

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**

**School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing**

**Faculty of Business and Law**

**A STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

**The Case of the Twelve Apostles, Port Campbell National Park, Victoria**

**By**

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TOURISM: The Case of The Twelve Apostles, Port Campbell National Park**

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## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **I        DECLARATION**

I, Angela Munro, hereby declare that the presented work has not been previously presented for any other academic award.

Signed.....

Date .....

## **II      ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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### III ABSTRACT

There has been widespread support for formal treaties and declarations to ensure ecologically sustainable development (ESD) internationally and in Australia, at national and state levels, for almost 30 years. Despite this, the momentum of ESD appears to be waning (Low et al 2000). It is the author's view that such loss of momentum calls for examination of planning process as it affects land use, including tourism. Indeed, the social and environmental impacts of tourism in Australasia have tended to be ignored in policy development (Hall et al 1997). Sub-optimal outcomes and the uncertainty engendered by costly and high profile conflicts over competing land use, in Australia and internationally in the past decade, highlight the need for such an examination.

In addressing this hiatus between ESD policy development and implementation, **the aims of this research are fourfold.** First, it seeks **to clarify the meaning of ecologically sustainable tourism**, given the reliance of the rapidly growing Australian tourism industry on natural resource conservation. In so doing it addresses the inherent conflict between alternative visions for land use as they relate to tourism development in and around protected areas

Second, contemporary **applications of stakeholder theory** are examined in order **to analyse and learn from such tourism related land use conflicts.** Stakeholders are defined as individuals or groups with multiple stakes or interests in an organisation or decision. Several epistemological perspectives are noted, with the present research fitting broadly within those of the political economy or political ecology of tourism, to which power relations are central.

The third aim is **to analyse the decision-making process in 1996-9 for the development of visitor facilities near The Twelve Apostles**, an 'icon' coastal attraction of national significance at Port Campbell National Park, in south western Victoria. The case study method is chosen to enable an in-depth application of stakeholder theory to that process as it relates to ecologically sustainable outcomes. The framework used for this empirical analysis is derived from an approach to stakeholder management known as Shared Decision-making (SDM). It was applied in a recent design and evaluation of planning process in British Columbia, Canada, where a comparable governmental framework and experience of natural resource conflict made it a useful model for a Victorian case study (Williams, Penrose and Hawkes 1998).

The Williams et al framework of evaluative criteria informs the schedule of semi-structured interviews. This was administered to 17 respondents representing the 12 key decision makers and stakeholders involved in the decision-making process for the Twelve Apostles tourism development. The framework also underpins the author's approach to analysis of material drawn from the project files of five stakeholder organisations and from contemporary media coverage.

Finally, the research seeks **to identify the implications of this decision-making process** for tourism planning which is conducive to ecological sustainability. It is the author's contention that a government commitment to collaborative planning, involving meaningful public participation is a key determinant of EST. Whereas community involvement has long been advocated for many reasons, philosophical and expedient, this research identifies the primary role of the community in promoting sustainable tourism as that of active citizens. Collaborative planning is judged essential but insufficient to



achieve equitable and sustainable outcomes. Meaningful participation and environmental protection must also be enforceable through institutional reform, including provision for open standing and third party appeal rights, largely unavailable under Victorian environmental law. Collaborative planning and stakeholder management, it is argued, operates in a political context, insufficiently acknowledged.

Research involving multiple cases and multiple jurisdictions would enable the validity of the study's conclusions regarding the pivotal role of citizens (and non government organizations) in the implementation of ecologically sustainable tourism to be tested. Further research, it is argued, should promote an interdisciplinary approach drawing on political science, law, ecology, urban and regional geography and environmental planning. In particular, the application of political ecology to tourism offers a promising framework for the analysis and design of stakeholder management conducive to ecologically sustainable tourism.

#### **IV      ABBREVIATIONS**

ALP	Australian Labor Party
BOICR	Bay of Islands Coastal Reserve
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CORE	Commission on Resources and Environment
DCALM	Catchment and Land Management
DCNR	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
DNRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
EST	Ecologically Sustainable Tourism
FOTA	Friends of The Twelve Apostles
NPAC	National Parks Advisory Council
NT	National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
PCNP	Port Campbell National Park
PCNPCG	Port Campbell National Park Consultative Group
PCNPMP	Port Campbell National Management Plan

PV	Parks Victoria
SDM	Shared Decision-making
SOC	Shire of Corangamite
TV	Tourism Victoria
UNCED	United Nations Commission on Environment and Development
VCC	Victorian Coastal Council
VCS	Victorian Coastal Strategy
VNPA	Victorian National Parks Association
VNPAC	Victorian National Parks Advisory Council

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Research Outline

The present research arises from a perceived gap between the ideals and principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and their application, in this case in the tourism industry (Murphy 1998). The concept of ESD was most authoritatively articulated in the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future* (UNCED 1987). It purports to reconcile the apparently conflicting imperatives of economic development and environment protection - jobs versus the environment. In practice, specific tourism development proposals in areas of high conservation value frequently trigger a replay of that fundamental conflict, both in so-called developed and developing countries; the devil, as the saying goes, is in the detail.

It is the purpose of this research, then, is to examine the meaning of ecologically sustainable tourism and, in particular, the role of the community in promoting such sustainability. That community role, like the ESD principles themselves, has been widely acknowledged by governments, academia, non-government organisations and corporations. In order to analyse that role more systematically, contemporary critique of stakeholder theory is reviewed. It is then applied in a case study of a notable case of coastal tourism development, namely that of a visitor centre at The Twelve Apostles in Port Campbell National Park, Victoria, between 1996 and 1999. Fourteen years after the watershed Brundtland Report this case study, like many others cited in the literature survey, indicates that the application of ESD principles remains problematic.

## Research Context

The greatest global challenge encountered today surely remains that tackled by Gro Harlem Brundtland, chairman of UNCED (1987), namely: **How may optimum production be achieved without endangering the systems on which life depends?**

At that time tourism was and is still regarded by many as ‘the smokeless industry’. Indeed it has been commonly promoted by environmentalists as an ecologically sustainable alternative to the exploitation of natural resources, chiefly in remote and wilderness areas, for irrigation, energy generation, logging or mining (Figgis 2000). Strangely, tourism received little attention in either the Brundtland Report or the later Rio Declaration (UNCED 1992), though it constituted a significant component of the report of the Australian Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Party (1992).

Those intervening years, however, have seen the burgeoning of tourism and increased attention by researchers to its economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. Often described as the largest and most rapidly growing industry worldwide, it depends on finite and, in some cases, diminishing natural resources. Its long-term viability is thus clearly dependent on their sustainable use and management.

Ironically, despite that resource dependence by the tourism industry and despite the widespread adoption of the principles articulated in the Brundtland Report by both governments and corporations, in practice few would dispute that ‘the momentum generated by UNCED is flagging’ (Low, Gleeson, Elander, Lidskog 2000, p. xi).

Closely related to such loss of momentum over the past decade, has been increasing dominance at supranational, national and regional levels of principles and practices espoused by advocates of the operation of the free market, neoliberal or economic rationalist schools of thought (Argy 1998). Government deregulation, a public sector substantially 'down-sized', contracted out, corporatised or privatised, and with an increased focus on the financial bottom-line, has characterised this dominant economic paradigm worldwide. Environment protection has assumed a highly politicised and ambiguous position in the context of such legislative and administrative redirection, most obviously in English speaking countries rather than in northern Europe (Hutton 1997).

Despite this, there is a growing literature on sustainable tourism issues. As a leading commentator has noted, however, most research has been produced by government and academia, and 'the message about sustainable tourism seems to have become trapped in an academic-government loop rather than being progressively adopted by the industry and its consumers' (Murphy 1998, p.187). Certainly, the language of sustainability is now commonplace in tourism documents prepared by both the government and corporate sectors (Dann 1996). 'Greenwash' aside, in Jenkins' terms, 'the environmental and social impacts of tourism are frequently ignored, neglected or strategically omitted from the policy-making process' (1997, p. 138).

Operationalising the concept of sustainable tourism is widely acknowledged as a challenge for industry, government and interested researchers alike. Given the complexity and multifaceted nature of sustainable development, Murphy argues that the concept must be broken down into manageable components, before it 'can move from a mental state to

a physical and economic reality' (1998, p.174). The current research is intended to contribute to such empirical analysis and to practical realization of the concept.

Tourism research has been poorly funded relative to other industries (Hall, Jenkins and Kearsley 1997, p. 16), and has focused on marketing and development. The present research examines the political economy of sustainable tourism. It seeks to provide 'a broader analytical perspective, which is often lacking in tourism research and planning' and which 'links domestic transformations with changes in the world economy' (Jenkins 1997, p.137). In their overview of tourism planning and policy in rural areas in Australia and New Zealand, Jenkins, Hall and Kearsley (1997, p.138) observed that, despite growing attention to rural tourism, 'there is little research into policy-making processes and planning approaches'. This leads inevitably to problems of formulation and implementation of tourism policies and plans. The research questions and methodology adopted emerge from these identified research gaps.

The key recommendations of the Brundtland Report, namely community involvement and allied institutional reform represent a dual focus in this research. Community involvement continues to be widely acknowledged as important by governments, tourism academics and practitioners alike as a means of facilitating tourism development and ensuring sustainability. However, the rationales used to justify this ostensibly common if ill-defined commitment often conflict.

Environmental leaders, through non-government and community-based campaigns have played an important role in Australia. Environment protection legislation has been brought about largely through sustained public pressure (Toyne 1994). This is evident in

the adoption and implementation of international treaties, such as the World Heritage and Biodiversity Conventions (1992), and in national and state legislation, such as the declaration of national parks (Kennedy 1996; Mosley 1997; Thomas 1998; Haigh 1999). It is the contention of this thesis that meaningful community participation is a precondition to the pursuit of ecologically sustainable tourism. World-wide, attempts to resolve protracted conflict between government agencies, developers and environmental activists, are indicating that the principles of community participation and ecological sustainability are integrally linked (Gurung et al 1999; Lejano et al 1999; Maggio 1998; McDaniels and Trousdale 1999; Stonich 1998; Yuksel et al 1999).

In order to examine such participation, the present research draws on various theories of stakeholder management. They offer explanations of the institutional and planning arrangements which govern and constrain the interaction of multiple interests with a stake in the outcomes of tourism development. Such stakeholder theories have been progressively refined over the past decade, notably in Canada, whose natural resource and native title land use conflicts are similar to those in Australia. This refinement has involved the design and evaluation of planning processes conducive to collaboration and to ecologically sustainable outcomes.

‘Thinking globally and acting locally’ is a worthy slogan. However a gulf remains between the principles of ecological sustainability, as endorsed internationally, and the reality of continued degradation through tourism development. Indeed the entrenchment of a free market, global economy poses additional challenges for the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity post Brundtland. It is therefore timely to review the meaning of ecologically sustainable tourism, both in theory and practice.



In its political context, analysis of the planning process provides an opportunity to develop strategies for managing the value conflicts between people and institutions inherent in the pursuit of sustainable tourism. Such analysis is likely to promote several important outcomes. These are first, optimal environmental management, including protection of the natural resource on which tourism depends; second, economies in the planning process for proponents and government; and third, political and democratic outcomes through the shared decision-making on which legitimacy depends.

### **Research Objectives**

Following the foregoing discussion, this research aims to:

- clarify the meaning of ecologically sustainable tourism;
- examine recent applications of stakeholder theory;
- examine the decision-making process that occurred concerning proposed visitor facilities at the Twelve Apostles, Port Campbell National Park , Victoria , from 1996-1999, using stakeholder theory;
- identify the implications and opportunities for planning and developing ecologically sustainable tourism, including opportunities for further research.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

A review of the academic and public policy literature was undertaken with the following three related foci: ecologically sustainable tourism; community involvement in tourism development; and stakeholder management and collaborative decision-making.

### **2.1 ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

#### **The background**

International deliberation and ratification has occurred over many years and signifies a commitment to transforming the way in which natural resources are valued and managed. In reality, the transformation has failed to materialise. Indeed, the advent of the globalised free market and the ‘end of history’ has arguably reinforced the dominance of the very ethos which the United Nations Commission on the Environment and Development was established to address (Fukuyama 1992).

Successive Australian governments have been instrumental in pressing for international commitments to sustainability. If such conventions are to have effect, however, they must inform developments on the ground. The decision-making in individual cases, such as the proposed visitor centre at the Twelve Apostles, represents in microcosm the practical challenges that this entails. It is in ‘thinking globally and acting locally’ that steps towards sustainability may be taken, negotiated through a planning process in which the national and international commitments are enforceable rather than discretionary.

The Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, (1987) made a compelling case for urgent change in the philosophy and practice of natural resource use if demonstrable, irreversible and escalating degradation of the environment was to be halted. In articulating the concept of **ecologically sustainable development** (ESD) the Report offered the prospect of breaking the prevailing impasse of 'the economy versus the environment'. Murphy (1998) has refined a widely cited framework of 14 components of sustainable development, ranging from population control to carrying capacity, and including the principle of community control over development decisions affecting local ecosystems (Appendix 3).

Innumerable approaches to ecologically sustainable development have been proposed. Various interpretations as a statement of vision, a value change and a transformational process towards a desired future, ESD was recently and pithily defined as 'utilizing no more resources than the natural rate of reproduction permits or inflicting no more damage than natural resilience allows for' (Ruijthrok 1999). It was more broadly defined by Brundtland as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs; inter-generational equity is advanced as both a principle and a measure of sustainability. As such, it has been accepted by thousands of governmental, corporate and non-government organisations world-wide (Gladwin, Kennelly & Krause 1995). Both in its analysis of the underlying causes and in its strategic responses, two themes dominate this seminal document.

**First**, there must be **fundamental reform of the institutional arrangements** - regional, national and international, which had failed to stem escalating threats to the environment on a global scale and were themselves thwarting concerted action. These threats included

deforestation, desertification and loss of species; growing reliance on finite fossil fuel, with associated greenhouse effect and climate change; exponential population increase; and the threat to the maintenance of biodiversity - of the support systems and genetic diversity on which life depends.

**Second**, the role of the **community was central to the mass movement required** for the transformation of values and behaviour on which ESD depended. It was also fundamental to the transformation, legitimacy and operation of political, legal and governmental arrangements capable of ensuring ecologically sustainable development. There was thus a clear association made in the Brundtland Report, between these two broad preconditions for change: institutional reform and community involvement.

There was negligible recognition of the impact of tourism on the environment in the Brundtland Report, unlike agriculture or mining which were acknowledged as having significant environmental repercussions. But ecologically sustainable tourism (EST) must clearly be governed, like any resource dependent activity, by common principles and objectives of ecological sustainability. This was reflected in the 1992 Australian National Strategy on Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD), an outcome of the UNCED initiative. It set out to embed ESD principles and considerations into decision-making processes within the three spheres of government (NSES 1992). Significantly, tourism was one of the 11 sectors within that internationally acknowledged strategy (GFANC 1997).

Just as ESD (like EST) is a paradox, even an oxymoron to some, it has also been seen as: 'an ideal political formulation providing the global community with the illusion of a

broad, coherent consensus, within which an almost endless array of objectives may be pursued' (Turner 1997). There are dozens of labels such as green, soft, authentic, alternative, new and ecotourist developed to convey a commitment to 'sustainable tourism', with growing international opprobrium arising from the environmental and cultural toll taken by mass tourism (Butler 1990). The analysis of social geographers Mowforth and Munt (1998) demonstrates the role of power, and hence political conflict, in explaining the variable definitions of so-called sustainable tourism and the political perspectives of their proponents, whether they be property developers or safari hunters on Indigenous pastoral land. They discern an appropriation of the term 'sustainability' (now a marketing buzz word) to serve conflicting discourse and interests.

In fact the word 'ecologically' tends to be left out altogether by many commentators. Sustainability may even imply the maintenance of an industry and its profit levels, irrespective of the level of natural resource use entailed. Nowhere is the conflict of values more apparent than in disputes over the use of land, and the use of land and sea is at the heart of the debate over EST. The question posed by one academic industry advocate, fearful of protected areas being 'locked up' is: Can tourism survive sustainability, the 'unrecognised threat?' (McKercher 1993).

Another academic, also writing from a laissez-faire perspective, has observed that:

*the key determinants of what happens will be the market ... Sustainable tourism is, perhaps, an impossible dream ... because tourism is inherently unsustainable or... unforeseen future political, economic, social and*

*technological changes may make current approaches to sustainable management obsolete (Swarbrooke 1999, p.41).*

By implication, since the future is unknowable and degradation an unfortunate externality, society, government and industry are absolved from attempting to forestall the inevitable. Of course this runs directly counter to the precautionary principle, central to the application of ESD worldwide, namely that ‘where there is the possibility of irreversible harm to the environment protective action should be taken *in advance* of scientific “proof” of harm’ (Harding and Fisher 1999, p. v). That is, the precautionary principle guiding EST serves to anticipate and prevent rather than react to damage.

A rare analysis of threats to the world’s coastal areas through tourism has been made by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (GFANC 1997). Even in supposedly progressive European countries, and even in officially protected areas, biodiversity was found to be substantially unprotected from tourist impacts (GFANC 1997, p. 135). Mass travel to and construction of infrastructure in remote and fragile locations was also seen to threaten biodiversity and ecosystems through vegetation clearance (often undervalued but crucial mangrove and heath land habitat), discharge of sewage and draining of wetlands.

The incremental destruction for over a decade at Oyster Point, adjacent to World Heritage Hinchinbrook Island and the Barrier Reef Marine Park, is a case in point in Australia. Not even the highest available level of international, national and state protection of the area for all mankind could prevent the cumulative degradation of land, sea and biodiversity associated with the development of a resort and marina. In the words of the recent all-

party Senate Inquiry, the process was characterized by ‘controversy, inter-governmental disputes and bungling at all levels ... a tragedy of errors’ (Allison 1999, p. xv).

Controversial development aside, affluent, environmentally aware ecotourists, pioneering entry to fragile or remote destinations, may open up, popularise and pave the way for subsequent mass visitation, rather than ‘treading lightly’ as conventional wisdom would have it. Ecotourism as marketed and practiced is not necessarily ecologically sustainable.

### **International Commitments**

The global scale of environmental threats and, accordingly, the need for intervention on that scale has been the focus of increasing effort under the aegis of the UN for over thirty years. It developed in a period often described as the ‘first wave’ of environmentalism, particularly in OECD countries, including Australia. The UN Convention on the Human Environment in Stockholm, in 1972, led the way. In 1982, member nations formally recognised their obligations to protect the environment, through the adoption by the UN General Assembly of a Resolution on the World Charter for Nature, this in turn paving the way for UNCED in 1987. The ambiguity inherent in a commitment to ‘optimum production without endangering ecosystems’ remains.

Two developments of particular relevance to EST arose from the UNCED process. First, the Biodiversity Convention was opened for signature at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 and has since been ratified. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including 27 guiding principles, was also negotiated at that conference. A related framework for action known

as Agenda 21 was adopted at the same time. This dealt with a range of areas pertinent to EST, including construction, transport, energy and waste management.

Unlike the Biodiversity Convention, Agenda 21 is not a treaty and requires no legislative application in member states. It is therefore not legally binding and enforceable.

