The business of cultural heritage tourism: critical success factors

Michael Hughes**
Curtin Sustainable Tourism Centre
Curtin University

Jack Carlsen
Curtin Sustainable Tourism Centre
Curtin University

---
* email: m.hughes@curtin.edu.au

The business of cultural heritage tourism: critical success factors

Abstract

This paper explores critical success factors (CSFs) required for cultural heritage tourism (CHT) operation and how these relate to commercial focus. The literature indicates tension between conservation of authenticity and commercial focus as it is seen to undermine authenticity, potentially degrading its quality and ultimate success as a tourism product. A list of nine key CHT business success factors was devised based on the published literature. Managers and operators of a range of Australian CHT operations were interviewed regarding achievement of CSFs. The operations were broadly categorised according to the level of commercial focus. The level of commercial focus was cross tabulated with the number of CHT business CSFs achieved. While all places in this study had addressed authenticity, CHT places presenting highly commercialised products tended to meet the criteria for achieving a greater number of CSFs than their less commercialised counter-parts. This has implications for sustainable CHT operation practices.

Key words: business success factors, commercial focus, authenticity, Australian cultural heritage

Word Count: 7094

Introduction

While cultural heritage is valued as a community resource, it also often forms the focus for tourism business (Ashworth, 2009). The business of cultural heritage tourism (CHT) essentially requires catering to a market desire to experience the past in an entertaining way (Australian Heritage Commission, 2001; Jones and Shaw, 2007). That is, development of a successful CHT business requires some amount of commodification (Ashworth, 2009). In the context of this paper, we use commodification in terms of the extent to which a heritage place has been modified through adoption of a commercial focus for tourism purposes. This could either be through reconstructed representations of heritage, or historic places with strong elements of physical modification for tourism and /or commercial development purposes. Toward the other end of the spectrum are places of minimal commodification. This includes heritage places with little or no evidence of physical modification of historic artefacts for tourism or other commercially oriented purposes, this excludes conservation or preservation activities to maintain heritage values. CHT essentially requires a management shift from a sole focus on conservation or preservation of a cultural heritage site or asset to a tourism product that caters to current market demand and is commercially viable (Cohen, 1988). Dominance of the conservation paradigm in CHT and lack of emphasis on business principles and practice has led to a high rate of failure of CHT operations (for example Bramley, 2001; Prideaux & Kininmont, 1999; Young, 2006). With this in mind, the aim of this paper is to explore the factors around balancing a commercial focus with authenticity and successful CHT business operation.

Heritage conservationists generally view commercialisation as a path to undermining the integrity of the heritage presented, and hence its authenticity, by replacing conservation driven management with a profit motive (Breathnach, 2009; Cohen, 1988). Authenticity can refer to the accuracy of replication or preservation of some real or imagined past (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999). Waitt (2000, p846) noted that authenticity may not be considered as 'a stable autonomous reality". Instead, it may be perceived as a construct of society to be

negotiated and questioned. Ashworth (2009) stated that authenticity is what ever 'presents' select from imagined pasts for contemporary and future use. Perceptions of authenticity in cultural heritage presentation can also differ depending on the audience. In any case, authenticity is seen as a critical aspect in producing truth and value within tourism and is considered to have implications for CHT success (Taylor, 2001; Waitt, 2000). Altering the management focus from heritage conservation to profit making provokes concerns about degradation of the authenticity, value and integrity of heritage represented (Breathnach, 2009; Cohen, 1988). Fyall & Garrod (1998) stated balancing satisfaction of visitors' expectations and managing their impact, without compromising the authenticity of the heritage experience itself presents a dilemma for CHT managers.

Waitt (2000) regarded commercialisation with trepidation. He proposed that the selective interpretation of The Rocks in Sydney, Australia, disregarded 'oppression, racism and conflict' but was highly saleable and quite popular amongst tourists. Fyall & Garrod (1998) considered that future generations are disinherited when a 'heritage product' is produced with the intention of mass market consumption. Other critics of commercialisation include Hewison (1987) and Lowenthal (1998). In turn, some authors argue that commercialisation is not necessarily destructive of authenticity (see in particular Cohen, 1988) but may act to strengthen cultural identity through popularisation and promotion of cultural legitimacy. This is particularly so when being driven from within a community with a view to achieving such aims (Halewood & Hannam, 2001).

Cultural heritage tourists are often motivated by nostalgia. Poria, Butler and Airey (2003) found CHT that offered entertaining and personally relevant insights into the past were preferred by tourists. Similarly, McIntosh and Prentice (1999) and Wilson and McIntosh (2007) found cultural heritage tourists tended to focus more on the personal relevance and entertainment value of a CHT experience than the historical authenticity. On the other hand, some argue that tourists see value and importance in the preservation of authenticity (Chhabra

et al., 2003). Thus a balance is required between historical accuracy and nostalgia to ensure a saleable experience (Chhabra et al. 2003; Taylor, 2001; Waitt, 2000).

McKercher, Ho, & duCros, (2004) considered there may be a limit to commercialisation beyond which the experience is compromised and tourists are no longer satisfied with the experience. It could be argued that highly commodified CHT operations present a shallow, and hence, unsatisfying tourism experience (Waitt, 2000; McKercher & du Cros, 2002). However the proportion of tourists seeking a deep and purposeful cultural experience is likely to be a small niche market segment (Cohen, 1988; McKercher and du Cros, 2002). This supposes that degradation of authenticity in representation of heritage through commercialisation could ultimately result in failure of the CHT business operation. The assumed tension between maintaining integrity of what is considered to be authentic in cultural heritage and the development of cultural heritage as the focus for tourism business presents a challenge for practitioners.

