exhibitions and festivals
• as a region/statewide projects, e.g. RGA, Arts Council, Tourism NSW, NRRTO
• indigenous crafts for tourist shopping, collaborative marketing
• gallery/studio loops and trails, education

Appendix I

Jacaranda Festival 2002 Program
A full program is available for sale from all newsagents in Grafton
Saturday, October 19
PARTY FOR selection of a Princess, Flower Girl and Page Boy - commencing 9am at Market Square
Friday, October 25
JACARANDA BALL and Official Opening of 68th Festival
Saturday, October 26
Junior Jacaranda Queen and Junior Jacaranda Princess crowned in Market Square Judging and CROWNING of Jacaranda Queen, Jacaranda Princess and Holiday Princess
Presentation of Awards for Jacaranda Festival Garden Competition
Various other activities throughout the day including - pet show, parade of youth, galleries, golf, bowls, aircraft muster, markets, antique fair, art exhibition, celebrity challenge, speedway, cycle criterium, horse racing, Jacaranda Mile, Youth Art awards, motor show, basketball carnival.
Sunday, October 27
JACARANDA AVENUE REVISITED - commencing at 3.00pm. Pound Street between Alice and Mary Streets
Various other activities throughout the day including - golf, bowls, fun walk, fun run, aircraft muster, markets, hockey, antique fair, art exhibitions, 49th Annual Choral Service, Organ Recital, Family Music Festival and Beautiful Baby Competition.
Monday, October 28
JACARANDA FUN NIGHT, Market Square.
Various other activities including - golf, bowls, woodcraft exhibition, childrens craft expo, pottery, art exhibition, Youth Art awards and Rotary dinner.
Tuesday, October 29
JACARANDA FLORAL WINDOWS JUDGING
AB's TREK FOR KIDS in Market Square commencing at 4.00pm
Various other activities including - Art exhibition, golf, bows, galleries, gems display, handicraft Mini Mart
Wednesday, October 30
CARNIVAL CAPERS at South Grafton
JUDGING OF DECORATED WINDOW DISPLAY and SHOP & OFFICE STAFF DRESS UP COMPETITION at South Grafton
Various other activities including the above as well as Salvation Army Women's morning.

Thursday, October 31
Some shops and offices close at 12 noon
JACARANDA DAY - a fun day where seeing is believing.
Breakfast in Market Square, Judging of festival shops, offices and staff, junior talent quest and
most of the above activities
Festival of Flowers, quilters exhibition..
Live recording of Toyota Outback Club Radio Program and live entertainment in Market
Square.

Friday, November 1
VENETIAN CARNIVAL on the banks of the Clarence River, featuring fireworks display and
Big River Canoe Club pre race dinner.
JACARANDA QUEEN’S AFTERNOON TEA. VENETIAN CARNIVAL on the banks of the
Clarence River.
Plus many of the above activities.

Saturday, November 2
GRAND FLOAT PROCESSION
Live Entertainment Concert in Market Square
Family Ceilidh Concert at South Grafton Ex-Services Club, Wharf Street.
TAFE market day, big river canoe club marathon, bowls, arts, golf, pipe bands, Scottish
country dancers, Irish and Highland dancers, cycle criterium, show and shine of cars, plus
most of the above activities.

Sunday, November 3
Festival of golf, bowls carnival, mixed volleyball, galleries, Historical Society exhibition and
Grafton Vintage Car Jacaranda Festival Run.
Appendix J

**Beef Week 2007 cancelled (Press Release)**

Friday, 02 February 2007

THERE will be no Casino Beef Week this year.

The board of the Beef Week Promotions Committee reluctantly resolved earlier this week not to hold the long-running festival this year.

Beef Week president Terry Serone said the decision had been extremely difficult to make, however dwindling sponsorship coupled with an ever diminishing number of volunteers to run the festival had left the board with no other option.

Mr Serone said the Beef Week Promotions Committee would meet in October to decide its future, but doubted the festival would be resurrected in its present form.

“It’s been a heart wrenching decision for everyone involved,” Mr Serone said.

“Everyone on the board is committed to doing what’s best for Casino and Beef Week, however in the end we felt we had no other option.

“Continual pleas to the community over a number of years for more people to help run the festival have failed and it’s reached the stage where a very small number of people were doing all the work.

“That simply could not be sustained.

“And unfortunately, despite being a major attraction for Casino, the committee found it increasingly difficult to attract sponsorship for the event which costs around $90,000 to run.

“The committee would sincerely like to thank a number of important sponsors who have stuck with us over the years, namely The Northern Co-operative Meat Company, Richmond Valley Council, Prime Television, The Land Newspaper, The Northern Star, The Richmond River Express Examiner, Days Machinery, Radio 2LM, the Casino RSM Club and George and Fuhrmann.

“However, even with their continued support, we believed it was not possible to continue.

“This decision was not made lightly; board members have had sleepless nights agonising over it.

“But with no prospect of attracting more volunteer helpers and with sponsorship dollars drying up, we did not want to damage the reputation of the festival we all love by running a second rate event.”

Press release issued Thursday, February 1, 2007 by the Casino Beef Week Promotions Committee.

For further information contact Terry Serone on 0429 150 324.


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