However, as a comprehensive approach overseen by a UN conference at which 130 heads of state and government were present, it provides a co-operative, coherent direction in principle and practice including monitoring and report back, with legitimacy world-wide (Marlin 1996).

### **Australia's Commitment**

Australia is rare, as a developed nation, in being 'one of the most important countries for global biodiversity' (GFANC 1997, p. 62). Yet its record of elimination and endangerment of species of flora and fauna, through continued land clearance, is well documented (Beale & Fray, 1990). The record has nevertheless been progressive in many ways, including the early declaration of national parks, and support for listing of 13 sites subject to the World Heritage Convention, through the World Heritage Properties Conservation Act, 1983. Certainly, Australia was one of the first signatories to the World Heritage Convention and a member of the World Heritage Committee from 1976-89 (Kennedy 1996).

Australian adherence to 'best practice' appears to be recognised in the international literature. The German Federal Nature Conservation Agency singled out Australia for commendation on the basis of the ambitious ESD policy and implementation strategies (such as the National Ecotourism Strategy and funding program) undertaken in the 1990s



and of whose ultimate sidelining the Agency, at the time of publication in 1997, is apparently unaware (GFANC 1997, p. 66 & p. 218). The declaration of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Authority established under the Act of that name in 1975 is similarly widely recognised as a precedent.

In terms of the Convention on the Conservation of Biodiversity, Australia also played a lead role in drafting the articles of the proposed implementation procedures. Michael Kennedy (1996) notes that the Commonwealth acted ahead of obligations emerging under the Convention by establishing a public advisory committee in 1991, to develop the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity, completed by September 1992. Kennedy observes, however, that:

*Notwithstanding the ratification by Australia ... program implementation, national and international, has been in limbo ever since ... biodiversity conservation was given a back seat to perceived economic threats in a Cabinet ... hotly pursued by every major industry association in the country* (1996. p. 187).

The environment was perceived as a non-issue in 1899, when Australia's federal constitution was being drafted. Without explicit constitutional powers in this area, the Commonwealth has traditionally been loath to exercise the considerable powers vested in it under s 51, which relates to trade and commerce, taxation and external affairs (Bates 1983, p 19). Phillip Toyne (1994), former director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, has documented this failure to 'intervene in state affairs'. The combination of a united front between powerful industry lobbies (mining, construction, transport and

tourism) and between states and territories as well as a shared commitment by both major parties to a dominant economic paradigm, is cited to explain this reluctance.

Above all, the Commonwealth has been bound (and bound itself) politically rather than legally, to consensus outcomes with the states, as in the Inter Governmental Agreement on the Environment (1992). More recently, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act (1999), ‘the most major adjustment of environmental law in decades’ (Campbell 1997, p.294), has promoted deregulation and devolution, as well as maximum ministerial discretion in environment protection. Yet according to Toyne (1994), in no country has such sustained controversy accompanied World Heritage Listing, symptomatic of the interests liable to be weakened under this reform. In a nation lacking uniformity of legislation and with ‘confused and ad hoc action’ for environmental protection by the Commonwealth Government, Toyne comes to the ‘gloomy conclusion that for all the mechanisms tried, a durable, effective measure has yet to be found’ (Toyne 1994, p. 3).

## **2.2 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

Community, like sustainability, is an ill-defined concept subject to different use and interpretation by those of quite different interests and motives. Every stakeholder, certainly publicly, acknowledges the need for community involvement and support, for a variety of reasons.

There is no single community however, particularly in a society that prides itself on pluralism and multiculturalism. In reality, there are heterogeneous, overlapping communities with a variety of formal and informal affiliation – occupational, non-

government, industrial, party political, ideological, local, regional, state, national and international. Those writing from the perspective of developing countries, increasingly refer to Indigenous people as 'the community' (Maggio 1998). The issue of land rights is relevant here as Indigenous groups, such as in the Philippines, Indonesia and the Caribbean, mobilize in the face of loss of livelihood from alienated land or silted rivers, as a result of exploitation of forests by multinational timber companies (Broad and Cavanagh 1993; McDaniels and Trousdale 1999).

Many different research perspectives have been adopted on sustainable tourism. For example, Macbeth (1997) addresses the local community as his client in the planning exercise. He explicitly researches and assembles a local community perspective in his study of sustainable tourism development in the former Victorian Shire of Omeo. Murphy, on the other hand, seeks to facilitate the tourism industry's ability 'to adjust and prosper within this new reality' of sustainable development in place of the 'old free market economic system' (1998 pp.178 and 185). He identifies the challenge as getting the sustainable development message 'to the (industry) front lines where it needs to be implemented' (1998 p.187). As tourism academic and avowed industry advocate, McKercher offers another perspective. He claims to be deeply sceptical both of ecological sustainability and of the bona fides of 'the conservation movement' for 'using sustainability' to promote 'pernicious land use policies' to displace tourism (1993 p.132).

Those writing from a tourism industry perspective often implicitly define the community as local residents who must be 'on side' with tourism developments. This was evident in

1996, for example, when protestors opposed the establishment of Club Med on a prime beachfront site at Byron Bay in NSW. It was important that the opposition be defused, costly delays avoided, the planning process streamlined and tourists warmly received by a well disposed ‘host community ‘ (Pearce 1996). On the other hand, the ‘green consumer’ is increasingly influential and identified as a profitable and growing market sector, a manifestation of community preference. Recent research in the hospitality industry, for example, confirms that ‘green practice’ has been driven by consumer pressure rather than hotelier enlightenment – the industry being pragmatic rather than proactive in this regard (Knowles et al 1999).

There are many definitions and conceptions of community and many proposed rationales for community involvement. Croall (1995), for example, documents a series of imaginative and effective local strategies and actions to stem or repair environmental damage caused by tourism in Britain. Local action, especially in aggregation, is also demonstrably effective both on the ground and in modifying government policy, and hence industry practice. Indeed, environmental progress in Australia, if measured in legislation, is generally attributable to intermittent groundswells of sustained community action. It has typically been instigated by individual champions (often scientists and bush lovers) enlisting and working through non-government environmental organisations, such as Friends of the Earth, The Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation (Pybus 1990; Thomas 1998; Toyne 1994).

Successful environmental campaigns have not simply been won by logical argument or high mindedness on the part of governments. Rather, it has been through massive, highly controversial grass-roots campaigns both on site (as with opposition to the construction of

the Franklin Dam in 1982/3 and the sand mining of Fraser Island), in the media and, ultimately, at the ballot box. The development of the Tasmanian Greens and the Green Bans movement of unionists in NSW 20 years ago, though in eclipse, has had significant national and international impact, not least in inspiring the formation of the German Greens Party (Pybus and Flanagan 1990).

Strangely, this fundamental legitimacy and strategic importance of community is rarely acknowledged in the tourism literature. Generally, there is a relatively passive definition of community as object – to be educated, enlisted, mobilized or co-opted. Surprisingly rare too, is mention of the role and rights of citizens to whom government is ostensibly accountable, to be guaranteed meaningful participation in decisions increasingly shrouded, in a free market global economy, in ‘commercial in confidence.’ Hence the pessimistic conclusion drawn by Munt and Mowforth (1998), seemingly at a loss for solutions, despite their rigorous and illuminating analysis of the political economy of tourism.

## **2.3 STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT AND COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING**

### **Stakeholder Theories: Origins and Approaches**

In the face of incomprehension, tokenism and scepticism it is understandable that despondency as to the ecologically sustainable management of natural resources should persist. However, growing interest in ‘stakeholder’ analysis over the past decade, offers the chance of productive engagement of interests hitherto embroiled in often costly and

intractable conflict. This conflict has been especially evident in relation to proposed development in public and protected reserves both in Australia and abroad.

In the words an article in the Australian Financial Review (Harley 1997):

*Throughout Australia, from Port Hinchinbrook in the north, through East Circular Quay, Balmain or Mascot in Sydney and Wilson's Promontory or the Twelve Apostles in the south – the increasing pace of development is running headlong into a rising national frustration over the way the environment is shaped ... the outpouring of... grief... taps a growing national frustration with the failure of planning process and planning outcomes.*

Such protest was most evident and sustained in Victoria in the 1990s. For example, in 1994, crowds of 10,000 rallied in Melbourne in May and July and 6,000 in December, to protest the commercialisation of inner city Albert Park for the Formula One Grand Prix. This was effected under conditions of commercial-in-confidence and withdrawal of right of appeal to the Supreme Court and entitlement to an Environment Effects Statement. Again, 20,000 gathered at a *Victorians Under Threat* rally in the Melbourne City Square on February 10, 1995. Indeed, so many and widespread were sites in contention in Victoria under the Kennett Coalition Government (1992-99), that over 80 community groups were represented at a further protest rally called by an alliance of non government organisations including the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) in Melbourne on 23 February, 1997, under the banner: *Hands Off Our Parks* (Save Albert Park 1999).

Many of these protest groups had developed in response to proposed tourist and major event infrastructure on Crown Land, including national parks, notably commercial development in the state's 'flagship' national park at Wilson's Promontory. Such developments (as in North America over the previous decade) followed the decline of the traditional industrial and maritime economic and employment base (Noll and Zimbalist 1997). As in the USA, Victoria's rural recession made such proposals attractive to all three spheres of government.

In the context of high profile conflict and radically changed institutional relationships within and between the three spheres of government, reference to stakeholders gained currency in Australia. Corporatisation, privatisation and contracting out of governmental goods and service provision followed establishment of the National Competition Policy in 1995 (National Competition Council 1999/2000). This generated new entities and reporting procedures, 'stakeholder relationships' becoming routinely reflected in mission statements and annual reports (Argy 1998, p. 85). The term was first coined by the Stanford Research Institute in 1963, drawing on analysis of the corporate planning process at Lockheed. In the following 20 years the concept was developed as *management theory*, as a *process for strategic management* and as a *framework for analysis* (Shafritz 1998, p. 2120), becoming a managerial buzzword internationally in the 1990s.

A stakeholder is generally defined as an individual or group with a 'stake' or interest in an organisation (or place, activity or decision), 'sometimes referred to as an influencer, claimant, public or constituency' (Shafritz 1998, p. 2119). Originally applied to business organisations, the concept has been applied more widely in both government and non-

government sectors, especially in the English speaking world, as support for a neoliberal philosophy of governance and a corporate model of best practice became increasingly entrenched (Hutton 1996). There is thus a myriad of potential stakeholders, depending on the complexity and significance of an issue - organisational, political, economic, social and environmental. Stakeholders may be internal or external to an organisation; employee, board member or shareholder, competitor, critic or customer, regulator, legislator or investor. They may also operate at one or more levels, from international through to neighborhood arenas.

Rather than claiming discrete lists of interests, some researchers have developed models of 'concentric circles' or 'clusters' of stakeholders around a central resource, chiefly public land (Caneday & Kuzmic 1997, p.1180) or again, of a 'universe of community stakeholders' (Healey 1997, p.271). Indeed, Sautter and Leisen (1999) have developed the concept of a 'new tourism system', based on mapping the roles and relationships of key stakeholders, rather than a traditional model representing the interaction between tourism entities or functions.

It is evident from the prolific industry and research literature that the concept of stakeholder is not uniform. To some it is alien, conveying substitution of corporate for social democratic models of governance. To others it implies marginalization of citizens through government identification of key interests with whom dialogue and influence may be concentrated. Writers who classify civil society as 'a stakeholder', along with business interests and public authorities, epitomise such marginalisation (and confusion) in an era when citizens are often labeled customers (Davies & Johnson 1995). The three



mutually exclusive categories of stakeholders, experts and the public represents another, perhaps unwitting, anti-democratic use of the term (Morrone & Hawley 1998).

On the other hand many analysts, including Healey (1997), use stakeholder theory precisely in order to justify and promote more democratic discourse. Such researchers seek to identify the broad gamut of relevant stakeholders and to open the debate beyond a narrow range of industry lobbies or shareholders. A recent Canadian researcher has stated, for example, that he:

*deplores the penchant of economists to evaluate on the basis of willingness to pay (WTP) all policy positions except their own ... and recommends ... 'stakeholder' negotiations and collaborations, which offer deliberative, diverse, and therefore democratic approaches to resolving environmental disputes and solving environmental problems (Sagoff 2000, p. 1426).*

Another Canadian academic argues that, whereas destination visions are typically market-driven, a vision for 'a unique national treasure' must be driven 'by the values (the "deeply held, enduring beliefs" of those affected') - the stakeholders' (Brent Ritchie 1999, p. 273).

Some academics, however, have cautioned against the 'so-called stakeholder society' as a 'necessary corrective to free-market capitalism' (Robson 1996, p.533). There are tensions and ambiguities as well as benefits in the stakeholder metaphor. One researcher concludes that the use of the term 'reflects an optimistic communitarianism, and that the benefits of emphasizing community participation, rights and responsibilities, should not

be used to legitimate a policy of abandonment of those (geographic) communities lacking the resources to participate as stakeholders' (Sunley 1999, p. 2189).

Beyond definitions, varying disciplines, epistemologies and values inform different applications of stakeholder theory. Relevant research areas range from risk management, decision-making, game theory and conflict management to public ethics and accountability (Lejano & Davos 1999; McDaniels & Trousdale 1999; Shields et al 1999).

From a North American recreation management perspective it was argued, almost a decade ago, that with 'diversifying land uses, the nature of public lands decision-making is changing ... policy being in a perpetual state of negotiation between multiple interests' (Stewart et al 1991, p.61). The authors accordingly distinguish between a relatively passive definition of stakeholder under 'the historical model', and the emerging alternative (and imperative) of active stakeholder engagement in such negotiation. Their analysis of user group assessment of management in two national parks supported the hypothesis that 'pathways for dialogue between stakeholders influence the development and ultimate acceptance of land management decisions' (Stewart et al 1991, p. 63).

Political scientists, urban geographers and, more recently, ecologists have developed stakeholder theory with particular application to ecologically sustainable tourism. Concern with social and environmental justice has been the spur to such analysis. This has prompted a focus on unequal distribution of resources and power in allocating land uses, and of costs and benefits of subsequent developments – economic, environmental and social. Degradation and dispossession is well documented, notably in developing countries and associated with various land uses, including tourism, such as in the Caribbean, Philippines and Indonesia. Planning models which accommodate opposing

values and interests are, however, emerging (McDaniels & Trousdale 2000; Aston 1999).

In understanding and moving beyond the stand-off between 'the economy and the environment' as a zero sum game, the identification and participation of multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process is a fruitful area of new research, from a number of perspectives.

Linking *political economy* with the concerns of *ecology*, *political ecology* seeks to understand how environmental and political forces effect social and environmental changes through various 'social actors' operating at different scales, from international to local (Stonich 1998, p. 28). Developing momentum since the 1970s, political ecology focuses on the relative power of these actors, or stakeholders, in terms of access to and management of natural resources, actors being linked by relations of power. The role of the state through policies such as taxation, incentives and concessions and through processes that favour some actors over others, is central to this analysis. One such approach is to be found in a rare application to tourism of the emerging school of political ecology. This case study of tourism development in the Bay of Islands, Honduras, showed that while the islands' freshwater and marine resources were at risk through unchecked tourism, the adverse affects were not equally distributed (Stonich 1998, p. 25). Although environmental degradation was attributable to the actions of powerful national and international stakeholders, the poor ladino immigrants and Afro-Antillean residents bore the brunt of resulting environmental health risks.

While many studies over the past 20 years have demonstrated adverse environmental and social impacts from tourism development (Butler 1990; GFANC 1997; Gurung et al 1999), the disaggregation of these consequences for various actors/stakeholders, is a

conceptual and methodological feature of political ecology. The apparent inability of non-government bodies and responsible authorities ‘to stem the negative environmental effects and associated human costs of tourism’, Stonich argues ‘is to mandate the meaningful involvement of local people in all facets of the tourism industry (1998, p. 49). Motivated differently, as political ecologist, she effectively reinforces the pragmatic conclusions of Stewart (1991) as recreation manager.

Another and more common approach to ecological sustainability has been through the concept of Integrated Resource Management, applied internationally and reflected in the Report of the Australian Resource Assessment Commission on the management and use of the coastal zone (1993). This approach has been chiefly driven by the environment sector – scientific, government and non-government. Here too, the application of stakeholder theory has assisted clarification of the roles and relationships of multiple government agencies (and constituent lobbies) responsible for aspects of management of common sites. Traditionally these separate responsibilities have been exercised in functional isolation - Ministerial, departmental and intergovernmental. The introduction of a unifying management objective and related structures, often at a regional level, fosters a whole-of-government, area-based approach more conducive to pursuit of economic and environmental outcomes. The Westernport and Upper Yarra Valley regions, through past statutory regional authorities and land use plans, have been leaders (and exceptions) in this regard in Victoria.

A tension remains, however, between profitability and more altruistic goals inherent in the concept of ecological sustainability. This tension is highlighted in Canadian research which explores ‘the crisis of legitimacy surrounding ecotourism’ (Lawrence, Phillips and

Wickens 1997, p. 308). The alleged crisis is traced to the genesis of ecotourism as an entrepreneurial activity based on growing demand for nature-based tourism, and as an environmentalist strategy to promote conservation and education. The intractability of 'the legitimacy problem' is attributed to the industry's need to gain the support of a plethora of interested stakeholders, with dramatically different expectations and understandings, interacting in an ill-defined institutional context.

A recent paper on the moral basis of stakeholder theory provides an unusual perspective of relevance to questions of altruism and legitimacy (Gibson 2000). Gibson identifies three approaches to stakeholder theory. The first is descriptive: whether stakeholder interests are taken into account in decision-making; the second is instrumental: what impact stakeholders may have in terms of corporate effectiveness; and the third, the normative approach: why corporations ought to consider stakeholder interests even in the absence of any apparent benefit (2000, p.245).

Clearly ecotourism, as an industry niche, is a microcosm of the wider arena in which governments (and businesses) committed to ecologically sustainable development must negotiate. Lawrence et al's response to the challenge of 'legitimacy management' in ecotourism, in being susceptible to criticism for failing to live up to its aims, is three-pronged. First, there must be analysis of the stakeholders involved; second, of the kinds of evaluative frameworks they use and third, of the issues being evaluated. Stakeholders are seen to be central to the 'politics of legitimacy'. Hence the 'management of legitimacy' is a political process whereby the interests of stakeholders conflict as they work to construct expectations and perceptions (including through the media) that favour their own goals' (Lawrence et al 1997, p. 309). So the management of legitimacy (by all

stakeholders and responsible authorities) may take two forms: that of trying to legitimize and to deligitimise a certain activity or position. The outcome of this ‘conversation’ between stakeholders, determines the degree of support that stakeholders will provide and marshal.

There are recurring themes and conclusions in the extensive and recent literature based on case studies of stakeholder research in tourism. Just as stakeholder analysts write from quite distinct value perspectives, so the stakeholders, whose perspectives and relationships they analyse, espouse diverse values and evaluative frameworks. It is this inevitable value conflict over what is desirable and possible, on the part of democratic government and stakeholders, that leads academic and practising urban planners, such as Forrester (1999), to conceive of planning as *an argumentative discipline*. Far from being expert and value free, he argues, planners operate in (and are part of) a highly political and value-laden environment in which, to paraphrase George Orwell (1998), ‘some are more equal than others.’ Healey (2000) elaborates on this school of *communicative planning* in her scholarly and persuasive linking of land use planning with the institutional arrangements or governance in which it is embedded. She, too, concludes that only through meaningful and enforceable involvement of representatives from that ‘universe of community stakeholders’ may ecologically sustainable outcomes be negotiated.