The business of CHT
There are a number of case studies highlighting a poor level of CHT business performance. These include 'Halls of Fame' (Bramley, 2001); Old Sydney Town (Davidson & Spearritt, 2000); the visitor centre in the historic town of Strahan (Fallon & Kriwoken, 2003); Coal Creek Pioneer Settlement (Frost, 2003); the historic town of Angastown (Leader-Elliott, 2005); a paddle-steamer (McKercher, 2001); a number of Queensland CHT attractions (Prideaux & Kininmont, 1999); and pioneer settlements and outdoor museums in general (Young, 2006). CHT development arguably represents a unique and potentially inconsistent combination of commercial business and cultural 'property' often verging on sacred. Thus, it is important to identify key business success factors which heritage managers may adopt to avoid the litany of business failure.

Ho and McKercher (2004) identified four key factors associated with unsuccessful attempts to develop CHT at various sites in Hong Kong. These were heritage managers

having: a lack of understanding of market expectations in relation to the nature of experiences of heritage sites; a lack of assessment of the tourism potential of a site in terms of 'attractiveness' and carrying capacity; absence of site management objectives and priorities in delivering a tourism experience; and finally a lack of connection between management of a site as a heritage asset and development and promotion for tourism. What these factors indicate is a general lack of skills and understanding of tourism product development, the market and marketing on the part of cultural heritage site managers in Hong Kong.

Successful attempts at site-based CHT development have been documented by Mattson and Praesto (2005). They listed a number of factors relating to development of a medieval Scandinavian heritage site. These factors included: uniqueness and 'charisma' of the built aspects of the site; creation of an engaging personal story through a fictional character 'Arn'; using links to popular culture such as movies Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter; and the presence of well known individuals (celebrities, public figures) acting as ambassadors for the site. These popular culture elements could be viewed by heritage experts as inauthentic despite the appeal to tourists.

Gyimothy and Johns (2001) cited examples of successful CHT operation practises in the United Kingdom. The Scotch Whiskey Heritage Centre in Edinburgh applied interactive technology to create unique, exciting and informative experiences. While this served as a successful focus for tourists, business success was elusive owing to significant costs in installation and maintenance of technical equipment and a resultant reliance on high yield from visitation. The 17th century reconstructed manor house in South Wales, Llancaiach Fawr Manor, highlighted the importance of staff training and management. The manor house is a restored Tudor mansion with replica furnishings and costumed actors designed to provide an authentic experience of 17th century Wales. Considerable time and effort was put into training staff who were recruited locally. Staff were also rotated through different roles to provide them with a holistic view of the operation and how their main role 'fits' into the

bigger picture. All staff were provided with wider training in customer care and related areas to provide consistent service standards for visitors. Volunteers were also encouraged to undergo similar training.

The Australian Heritage Commission (2001) emphasised the need for basic business skills, particularly strategic planning, a significant factor also identified by Ho and McKercher (2004). Establishment of a business plan requires a clear and unified management approach to the CHT operation, as well engagement with stakeholders. Confusion of concepts and objectives may result in inefficient operation or inappropriate decision making. Heritage, by its very nature, is prone to such problems given the tension between conservation and commercialisation, the often high costs of maintenance combined with limited revenue from visitors and changing government funding arrangements (Fyall and Garrod, 1998). However, the adoption of a business plan is not in itself a guarantee of success. Indeed, in some cases it has been specifically noted that troubled attractions had professional business plans (Frost, 2003).

Overestimating market demand for a particular cultural heritage experience may often be a fatal flaw during the CHT business development stage (Bramley, 2001; Frost, 2003). It is thus important to identify a market for the CHT product, in addition to planning for and understanding the character of that market. While there may be a demand for a particular type of cultural heritage experience, it is also important to target gaps in the market supply. This can prove difficult as there can be little available data on potential markets and their motivations or CHT managers may lack market research skills (Cameron and Gatewood, 2004: 55-6).

In many cases there may simply be a glut of heritage attractions, where successful entry into the market is difficult. A number of writers have expressed concern that the supply of heritage may have out-stripped demand (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Hewison, 1987; Johnson & Thomas, 1995). Finally, an ability to meet visitor needs and expectations requires

a balance between a tourism market-oriented and heritage conservation approach. Lade and Jackson (2004) argued for a greater focus on the CHT visitor. It would seem that success eludes many CHT operations where the primary focus is often on preservation or conservation of cultural items rather than tourism product development and service to visitors.

The literature indicates a tension between conservation of authenticity arising from commercialisation of the type of CHT product most likely to succeed in business. Authors generally consider commercialisation undermines authenticity, which in turn may not only reduce heritage value generally but potentially degrades its desirability as a tourism product. This paper identifies the factors, published in the Australian and international literature, considered vital to the success of CHT places. The literature informed the development of a list of critical success factors (CSF) for CHT. The CSFs were used to evaluate a series of CHT places across three Australian through interviews with managers and operators.