### **Design and Assessment of Tourism Planning Process**

The threads of these analytic approaches are usefully drawn together in recent land use planning reform in the Canadian province of British Columbia. Similar to Australia in its

constitutional arrangements and land use planning, Canada also possesses natural assets of great beauty, diversity and pristine condition, which have enabled rapid growth in international tourism and outdoor recreation. Again, like Australia, pressure of competing forms of development over the past 10-15 years has generated some of the most contentious land use conflicts in Canada's history. High profile, bitter and protracted conflict between industry and conservation groups, as well as over Native Title claims, have been costly, time-consuming and destabilising. It was recognised by government in the 1980s that there had to be a better way of allocating land and resources (Williams, Penrose & Hawkes 1998, p. 861).

Experiment and reform in Canada were driven by the need to accommodate the complexities, uncertainties and competing values to which the traditional top-down, planning and management paradigm was unequal. Growing cynicism and frustration in the community as to government's capacity to protect public interests was first met with various forms of supplementary consultation and with institutional arrangements to enable integrated resource management. This had the effect of forcing better inter-agency co-operation and more meaningful public stakeholder involvement.

Shared Decision-making, as developed and implemented in British Columbia, was firmly based on the theory and practice of *consensus building*, *interest-based negotiation* and *collaboration* (Williams et al 1998, p. 864). The critical departure from conventional approaches, it was claimed, was the level of collaboration between decision-makers and those who had not historically taken part in this process. Consensus building (rather than unilateral or majority decisions) aimed to reduce power imbalances between stakeholders. Through interest-based negotiation, it sought to build on common ground

rather than allow energy to be expended in defending opposing positions. While public participation takes time and resources, it was argued, the alternative of sustained conflict, unsatisfactory resolution and the need to revisit a problem inadequately dealt with, may well be more costly in the long run (Harley 1997). Environmental and political costs, such as loss of legitimacy and trust, were less easily calculated long-term costs.

The evaluation of the planning model developed and implemented in British Columbia seems readily applied and tested in Australia. In 1992 the provincial government embarked on a comprehensive land use planning process. It was unprecedented in two respects: its statewide scale and its level of involvement of citizens in decision-making. An independent organisation, the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) was established and ‘mandated to advise the government on public land and related resource issues, and to develop and guide the implementation of a provincial land use strategy’ (Williams et al 1998, p. 861). This was to be achieved through *shared decision-making* processes between government and stakeholders enabling negotiation of *consensus agreements*.

Shared decision-making (SDM) was defined as meaning that:

*on a certain set of issues, those with authority to make a decision and those who will be affected by the decision are empowered to jointly seek an outcome that accommodates rather than compromises the interests of all concerned* (Williams et al 1998, p. 861).

Such a definition clarifies the distinction between those with authority and those who are stakeholders in the decision-making process. Significantly, planning strategies were



explicitly required to focus on achieving ecologically sustainable development, as defined by Brundtland. It was also argued, again consistent with Brundtland, that the probability of sustainable stewardship of natural resources would be greater if there were meaningful citizen involvement in consensus problem solving.

In SDM, all public stakeholders are expected to play a direct role – on issues to be addressed, in data acquisition, in analysis, in making trade-offs and in helping to implement decisions. It pays particular attention to process. The success of this consensus approach is seen to depend on a number of factors, such as the perception by all parties that it is a preferred approach, and the political will of government to support it through to the end. Williams et al go further in defining optimal but unrealistic conditions for SDM, predicting that ‘if there is an imbalance of power, such collaborative processes will likely fail’ (1998 p.865).

Through a suitably structured process, it is argued however, viable decisions and agreement are possible. This is consistent with Dryzek’s contention that, as structures improve, so does the quality of debate and decision-making (1993). While SDM may have potential as a tool in providing the structures and process for promoting ecologically sustainable decision-making, the challenge was to make it work in practice.

Four regions, traditionally plagued with land use conflict within the Province of British Columbia, were the initial focus for the planning reform. The evaluation of the planning process in one of those regions, Cariboo-Chilcotin, was conducted in two stages, between 1992 and 1996. The focus of this research was on the role of tourism stakeholders and

aimed to describe and assess the efficacy of the process in terms of the outcomes desired and attained by the industry.

Drawing on criteria drawn from the extensive literature on interest-based negotiation, consensus building and collaborative planning, Williams et al, (1998) sought to evaluate SDM processes as applied to the British Columbia reform. Table 1 reproduces the authors' Framework of Design and Evaluative Criteria for SDM Process, indicating the ten criteria used, grouped into three categories, namely: support for process, representation and resources, and process design. Design and conduct of a planning process to meet these criteria, they argue, should increase the probability of fairness, efficiency and stability in land use decision-making (Williams 1998, p. 867).

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

Following the literature review, it was decided that the case study methodology was appropriate to document and analyse the decision-making process during a recent and controversial tourism development in a national park. This was done to better understand the role of the community at a project level, and to apply a model of stakeholder management in evaluating the process. The case selected was that of the proposed visitor centre adjacent to the Twelve Apostles at Port Campbell National Park, in south west Victoria in 1996-9 (refer map of the Great Ocean Road, p.1).

#### **Case Study**

The case study approach was adopted for several reasons. Firstly, it would allow for an in-depth examination of the key stakeholders - their views, roles, resources and relationships - in promoting or impeding ecologically sustainable tourism development. It had the potential to highlight the linkages between the practical realities and theoretical context of EST and stakeholder theory. An alternative approach would have been to survey participants by questionnaire, thus allowing a larger number of respondents, a broader institutional and geographic spread and, perhaps, a comparison of several cases of tourism development. Such an approach was judged inappropriate in this case, in part for logistical reasons. Secondly, using the single case study, semi- structured interviews could provide greater initiative and depth in stakeholder response. This was judged to be more productive in the poorly researched field of planning process, especially in rural areas. Such in-depth examination of the process could better inform future survey by questionnaire.

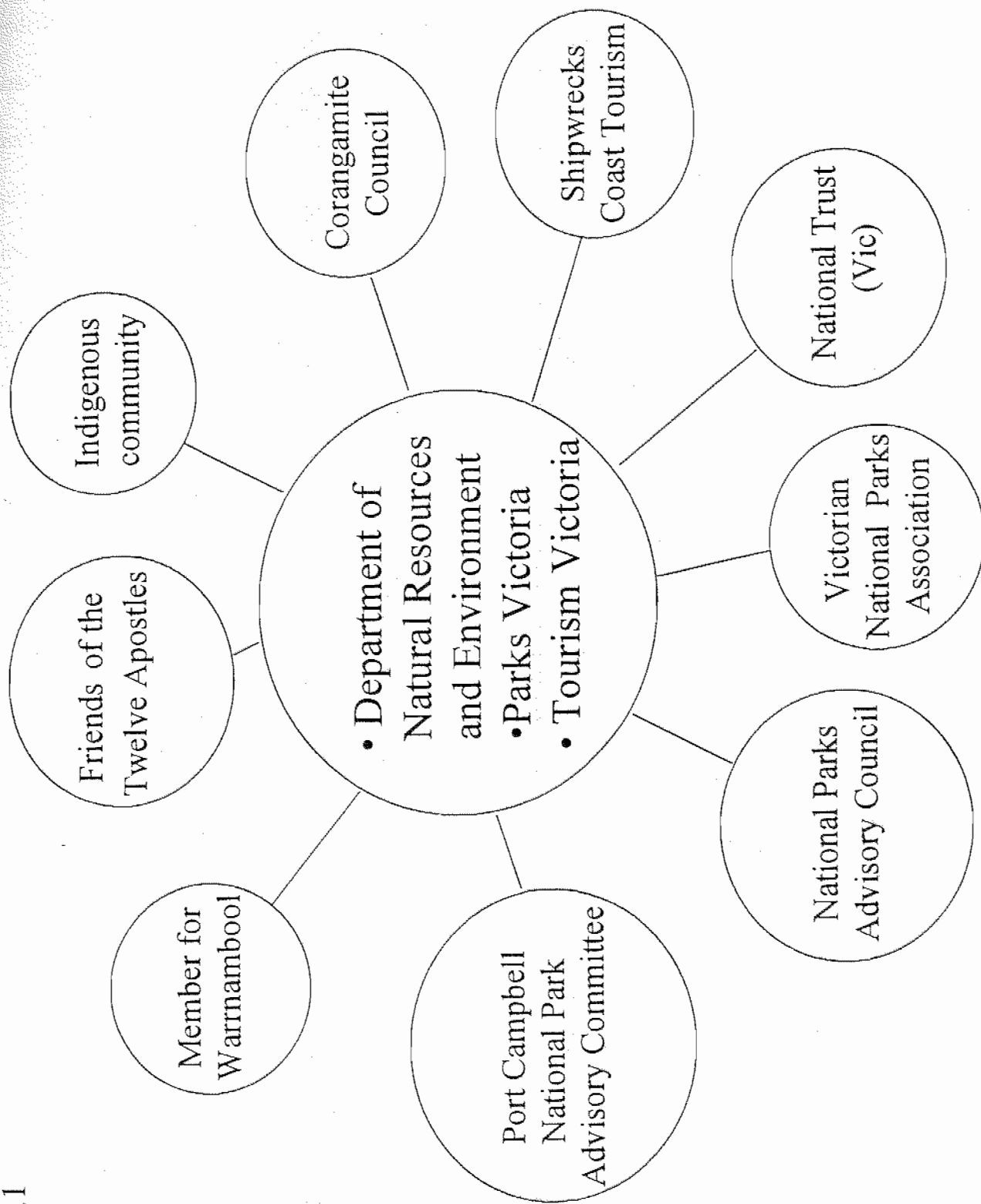
Thirdly, analysis of the political and managerial framework and dynamics of decision-making during a period of major economic and public sector change in Victoria, lent itself to case study method. The Twelve Apostles case was selected as a prominent and recent example of disputed development in a protected area. Such conflicts have dogged many significant tourism and related developments in rural Australia over the past decade. As a major state project, attracting sustained public and media attention over a three year period, it was likely to offer sufficient and diverse oral and documentary material to allow for the conduct of a detailed study.

In particular, being located in Victoria ‘the contract state’ (Alford & Fitzgerald 1994), the case was one of numerous contested tourism projects in the period of Coalition government between 1992 and 1999. It therefore had potential to clarify the influence on land use planning and environmental management of recent deregulation, corporatisation and small government policies. These had been implemented more comprehensively in this state than elsewhere in Australia. Finally, practical considerations affecting the single case selection were those of proximity and affordable access to the site and to interviewees, within the short time-frame available to a researcher undertaking a minor thesis.

The researcher analysed a range of public documents including legislation and key government strategies, business plans, annual reports, management and marketing documents as well as national, metropolitan and local print media coverage. The Twelve Apostles project files of five organisations were made available for the research, namely those of the Corangamite Shire, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Victorian National Parks Association, Shipwreck Coast Tourism Association Inc. and Friends of

# THE TWELVE APOSTLES VISITOR CENTRE STAKEHOLDER MAP 1996/99

Fig.1



the Twelve Apostles. In an iterative process, based on such secondary sources and on preliminary discussion with a number of observers and participants in the planning process, (academic, public sector and non-government), a stakeholder audit was undertaken (Corbett 1992). A stakeholder map was drawn up, based on the audit, and nine stakeholders were identified (refer fig.1). The stakeholders selected were those centrally involved in or impacted by the proposals, and operating in relation to the three central agencies with authority over the project. There was a high level of consensus among informants as to the identity of key stakeholders and authorities.

The researcher identified representatives of these stakeholders and authorities who could offer particular perspectives and interests, with a view to providing a credible sample of the multiple perspectives, listed in Appendix 1. The key interest groups from which they were selected, were identified for the purpose of the research project as follows:

**Victorian Government Departments or agencies:** Department of Natural Resources and Environment, (including specialist advisory and co-coordinative bodies such as the Victorian Coastal Council and Western Regional Coastal Board); Parks Victoria, (central and regional offices); Tourism Victoria; National Parks Advisory Council and the then Member of the Legislative Assembly for Warrnambool (1985-99);

**Local Government:** Corangamite Shire Council;

**Tourism industry:** Shipwreck Coast Tourism Inc and the Twelve Apostles Tourism Association;

TABLE 1

# FRAMEWORK OF DESIGN AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR SHARED DECISION MAKING (WILLIAMS, 1998)

Criteria	Description
Support for Process: Participant Support for Process	Participants must acknowledge need for change and be committed to SDM. Participation must be voluntary. Appropriateness of negotiation should be assessed before negotiations begin.
Government Support for Process	Government must demonstrate leadership and commitment by establishing clear objectives, allocating sufficient resources, and acting upon consensus recommendations. It should legislate SDM processes and the public's right to participation. Government must provide timely policy support and coordinate a SDM process with related initiatives.
Representation and Resources: Inclusive Representation of Interests	All interested and affected parties must be allowed to participate. Timely notification of opportunities to participate must be given and provision made to add parties after negotiations begin. Government representation is critical. The number of parties must be manageable. The wider public must be kept informed.
Effective Representation of Interests	<i>Sector representatives</i> must be committed, interest-based, empowered, maintain communication with constituents, and use their resources efficiently. <i>Government representatives</i> must exhibit all traits of sector representatives and be neutral, available, skilled and knowledgeable.
Sufficient Resources for Participants	Participants must be provided sufficient and timely training, funding, and information. Information must be accurate, understandable, and relevant. Joint-fact finding promotes productive problem-solving. Experts must be available to explain and interpret information.
Effective Process Management	Process managers must be neutral, committed, available, skilled, and knowledgeable.
Process Design: Clear Terms of Reference and Realistic Scope	Terms of reference must be clear and agreed to by all parties. The mandate should be scoped appropriately to keep negotiations manageable. Geographic scale should be meaningful to all participants. A realistic time frame must be set.
Participatory Design	All participants should be involved in negotiation process design.
Comprehensive and Effective Procedural Framework	A comprehensive procedural framework should delineate: roles, responsibilities, and conduct of participants; organisation, roles, and authority of subgroups; consensus and a dispute settlement process; deadlines and a fallback mechanism; and meeting management rules and media policy. The process must be adaptive. Participants must adhere to procedural agreements if a framework is to be effective.
Structured and Integrative Decision-Making Framework	Complexity of substantive issues must be managed by structuring the decision process. Objective criteria should be used to provide clarity and bound discretion. All participants must be involved meaningfully in decision-making. The process should be comprehensive and integrative in order to promote decisions rooted in the social, economic, and environmental principles of sustainability.

**Non-government organisations:** National Trust of Australia (Vic) and the Victorian National Parks Association;

**Indigenous organisations:** Framlingham Aboriginal Trust;

**Community organisations:** Friends of the Twelve Apostles and the Port Campbell National Park Advisory Committee.

Representative informants were enlisted in what proved to be a delicate and time consuming process of research, consultation and negotiation, given the political sensitivity, recency and complexity of the case. Identifying such informants, validating their selection and enlisting their involvement were decisive factors in amending the original decision to undertake two cases to one. 15 face-to-face interviews were conducted during the period November 17 – December 22, 2000. They lasted for between 60 minutes and 2 hours and involved 17 informants. Each interviewee was guaranteed anonymity in a research contract made between the researcher and the interviewee. The text of the contract was endorsed by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Victoria University's Faculty of Business and Law.

A semi-structured interview format was used, incorporating the key criteria used to evaluate the planning process. These had been identified in the stakeholder literature review and, specifically, in the research of Williams et al (1998). The relevant design framework and the evaluative criteria developed in that research are set out in Table 1. The use of open-ended questions informed by these criteria allowed a high degree of flexibility to respondents. This enabled the identification of issues not explicitly sought or anticipated by the researcher. The schedule is attached as Appendix 2. Detailed notes



were taken by the researcher throughout each interview, question by question. Use of a recording device was rejected as likely to inhibit candid discussion of potentially sensitive issues. No comments are attributed or attributable to an individual in the text, other than one by a member of parliament who authorised its use and whose views were well represented in the local print media. The author supplemented this material with detailed notes from the project files made available by five stakeholders. Photocopied material from these files was also provided, letterhead having been removed in one case.

Gaining access to organisational files involved considerable negotiation. They were important because their contents documented and clarified the planning process and also enabled more informed interviews by the researcher. Further, the files included private and public documentation and communication, (including the interaction of ongoing correspondence) and hence provided multiple verification of stakeholder accounts. This documentation was significant for a number of reasons: the speed and confidentiality with which some decisions had been undertaken; the considerable duration of the period studied; the variable access to, understanding or recall of information, reports and events; and the significant discontinuity through turnover in key personnel in five of the stakeholder and managing organisations.

### **The Cariboo-Chilcotin (BC) Stakeholder Management Model**

The interview questions were designed to distil stakeholder perceptions of the purposes, outcomes, determinants, strengths and weaknesses of the process. They sought to explore aspects of the ten challenges and related measures brought together for the evaluation of the collaborative land use reform in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of British Columbia,

Canada (refer Appendix 3). This research was selected from the stakeholder literature (to which Canada is a major contributor) on several grounds. First, it arose in a province where circumstances were comparable to the development conflicts experienced in Victoria in the 1990s and where the constitutional and common law context was comparable.

Second, it sought to link the theoretical context of EST and SDM, a variant of stakeholder theory with the practical realities and dynamics of the planning process in British Columbia (Williams, Penrose and Hawkes (1998). Their evaluation was based on a theoretical model specifically designed to promote and assess the social, economic and environmental principles of sustainability (refer table 1). It also provided a rigorous evaluative framework, based on ten widely accepted criteria , for the study of the planning process in the case of the Twelve Apostles development (Williams, 1998). Third, the breadth of the literature from which it was developed and its immediate relevance to the research questions posed in this thesis, rendered it a valid model for application.

In the present research the author contends that the involvement of the community (local, regional, state or national) is a key determinant of ecologically sustainable outcomes for tourism development. However, the research does not target or seek to represent or any single stakeholder or interest. On the contrary, it seeks to disaggregate and clarify the interaction of seemingly amorphous interest groups, such as government, industry and community - their mandates, roles, agendas, resources and effectiveness, through the application of stakeholder theory. Such application is intended to assist in the

identification of the means by which ecologically sustainable tourism can be promoted (or impeded) in an inherently political decision-making process.

In short, the case study methodology, drawing on the Canadian model, links the three tiered concepts on which the literature survey focused, namely: the application of **stakeholder theory** to understanding the **role of the community** in achieving **ecologically sustainable tourism**.

### **Limitations of the Case Study and the Interpretation of Results**

There are several limitations to the chosen methodology and to the interpretation or generalisation of results. Some are inherent to the subject matter and others are a consequence of research decisions and constraints. First, the research was conducted as part of a master of business in tourism management, with the time and resource constraints of a four month study without external funding. Second, the research methods used and interpretation of results were exclusively qualitative. The case study of the Twelve Apostles, in the context of the literature survey, enabled an in-depth analysis of a single dynamic process. Such depth required a narrow focus, with a small number of interviewees whose responses were therefore not amenable to quantitative analysis. The extent to which the case is representative of Victorian, Australian or international experience is neither established nor asserted.

Third, the results derive in part from the retrospective and partisan judgments of stakeholders engaged in a highly publicised, politicised and polarised process, not yet documented or even complete. As in the Williams et al research (1998), there are advantages to retrospective analysis, given the complexity, confidentiality and heightened

sense of vulnerability of those involved in a controversial and well publicised process. There was, however, no opportunity for participant observation and analysis of actual interaction. Attendance at regular or special meetings, convened either by stakeholders, government decision-making agencies during the planning process or by the researcher, would undoubtedly have provided a valuable source of data. As it was, the researcher was the mediator who, (through comparative analysis of interviewees' responses in the context of documented proposals, argument and chronology), effectively assembled and deduced the nature of the debate, decision-making process and outcomes.

Fourth, the planning process was conducted in a turbulent institutional climate of radical reform, with major governmental restructure, including corporatisation, and related stakeholder changes in policy and personnel. This included the establishment in 1996 of Parks Victoria, a corporatised entity with a board of directors. Direct responsibility for managing the Port Campbell National Park, including the Twelve Apostles development was then transferred from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). The Department, through the constituent Department of Conservation and Land Management, retained responsibility as purchaser of Park Victoria's management services, in a purchaser/provider split introduced in the public sector across Victoria. Commercial-in-confidence requirements and a culture of secrecy evident in stakeholder accounts and in government responses to Freedom of Information requests, further inhibited access to information (State Opposition 1996). The Parks Victoria Land Bill in which the objectives and responsibilities of the organization were set out, was not enacted for another 18 months, in May 1998. Such a delay was contrary to parliamentary

convention as the shadow minister for conservation, Sherryl Garbutt, belatedly noted at the time of the enactment ( Hansard 1998).

The Coalition lost two by-elections in 1997 and the political climate leading up to the September 1999 state election, won by the Australian Labor Party (ALP), intensified the uncertainty within which all stakeholders operated. It was not surprising that two key public sector participants in the Twelve Apostles process within DNRE declined to be interviewed. A third, a member of the National Parks Advisory Council, declined to be interviewed on the basis that, apart from annual reports to the State Parliament, the Council is solely charged with advising the Minister for Conservation,. The climate of rapid and fundamental changes in public policy and administration constitute a limitation on documentation and on interpretation in this case. Yet it is, itself, a vital part of the context within which the relevant decision-making occurred.

The extent to which the case is representative is taken up at the conclusion of the thesis. The Twelve Apostles development was certainly part of a statewide government tourist strategy and, equally, part of a statewide protest against commercial development in national parks. However, broadly based conclusions will depend on comparative analysis beyond the resources and focus of the present study. The documentation of the case (including atypical attributes, such as the absence of a commercial proponent of the development), is intended to contribute to the broader and ongoing research agenda.

Regardless of the limitations outlined, all interviewees held key positions in relation to the project in their respective organisations and (with the exception of the Indigenous community) were identified as such by fellow stakeholders. Credence may therefore be

given to their interpretation. Lack of access to government files, and the number and diversity of internal stakeholders in government agencies, notably DNRE, explains the disproportionate number of interviews held with government representatives; six out of a total of 17 interviewees represented senior managers in the three lead government agencies. Furthermore, access to five sets of stakeholder files provided substantial bureaucratic and ministerial correspondence, media releases and reports. Significantly, despite the conflict of values of stakeholders in terms of desired outcomes, the collective definition of process and of stakeholder identity (generally excluding Indigenous stakeholders) was largely consistent.

The stakeholder map (Fig. 1) is a useful representation of the government agencies in authority, and primary interests with a stake in the planning process, selected for the case study. In reality, it became apparent that many participants represented more than one stakeholder, or represented both a lead agency and a stakeholder. A member of the National Parks Advisory Council was also a member of the committee of the VNPA; a regional Parks Victoria employee was on the management committee of Shipwrecks Coast Tourism and Great Ocean Road Tourism; the Manager of Shipwrecks Coast Tourism was on the Country Victoria Tourism Council, within Tourism Victoria; the convenor of FOTA was a member of the Port Campbell Tourism Association and former president of the Port Campbell Progress Association.

Key individuals resigned, were retrenched or moved between DNRE, Parks Victoria and Tourism Victoria during or following their involvement in the project. The extent to which a body such as the Warrnambool-based Western Coastal Board, (predominantly local representatives, but subject to ministerial appointment and to the oversight of

DNRE, under the Victorian Coastal Management Act, 1995) is a regional, quasi-governmental stakeholder or an internal stakeholder of a central government authority, is debatable.

These complexities, and possibly others unknown to the researcher, may limit the interpretation of results obtained. In fact, however, they constitute a valuable dimension of the findings of this single case study in the under-researched area of the politics of planning process (Murphy 1998, p.174; Jenkins 1997, pp.137-8). Indeed, it is precisely the unique and complex combination of factors in this case of multiple stakeholders pursuing multiple agendas on common land, that provides the material from which insights and conclusions may be drawn. The application of the detailed Shared Decision-making (SDM) model of the planning process developed in British Columbia, moreover, provides both a theoretical and empirical basis for evaluating such results in the present study (refer table 1. SDM Framework, Williams et al 1998).

## **4 THE CASE OF THE 12 APOSTLES: SETTING**

### **4.1 CONSERVATION AND TOURISM**

#### **Natural and cultural environment**

The honey coloured limestone stacks of The Twelve Apostles loom off Port Campbell National Park, in an often wild and treacherous sea (refer map page 1). Traveller and sinologist, 'Chinese' Morrison, as a seventeen year old trekking from Queenscliff to Adelaide, described them in his diary of 1880 as: 'immense rocks or rather detached cliffs, standing right away from the land and surrounded with reefs' (Hyett 1997, p. 64). A widely recognised and publicized image, they are the most spectacular point and major tourist destination in a tract of untamed coastline. The towering perpendicular cliffs, up to 65 metres high, have been scoured by the wind and waves of the Southern Ocean over millennia. The result is a series of magnificent gorges, arches, islands and blowholes.

Aptly named the Shipwreck Coast, it claimed five sailing ships between 1855 and 1908. Glenample Homestead, now restored, was the sanctuary for two survivors of the most famous wreck, that of the Loch Ard, in 1878. One of its relics is the exquisite, life-size, Minton earthenware peacock, intended for the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880. It is preserved intact and displayed in Warrnambool, symbolic of the rich maritime history of the region.

For at least 10,000 years before the arrival of Europeans, Aboriginal people lived in the region, a mosaic of culturally significant places then and now. The language groups include the Watha-wurung, the Gadubanud, the Girai-wurring and the Dhauwurd



(Mosley 1997) Coastal middens reflect traditional land use and Gibson Steps, carved into the cliff below Glenample Homestead, are thought to have been first cut by Aborigines (Hyett 1997).

The narrow, linear strip of predominantly windswept heathland, between the Southern Ocean and the Great Ocean Road, was declared Port Campbell National Park in 1964, following a sustained community campaign. Adhering to the park boundaries, extended to 1,750 hectares in 1981, the National Trust classified the landscape as of state significance in 1982. It stretches for 30km from Curdies Inlet to the Gellibrand River, judged 'one of the most unusual and striking coasts in Australia' (National Trust of Australia (Victoria) 1982). The Trust identified its values in the landform, vegetation and man-made elements, a natural and cultural landscape. Its assessment nominated aesthetic, cultural and scientific values, including rare and endangered flora and fauna, and the many species of birds feeding along the coast. The ecological values of this southern rim of Australia, once connected to Antarctica and South America as part of Gondwanaland, were poorly recognised prior to the Park's gazettal. Until then the so-called 'scrub' was grazed by sheep for whom new growth was encouraged by regular burns.

In the Great Ocean Road Region, from Torquay west to Peterborough, the foreshore is in public ownership. The decision to ensure such control laid the groundwork for the concerted attempt since the 1950s, through the Ocean Road Planning Scheme, to prevent the 'ribbon development', which has characterized much of Australia's eastern seaboard. The relatively undeveloped condition of the region's distinctive physical environment is thus attributable to long-term planning by state and local government, at the instigation of early naturalists supported by the community (Moseley 1997).

## **Socio-economic profile**

Early whaling in the area was overshadowed in the late nineteenth century by the developing pastoral industry. The Western District, from Geelong to Portland, remains synonymous with the prosperity and solidity of the squatters whose grand, granite homesteads and civic buildings reflecting the great wealth earned from wool. Recent statistics reflect the continuing dominance of agriculture along with forestry and fishing in Corangamite and adjacent districts. Rural recession and the declining fortunes of wool are also reflected, however, in the falling socioeconomic index of the shire and in a population decline of 6% in 1996 to 17,604 in 1998 (MAV 2000).

## **Tourism**

Increased interest over the past decade in promoting tourism more broadly to interstate and international visitors was stimulated by rural recession. This occurred at national, state and regional levels, local councils being linked into three sub regional groups, as part of the Great Ocean Road Marketing Committee, supported by the Country Victoria Tourism Council.

The 1995 Travel and Tourism Survey indicates that approximately 2.2 million visitors traveled to the region, of whom the vast majority (87%) were Victorian, 12% from interstate and 2% from overseas (Tourism Victoria 1995, pp. 5-8). The average length of trip was three nights and the Day Trip Survey (confined to Victorians) showed the private vehicle was the form of transport used by 95% of visitors, most of whom 'go for the view' and stay a short time, on average less than half an hour.

According to the survey, while 17% of visitors overall, and from overseas, reported visiting a national park, 39% of those from interstate reported such activity. Given the low recognition of the Port Campbell National Park, it seems probable that the most popular activity reported by interstate and international visitors, namely to 'drive to sightsee/pleasure', may have included such coastal Park visitation, adding to the overall percentage (Tourism Victoria 1995, p. 8). While it is low relative to domestic visitation, international visitation is escalating in response to promotional campaigns over the past decade. Annual visitation is 750,000 and, with a projected growth rate of 10%, is expected to reach 1m by 2005 (Parks Victoria 2000b, p. 10). The Great Ocean Road tour is now taken by an estimated 23% of the annual 1.05 million international visitors to Victoria. It is especially popular among Germans, of whom 42% list Port Campbell and/or the nearby Cape Otway as chosen destinations (Roewenkamp 1999, p.1).

## **4.2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

For many years it has been clear that high quality visitor amenities are needed at the Twelve Apostles. Reports have been undertaken at local and state government levels, prompted by the declaration of the Port Campbell National Park in 1964. Its 1990 Management Plan, prepared by the then Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, recommended the upgrading of toilets and related facilities. In December 1994, Premier Jeff Kennett announced a proposal to upgrade the Great Ocean Road visitor facilities. Tourism Victoria also commissioned an audit of infrastructure in the Great Ocean Road Region, which formed a part of the Tourism Development Plan for that 'product region' (Tonge 1996).

The regional tourism plan acknowledged the potential danger of concerted local opposition to mass tourism. A key priority was identified as the need to ‘upgrade and relocate the Port Campbell DCNR information centre ... redeveloped as an international standard interpretive and information centre in an appropriate location to service the key features of the Park’ (Tonge 1996, p. 110). The plan also recommended the establishment of a ‘world class seafood restaurant on the Great Ocean Road’, and that the feasibility of an ‘up market resort’ and potential for a ‘themed living heritage, maritime village’ at Port Campbell be investigated. It was acknowledged that any such development would be contingent on community support (Tonge 1996, p. 214).

No stakeholder groups were opposed to the provision of visitor facilities for the Twelve Apostles in 1996, at the beginning of the period covered by the present case study. The precise nature of the government’s visitor centre proposal is hard to identify for reasons that will become apparent. It forms part of a dynamic, unfinished process which is largely undocumented. It is also subject to the strict application of commercial-in-confidence provisions and to alternative interpretations and recollections. The events also transpired during a politically and institutionally turbulent period, involving a changing caste of actors. Hence the attempt to identify a commonly held definition of the proposal, and its evolution through the planning process, is central to the present study. A chronology of the decision-making process is attached as Appendix 4.

Three circumstances appear to have been generally agreed from the outset. Firstly, sub-standard public toilet facilities had been removed by parks management some years earlier and had not been replaced until construction began in late 2000. In the face of rapidly increasing tourist numbers, handling busloads of visitors, largely day trippers

from Melbourne, became critical. Such basic facilities were urgently required from the point of view of tourist amenity, public health, aesthetics and the uncontrolled trampling, erosion and pollution of fragile ground cover. In the words of one respondent, the Twelve Apostles represented a 'five star attraction with third world amenity', a destination which had received many awards for its tourism marketing activities.

A second point of agreement was that visitation exceeded the Park's carrying capacity, with obvious negative impacts on the environment. The volume of vehicles, buses and cars created gridlock at times on the existing 40 vehicle car park near the Twelve Apostles (Parks Victoria 2000b 10). Far exceeding that capacity, up to 80 cars often parked on adjacent land, or along the highway in a 110 kph zone, with considerable risk to the safety of visitors (Tonge 1996, p. 211). Commonly referred to as “the Port Campbell national car park”, the narrow and extremely fragile strip of park had become increasingly paved and segmented, with a loss of vegetation and habitat. This detracted from the wilderness experience of an ancient and elemental landscape and seascape, subject to an unusually high concentration of visitation in a very restricted space.

Third, the provision of interpretive material to enable visitor appreciation and protection of flora and fauna, prior to and during trips to the Twelve Apostles, was widely acknowledged as inadequate. Awareness that the attraction was within the Port Campbell National Park was also limited. During 1993/4, visitation at the small Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Information Centre in Port Campbell township accounted for only 3% of total visitation at the Twelve Apostles (Tonge 1996, p. 110). For most visitors the Twelve Apostles were a turnaround point, and few proceeded to the low profile, low budget centre in Port Campbell township.

Recurring and sometimes conflicting views were expressed by respondents during the present research concerning environmental and visitor management at the Twelve Apostles. These stakeholder positions are set out below. The author drew up a chronology of the evolving development proposals and their context, based on media coverage and the project files of five stakeholder organizations. The Project Chronology is attached as Appendix 4.

Despite the organisational complexity and shifting, conflictual process, three stages may be distinguished - 1996, 1997 and 1998/9. The first stage began with the announcement on September 5, 1996 by the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, Marie Tehan, of 'a world class visitor centre' to be built on the Great Ocean Road. It was projected to cost \$12m, and to be located 300m from the Twelve Apostles viewing platform.

The concept was set out in the Proposal for a Great Ocean Road Visitors Centre, produced in September 1996, by the National Parks Service, Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) in consultation with Tourism Victoria. This promotional document, on which public comment was sought, included the concept design by a prominent architect of a rammed earth building.

The 1996 Great Ocean Road Product Region Development Plan, the first of a series of regional tourism strategies, emphasised the need for appropriate visitor facilities for the Twelve Apostles site (Tonge 1996). So too did the 1997-2001 Tourism Victoria Strategic Business Plan. However, local and metropolitan media gave widespread coverage to community alarm over the DNRE/Tourism Victoria Proposal. There was particular

concern that it pre-empted Parks Victoria's Draft Park Management Plan for Port Campbell, shortly due for release. Such five yearly planning cycles were the means whereby park infrastructure was authorised following public consultation, under the Victorian National Parks Act (1975). The approach adopted was also seen by critics as inconsistent with the draft Victorian Coastal Strategy. The latter, designed to achieve ecologically sustainable development, had been released for public comment by the newly constituted Victorian Coastal Council, within DNRE, in November, 1996.

Friends of the Twelve Apostles (FOTA) was formed at a public meeting held in Port Campbell on December 16, 1996. This pre-Christmas 'crisis' meeting was prompted by the lack of project detail, the bypassing of the legislated park management planning process and the mounting evidence statewide of commercial development on public parkland. The Friends aimed to advocate adherence to state legislative and local planning controls, to protect the Park from the perceived threat of alienation and to ensure appropriate facility development and location.

Added impetus for this local initiative was provided by the surprise announcement by the Minister for Conservation on December 12, 1996 of the establishment of Parks Victoria as a corporatised entity, less amenable to public scrutiny than the previous National Parks Service. Park management services were now to be purchased from Parks Victoria under contract to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). This represented another major upheaval in the portfolio, following 'continual restructure since 1983' (Durham 1998, p.46). It involved new senior personnel and significant changes in management responsibilities, accountability and policy-making. In a break with parliamentary convention, the Parks Victoria Lands Act was not assented to for a

further 18 months, during which it operated under an amendment to the Water Act (refer Appendix 4).

The second stage, in 1997, was marked by mounting and well publicised protest over the Twelve Apostles development. It was reinforced by the high profile campaign led by the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), opposing commercial development in Wilson's Promontory National Park. On January 31, the Opposition launched a media campaign based on the extremely limited response to a request under Freedom of Information provisions for all documentation regarding the development. On February 2, an independent candidate was elected to the safe Liberal seat of Gippsland West, in a state by-election; a parallel campaign against the government's proposed commercial development at Seal Rocks, Phillip Island, had been waged in that electorate.

A meeting of stakeholders to be held on February 25, at the invitation of the Minister for Planning, was cancelled the previous evening. It had been called in response to the formal request by the National Trust, to advise the Minister as to the requirement for an Environment Effects Statement. Parks Victoria immediately announced the deferral of the proposal pending further study. Although it had been authorised by the Minister for Conservation, this decision was subsequently denounced by the Premier (refer Appendix 4). On February 27, 88 park and forest protection groups joined together for a statewide "Hands Off Our Parks" rally in Melbourne. The event was organised by a coalition of peak environment groups including the Victorian National Parks Association, Australian Conservation Foundation and Town and Country Planning Association (Save Albert Park Campaign Chronology 2000). The community campaigns had escalated and coalesced and the government appeared to be in retreat and in disarray over the proposal.



By the end of 1997 two key government documents had been released. These were the final Victorian Coastal Strategy and the Draft Management Plan for the Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Reserve (Victorian Coastal Council 1997; Parks Victoria 1997). Under the latter plan, the single visitor centre proposal had become two. First, a scaled down complex of toilets, parking area and static interpretive display were to be constructed on leased private land, north of the Great Ocean Road, opposite the Twelve Apostles. It was intended to link this section by pedestrian underpass to the Twelve Apostles viewing area, its former car parks being restored to parkland. Second, a kiosk and Interpretive Centre would later be privately developed at one of five government owned sites in and around Port Campbell township. Again, Premier Kennett publicly condemned this outcome. The year closed as a second Liberal seat was lost, this time to the ALP, at the Mitcham by-election on December 12, 1997.

The third stage in the project chronology, 1998/9, began with an outwardly uneventful period, after which Minister Tehan announced at a public meeting in Port Campbell, in July 1998, that the 'information centre and kiosk' would proceed at the Twelve Apostles. Predictably, this was received with local anger reported in the print media. When the Minister released the final Park Management Plan in September, however, the diminished proposal, (without commercial food services and without encroachment onto the national park), was intact. On January 19, 1999 Corangamite Shire Council issued a permit for the \$2.9M Twelve Apostles facility. This was despite longstanding protection of the rural environment under successive planning schemes, ensuring location of building construction with existing infrastructure in townships.