Method
The researchers interviewed managers and operators of a range of CHT places in three Australian states. Places ranged from those that could be considered to have a strong commercial focus, and therefore inauthentic, through to authentically conserved places with minimal commercialisation evident. Pre-arranged in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted on site in the States of Victoria and Tasmania during site visits in February 2006. Interviews were conducted with Western Australian CHT managers and operators during March and April 2006 (Table 1). Researchers allowed the CHT organisation determine their representative for the interview. This varied from a single management representative through to five or more members of a board of management as well as representatives from government agencies responsible for CHT places.

CHT operation case selection
The authors sought to obtain a representative range of post-colonial heritage across three Australian states by drawing on the extant literature and knowledge of leading experts. ,.

Table 1 describes the heritage places, types and locations included in the study. CHT operation selection was considered in terms of variety of historical context as well as level of commercial focus. Consequently, the study sites include representations of agricultural, convict, industrial, mining, military and monastic heritage from the early nineteenth century period through to the mid to late twentieth century. These operations ranged from authentically preserved heritage places through to heavily commercially focussed heritage products. The CHT operations were managed by a range of bodies including family enterprise, local municipal government, trusts and state government departments.

[TABLE 1 NEAR HERE]

In addition to interviewing managers and visiting specific heritage sites, representatives from relevant government agencies were also interviewed to gain insight into broader issues beyond individual operations. Agencies directly involved in management of heritage places were interviewed and included: Heritage Parks Victoria; Tourism Tasmania and the City of Albany.

The structure of the interviews was based on the amalgamation of critical success factor elements from the literature deemed important to successful CHT operations (Carlsen, Hughes, Frost et al, 2008). The interview process with managers highlighted some additional success factor elements that were added into consideration. The CHT CSF list tested in this study was drawn from the literature as follows.

o Agreed objectives and clear concepts
o Financial planning for budgeting, capital raising and price setting
o Effective marketing strategies based on sound market research
o Monitoring of proximity to major markets and visitor flows
o Effective human resource management, including paid staff and volunteers
o Planning for product differentiation, life cycles and value adding
o Quality and authenticity of products and experiences
o Engage cultural heritage and tourism expertise in conservation and promotion
o Interpretation as an integral part of the heritage tourism experience

Semi-structured interviews took place and the CSF list was not necessarily followed in strict order. The flow of discussion was mainly influenced by points raised in interviewee responses. This approach encouraged interviewees to volunteer information during the flow of discussion that might otherwise be missed in a more rigid interview format. The researcher ensured that all points in the CSF list were addressed by directing discussion as appropriate through occasional direct questioning. Researchers took detailed written notes during interviews.

Information Analysis
The detailed notes from the respective interviews were manually analysed for content on CSFs. Common terms and phrases were identified in relation to critical success factors and how they were, or were not, addressed by respective operations. This was used to determine the number of CSFs met and how effectively they had been met. A cross tabulation between the level of commercialisation and number of CSFs met by specific operations was constructed.

Limitations
The information gathered during this research is based on verbally reported levels of performance by managers of CHT operations. According to Annandale, Morrison-Saunders and Hughes (2007) relying on perceptions of managers as a means of assessing performance is less reliable than reviewing archival evidence. However, managers were found not to intentionally provide misleading information on performance given information could potentially be checked using archival techniques. Annandale, Morrison-Saunders and Hughes (2007) noted that errors in performance reporting tended to result from inaccurate recall most cases. For the current study, all interviews where scheduled well in advance and CHT operation representatives commonly attended with notes or documentation in hand.

The study does not include the perceptions or experiences as expressed by CHT site visitors. Thus, discussion around relationships between commercialisation and authenticity of

CHT places and success as a business is based on published knowledge, perceptions of managers and expert opinion. The views of those consuming the experiences are not included. It would be reasonable to assume that a successful CHT business requires visitors who enjoy the experience and draw value from it in some form.

Classification and Description of CHT operations

Operations were broadly classified according to the level of commercial focus apparent as indicated by available marketing collateral, promotional material, website content and observation of places. In the context of this paper, commercialisation was considered in terms of the level of physical alteration of a place subsequently imposed by operators for the purposes of commercial functionality. Focussing on the tangible alteration of place presented a more practical option than attempting to discern the extent to which representations of the intangible had become commodified, the latter being more reliant on personal beliefs of individuals rather than physical evidence. Rather than defining a dichotomy, classification was based on a gradient between the highly commodified and the minimally commodified CHT operation. Highly commodified CHT places could consist of reconstructed representations of heritage, or strong elements of physical modification specifically for tourism and /or commercial development purposes. Minimal commercial focus could relate to CHT places with little or no evidence of physical modification of historic artefacts for tourism or other commercially oriented purposes, but excludes conservation or preservation focussed activities to maintain value of the place. Based on site visits and the commercialisation criteria, the heritage places included in this study were classified along a commercialisation scale as illustrated in Table 2.

[TABLE 2 NEAR HERE]

Strong Commercial Focus

Sovereign Hill

Sovereign Hill is a completely contrived replica 1850s gold mining town located in the City of Ballarat. It commenced operation in 1970 and presents a constructed interactive experience of the 1850s Victorian gold rush era. The museum includes a full scale 1850s replica town, gold mining and an evening light show "Blood on the Southern Cross" over an area of 30 hectares. Costumed actors populate the town site through which visitors may explore and purchase items from the various shops and restaurants or watch demonstrations of various 1850s trades by trained craftsmen. The site offers a combination of self guided and guided experiences as well as scheduled and 'impromptu' performances by various characters in the town.. The production, "Blood on the Southern Cross" is currently the centre piece of the museum. The nightly open air show tells the story of a miners' revolt against the authorities using a fully automated system of light, sound and pyrotechnic effects with audiences walking and being transported across the Sovereign hill site to view the experience.