Following the defeat of the Coalition in the subsequent State Election on September 18, 1999, the incoming ALP government, committed to prohibition of commercial development in national parks, approved plans for a \$4.735M amenity. Parks Victoria and the Corangamite Shire then jointly sought funding for a feasibility study to determine the nature and location of the proposed major interpretive complex, including a commercial component. In the interim, the two agencies established a joint tourism information and environmental interpretation centre in Port Campbell township, on the site of the previous Parks Victoria centre.

**In summary, the three stages of decision-making were as follows:**

First, in 1996, following the publication by Tourism Victoria of the regional tourism plan, the government launched a proposal for the \$12M commercial development of a world class Great Ocean Road Visitors Centre. It was to be 300 metres from the Twelve Apostles, on one of several possible sites, with a restaurant and kiosk, interpretive centre and amenities. It met growing local protest, led by FOTA and reinforced by the unprecedented statewide campaigns by VNPA (with National Trust support) to protect Wilson's Promontory National Park and Seal Rocks, Phillip Island from commercialisation. The surprise establishment of Parks Victoria as a corporate entity, to manage parks under contract with DNRE, fuelled fear and protest.

The second stage, in 1997, was a period of acute instability in government and of vociferous campaigning by the Friends group and the VNPA. The year was marked at either end with the government's loss of a by-election. The limited response provided to Opposition Freedom of Information requests and the avoidance of an Environmental

Effects Statement further politicized community concerns. Two major policy documents affecting the national park, (the Victorian Coastal Strategy and PCNP draft Management Plan) were published. The latter was interpreted by the media and the Premier as a 'win' to conservation stakeholders, the visitors centre being greatly reduced in scale and function, without commercial facilities and located outside the national park. Conservation stakeholders remained highly critical of the alienation of an undeveloped coastal landscape adjacent to the park.

In the third stage, in 1998/9, the Minister for Conservation, as responsible Minister, announced that the information centre and 'kiosk' would proceed, associated with reports of acquisition of private land. However, the acquisition was vigorously opposed by the landholder, a farmer representative on the PCNP Consultative Group. The compromise proposal, reiterated in the final Management Plan in September, was given planning approval by the Corangamite Council in January 1999. The plan was then confirmed by the incoming ALP Government, following the state election on September 8, 1999.

## **5 THE CASE OF THE 12 APOSTLES: STAKEHOLDERS**

### **5.1 STAKEHOLDER SELECTION**

The concept of stakeholder management may be applied both in designing and evaluating a planning process. Corbett (1992) breaks such management down into five aspects of an iterative task, namely: identifying stakeholders, anticipating their strategies and resources, consulting, negotiating with and informing them. In the present study these dimensions were evaluated through the interview schedule. The questions covered the ten criteria of collaborative planning process developed by Williams et al (1998). The challenge for this case study, like theirs, was how to identify the people and parties whose interests mattered and to select primary stakeholder groups from the 'universe of stakeholders'. The extent to which these five aspects of stakeholder management were addressed by the decision-makers in the Twelve Apostles project, is pertinent to this case study.

The Stakeholder Map (fig 1) represents twelve interests chosen for inclusion in this study. Other significant decision makers and actors were involved, notably the former Premier and his ministerial advisers, state agencies such as VicRoads, the Environment Protection Authority, Planning Victoria and Heritage Victoria, as well as the Opposition Party, the ALP. However, for a small research project with a complex and politically sensitive focus, it was important that the issues be distilled from a manageable yet balanced range of views. Media were regarded as a conduit and commentator on such views rather than as a stakeholder. The selection of interests for inclusion in the case study reflects scale and level (state, regional, local), functional perspectives (tourism, conservation),

authority and auspice (government, industry, non-government, community-based) as well as seniority or elected office. Others consulted without formal interview included some front-line service providers and academics in tourism and environmental science.

While certain key government figures were unavailable for interview, all but three of the 17 personnel interviewed were senior and/or influential players in the development process. Those three represented the Kerai Wurrung, traditional custodians of the land reserved as Port Campbell National Park and who, despite their lack of effective involvement in practice, may be seen as legitimate stakeholders on legislative, administrative and democratic grounds. Although the National Parks Advisory Council was identified as a major stakeholder by the researcher (as well as by DNRE and VNPA) the statutory confidentiality of its specific advice precluded an interview.

In selecting the representatives of stakeholder groups for interview, reliance was placed on those named in attendance lists, in correspondence and in media reports, as managers or official representatives of stakeholder organisations. Stakeholder interviews provided consistent perceptions of key stakeholders, organisations and individuals. The Indigenous community was not nominated by any stakeholder, although questions posed elicited descriptive rather than normative judgments of that status. A senior Indigenous representative of the Framlingam Aboriginal Trust was invited by the Minister for Planning to the meeting regarding the case for an Environment Effects Statement, due to be held early in 1997 but cancelled the previous day.

The researcher (like Williams et al 1998) adopted the interpretation of stakeholders as those impacted by and with an interest in the decision-making process. The stakeholders

were thus those interests and organisations 'managed' during the process chiefly by three statutory agencies. DNRE and later Parks Victoria, had authority and responsibility for decision-making, being accountable to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, later Natural Resources and Environment. Both worked in close consultation with Tourism Victoria. The latter had no statutory influence over the land in question but a crucial strategic, promotional and brokerage role in meeting tourism infrastructure needs. DNRE was, by law if not in practice, the lead agency.

## **5.2 STAKEHOLDER AIMS AND ROLES**

The first three questions in the research questionnaire, attached as Appendix 2, were the major source of information as to stakeholder objectives, roles and relationships. All but the Friends of the Apostles were subject to agency roles defined by legislation or by articles of association. Agencies varied as to whether a specific document spelt out their position on the proposed developments at the Twelve Apostles. The roles may be summarised by agency, in alphabetical order, commencing with the three state agencies which managed the planning process and followed by the nine stakeholder groups selected for the study.

- **Department of Natural Resources and Environment, including the  
Department of Conservation and Land Management**

The National Parks Service, within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) was, until the surprise creation of Parks Victoria in December 1996, the responsible agency for both parks policy development and park management services. The original proposal for the Twelve Apostles visitor centre was published in

September, 1996 by the National Park Service, within DNRE, in consultation with Tourism Victoria. The case for upgraded management of escalating and concentrated visitation was two-fold: pedestrian and traffic impact must be minimized and allied visitor education provided. Indeed, provision of information before entry to Port Campbell National Park (including raising awareness that it was a Park), control of visitor movement, relocation of parking and toilet facilities and provision of a new interpretive centre, had been included in the Park's previous Management Plan.

The **aim** of the Department was to manage the Park for the primary purpose of nature conservation. Given the array of specialist sections and agencies within the Department, statewide and regional, (such as for tourism, flora and fauna and coastal co-ordination) the question of a corporate aim, especially after the establishment of Parks Victoria, was a moot one. According to the 1995/6 Annual Report, the Department set a target for 15 million visits per annum in 1996/7, a projected increase of 16% more than the 12.97 million recorded for that year.

**No one document** was cited as representing the departmental view on nature tourism in the region or on the proposed development. Several agencies and sections within the mega department of NRE made confidential submissions to the Parks Victoria Management Plan process in 1997/9, including the Victorian Coastal Council. There were thus internal stakeholders within the Department, some critical of its official support for the visitor centre proposal and of the unconventional process, independent of the Management Plan.. The National Parks Act, 1975, was the fundamental policy document binding the Department. Changing interpretation of those responsibilities is reflected in

the succession of three key planning documents, namely the initial Proposal, the draft Management Plan and the final Management Plan.

- **Parks Victoria**

The surprise announcement of the creation of Parks Victoria in December 1996, (of which not even the National Parks Advisory Council had forewarning), enabled the contracting out by government of national, state and regional parks management (Durham 1998, p.46). Parks Victoria brought together the former National Parks Service and Melbourne Parks and Waterways. According to the 'purchaser provider' model of service provision, (central to public sector reform under the Kennett government, 1992/9), Parks Victoria provided management under a Service Agreement overseen by the purchaser, DNRE. Thereafter, the role of DNRE was unclear in theory and practice, both to employees and other stakeholders interviewed. The situation was complicated by the fact that corporate body managed most of Victoria's parks well in advance of the legislation which established it and defined its responsibilities (Humann 1997).

Protesting belatedly, the Shadow Minister for Conservation described as 'outrageous arrogance ... the manipulation of different acts (such as the Water Industry Act) to give Parks Victoria the ability to operate 18 months before introducing a bill to parliament (Hansard 1998).

DNRE remained formally responsible for protected area policy and for a number of other relevant policy areas. These included coastal planning and co-ordination, and catchment management, each function having its own state and regional structures. The 1998 Management Plan for Port Campbell was the statutory vehicle through which the visitor



centre must be authorised. Since this Plan was prepared by Parks Victoria, it effectively exercised policy responsibility which was ostensibly the preserve of DNRE. The fact that the proposal arose in advance of and separate from the management planning process already underway, indicates the political primacy of the tourism agenda over that of protected area conservation in this instance.

The main **aim** of Parks Victoria was, according to the Annual Report (1998/90) ‘the protection of the precious natural environment of which we are the privileged custodians’ subject to the National Parks Act, 1975, and annual Service Agreements with DNRE. However the first Parks Victoria’s Annual Report (1996/7, pp. 7,9) expressed a commitment to increasing tourism and ensuring maximum return on investment in tourism infrastructure and services. While guidelines were to be drawn up ensuring the protection of these natural assets, this commitment represented an emerging tension between ecological and commercial imperatives.

The **key public document** reflecting the agency's position was the 1998 Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Reserve Management Plan, in draft and final form. The relevant annual Service Agreements were not available to the researcher. Significantly, documents received under Freedom of Information by the Opposition, included a listing of ‘ten strategic goals for the facility’, none of which referred to environmental protection. They included provision of ‘café and restaurant sales, souvenir and product sales’ and an office for parks staff. Most importantly, the aim was to ‘maximise the economic return of the Visitors Centre, such that it covers all annual operating costs and contributes to the general management costs for the National Park’ (Stone 1996).

- **Tourism Victoria**

The roles of Tourism Victoria were, according to most interviewees, as instigator of the Twelve Apostles Visitor Centre and as manager, with the National Parks Service and later Parks Victoria, of the decision-making process. Having neither statutory responsibility for management of land nor for land use planning, Tourism Victoria operated only indirectly as policy maker, promoter and broker. The original 1996 Proposal for the visitor centre was published by the responsible agency, the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), within DNRE, in consultation with Tourism Victoria; the latter's role is clearly spelt out in its 1997-2001 Strategic Business Plan. The Infrastructure Development Division is described as the primary vehicle for 'feasibility work and general advocacy aimed at filling gaps in infrastructure identified through infrastructure audits and Regional Tourism Development Plans' (Tourism Victoria 1996, p. 16).

Following the completion of a tourism infrastructure audit, the Great Ocean Road Region was to be the subject of the first of these development plans (Tonge 1996). The need for high quality amenity and interpretation in the region was consistent with the commitment in the 1997-2001 Business Plan, to 'attractions and facilities in regional Victoria which have the capacity to increase length of stay and visitor expenditure' (Tourism Victoria 1996, p.16). Indeed, there was a major and award winning national marketing campaign in 1998/9, the Great Ocean Road being identified as a prime destination for increasing domestic and international visitation.

Tourism Victoria, as broker in matching experienced private operators with identified infrastructure and service needs (such as for five star accommodation and restaurants) was giving effect to a state government commitment to private rather than public investment and operation. As government respondents in this research made clear, dependence on private investment was a determining factor in the decision-making process. Indeed, lack of public funding was identified in the Development Plan as an obstacle to infrastructure provision. In the words of one government representative: 'To be brutal, the development had to be in the right position to attract developer interest. They made that plain.' As another observed, the cost and scale of servicing national parks statewide was so great that infrastructure must be subsidised or provided by private investment, consistent with the Government's 'small government' philosophy.

The **aim** of the agency was spelt out in the Business Plan, in which natural attractions were identified as one of Victoria's major yet undercapitalized product strengths (Tourism Victoria 1996, p.11). Significantly, eight strategies designed to enable such capitalization relied explicitly on working with Parks Victoria, in 'positioning and theming for major National Parks', 'supporting the implementation of major reforms by Parks Victoria' and 'the development of quality infrastructure which extends the range of nature-based product.'

Thus **several major policy documents** represented the position of Tourism Victoria. The 1996 Great Ocean Road Product Development Plan set the framework for negotiation with land management agencies and planning authorities, including local government. It was chiefly by influencing Parks Victoria's Management Plan process in 1997/98, with senior Ministerial support, that Tourism Victoria sought to implement its policy position.

- **Corangamite Shire Council**

Corangamite Shire, including the township of Port Campbell and the National Park, was created in 1994, bringing together all or part of six former municipalities. The first council election was held in March 1996, following the statewide period of government appointed commissioners. Its dual role in representing the community and as agent of the state government was still evolving. In early 1996, the Chief Executive was part of a small government reference group set up to advise the consultants engaged by Parks Victoria in consultation with Tourism Victoria, to prepare the visitor centre proposal. In this capacity, the Chief Executive Officer provided periodic oral and written input.

The Shire's role as planning authority was formally one of neutrality, pending application for a planning permit, if required, under the statutory planning process. It is apparent from the shire files that this stance varied on occasions, after the return of an elected council. In a letter to the Minister for Tourism, for example, the mayor expressed strong support for the development of 'an up-market resort' at Port Campbell in which he anticipated working closely with Tourism Victoria in the implementation of the regional plan (Vogels 1996). The Council did not respond officially to the visitor centre Proposal, but the CEO commented as a member of the reference group during the drafting phase. Despite its claimed neutrality, the Council lodged a formal submission in response to the Draft Management Plan, based on a detailed analysis of options. This response favoured Port Campbell township as the location for the proposed centre (SOC 1997; SOC 1998).

Following the government's cancellation of the stakeholder meeting concerning the preparation of an Environmental Effects Statement, the Council immediately resolved to

inform the Minister for Planning and Local Government that, as Responsible Authority, it advocated such a process, 'given the very clear sensitivity of the proposal and the number of optional sites being considered' (SOC 1997). Given the degree of public opposition, it was apparent that the Council could suffer opprobrium in issuing a planning permit for the development.

The record of reference group meetings by the Chief Executive, including detailed responses both to the proposal and to the planning process, are illuminating (SOC 1996). These included questions of the consultants as to the accuracy of minutes and as to estimation of the commercial viability and cost of the centre. He warned of inconsistency with the local planning scheme, and of the effect of such a precedent on the rural environment and on the economic viability of Port Campbell. He also advised of the likelihood of protest if the case for the development was not better substantiated.

Pressure from community objectors could not be ignored by Council. Objections were spearheaded by the lead non-government agency, the VNPA, and included the local member of parliament and the ALP Opposition. These stakeholders received high profile media coverage of their critique locally, statewide and even nationally. The public championship of the project by the Premier himself, prior to the release of the Draft Management Plan meant that Council was unable to be directly involved. Indirectly and informally, including via the Mayor, (elected Liberal member for the state seat of Warrnambool in 1999), the Council played a crucial role as broker and conduit of information and opinion. The community and relevant agencies also viewed Council as a legitimate source of information and democratic forum for conflict resolution. Hence the

request by the Port Campbell Progress Association that Council convene the crisis meeting, *Port Campbell at the Cross Roads*, in September 1996.

The **aim** of Council (insofar as there was an explicit corporate view) was to maintain objectivity as the planning authority. Caught in the cross-fire of government policy and community resistance, it sought to ensure that visitor facilities would enhance local tourism in both economic and environmental terms, in a manner consistent with the Local Planning Scheme.

**No one document** represents the evolving Council view. Like the proposal itself, the view changed during the three year period covered by the study, culminating in the issue of the planning permit in 1998. However documents on file reflect adherence to longstanding local planning policy and, indeed, adherence to the Victorian Coastal Strategy. The final compromise, subject to the conditions of the permit, was regarded by Council as the best possible outcome given the circumstances of prolonged dispute.

- **Friends of the Twelve Apostles**

Friends of the Apostles (FOTA) was the main local vehicle for overt community protest against the proposed visitor centre. It was formed at a public meeting in Port Campbell, on December 16, 1996, following the release of the DNRE/Tourism Victoria Proposal in September. The small, elected working group acted as intelligence agency, community lobby and network. It communicated with its constituents largely through the well developed informal networks of a small community, through a sustained, three year media campaign, and through public meetings which it called, caused to be called or publicised. While FOTA may be said to have politicized the decision-making process, the

group remained non-party political (despite the eagerness of elements within the ALP to join forces in the run-up to a state election). This was an important strategic position to maintain given the politically conservative constituency.

FOTA's core campaign group was diverse, including local professional, academic, small business and trader interests with wide community and government networks. The organization developed strong links with the VNPA and other parks groups, as well as with the local Port Campbell National Park Consultative Group (PCNP), set up by Parks Victoria in 1995. It was dissolved by resolution at a public meeting following the issue of the planning permit for the compromise development in January 1999.

**The document which best represented the group's views**, and on which it relied heavily, was the so-called 'Green Paper' submitted in the names of all but one of the members of the Consultative Group, in its formal response to the 1996 Visitor Centre Proposal. This closely argued, 30 page submission opposed the recommended locations, referring to the government's 15 page proposal as a 'marketing prospectus' and 'pageant of potential' (PCNPCG 1997). Detailed reference was made to other relevant documents, such as the recent Great Ocean Road Tourism Development Plan. The paper made a strong environmental and economic case for relocation of the proposed visitor services away from the Twelve Apostles, on grounds of both state and local government land use policy. It canvassed several alternatives including Glenample Homestead, managed by Parks Victoria, and proposed that toilets be constructed on disturbed ground near Loch Ard.

FOTA translated the case made in the Green Paper into the language of the popular media. Like the VNPA, National Trust and the Consultative Group, FOTA repeatedly warned of the inevitable, incremental environmental degradation which would follow the establishment of a commercial precedent on an undeveloped coastline in or adjacent to the national park.

The association was notable for the volume of media releases and media coverage, relative to any other stakeholder, and for its tenacity, passion and plain speaking. In an early media foray into the debate, for example, the group claimed that the ‘financial gain by the lucky operator (perhaps off shore) will result in the sale of one of our national icons and a prostitution of our heritage ... it is about exploitation pure and simple’ (FOTA 1996).

The **aim** of FOTA and chief thrust of the Green Paper, reiterated in media releases throughout the campaign, was to ensure that due planning process was upheld. This included advocating the preparation of an Environment Effects Statement and, more broadly, a publicly accountable planning process. The object of the group was the protection of the national park under the National Parks Act and the Local Planning Scheme. FOTA was in many ways the single most important stakeholder in the decision-making process.

- **Indigenous community**

Framlingham Aboriginal Trust (FAT), located at Purnim, near Warrnambool, is the legal entity responsible for management of Kerrai Wurrung land under the Aboriginal and



Torres Strait Islander Act, 1984. It is also the party having standing to negotiate Native Title claims on behalf of the Indigenous community.

On the basis of a group interview undertaken by the researcher, it appears that no submission was made to any of the three major documents - the original Proposal or the Draft and final Management Plan. There was no evidence of Aboriginal involvement in decision-making, although the former Cultural and Heritage Officer had been invited by the Minister for Planning to a discussion (subsequently aborted) regarding the need for an Environmental Effects Statement on February 25, 1997. At the request of Parks Victoria, representatives also participated in a search of the visitor centre site for artifacts, before clearance for construction in 2000.

It is thus **not possible to speak of an aim or document** which represents the Indigenous community's views on the project's development process to which they were not, in practice, a party. The Commonwealth Native Title Act (1985) provides a legislative requirement for consultation and the Parks Victoria Annual Report (1998/9) records, in general terms, that 'the agency continued to work co-operatively with Aboriginal communities on a range of projects.' A range of other legislation, state and federal, governs archaeological and heritage protection. Correspondence from the Trust dated June 23, 1998, alleging breach of process and agreements by Parks Victoria in another context, is attached as Appendix V. In the absence of documents on file regarding the visitor centre proposal, the Trust representatives proffered this correspondence as evidence of difficulties experienced in negotiating binding protocols for consultation.

- **Member of the Legislative Assembly, Warrnambool**

The role of the local state member was central from the time of the original Proposal in September 1996 to the compromise announced in September 1998 by the Liberal Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and largely confirmed by her ALP successor in 1999. His difficult dual role was to represent government policy, as a member of the National Party and hence the Coalition government, and to represent community views and interests as their elected member. He sought to be briefed by public servants on the proposed development, tackled impediments to such information and received deputations and petitions from different sectors of the community. He ensured communication of their comments to relevant government agencies, notably through the Minister for Conservation, and assessed and communicated response to such material, acting as broker and advocate. He occupied a legitimate and pivotal position in terms of communication and negotiation between all parties.

His primary **aim** was to represent government policy and community views and, specifically, to facilitate a democratic resolution to the tension between demand for much needed tourism facilities and for conservation of a world-renowned and fragile coastline.

There is **no one document** that represents his position, which were regularly reported in the local media. In a protracted and adversarial process, he advocated adherence to statutory planning process. His opposition to commercialisation in Port Campbell National Park was so strong that he announced that he would personally challenge, at the Civil and Administrative Tribunal, a permit issued for such a development. He reported,

both in the media and in the interview for the present research, that he believed the compromise reached was, in the circumstances, the best that could be achieved.

- **National Parks Advisory Council**

Established under the National Parks Act, the Council is the peak statutory and community-based advisory body to the Minister for Conservation. Including the Director of National Parks, its nine unpaid members are drawn from local government, non government environment organisations (including the VNPA), academia and elsewhere, and the Council is required to provide advice to the Minister on matters referred to it and on those it sees fit to raise. Its annual reports to the state parliament are publicly available and its advice is independent of nominating organisations, the Government and the bureaucracy.

The statutory **aim** of the Council at the time of the project was to advise on optimal management of the state's national parks, consistent with the National Parks Act, 1975. In its annual reports from the period, reference is made to the Council having advised the Minister on the Draft Management Plan and the Twelve Apostles in particular. Reference is also made to the lack of monitoring of natural values in some parks and of the need for tourism in parks to be consistent with their primary objective of nature conservation (NPAC 1997/8, p. 3). Without referring specifically to the Twelve Apostles, the Council's 1998/9 Annual Report (p.12) states that:

*private sector involvement in the provision and management of park facilities  
should be approached cautiously and in some circumstances will not be*

*appropriate (and) permanent roofed accommodation in parks is undesirable and its general absence should continue to be a special feature of Victoria's parks.*

While its role is clear, its influence is less so. Certainly, major decisions were made at the time without reference to the Council, such as the creation of Parks Victoria (Durham 1998, p. 46). On other occasions, Council recorded in its Annual Report, it was:

*often consulted too late in the planning process after expectations had been raised. An unfortunate consequence of this is that the Council can be perceived as negative when it is simply fulfilling its charter of ensuring that parks are managed in accord with the objectives and principles of the National Parks Act' (NPAC 1997/8, p. 4).*

Such a 'perception' can only have been that of the Minister and/or senior bureaucrats, given the confidential nature of its advice.

Further and contrary to past practice, the terms of new members had been varied such that all appointments were due to expire on April 30, 1998. A Bill to revise the National Parks Act was also proposed for the presentation in the near future (Durham 1998, p.47). This coincided with the height of unprecedented public conflict over tourism development in Victoria's national parks, in the midst of centenary celebrations of the establishment of national parks in the state, and following the abolition of four statutory or advisory environmental bodies, of which the Land Conservation Council was most notable (Christoff 1998, p. 13). The future of the Council was thus uncertain.

Although it was a major stakeholder, its position on the Twelve Apostles development was not public, being put forward as confidential advice to the Minister for Conservation.

Therefore, the **documents** which best reflect the position of the Council in the decision-making process are the National Parks Act and the relevant annual reports, whose strength lay in their undoubted independence, credibility and availability to the public. At a time when corporatisation and contracting out were removing public administration from scrutiny on grounds of ‘commercial in confidence’, the Council’s role as a statutory and independent body was highly valued by environmentalists, notably the VNPA. Likewise, the continuity provided by Council members over the fifteen years when the environment portfolio was under constant restructure, was highly valued.

- **National Trust of Australia (Victoria)**

As the state's peak non-government heritage organisation, the Trust had a clear role and related **aim** in relation to the development of visitor facilities in a classified landscape. This was to give effect to the 1982 Trust classification of the Port Campbell National Park as being of State Significance, and to protect its listed values. Located in adjacent offices, the National Trust and VNPA worked in close co-operation and, consistent with their charters for conservation, advocated similar positions. In formally requesting the Minister for Planning to require an Environmental Effects Statement, under the Environmental Assessment Act, the Trust played a unique and crucial role in exercising its responsibility to conserve the Park and to enlist the wider community through its membership, political and academic networks and the media.

The **key document** on which the Trust's position was based was its 1982 Classification of the landscape of Port Campbell National Park. The latter was based on expert research and evaluation of both natural and cultural heritage and was endorsed by its council. The

attributes and values on which the classification was based were thus tightly defined and the organisation readily mobilised to defend them, led by its conservation manager. They were also central to the 12 page submission in December, 1997 in response to the Draft Management Plan, in which the Trust argued 'that built structures be kept to a minimum or avoided altogether' since they 'inevitably form nuclei for incremental development.'

- **Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Reserve  
Consultative Group**

This group, set up in 1995 by the National Parks Service at the behest of locals, represented a cross-section of interests - farming, tourism, conservation and retail trade, to enable community liaison and assistance with the management of the Park. As conflict over the development grew, the nine member Advisory Committee (bar one member) prepared a submission to Parks Victoria, in response to the Draft Management Plan, as indicated above - the so-called Green Paper.

The initial **aim** of the group was to provide multiple stakeholder perspectives on the Park's management to Parks Victoria's regional office. As the Proposal for the Twelve Apostles development and Draft Management Plan were successively released, the group assumed a critical though low profile stance, and forfeited the legitimacy previously accorded it by that agency. Its aim, however, remained unchanged, namely to ensure ecologically sustainable management of the Park. Specifically, it sought the relocation of the proposed visitor centre to the town of Port Campbell, the provision of basic facilities on disturbed land such as near Loch Ard, and prohibition of commercial development in

the park. It also advocated government adherence to state and local government land use plans and statutory obligations.

The attempt by Parks Victoria to exclude the group from the local consultative meetings in early 1998, following release of the Draft Management Plan, reflected its ambiguous status at the time, despite its role as the sole stakeholder forum for the park.

- **Shipwreck Coast Tourism Association Inc.**

Funded by the three councils of Corangamite Shire, Moyne Shire and Warrnambool City as well as the subscriptions of individual tourism businesses and local tourism associations, Shipwreck Coast Tourism Association (SCTA) was the leading industry lobby in the region – a sub-set of the wider Great Ocean Road Region. Led by a well-connected and politically experienced chairperson, the agency liaised with the Country Victoria Tourism Council and Great Ocean Road Marketing, on whose boards it was represented.

It worked in close co-operation with Geelong Otways Tourism throughout the decision-making process on the visitors centre. Importantly, Parks Victoria was represented on its board. Supporting the initial DNRE/Tourism Victoria proposal, its views evolved as the proposal changed. The Association was the leading local advocate for an accredited information centre, an extraordinary omission given the longstanding significance of the Twelve Apostles to tourism statewide and nationally. The board was deeply dissatisfied with the final compromise represented in the Draft Management Plan, conveying its views forcefully in its formal response, in subsequent ministerial correspondence and by requiring explanatory briefing sessions on the outcome by Parks Victoria (SCTA 1997).

The **aim** of this stakeholder interest group was to secure a high quality visitor centre for the outstanding natural attraction in the region, identified as one of three state infrastructure priorities. The aim of 'capturing' tourists and tourist expenditure hitherto lost to the region was at the forefront of its priorities. The protection of the ecological values of the park and the quality of tourist experience long term was also accorded high priority. The agency argued that the facility as originally proposed would enable visitor expenditure, as well as provide an opportunity to alert and direct travellers along other routes, to destinations further west along the coast and inland. The association's case in support of the original proposal was based on the existing lack of interpretation, lack of amenity for a site of such importance and high visitation, and the predominance of day trips associated with low visitor expenditure to offset costs. Unlike the VNPA and FOTA, it also accepted the conservation management rationale put forward in the original Proposal: to enable the long-term survival of the natural resources on which tourism depended.

**Documentation** of the association's case is to be found in successive submissions to the DNRE/Tourism Victoria Proposal and to the Draft Management Plan. It is also evident in ministerial correspondence in both the tourism and environment portfolios. The Association's Three Year Business Plan, 1998-2001 was its 'working document', concentrating on the 'big picture issues' and seeking to facilitate the recommendations of the Great Ocean Road Tourism Development Plan and Tourism Victoria's Strategic Business Plan, 1997-2001 (SCTAI 1998, pp.10,11).



- **Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA)**

The VNPA is the peak statewide, non-government body advocating the establishment and optimal management of protected areas under the National Parks Act (1975). It had a pivotal role throughout the planning process. Having built up an unprecedented momentum in 1996/7 in its 'Hands Off the Prom' campaign, (chiefly opposing commercial, resort style accommodation, restaurant services, and road to the lighthouse) the Association was geared up to include the proposed developments at the Twelve Apostles and at Seal Rocks, Phillip Island under that umbrella. The agency's intelligence and policy capacity, and well developed lobbying networks at national, state and local levels, as well as within academia, were thus brought to bear at Port Campbell.

The VNPA was arguably the highest profile stakeholder, certainly at metropolitan and state level. Its standing and impact arose from a combination of attributes, namely its indisputable ecological and legal expertise, the rigour of its analysis of the proposal and planning process, the media networks and skill through which these views were disseminated, and the committed membership which was mobilized to rally and lobby. It was widely acknowledged by interviewees, government and non-government, as a tenacious, credible and powerful advocate. Its collaborative and complementary links with the National Trust and with the Friends of the Apostles were crucial to the impact of this conservation stakeholder cluster and to the project outcome.

Nevertheless, each organisation had a distinctive orientation. VNPA, in emergency mode, had a 'big picture' approach to the protection of the state's national parks, which it judged to be facing an unprecedented threat of commercialisation. Port Campbell was regarded

as a notable example of the perceived crisis. FOTA, by contrast, was focussed on Port Campbell, albeit in a statewide context.

The **aim** of the VNPA was to ensure that the primary goal of the preservation and protection of the Port Campbell National Park was honoured by government under the National Parks Act and the Victorian Coastal Strategy, and that no precedent be set for the commercialisation and alienation of protected areas. The Twelve Apostles development was regarded as an example of a statewide threat to the system of national parks. Like the National Parks Advisory Council, the National Trust, Port Campbell Consultative Group and Friends of the Apostles, the VNPA called for due planning process. This included an environment effects statement, and the avoidance of a precedent for ‘whittling away’ protected areas by excision, as ‘easy development sites and potential money spinners’ (Humann 1998). In a climate of continued cuts to conservation agencies, especially in the second Kennett term from 1996, (in addition to the 46% reduction in staffing of the Department of Conservation by the previous Labor Government from 1982-92), the VNPA asserted that scarce resources ought not be diverted to tourism (Christoff 1998, p.21).

The **key policy documents** on which VNPA views depended were the National Parks Act (1975) and its own articles of association. The major documents in which the Association presented its specific critique and counter proposals were in response to the Proposal and to the Draft Management Plan.

## **6 THE CASE OF THE 12 APOSTLES: PLANNING PROCESS IN ACTION**

### **6.1 PLANNING AND CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES**

On the basis of this research, it is difficult to be precise as to decision-making structures overseeing the development. No interviewee or document sighted explained such formal arrangements other than in the most general terms. In the absence of access to relevant government files it may be assumed, as reported, that three personnel in the lead agencies managed the process as a joint officers group, including periodic consultancies. This triumvirate represented Infrastructure Development in Tourism Victoria, DNRE and, after December 1996, Parks Victoria.

Several representatives of government agencies referred to 'briefings' about the project, in a one to one and sequential, rather than collective manner. Those briefed had some statutory stake in the outcome, such as Vic Roads and the Environment Protection Authority, whose formal approval was required regarding traffic and waste management respectively. The new Victorian Coastal Council had a co-coordinating and advisory role in coastal land use, and Corangamite Shire was the Local Planning Authority. According to files and interview accounts, decision-making and related media releases appear to have been produced by Parks Victoria, at head office. But rather than the decision-making structure and process being envisaged as the spokes of the wheel radiating from a central hub, one close government observer described it as 'akin to a tangled ball of wool'. Such was the complexity of relations within and between government agencies and the political sensitivity associated with the championship of the project by the premier.

The clearest policy base for the development of the visitors centre was in Tourism Victoria's Great Ocean Road Product Region Development Plan (1996). The Plan, as confirmed by April 1997 Budget Papers, authorised the construction of 'world class' amenities at Wilson's Promontory, Port Campbell and Seal Rocks, Phillip Island. However, it was apparent that many interviewees, (other than Tourism Victoria and Shipwreck Coast), were either unaware of or unfamiliar with the contents of that Plan, developed as it was within the tourism sector. Parks Victoria's 1998 Management Plan became the key public document legitimising the visitor centre. Public consultation and response to the draft Management Plan was required under the National Parks Act (1975). This, together with the need to secure permits and licences from certain statutory authorities (notably Corangamite Shire Council, the Environment Protection Authority and VicRoads) necessitated such ad hoc planning and consultative processes as took place, very much a 'moveable feast', as institutional changes occurred and political pressure mounted.

When Parks Victoria assumed responsibility from the National Parks Service for the project, there were neither published terms of reference for a public consultation, nor a staged process promoted to ensure participation. In fact, the Proposal was prepared independent of and prior to the statutory review of the Park's Management Plan. Further, the Premier publicly championed the development at the time of the initial Proposal, after its deferral in early 1997 pending further study, and again, in late 1997, after release of the Draft Management Plan in which the compromise was put forward. That is, the decision to implement the Proposal had been made prior to the public consultation which was, at best, an opportunity to rank preferred locations, a gesture towards the public

consultation required under the National Parks Act. As to the decision-making time-frame, it is apparent from both the Great Ocean Road Regional Development Plan and the Tourism Victoria Business Plan that opportunities flowing from the Sydney Olympic Games in September, 2000 and the Federation celebrations throughout 2001 provided a target date for completion, when the proposal was announced in 1996.

In addition to inter-departmental liaison between senior state government officers in tourism and protected area management, consultants were engaged by the National Parks Service to prepare the 1996 Proposal. This reportedly followed a comprehensive analysis of the legislative and planning context, prepared by these consultants. Neither analysis was made public nor made available to the Opposition under their Freedom of Information request (State Opposition 1996). Based on Shire of Corangamite files, there was also a small reference group of senior government managers, including the shire CEO, from whom advice was sought by the consultants regarding the development proposal. There was a similar liaison within the separate consultancy managed by Parks Victoria to prepare the Draft Management Plan.

There was evidence on Shipwreck Coast files that a 'Port Campbell Visitor Centre Consultation' was conducted by the National Parks Service, following the release of the Proposal in September 1996. Feedback Sheets at the centre sought comment by October 4, and referred to a forthcoming 'series of presentations to the tourism industry and local government in the Port Campbell area'. This was not mentioned by stakeholders interviewed during the research project. As to the outcome of consultation, the State Opposition later made media capital out of Parks Victoria's refusal to give access to submissions received in response to the Proposal and Draft Management Plan.

The Port Campbell National Park Consultative Group, as outlined above, was set up by Parks Victoria and drawn from a wide range of local stakeholders with an interest in the Park. However, when in late 1997 several small group consultations were convened by Parks Victoria, in response to public criticism of the Draft Management Plan, members of this duly constituted structure were not invited. Not to be bypassed on the assumed grounds of their critical Green Paper response, members nevertheless attended.

The Friends of the Twelve Apostles, although a crucial agent of local critique and media coverage, were never invited to participate in any formal sense at any stage of the planning process. Nor were they among the 13 stakeholders invited by the Minister for Planning to the planned discussion (later cancelled) of the case for an Environmental Effects Statement in February, 1997. The state member of parliament commented that he believed that FOTA had been 'treated shabbily'.

**In summary**, other than written submissions being invited to the original Proposal and to the draft Management Plan, it appears that no schedule of meetings was proposed, in advance, for a formal public consultation program. This was despite repeated assurance by Parks Victoria and by the Minister for Conservation that 'community support indicates a strong need for improved visitor facilities' and 'How this will be achieved will be decided following close community consultation and based on the most environmentally sensitive building alternatives' (News Release 1997). In his introduction to the 1998 Management Plan, the Director of Parks Victoria indicated that 'the Plan was prepared in consultation with key stakeholders' and that 'stakeholders, organisations, groups and individuals were offered a major opportunity for further involvement in planning the future management of these important parks' (Parks Victoria 1998, p.1).

Evidence from the media, organisational files and the sequence of events confirms interview reports of a top-down, centralized decision-making process of which consultative structures were not part. Small group consultation was belatedly convened in early 1998 in response to media coverage of the high level of criticism of the proposed facilities. Such criticism related to lack of public and transparent planning process, lack of convincing rationale and lack of environmental impact assessment. Even then, the officially constituted Park Consultative Group was sidelined during that process. Most significant, the meeting to which a broad range of stakeholders was invited to discuss the requirement for an Environment Effects Statement, in February 1997, was cancelled and no environmental impact assessment undertaken.

## **6.2 INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION**

The apparent absence of clear decision-making and consultative structures and of lines of accountability had major implications for representation, participation and information exchange. In terms of the Williams et al (1998) research criteria, set out in Table 1, the decision-making failed to provide a clear mandate, purpose, schedule or channels for participation. It is therefore difficult to examine the question of participation, since response to two published documents, namely the Proposal and the Draft Management Plan, were the only planned opportunities for invited response. Mounting protest led to a number of group meetings after the release of the Draft Plan, a year after the proposal was launched. It was generally reported however, by both government and non-government stakeholders, to be too late to defuse the pervasive distrust. Indeed, the alienated community base had expanded to include Shipwrecks Coast Tourism.

The original Proposal, though it invited response, was neither sufficiently detailed nor structured to facilitate genuine responses to key questions and options, process or timetable. In the words of the record of the public meeting at which FOTA was formed: ‘It is difficult to form an opinion on the best site because so little is known about what is envisaged as a visitors centre. What is the purpose? What will it contain? What will be its impact? How much land is required?’ (FOTA 1996).