Whale World

Whale World is a whale and whaling museum located on the site of a whaling station that operated from 1952 until 1978. It is located near the City of Albany, 400km south of Perth, Western Australia. Key aspects of the station such as machinery, flensing deck, cutting deck, generators and digestors have been preserved and allow visitors to gain insight in to how whales were processed. Other buildings have had their interiors heavily modified. For example, the oil storage tanks have been converted into movie theatres, a look out and photographic exhibition. Other sheds have been modified to house photographic displays or whale skeletons. A 530 ton whalechaser boat (Cheynes IV) has been restored, placed in dry dock and is fully accessible to visitors. It includes recorded sound effects and commentary in relation to its whaling activities. Entry to the museum is through a purpose built visitor centre housing a café, theatre and souvenir shop.

Significant Commercial Focus

City of Albany Forts
Albany is located on the southern coast of Western Australia about 400km south of Perth. It was established in 1826 as a British military outpost. The Albany Forts (Princess Royal Fortress), established in 1893 and operational until 1956, provides a tangible link to the military history of the area. It is an outdoor museum containing military artefacts from various eras transported to the site and installed around the grounds. The original onsite military buildings have been fitted out with museum displays from various eras. The Fort's original heavy guns and concrete emplacements for defending against seaborne attacks have been conserved and are accessible to visitors. A purpose built restaurant on-site caters for various functions.

Port Arthur Historic Site
The Port Arthur Historic Site is located on the Tasman Peninsula about 100km from Hobart, Tasmania. The site consists of more than thirty nineteenth century buildings and ruins dating from the convict prison period spread over 40 hectares. A major conservation and restoration program was conducted between 1979 and 1986 and the site underwent a major redevelopment in the late 1990s including the construction of boardwalks and a purpose built visitor centre incorporating a range of facilities and services including restaurants, ticketing, information, interpretation, gift shop, hire services, toilets, first aid and storage. There are additional restaurants and accommodation on site. The Port Arthur site provides for both guided and self guided days tours of the ruins, a night time 'ghost tour' and a harbour cruise including a visit to the 'Isle of the Dead', a cemetery island located just off shore in the bay.

Moderate Commercial Focus

Brickendon Farm and Historic Accommodation
Brickendon Estate is a working farm about 3 km south of Longford in northern Tasmania. The farm belongs to the Archer family who formerly owned a string of properties in the region. It is a remarkably intact rural heritage complex, including a main residence,

outbuildings and chapel set on original farming lands. The property reflects the lifestyle of early landed gentry in Tasmania and both the house and gardens are recognised as significant and included on the Register of the National Estate. (Australian Heritage Council, 2006; Patterson, 2006). The tourism business is primarily used to fund conservation of the significant heritage buildings and features on the property. Tourism activities include a range of self-guided and guided tours of the extensive buildings, grounds and gardens. A number of the historic cottages are available as visitor accommodation, and the property is a venue for weddings, conferences, meetings and product launches.

Buda Historic Homestead
Buda Historic Homestead is located on a 1.8 hectare property in the town of Castlemaine, Victoria. Built in 1861, it was occupied by the Leviny family for 118 years. The Homestead is notable for its collection of art created by the Levinys, 19th century garden, and the layers of family heritage items on display spanning the 19th and 20th centuries evident throughout the building. The display has been design to convey an authentic 'living house' and garden through which visitors may explore. Buda Homestead also includes a venue for conferences and workshops and a garden nursery selling heritage plant varieties.

Cascades Colonial Accommodation
Cascades Colonial Accommodation is situated on Norfolk Bay on the Tasman Peninsula in south-eastern Tasmania. The property was originally a probation station linked to the Port Arthur Settlement operating from 1842 until 1857. There are several convict-built buildings on site including a mess, hospital, two blocks for officers' quarters, solitary cells, workshop and other relatively undisturbed buildings. Many artefacts and ephemeral remains of a steam sawmill, sawpits, water sluice, and tramway give the site particularly high archaeological significance. The restoration of several cottages has allowed the site to be developed as heritage accommodation. Visitors are provided with exclusive access to the site, including the private museum and a number of walks.

Victorian Goldfields Railway

Victorian Goldfields railway is a remnant of the network of branch lines that serviced central Victoria from the 1880s until the 1970s. An 8km branch line between Castlemaine and Muckleford is used to run heritage train journeys. The rolling stock consists of a range of restored carriages and locomotives from the 'branch line era'. The railway is operated and maintained mainly by volunteers with a small number of part and full time staff. The focus of management is centred on enthusiasm for trains and restoration of rolling stock. Most of the volunteers and funding are sourced via the Castlemaine & Maldon Railway Preservation Society.

Woolmers Estate Home and Accommodation

Woolmers Estate is situated about 4km south-east of Longford in northern Tasmania. The property is historically and architecturally important to Tasmania. The homestead is a well built and maintained single storey brick house in Colonial vernacular style. The main house is complemented by a collection of outbuildings including pump house, barn, store, wool shed, stables and gardeners cottage. The garden is historically significant as an early example of the Gardenesque style. The array of extant buildings on Woolmers provides an insight into the social structure of a colonial pastoral estate. The combination of the historical collections and buildings represents a significant cultural resource and an important visitor attraction.