There was no formal participatory or representative process as such. In fact, FOTA played a crucial role through a sustained media and lobbying campaign, and in both convening public meetings and lobbying Council and Parks Victoria to convene them. Raising public awareness and enabling participation was both a major strategy and achievement of FOTA. For example, having learnt informally of a last minute, unadvertised meeting called by the Minister for Conservation, on July 16, 1999, FOTA ensured public awareness, a public presence and further media coverage. The convenor was quoted in the local press as accusing the Minister of calling an ‘impromptu meeting’ in order ‘to minimise opposition and further mask and facilitate the hidden agenda behind the proposal’ (Warrnambool Standard 1998). The local member of parliament indicated that even he had inadequate notice to attend. Representation, participation and information thus were achieved against considerable odds, by subverting FOTA subverting the system rather than participating in a transparent process.

Indeed, the debate about and, in the long run the decisions regarding the centre, were substantially conducted through and influenced by the media. Regarding the print media in particular, it was a matter for comment by various stakeholders (government and non-government) that the responsible agencies were largely silent in the face of criticism.



Whether this was designed to ‘starve the protest of oxygen’ or a reflection of inability to explain or to refute charges, is a matter for speculation until government files are made available. However, not being the responsible agency for national parks, Tourism Victoria was constrained from publicly championing a controversial development. Parks Victoria, on the other hand, was effectively the vehicle for Tourism Victoria's proposal but technically responsible for parks management rather than policy. It too was constrained by a politically and administratively complex situation.

While commercial interests had been approached (as was a responsibility of Tourism Victoria), there was no publicly acknowledged commercial proponent and, in effect, no clear proponent at all. The Corangamite Shire records are instructive in this regard. In September, 1996 a letter from Parks Victoria, accompanying the draft Management Plan, explains that after public response: ‘there will be further discussion with proponents’, undefined. In correspondence in November 1996, Council’s Chief Executive explains that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has been the ‘major proponent’. In the same month, the Minister for Tourism refuses a third invitation from the Shire to discuss the proposal. She explains that ‘the role of Tourism Victoria in this process will be to facilitate discussion and lend support as required’ (SOC 1996). There was thus an evident ambiguity and delicacy in naming and distinguishing agency roles, given the statutory constraint on development posed by the National Parks Act.

Lack of public response to public questions (such as in letters to the editor columns) fuelled community suspicion and rumour according to most respondents, government and non-government. In its response to the draft Management Plan, Shipwreck Coast Tourism appended a detailed expose of Parks Victoria’s failure to justify its position on the

visitors centre (SCTAI 1997). In this appendix the Association referred to a Parks Victoria briefing on October 30, 1997, when it had requested 'a document which details the organisation's rationale, supporting and explaining the recommendations in the Draft Management Plan.' In response, according to the Association, the named Parks Victoria official replied: 'No such document has (sic) or will be produced by Parks Victoria' (SCTAI 1997, p.3).

While disagreeing with the regional tourism body's support for the original Proposal, the convenor of FOTA was equally sceptical of Parks Victoria's case. He observed 'that there was no unity of purpose between the proponents and the people they would require to implement the Plan (Parks Victoria). There was a lot of opposition from sectors of Parks Victoria to the original proposal. It was not easy to justify from the park management perspective. They had to reinvent the Management Plan to justify the Proposal' (FOTA 2000). The de facto proponent, in FOTA's view, was Tourism Victoria supported by the upper echelons of DNRE and Parks Victoria and, ultimately, of Cabinet.

It was evident from the Corangamite Council files, that the advice of the CEO before the proposal was made public, as to the sensitivities of the community, the hostility to mass tourism and need for consultation, were not acted upon until late 1997 and early 1998. By the time small local meetings were arranged, public trust in the planning process was eroded, as most informants acknowledged. In government ranks too, there was loss of trust between departmental sections and between central and local levels. An official ban on giving information to the public was applied to local Parks Victoria staff, and one government interviewee referred to 'fifth column' sabotage of the proposal within the environment bureaucracy. The ALP made much of the few severely edited documents

they acquired under Freedom of Information, in a succession of media releases, (State Opposition 1997).

Even in the most basic democratic structures and processes for participation and representation, the flow of information was, in the early stages, deliberately restricted at a senior government and bureaucratic level. In the words of one government protagonist, 'I had to work out the givens'. On his own account, the local Member of Parliament himself had unprecedented and unacceptable difficulty in determining the nature of the development. At an appointment with the relevant agency, he was informed repeatedly by the officer that he was 'not at liberty' to answer his questions. Only when, in extremis, the Member took the matter up with the Minister for Conservation was he able to establish, through her, a conduit by which community critique and questions could, in future, be submitted to agency officers and responded to. The efficacy of such response then enabled him to assess the merits of the arguments.

The avoidance of an Environment Effects Statement, the most fundamental mechanism enabling the impacts to be publicly and expertly presented and evaluated, is evidence of an official reluctance to provide information or meaningful participation. It is also indicative of a reluctance to allow consideration of conservation to impede economic development, even in a national park where the government's primary statutory duty was one of conservation. The explanation of the cancellation to Corangamite Shire Council by the Minister for Planning and Local Government was that:

*The Minister for Catchment and Land Management has advised that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment is still considering*

*submissions from the public' and 'conducting additional assessment on aspects of the concept', so that it had been decided that it 'would be premature' but 'kept under review' (Minister for Planning and Local Government 1997).*

In terms of basic misinformation by government, a leading Victorian ecologist expressed incredulity and outrage about the proposal in a note to the VNPA:

*Given Visitors Centres cost \$1-2M what is a \$12M centre going to look like? Is it the thin end of the wedge of a massive tourist development? Stunningly a development on the site proposed is NOT consistent with the draft Coastal Strategy. Are we in the unbelievable position of having the National Parks Service proposing a development that would not be allowed on non-park land in Victoria? This is shameful' (VNPA 1996).*

Many government and non-government interviewees spoke of the Government's 'anti consultation' ethos, of its 'gung ho, pro development' stance, its desire to 'make lazy assets pay' and to build 'world class icon attractions.' In Victoria, the term Agenda 21, born of the UNCED Rio Conference on Environment and Development (1992) was appropriated as the marketing label for a major projects construction program. In a down-sized, contracted out and increasingly politicised public sector, competitiveness and insecurity rather than co-operation within and between departments was also a matter for comment. So too was the unaccountability and secrecy of the newly corporatised Parks Victoria.

A key government officer, questioned about his agency's muted response to the Draft Management Plan, explained that 'we weren't going to get our noses broken for nothing.' Another spoke of senior management's instruction in Parks Victoria not to communicate with the public on the project and, in turn, of public scepticism of local staff's purported ignorance of the project. The view expressed by most interviewees was that the visitor centre, as proposed, was a *fait accompli* championed personally by the Premier, the leader of a government with a substantial majority. Nor was a contrary view put by any stakeholder. It is difficult to refute the assertion of the State Opposition that: 'The Government is clearly trying to cover up the details of the proposed visitor centre because it knows that most Victorians would be opposed to this sort of commercial development' (State Opposition 1996).

**In summary** and with hindsight, it may be seen that secrecy and lack of consultation early in the decision-making process, designed to thwart anticipated protest, (such as had as had occurred with the proposed ski run on Mt Stirling the previous year) in fact exacerbated such protest (Humann 1997). The effect was to fuel and prolong an adversarial conflict so that government was 'brought kicking and screaming' to the negotiating table, in the words of one interviewee. Further, the Government was forced to abandon a proposal for which it had been unwilling to enable prior public or even relevant agency input, failed to make a convincing case and sought to impose despite statutory obligations to the contrary. The planning 'conversation', (stifled by avoidance of statutory process), was forced into the arena of public media. There, informed, strategic and energetic environmental advocates ostensibly 'won the argument' locally and statewide, in a gathering political storm.

### **6.3 REPRESENTATION**

Effective representation of stakeholders in decision-making was constrained by a number of inherent factors, compounding those associated with the lack of project specific consultative structures. They were as follows:

#### **Lack of cultural relevance**

Indigenous stakeholders were those most constrained from participation in the decision-making process. The extent to which the standard invitations made (on the final page of the Proposal) were registered and not taken up is unclear. What is obvious, (as was claimed by Indigenous interviewees), is that just as the avenues for participation by the predominantly Anglo-Celtic community were ill-defined and intermittent, it was even less culturally relevant to the Kerrai Wurrung. Furthermore, the statutory obligation to consult with the Indigenous people was not fulfilled. The dissatisfaction of the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust in dealing with Parks Victoria is reflected in the correspondence attached as Appendix 5. Heritage sites aside, the Indigenous stakeholders interviewed stressed the need to be involved in planning their future as well as preserving their past.

The narrowly defined consultation - seeking written response rather than oral input to a series of planning documents, is not equally appropriate to all sections of the community. Farmers, for example, complained of the 'strange language' used in the reports, the lack of trust that ensued and the lack of 'feedback of consequence from farmers to Park managers' as a result (PCNPCG 1997, p.22). The Port Campbell National Park Consultative Group, on which farming interests were represented, attributed this apparent

apathy to 'feelings of insecurity and obstinate refusal at times.' Two way interaction and collective problem solving were thus prevented by the approach adopted.

The question of cultural relevance is thus closely linked with that of social inequality.

Robson (1996) interprets the position of women as being problematic in analysing the concept of the 'stakeholder society'. Identifying key stakeholders will tend to draw on the views of more powerful and better resourced interests. Certainly, women were greatly under-represented in the decision-making process and, as a consequence in this study, in which 15 of the 17 stakeholders interviewed were male. No key representative of any government agency was female. Analysis of such stakeholder views may thus wittingly or unwittingly reinforce an elitist perspective.

The question of how or whether women's views are to be tapped is therefore both a methodological one for a stakeholder analysis and a democratic one for government. It also has clear implications for achieving ecologically sustainable outcomes. For while senior management positions tend to be filled by males, membership of environmental organisations tends to be disproportionately female and their leadership better represented by women (Krockenberger 2001). The under-representation of women and the identified constraints on participation by environmental non-government organisations is thus an impediment to sustainable tourism. As with Indigenous and farming communities, the under-representation of women in an ostensibly democratic planning process, highlights the need for collaborative decision-making, of which Williams et al (1998) provide a model.

A stakeholder model for collaborative decision-making is insufficient guarantee of design or evaluation of inclusiveness, however, as the Cariboo-Chilcotin case study bears out. Despite Native Title claims being negotiated throughout the region, the researchers found that the land use planning process provided minimal Indigenous representation. Only one respondent commented on that omission, despite avowed commitment to inclusiveness (Williams et al 1998, p.877). The issue of gender representation was not raised or examined by the researchers; Indigenous communities may represent a stakeholder group but women apparently not. Yet the authors state that ‘an effective SDM process requires that all interested and affected parties be invited to participate and their values and interests recognized as legitimate’ (Williams et al 1998, p.877).

The explanation for this omission was that ‘it did not come up in our initial or later research design considerations. While some members of these stakeholder groups were female, they were not necessarily representing themselves but rather their stakeholder groups’ (Williams 2001). Thus the focus on stakeholder groups as interest groups precluded consideration of the adequate representation of half of the population. This flaw in the SDM model and in the case study reinforces the political naiveté reflected in its recommendation to ensure ‘a level playing field’ prior to participation in the planning process (Williams 1998, p. 885). It also reinforces the arguments of Stonich (1998) that planning process must be interpreted within its political context, that is power relations. Arguably an advantage of the stakeholder approach is that such omission of interests may be discerned more readily, than more general reference to ‘the community’.



## **Lack of resources**

The sustained intellectual and political effort required of all parties to be informed of and to influence the decision-making process was substantial for three years. This was particularly so for volunteers, as in FOTA and PCNPCG. The seven FOTA committee members, notably the convenor, devoted their time, energy and personal financial resources to mount a high profile campaign in addition to their work commitments. In this they relied on the detailed analysis of the proposal in the Green Paper prepared by members of the Park Consultative Group, themselves volunteers. The latter admitted, in their covering letter, that the preparation of their 30 page response to the draft Management Plan, in addition to prior commitments to family and business, was an ‘arduous task’ (PCNPCG 1998). This unequal participation of volunteers and tourism representatives, suffering loss of income, was also emphasized by Williams as was the need to adequately resource a collaborative planning process (1998, pp. 877-9).

Given the political climate and high profile conflict, the development near the Twelve Apostles was the single most time-consuming issue from late 1996-1999 for the local Member of Parliament. As a backbencher he had no research staff to assist in his analysis. Lack of research capacity was also the major internal impediment to non-government and especially community organisations, and was a matter for comment by the Auditor General in his 1998 report on the National Parks Advisory Council (Durham, 1998). Likewise, the newly restored and elected Shire Council had been ‘downsized’ following amalgamations, and was preoccupied and tentative, for the organisational and political reasons previously outlined.

In the absence of collaborative planning it is apparent from internal files that individual stakeholders, such as Shipwreck Coast Tourism, took it upon themselves to make and maintain contact with other stakeholders in order to understand the nature of the proposals, to refine their position and to lobby effectively. Supported in this by the better resourced Geelong Otways Tourism, but serviced only by a director and receptionist, the board was fully extended and unable to focus on other aspects of its agenda. Indeed, the Twelve Apostles Tourist Association (with cross links into FOTA and the Parks Consultative Group questioned the legitimacy with which the regional tourism association was formulating its views in the absence of formal consultation with the local association.

The organisational, political and financial demands of dealing with the numerous arms of central government (bureaucratic and ministerial) and with other stakeholders, thus taxed Shipwreck Coast Tourism's limited resources to inform and elicit the views of its membership and constituency effectively. This impact on tourism industry stakeholders was also identified by Williams et al (1998, p. 877). FOTA relied on frequent media releases, open committee meetings and public meetings to keep in touch with and to represent the values the committee members were elected to protect. The informal networks in the three most affected communities of Peterborough, Port Campbell and Princetown, made such communication extremely effective.

Besides the major restructuring in the environment portfolio, the downsizing and closure of agencies and outsourcing of functions, the organisational and research capacity of the public sector was also greatly diminished, as Peter Christoff (1998) has detailed in his paper: *'Degreening Government in the Garden State'*. The corporate model of

governance introduced through the Public Sector Management Act (1992), unique to Victoria, concentrated authority in departmental chief executives accountable to the Premier. It greatly reduced the independence of the public service, as did the abolition of the Public Service Board and the widespread use of contracted labour (Alford & Fitzgerald 1994). The preoccupation of DNRE with the shift from parks policy and parks manager to policy and contract manager, required new skills for which some staff were reportedly ill-equipped. Similarly, the changes also meant that some consultants, at that early stage were ill-equipped to fulfill tasks hitherto undertaken by the bureaucracy.

### **Lack of statutory 'teeth'**

All stakeholders operated with different kinds and degrees of constraint. Tourism Victoria, having no control over land management or land use planning, (and in the absence of a regional planning forum), was necessarily restricted to influencing the management and practice of the range of statutory authorities involved, notably Parks Victoria. This lack of formal standing and hence involvement by the tourism sector in land use planning (unlike forestry in particular) was a major factor influencing the British Columbia reform (Williams 1998, p.863). In the case of the Twelve Apostles DNRE was legally, if not politically, the lead agency regarding infrastructure development in a national park. The public face of the process was that of the Minister for Conservation (within the mega department of Natural Resources and Environment) rather than Tourism, whose successive ministers, according to correspondence, were strongly supportive of the icon attraction envisaged (Shipwrecks Coast, 1997/9). The Premier, undeterred by protocols of ministerial responsibility, made his advocacy of the original

proposal clear. This constrained the capacity of DNRE and Parks Victoria personnel to deal effectively with environmental impacts or with public criticism.

The National Parks Advisory Council was another agency constrained from speaking out publicly. Empowered by the National Parks Act (1975) to advise the Minister for Conservation and to report annually to Parliament and hence to the public, their advice needed neither to be sought nor accepted. Nor could this expert community-based committee disclose its advice, such as on the Twelve Apostles development, other than in general terms through an annual report. For instance, in 1997/8 at the height of the VNPA's Hands Off Our Parks campaign, the Council 'cautions against a market-driven approach to the provision of services in response to visitor demands to the exclusion of other objectives' adding that 'parks managers must be conscious of but not driven by visitor needs as this can lead to excessive and inappropriate development' (NPAC 1998, p. 10).

In Port Campbell, the park Consultative Group was marginalised by Parks Victoria following its strong critique of the Draft Management Plan in late 1997. Shipwreck Coast Tourism staff also reported being excluded from decision-making as had the chairperson in ministerial correspondence. This complaint related both to Parks Victoria and to Tourism Victoria, in what was very much a top-down exercise (SCTA 1998). Thus not only was comment and advice not effectively sought by decision-making agencies, but critics rebuffed.

Thus, for a variety of reasons tourism, community and non-government stakeholders (and government staff at a local level) were constrained from publicly advocating their case.

## **Cynicism and distrust**

It was evident, both explicitly and implicitly, in the accounts of most interviewees, that mutual distrust was a significant constraint on effective engagement and negotiation. The extent to which such cynicism was merited on the part of either senior parks management or that of a community lobby, is a matter for political judgment. Given the planning process outlined, it was an inevitable consequence. One senior manager spoke with a degree of self-criticism of the ‘hubris of power’, in its exercise by both bureaucracy and government. Many factors, as indicated above, contributed to public distrust, such that government was seen to have breached its integrity in terms of its obligations under the National Parks Act. The pragmatic and belated attempt by Parks Victoria (which inherited the proposal from the former National Parks Service) was unable to remove such distrust, although a compromise was negotiated.

## **Turnover of personnel**

Throughout the three year conflict there was significant change of personnel in key positions. The creation of Parks Victoria on December 12, 1996 caused, in the words one senior DNRE protagonist, ‘a changing of the guard - the identity of stakeholders was turned on its head overnight’. Nor, given the highly politicised climate, was there an adequate handover between regimes in his view. Rather, blame for mismanagement was reportedly leveled at the previous team within the National Parks Service. The work of staff and consultants originally engaged on the project was largely consigned to history, though a number of former employees in DNRE moved to Tourism Victoria. In the non-government sector too, the two key players at VNPA and the National Trust left their

positions before their campaign was over, while in 1996 local government had only just elected councillors after a period of suspension of local democracy. This level of change inevitably generated some confusion, discontinuity and loss of institutional memory, an impediment to informed and collaborative decision-making.

## **6.4 TANGIBLE OUTCOMES**

### **Visitor Amenities at the Twelve Apostles**

The allocation of \$4.9M by the incoming ALP Government confirmed the previous government's decision regarding the facilities. This was higher than the amount of \$2.9M specified in the planning permit but much reduced from the original estimate of \$12M. The planned facility was thereby reduced in height, roofed area and scale. It was agreed that there would be a static interpretive display linked by pedestrian underpass to the National Park at the Twelve Apostles. Unofficial and paved car parks and multiple walking tracks were to be reabsorbed and revegetated as parkland and habitat.

According to Parks Victoria (2000b), 'State of the art toilet facilities' with effluent managed on site, and the creation of a wetland for waste and stormwater retention, represented the major component of cost'. Optimum use of natural lighting, water recycling and a mass revegetation program represented tangible outcomes consistent with ecologically sustainable tourism. The design and rammed earth construction of the centre also sought to complement rather than impinge on the heathland and sandstone cliffs. The objectives of the original proposal had been partially achieved in terms of interpretation, managing visitor and vehicle impact on a fragile environment, and public health and safety.