Minimal Commercial Focus

Benedictine Community of New Norcia

New Norcia is a small town of 70 residents located about 130km north of Perth, Western Australia. New Norcia is unique as it is the only privately owned monastic town in the Southern Hemisphere. The town was established by Benedictine Monks in 1846 as a Catholic mission. It has extensive, impressive architecture in the Spanish Mediterranean style and a small and still active population of Benedictine Monks (McKenzie, 2004). New Norcia has 27 buildings classified by the National Trust and the town as a whole is registered on the national estate. It offers individual and group accommodation in the old boarding schools and

monastery and is a venue for workshops and retreats. The buildings are essentially in their original form, and in need of repair.

Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park
Castlemaine is a mid-size country town, 110 kilometres northwest of Melbourne. It is surrounded by an extensive Box-Ironbark Forest. Alluvial gold was discovered in the area in 1851. Consequently, mining took place in the forest leaving extensive remains including ruins, races, mullock heaps and so on. Adding to this complexity are a number of Aboriginal sites and Chinese villages. In 2002 approximately 65,000 hectares of this forest was declared a National Park. In a first for Australia it was designated a HERITAGE National Park. As such, while the environmental values of the forest were recognised, the primary reason for its protection was its heritage values. The national heritage park has little evidence of commercialisation.

Old Castlemaine Gaol
Constructed between 1857 and 1861, Old Castlemaine Gaol is a significant intact example of a colonial 'Model Prison' such as was first constructed in Pentonville, London, in 1842. Despite decades of adaptation to a variety of uses including that of a restaurant and backpackers' hostel, the prison remains historically significant as a representation of the status of Castlemaine as a civic centre since the discovery of gold in the district in 1851. It currently functions as a vocational training centre with the original structures used for this purpose.

Findings
Interviews with CHT operation managers and representatives identified success factors that were either achieved or not achieved by specific operations. Interviews also revealed the commercial success status of respective CHT operations. In terms of the CHT critical success factors identified from the literature and interview feedback, the majority (6) are business oriented including:

- Agreed objects and concepts;
- Financial planning;
- Marketing;
- Market research;
- Human resource management; and
- Business Planning.

Three CSFs were specific to heritage authenticity, quality, conservation and interpretation. It was apparent that the achievement of business related CSFs was directly related to business success. Commercially successful CHT businesses were those that had significant tourism based revenue supporting day to day operations supplemented by successful applications for grant income for capital and other major works. This is reflected in the literature where successful CHT operations not only met criteria relating to management and conservation of heritage but also tactical and strategic business operations requirements (Australian Heritage Commission, 2001; Gyimothy & Johns, 2001; Ho & McKercher, 2004; Mattson & Praesto, 2005).

When cross tabulated against the commercialisation scale (Table 3), it is apparent that CHT operations toward the highly commodified end of the spectrum tended to demonstrate more commercially successful characteristics relative to their counterparts toward the minimally commodified end.

[TABLE 3 NEAR HERE]

As expected, the successful CHT places in this study tended to meet the commercially focussed CSFs to a greater degree than the less successful, less commercially focussed places. In particular, the more successful CHTs tended to be effective in relation to financial planning, marketing and market research and product development and differentiation as observed in previous work by Ho and McKercher (2004). Interestingly, most of the operations had, to a lesser or greater degree, met the CSFs relating to quality and authenticity. This indicates that CSFs relating to authenticity, quality and interpretation were the common

denominator for the places included in this study. However, the extent to which the remaining eight CSFs were achieved determined success overall.

Sovereign Hill and Whale World appear to be the most successful of the CHT operations based on the CSFs met. Interviews with the managers indicated these two operations support their ongoing day to day functioning with revenue from tourism visitation, indicating a viable business operation. These are arguably also the most commercially focussed of the CHT places included in this study. Sovereign Hill is a purpose built replica of a 19th century Victorian gold mining town. It leans heavily toward the nostalgic representation of the past sought after by tourists (Ashworth, 2009, Poria et al, 2003). The depravation, institutionalised racism and other negative elements are either glossed over or not represented. A fully automated "sound and light show" forms the experiential centre piece, telling the story of the Eureka uprising of miners against the authorities of the day. While Sovereign Hill is a re-created heritage place that appeals to tourist nostalgia, it's success perhaps lies partly in the personal engagement and emersion of tourists in the experience of a gold rush town (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999). Authenticity in could be present in terms of the historic stories told and the tangible representations of characters, buildings and trades. Physical immersion in a 19th century mining town could act to enhance the sense of personal engagement and entertainment. This is supported by McInstosh and Prentice's (1999) earlier findings that visitors to a series of industrial CHT attractions were less concerned with historical accuracy. Instead, they focussed on the level of engagement, personal relevance and entertainment value of the CHT operations. This is also supported by the comments of Poria et al (2003) who noted heritage tourists were interested in history in a personally relevant and enjoyable format. While Whale World includes preserved elements of its original form as a whale processing factory, it has also been considerably modified to enhance its entertainment value and commercial effectiveness. The commercial focus in the structure and function of these two CHT places appears to have acted effectively in supplying

a product that caters for a tourism demand. This has enabled their successful operation as CHT products despite any arguments over the authenticity of the heritage experiences they offer.

At the other end of the commercialisation scale, Castlemaine Diggings Heritage Park, New Norcia and the Old Castlemaine Gaol consist of minimally commercialised heritage experiences. The Castlemaine Diggings consist of ruins and other mining related artefacts spread over a wide geographical area. According to interviews with the Heritage Victoria representative, visitation levels are low and on the ground management presence low to non-existent. While walk trails with some interpretive signs have been installed in some places, the ruins and other artefacts essentially lie as they were left, with much evidence of decay over time. Management of the Castlemaine Diggings Heritage Park is publically funded with little or no direct revenue from any heritage tourists who may visit the sites. It is apparent that this CHT operation can only be viable as a publically owned asset. This may be the case for many capital extensive heritage places.

The Old Castlemaine Gaol has had several incarnations as a venue for events among other functions. It is essentially in its original state as a prison with virtually no evidence of commercialisation. Interviews and observation demonstrated it had only marginally achieved one of the CSFs, that of authenticity as a mostly intact prison. A lack of direction and cohesion in terms of objectives and concepts stymied development as a Cultural Heritage asset. The gaol relies on public funds for management and maintenance though generates some revenue in its recent function as a vocational training centre for hospitality. New Norcia had recently engaged a town manager to oversee the business elements within the town and coordinate strategic planning. Prior to this, The Benedictine Monks were responsible for business planning and management. While the buildings are impressive, authentic representations of Spanish architecture, they are also in a state of disrepair, offering very low quality venues for functions and accommodation. Maintenance and repair work relied heavily

on fund raising activities organised by the Monks. Management of the town was based on a focus around the Monastic lifestyle. While this is still a core element, the employment of a town manager with a human resources and accounting background will enable a more strategic commercial approach toward tourism development.

The CHT operations classified as being somewhere between the two extremes of the commercial focus spectrum could be segregated into those operated by a government authority and non-government or privately operated CHT businesses. Port Arthur and the Albany Forts both represent the former type of CHT operation. Albany in particular does not require business revenue as it is supported by local government funds from residential taxes. The City of Albany representative specified that their primary measure of success for CHT places is the number of visitors rather than any profit made. Hence the Albany Forts charge a small nominal entry fee that by no means covers the costs of maintaining the facility. The Forts also have the full resources of the local government in terms of planning and management. For example, The City of Albany recently completed a regional strategic plan that included the Albany Forts as part of a wider heritage and tourism component. The residential population of Albany are reportedly willing to contribute toward the management of the Albany Forts owing to its locally iconic status. Government ownership allows strategic management without relying on the individual success and resources of the CHT operation. Similarly, while Port Arthur receives significant revenue through tourism, it is underwritten by its nationally significant heritage status. That is, it has resources backed by government to ensure adequate planning and management in an operational context irrespective of the level of revenue received through visitation and related business success.

The remaining CHT places in the moderately commodified category are privately owned or operated mainly by volunteer organisations. The achievement of success factors for these places relied primarily on the availability of skills amongst those willing to volunteer their time, or the level and range of skills within the family managing the place. They also

tended to attract volunteers with a passion for the heritage represented, such as trains or colonial lifestyles and buildings. This meant a primary focus on conservation and preservation of assets over commercialisation. However, there was still reliance on tourism income for daily operation and management. Success in gaining grants for capital works and related major expenses was also an important factor in success. Grant applications presented another area of skill some operations lacked in their available personnel. Finally, with the exception of Buda Homestead, these operations tended not to have strategic plans. Rather they tended to develop their CHT operations as funds came available to address the most pressing needs or concerns at the time.

Breathnach (2009), Chhabra et al. (2003) and McKercher, et al. (2004) expressed concerns regarding the over commercialisation of cultural heritage for tourism. They considered it degraded the authenticity of heritage presented and subsequently resulted degradation of the tourism experience. Sovereign Hill and Whale World arguably present a more sustainable mode of CHT both in a business sense as well as in terms of cultural heritage artefacts. For example, as Sovereign Hill is a reconstruction, visitor impacts are of less concern as the tangible elements on display are repairable or replaceable without degrading their value. The Sovereign Hill experience however, can still communicate cultural knowledge through the stories told at the site, providing the cultural heritage values and sense of tradition despite its artificial nature. A CHT place such as the Castlemaine Diggings or New Norcia provides tourism access to original historic remains. Damage or destruction of the tangible historical items in these places would result in permanent loss of unique tangible links to the past.

Conservation or preservation of heritage artefacts can be costly, especially in the context of managing tourist contact with these artefacts as was evident from interviews with CHT representatives. The majority of the operations relied on grants to fund major works related to construction and conservation related maintenance. Significantly, visitor entry fees

were either nominal or set to cover day to day operational costs. Therefore, tourism revenue in the form of entry fees had a limited contribution to revenue. Fyall and Garrod (2007) discussed this issue noting that raising entry fees to cover maintenance and other major works could place the heritage experience beyond the financial means of a significant segment of the community. This works against the notion of heritage as a common good and may disenfranchise communities from their heritage. Interestingly, Whale World significantly increased entry fees and experienced a decline in visitor numbers (but an increase in profit). However, they were still reliant on grants for major works. Revenue may also be increased through increased visitor numbers. While this may be acceptable at more commodified or contrived CHT places, where objects can be readily replaced or repaired, those consisting of unique historical artefacts, such as the Castlemaine Diggings, may then experience increased physical impacts from visitors, increasing maintenance costs. It seems that income from visitor entry fees cannot reasonably produce enough revenue for ongoing maintenance and construction costs. This provide further evidence that these cultural heritage places can only be effectively maintained and sustained, even as CHT operations, when publically owned. This supports other examples provided by authors such as Frost (2003) and Prideaux and Kininmont (1999) regarding the costs of ongoing maintenance and repair being likely to result in the commercial failure of privately run CHT operations.

Conclusion

Places with a strong commercial focus appeared to be the most successful CHT operations in terms of achieving CSFs and sustaining profitable operation over time. This may help to resolve some claims in the literature that commercialisation degrades cultural heritage integrity and authenticity, reducing its appeal, and thus potentially reducing success as a tourism product (Breathnach, 2009; Waitt, 2000; McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Alternatively, those CHT operations with government resource backing also appeared to achieve most success factors. This was primarily owing to lack of reliance on the success of

the specific CHT operation in order to fund management and maintenance, create broader strategic and business plans and undertake major works (such as restoration projects). This suggests avoidance of commercialisation for CHT requires financial and management support, in the form of public ownership, independent of the business success of the operation. It was evident from this study that public ownership of CHT places is essential for success owing to limited revenue from tourism and often extensive capital.

The results of this research demonstrated that authenticity was a factor common to the CHT places included in this study regardless of the level of commercialisation. However, the more successful CHT operations are those that also met the commercially focussed CSFs. In particular, factors relating to financial planning, marketing and market research and product development and differentiation. This reflects Cohen's (1988) observation that commercialisation of cultural heritage is generally accepted by tourists as long as they perceive subjective traits of authenticity in the experience. This also aligns with the observations of McIntosh and Prentice (1999) and Poria et al (2003) regarding CHT tourists being more focussed on personal relevance and entertainment value than perceived authenticity. Even though Waitt (2000) expressed misgivings in relation to commercialised heritage tourism products, he also noted their commercial tourism success. Heritage places are multiuse resources that serve many purposes (Ashworth, 2009). Thus, conservation of cultural heritage authenticity and integrity is obviously important in terms of maintaining social and cultural value for the greater public good. However, in terms of successful cultural heritage tourism places as commercial enterprises, authenticity is but one factor that needs only partially to be met.

References

Annandale, D., Morrison-Saunders, A. & Hughes, M. (2007) Measuring the impact of voluntary environmental protection instruments: perceptual versus archival techniques. International Journal of Environment, Workplace, and Employment 3 (1), 1-14

Ashworth, G.J. (2009) Let's sell our heritage to tourists! Do we? Can we? Should we? Tourism and hospitality in a dynamic world: Proceedings of the 18th Annual Council of Australian Universities For Tourism and Hospitality Education Conference, Fremantle, Western Australia. Feb 10-13, 2009

Ashworth, G.J., & Tunbridge, J.E. (2000). The Tourist-Historic City: Retrospect and prospect of managing the heritage city (2nd ed), Oxford: Elsevier.

Australian Heritage Commission, (2001). Successful tourism at heritage places: a guide to tourism operators, heritage managers and communities, Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission.

Australian Heritage Council (2009) Australian heritage places inventory. Retrieved Oct. 2008, from, http://www.heritage.gov.au

Bramley, R. (2001). So you want to build a "Hall of Fame"?. 2001 Council of Australian Universities Tourism and Hospitality Educators National Research Conference, pp. 17–27, Canberra: University of Canberra.

Breathnach, T. (2009) Looking for the real me: locating the self in heritage tourism. Journal of Heritage Tourism, 1 (2), 100-120.

Cameron, C.M. & Gatewood, J.B. (2004). Seeking numinous experiences in the unremembered past. Ethnology, 42: 1: 55-71.

Carlsen, J., Hughes, M., Frost, W., Pocock, C., and Peel, V. (2008) Success factors in cultural heritage tourism enterprise management. Report to Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, Gold Coast, Australia.

Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. Annals of tourism research, 15 (3), 371–386.

Chhabra, D., Healy, R. and Sills, E. (2003) Staged authenticity and heritage tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 30 (3), 702–719.

Davidson, J., & Spearritt, P. (2000) Holiday Business: Tourism in Australia since 1870. Melbourne: Miegunyah.

duCros, H. (2001). A new model to assist in planning for sustainable cultural heritage tourism, International Journal of Tourism Research, 3, 165–170.

Fallon, L.D., & Kriwoken, L.K. (2003). Community involvement in tourism infrastructure – the case of the Strahan Visitor Centre, Tasmania. Annals of tourism research, 24(3), 289–308.

Frost, W. (2003). The financial viability of heritage tourism attractions: three cases from rural Australia, Tourism Review International 7(1), 13–25.

Fyall, A., & Garrod, B. (2007). Heritage Tourism: At What Price? in Timothy, D. (Ed) Managing heritage and cultural tourism resources: critical essays, volume 1Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Gyimothy, S., & Johns, N. (2001). Developing the role of quality. In Drummond S. and Yeoman, I. (Eds.), Quality issues in heritage visitor attractions. Oxford: Butterworth-Heineman.

Halewood, C., & Hannam, K. (2001). Viking heritage tourism: authenticity and commodification. Annals of Tourism Research, 28(3), 565–580.

Hewison, R. (1987). The heritage industry: Britain in a climate of decline, London: Metheun.

Ho, P., & McKercher, B. (2004). Managing heritage resources as tourism products. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 9 (3), 255–266.

Johnson, P., & Thomas, B. (1995). Heritage as business, in D.T. Herbert, (ed), Heritage, tourism and society, 170–190, London: Pinter.

Jones, R., & Shaw, B (2007) Introduction: geographies of Australian heritages, in R. Jones & B. Shaw (eds). Geographies of Australian heritages: loving a sunburnt country? 1–7, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Lade, C., & Jackson, J. (2004). Key success factors in regional festivals: some Australian experiences, Event management, 9 (1), 1–11.

Leader-Elliot, L. (2005). Community heritage interpretation games: a case study from Angastown, South Australia. International Journal of Heritage Studies, 11(2), 161–171.

Lowenthal, D. (1998). The heritage crusade and the spoils of history. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mattsson, J., & Praesto, A. (2005) The creation of a Swedish heritage destination: an insider's view of entrepreneurial marketing. Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 5 (2), 152–166.

McIntosh, A., & Prentice, R. (1999) Affirming authenticity, consuming cultural heritage. Annals of Tourism Research, 26 (3), 589-611.

McKenzie, F. (2004) Tourism opportunities and dilemmas for a rural tourism destination. Sustaining Regions, 4 (2), 4 - 18

McKercher, B. (2001). Attitudes to a non-viable community-owned heritage tourist attraction, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 9 (1), 29–43.

McKercher, B., & duCros, H. (2002), Cultural Tourism: The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management. New York: The Hawthorn Hospitality Press.

McKercher, B. Ho, P. S. Y., & duCros, H. (2004). Attributes of popular cultural attractions in Hong Kong, Annals of Tourism Research, 31 (2), 393–407.

Patterson, R. (2009) Brickendon. Retrieved Oct. 2008, from http://www.brickendon.com.au

Poria, Y., Butler, R., & Airey, D. (2003) The Core of Heritage Tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 30 (1), 238–254.

Prideaux, B.P., & Kininmont, L-J. (1999). Tourism and heritage are not strangers: a study of opportunities for rural heritage museums to maximize tourism visitation. Journal of Travel Research, 37, 299–303.

Taylor, J. (2001). Authenticity and Sincerity in Tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 28, 7–26.

Timothy D. J., & Boyd S. W. (2003). Heritage Tourism. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Waitt, G. (2000). Consuming heritage: perceived historical authenticity. Annals of Tourism Research, 27, 835–849.

Wilson, G., & McIntosh, A. (2007) Heritage buildings and tourism: an experiential view. Journal of Heritage Tourism, 2 (2), 75-93

Young, L. (2006). Villages that never were: the museum village as heritage genre. International Journal of Heritage Studies, 12 (4), 321–338.

Table 1 Heritage places, types and locations included in interview schedule

Heritage Place	Type	Location
Buda Historic Homestead	Mining/ colonial	Castlemaine, Victoria
Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park	Mining	Castlemaine, Victoria
Old Castlemaine Gaol	Mining/ colonial	Castlemaine, Victoria
Sovereign Hill	re-created Mining/ colonial	Ballarat, Victoria
Victorian Goldfields Railway	Industrial, transport	Maldon, Victoria
Cascades Colonial accommodation	Convict/ penal	Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania
Brickendon	Agricultural/ convict/ colonial	Longford, Tasmania
Port Arthur	Convict/ penal	Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania
Woolmers	Agricultural/ convict/ colonial	Longford, Tasmania
Benedictine Community of New Norcia	Monastic/ missionary	New Norcia, Western Australia
City of Albany Forts	Military	Albany, Western Australia
Whale World	Industrial/ whaling	Albany, Western Australia

Table 2: Classification of CHT operations according to level of commercialisation

Level of commercialisation			
Strong commercial focus	**Significant commercial focus**	**Moderate commercial focus**	**Minimal commercial focus**
Sovereign Hill	City of Albany Forts	Brickendon	Castlemaine Diggings Heritage Park
Whale World	Port Arthur	Buda Homestead	New Norcia
		Cascades	Old Castlemaine Gaol
		Vic Goldfields Railway	
		Woolmers	

Table 3: Success Factors and commodification Matrix

Category	CHT place	Agreed objectives & clear concepts	Financial planning	Marketing strategies	Monitoring markets and flows	HR management	planning - life cycle & value adding	Quality and Authenticity	Expertise- conservation & promotion	Integrated interpretation
Strong commercial focus	Sovereign Hill	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
	Whale World	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Significant **commercial focus**	Albany Forts*	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
	Port Arthur*	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Moderate **commercial focus**	Brickendon	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓✓	✓	X
	Buda Homestead	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	X	X	✓✓	✓✓	X	X
	Cascades	X	✓	✓	X	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
	Victorian goldfields railway	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓✓	X	X	X
	Woolmers	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	X	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Minimal **commercial focus**	Castlemaine Diggings Heritage Park*	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓✓	X	X
	New Norcia	✓✓	X	X	✓	✓✓	X	✓✓	X	X
	Old Castlemaine Gaol*	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X

*managed by government funded authority

X = Not met

✓ = Partly met

✓✓ = Fully met