Consistent with environmental protection, the conditions of the planning permit proscribed commercial operation including a retail food outlet. A precedent for incremental development on the site or elsewhere in or adjacent to the Park had, ostensibly, been avoided. The scale of the construction had also been greatly reduced and no part of the National Park had been alienated. Further, the development site was chiefly on three hectares of leasehold land, on the landward side of the Great Ocean Road. This reinforced the Park's ecological value as a protected area and related aesthetic and wilderness scenic values.

#### **Interim information/visitor centre at Port Campbell**

The second tangible outcome was the innovative collaboration between Parks Victoria and the Shire of Corangamite in jointly establishing an interim Tourist Information and National Park Information Centre in Port Campbell. The two agencies also sought Federal funding for a feasibility study into the construction and operation of a permanent and high quality interpretive centre, on one of five government-owned sites in or near Port Campbell township, appropriate to a destination of national importance. This joint auspice was in contrast to the originally state government-imposed model.

### **6.5 INTANGIBLE OUTCOMES**

#### **Long term problems and opportunities not addressed**

Since they were a compromise, it is not surprising that these outcomes failed to meet all the stated objectives and requirements of the decision-making agencies - Tourism Victoria, DNRE and Parks Victoria. They also failed to meet those of the stakeholders

who had most strenuously objected to the development, notably FOTA, the park Consultative Group and VNPA. To the responsible agencies, the opportunity for a major and high quality interpretive centre, educating visitors before entering the Park from the east had been lost. Viewed from a parks management perspective the fundamental challenges of escalating and concentrated visitation on a fragile, narrow strip of land with multiple public entry points, was not addressed.

From a statewide and regional tourism viewpoint, the opportunity to provide a first class amenity to complement an outstanding natural feature – to attract, accommodate and prolong visitation (domestic and international) had also been lost. So too, visitor expenditure on a range of services nationally and regionally, from airlines to hotels was forgone. The private investment on site, as well as revenue from a restaurant, kiosk and retail trade as originally proposed, was likewise foregone.

On the other hand, some among the community and environmental stakeholders, believed that the development remained visually obtrusive and, as visitation increased, would create pressure for incremental expansion and commercial development adjacent to the Park. The development site was in a rural zone, contrary to the Local Planning Scheme and was inconsistent with the Victorian Coastal Strategy. Both planning instruments directed development to existing infrastructure in urban settlements. It appeared to FOTA and others to be an over capitalization of such visitor amenities, more cheaply and appropriately located on disturbed ground near Loch Ard Gorge.

Many respondents (including those representing FOTA, Shipwreck Coast Tourism, and some within Parks Victoria and DNRE) expressed doubt that the limited provision for



carparking could accommodate increased visitation levels combined with increased time spent per visitor at the facility. Indeed, the recent promotional article in Parks Victoria's Bush Tales (2000b, p.11), acknowledged somewhat obscurely that the future would 'pose new challenges' for the site. It also identified current issues as the appropriateness of helicopter flights behind the centre; community concerns that it not compete with local business; and negotiations with the landowner. All of which implies that community and non-government fear of incremental development may have been valid.

Transport management was inadequately addressed in the Draft Management Plan, a major flaw. There was reference to 'people movers', or articulated carriages to minimise parking near the Twelve Apostles and to assist movement between sites. However, this issue was lost in the fundamental conflict over commercial development in a national park. The compromise development was thus not part of an overall regional land use and transport strategy. This was despite the identified impacts of car-based visitation on an exceptionally fragile coastal strip, bounded by a tourist highway suffering from significant erosion. In the absence of an environmental impact assessment, the Proposal and Management Plan addressed the symptoms rather the causes of and hence long term solutions to such impact.

The permanent interpretive centre proposed for Port Campbell was welcomed by FOTA. However, concern remained as to its precise location and hence ecological impact as well as its scale, ownership and local benefit. The serial and centralised conduct of the decision-making process, (agency by agency and issue by issue) often undertaken in damage control mode, meant the absence of collective and integrated consideration of options by government or stakeholders. For example, the identification by FOTA,

PCNPCG and VNPA of Glenample Homestead, an historic and well restored public property, as a site for a rest stop, was ruled out early in the process and never revived. The original presumption of an 'icon attraction', commercially funded and managed in the Park, was inconsistent with that suggestion. Yet, in a less confrontational atmosphere, that magnificent opportunity could have been better evaluated, particularly when the commercial nature of the centre had been eliminated.

Such a fragmented approach to consultation with government agencies was evidently explained by the need to acquire specific statutory permits and licences (such as from Corangamite Shire, the Environment Protection Authority and VicRoads). This limited and regulatory view of the legitimate involvement of such agencies was one which the Cariboo-Chilcotin reform sought to replace with a whole-of-government, area-based and strategic approach to which transport was fundamental (Williams 1998, p.885).

### **Loss of legitimacy by government**

In terms of the critique by Lawrence et al (1997), all statutory agencies involved in the Twelve Apostles visitor centre planning process were inevitably tarnished by the loss of legitimacy of government, which was an intangible outcome of the process. In the view of the author, the results of 1997 by-elections and the 1999 state election were confirmation of that loss of trust. Not only had the attempted circumvention of established planning processes been a cause for a three-year public campaign by which the government was seriously damaged. It also exacerbated that conflict, leaving a legacy of distrust and uncertainty with implications for future investment and planning proposals.

**In summary**, the compromise solution led to a cessation of conflict and appeared to have met the major requirements and objections of polarised stakeholder clusters. This was certainly the view expressed by those stakeholders most closely involved in negotiations, notably the state member of parliament and the Corangamite Council. Judged on the basis of such pragmatic criteria, it was a success. However, in terms of the long term strategic challenges of park management, it was a case of ‘sweeping them under the carpet’ in the words of one senior government observer. The environmental impact of tourist visitation was, in the long term, relocated rather than contained; for the conservation stakeholder cluster it was a pyrrhic victory. From the perspective of the Shipwreck Coast Tourism, a crucially important interpretive centre had been placed in limbo. No strategy for targeted, sustainable tourism had been developed and the time bomb of increasing motor vehicle access was still ticking.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Lessons may be learnt from the protracted and adversarial nature of decision-making over the Twelve Apostles visitor centre. Despite this, interviewees were generally unwilling or unable to suggest reforms. There was a widely held perception that the process had failed, but a prevailing assumption that, with political will, ‘the system would work’.

### **7.1 THE PLANNING PROCESS - ABERRATION OR SYMPTOM?**

The case of the Twelve Apostles was regarded by some stakeholders as atypical in that there was no commercial proponent. It was further argued that the period 1993-99 in Victoria was unique in terms of governance and planning process. In seeking to impose commercial, ‘world class icon attractions’ on protected areas at Seal Rocks, Wilson’s Promontory and The Twelve Apostles, with minimal consultation, the Kennett Government was seen to have adopted an agenda and autocratic style for which it paid the electoral price in 1999. In the words of one government stakeholder: ‘It was a test case and it passed the ultimate democratic test.’

Certainly an agenda of privatisation and corporatisation, in which a top-down, non-consultative approach was adopted, generated unusual political turbulence. Consistent with the ‘corporate governance’ approach, the model of premier as CEO and cabinet or council as board of directors was embedded in both state and local government reform. The associated ‘degreening’ of the state government in this period has been documented (Christoff 1998). However, as Toyne (1994) has demonstrated, development in environmentally sensitive areas has been extremely controversial and intensely contested

in Australia for 30 years. Nor is the loss of an election unique to this case, as part of a cumulative electoral backlash. The Twelve Apostles conflict appears to be a symptom of a wider and longstanding malaise in the planning system and approach to governance, rather than a one-off occurrence. Further, the entrenchment of neoliberalism nationwide is arguably a new reality rather than an aberration. The case of the Twelve Apostles may thus be seen as an example of planning and governance in a 'new world order', rather than an isolated symptom of zeal in an atypical term of office.

The chronology of the case indicates that the outcome was not a foregone conclusion, even with hindsight. Documents obtained by the Opposition under Freedom of Information show that, following a planned four week consultation on the Proposal in September 1996, expressions of interest for construction were to be sought by government (Stone 1997). In practice, the four months envisaged for finalisation of the planning approval extended to three years. In the author's view, the fact that the centre as originally conceived did not eventuate was not a vindication of the planning system and its capacity to deliver ecologically sustainable tourism development. Rather, the proposal was thwarted by an unusual combination of circumstances.

For in 1996 the VNPA had concluded that the integrity of the system of national parks was at risk and had committed itself to an unprecedented statewide, emergency campaign. The Twelve Apostles campaign was a local exemplar of that perceived threat and a beneficiary of the Association's statewide mobilization. Principally through participation in FOTA, locals were both willing and able to apply unusual leadership, skill and determination in publicly exposing the flawed planning process and in opposing what appeared to be a *fait accompli*. During his interview, the then VNPA director judged

their campaign the best of its kind in his experience. The expert gathering of local intelligence, for example, enabled forewarning of developments and preemptive, targeted publicity. In the words of the National Party MP, FOTA 'repeatedly headed the government off at the pass.' The group's non-party political community support-base was also a key to their effectiveness in a Coalition-held electorate.

During the period covered by the case study, political sensitivities were acute statewide concerning development in national parks and wider issues of public accountability. However the fortuitous timing of two by-elections in 1997 and a state election in 1999 enabled such concern to be harnessed for electoral effect. This was critical to the compromise achieved. That the landholder from whom it was intended to compulsorily acquire 13 hectares for the centre indicated, on learning of this, that he would vigorously oppose acquisition, was also a chance factor (Stone 1997). A farmer representative on the Port Campbell National Park Consultative Group, he ultimately agreed to lease the land to Parks Victoria in order to retain influence over its use.

It may be argued that the proposal and the high profile opposition engendered were historically consistent with the Australian experience, as documented by Toyne (1994). The scale of the proposed commercialisation in national parks and other protected areas in the study period was, however, without precedent in Victoria. In the circumstances, the failure by the state government to enforce the original proposal was surprising, given restricted public access to information and avoidance of public process, such as through environmental impact assessment. It was especially surprising given the diminished and politicised public sector, dominated by an interventionist premier who was commonly regarded as unbeatable in the lead-up to the election in September 1999. The compromise

outcome achieved was largely attributable to the perceived scale of the threat locally and statewide, the exceptional campaigning skill of FOTA and VNPA, together with the alienation of virtually all local stakeholders, including the Shipwrecks Coast Tourism Association and, significantly, the longstanding National Party member of parliament. Rather than ‘democracy at work’, one might reasonably conclude that, with skill and luck and against the odds, a proposal of doubtful legality in a national park, and promoted by its government custodians, was forestalled by the citizenry.

The case of the Twelve Apostles, while unusual in some respects, is thus no aberration. As is evident from the factors noted, it demonstrates that government protection of ecological values is not guaranteed even in a protected area of national significance. In attracting visitation such status may even reduce the prospect of protection in some instances. The case also demonstrates the potency of community activism and the role that citizens and non-government organisations can (or are obliged) to play in holding governments to account on tourism development issues. The application of a free market philosophy intensifies the importance of this role.

The extent to which this is a transitory or permanent feature of a ‘new world order’ is a matter of increasing debate in Victoria and worldwide, reflected in emerging political parties and international movements which challenge a global free market. Certainly, an unprecedented state government strategy for fast-tracking commercial facilities in a number of national parks was met with an unprecedented campaign of community resistance, in which the government was the loser. As the government of British Columbia had concluded in establishing its Commission on Resources and Environment

there had to be a better way to ensure ecological sustainability, and to accommodate rather than compromise such conflicting interests.

## **7.2 COLLABORATIVE PLANNING: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The need for community involvement has been acknowledged as the key prerequisite to ecological sustainability by Brundtland and by innumerable case studies. In the present case study, it was apparently a lesson learnt too late by government to allow a collaborative approach. When Parks Victoria announced a reassessment of the proposal in the face of public outrage, (The Age 1997a) Premier Kennett publicly denounced that decision the next day. This was consistent with his previous denouncement of those who would put “do not disturb signs” all over Victoria’, thereby publicly challenging the decision of his Minister for Conservation (The Age 1997b).

Constrained by the Premier’s early and public intervention, Parks Victoria later appointed a senior officer who facilitated negotiation with stakeholders resulting in the compromise detailed above. One might well ask why such a compromise could not have been negotiated two years earlier. Was it a determination by Cabinet and senior bureaucrats to impose a preconceived development with ‘selective stakeholder’ consultation (Stone 1997)? The evidence supporting this view includes the secrecy over details revealed in the few heavily edited documents released to the ALP under FOI (Stone 1997); the forewarning of strong community opposition by consultants (Tonge, 1996) and by Corangamite Shire Council’s CEO in February, 1996; as well as the last minute cancellation of stakeholder advice regarding an Environment Effects Statement.



There may well have been an underestimation by government of the potential strength and effectiveness of protest from the villages of Port Campbell, Princetown and Peterborough, the latter a favored retreat for influential Western District families. In terms of stakeholder theory, there was a failure of risk assessment of stakeholder capacity and significance (McDaniels, Gregory and Fields 1999). In the view of the local government interviewee, the compromise was entirely a product of the scale, length and intensity of the impasse. In the early stages, as an editorial put it, a ‘compromise in which all interests could be safeguarded’ had been forfeit (The Age 1997c). Up to two years later, as a result of expediency, rather than as a matter of democratic process or on ecological grounds, decision makers were forced to negotiate with regional tourism, community and non-government stakeholders.

The need for participation is routinely acknowledged in mission statements, annual reports and relevant consultant’s reports. In the case of The Twelve Apostles such participation was clearly withheld by government and was extracted only under duress, chiefly through the exertions of FOTA and the VNPA. Even the local member of parliament, on his own account, was forced to extraordinary lengths to gain access to information and bureaucratic advice to which he was entitled.

A senior government interviewee identified a central dilemma of community consultation. Questioning the extent to which two or three hundred local people (some, he argued, with a vested interest as local traders) should unduly influence an outcome, he justified the non-consultative approach as being in the interests of a wider community. He described this wider community as Victorians at large, residents of the future, and current and future tourists. Ironically it was FOTA, with negligible resources, which polled

visitors in 1997, and identified overwhelming support for the protection of the Park from commercial development, particularly among international visitors (FOTA 1997). In this instance, the joint campaign of local and statewide environmentalists, (uncharacteristic of much contested development) contradicted the notion that a handful of locals manipulated an outcome. Media and electoral results also attest to the fact that their case was publicly supported. Rather than a self-interested and unrepresentative lobby, these volunteers may be viewed as informed local (and global) citizens who were sufficiently responsible to take action on behalf of current and future generations and the environment.

In view of the adversarial nature of the process, it was surprising to discover from the stakeholder interviews that the opposing camps had gained considerable respect for each other. The VNPA emerged as a credible, level headed and effective advocate, as was generally acknowledged by respondents. Many interviewees (government, industry and non-government) also acknowledged the lessons they had learnt in the crucible of conflict – about other agencies, opinions and values and about the workings of government. It is testament to the lost opportunity for shared decision-making, that personnel of such high calibre were forced to operate from isolated and entrenched positions and to react rather than contribute to the solution of complex problems.

Though the implications drawn varied somewhat, the need for community involvement and community support was by far the most common lesson expressed by government representatives and stakeholders. Some saw the need to put more resources and effort into making the case for a development and therefore enlisting public support. Others saw the benefit of enabling shared problem definition and solution, consistent with the approach

adopted in British Columbia. Others interpreted the experience as supporting the cause of institutional reform. In short, the case made by Healey (1997) is well supported by the findings of this study: planning for ecological sustainability depends fundamentally on community involvement. Specifically, this is a matter of democratic accountability; of risk management (the broadening of the decision-making base); of effective conflict resolution (at the heart of assessing economic development within ecological limits); and of providing the decision support system which will ensure ownership and optimal results.

### **7.3 COLLABORATIVE PLANNING: INSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

#### **Planning Process**

Healy (1999) develops a strong case for the necessity to link land use planning and governance in order to achieve ecological sustainability. The case of the Twelve Apostles visitor centre bears out many of the shortcomings of both in Victoria, and suggests opportunities for reform. Public critique of ‘fast tracking’ and the circumvention of planning process was at the core of the case successfully mounted, chiefly by FOTA, VNPA and the National Trust. Some of the signs of dysfunction may be summarised as follows.

The National Parks Service (within DNRE), through its joint proposal with Tourism Victoria for a visitors centre near the Twelve Apostles (1996), envisaged a \$12M commercial development in a National Park. Yet to comply with the Victorian Coastal Strategy, government would have been bound to reject such a proposal from a private developer even outside the park. Developed by the Victorian Coastal Council, which was

also answerable to DNRE, the Strategy was released as a draft for public consultation two months later. More serious, the visitor centre proposal pre-empted the Port Campbell Park Management Plan whose statutory process (requiring public comment on its draft), legitimized infrastructure development under the National Parks Act. These two errors of omission or commission reflected a disregard for a legislated duty of care towards a protected area. Indeed, it was acknowledged in the draft Management Plan that the subsequent reduction and relocation of the facility, without commercial component, was consistent with the Coastal Strategy.

The visitor centre had clearly been imposed to facilitate tourism rather than conservation management as indicated by several respondents within Parks Victoria and DNRE and supported in media releases from the Opposition (1998). The sequence of events suggests that senior management in Parks Victoria (an autonomous corporate entity) may have been suborned; access to government files could confirm or refute that suggestion. The proposal arose directly from Tourism Victoria plans, including its Great Ocean Road Product Region Development Plan (1996) and Business Strategy (1997-2001). It was also reported by Mark Stone (then Director of the National Parks Service (DNRE) and later Director of Parks Victoria), in a briefing paper to the Minister for Conservation that ‘Tourism Victoria has been closely involved throughout the project (1996).’

### **Institutional Reform**

As with Brundtland, so with the literature review on which Williams et al (1998) drew: institutional reform is fundamental to achieving ecological sustainability. The Twelve Apostles planning process falls short on all ten criteria formulated by the Canadian

research team for the design and evaluation of Shared Decision-making (refer Framework of Criteria, Table 1). On the basis of stakeholder interviews (supported by documented evidence), there was neither philosophical nor practical commitment by the Premier, his senior colleagues and key public servants to such a collaborative process - quite the reverse.

It is apparent from the multiple oral and documented accounts of decision-making outlined, that there were severe divisions within Cabinet, between sections of DNRE, (in which Catchment and Land Management was a junior department), and within Parks Victoria. The latter was especially subject to tension between centrally located senior management and regional park managers, who had to deal face to face with a hostile community and with the reality of park management. The saga of the government's proposal, deferral, retraction, resubmission and further retraction, together with secrecy and breach of conventions under the Westminster system, suggest a tug-of-war between executive government and stakeholders intent on meaningful participation. Consistent with expectations of a flawed process and of government institutions in some turmoil, a sub-optimal outcome was produced in the judgment of most stakeholders and government agency representatives.

Lessons to be taken from the case of the Twelve Apostles in terms of institutional reform are many. Some appear to have been heeded and acted upon, following resolution of the conflict. Interagency collaboration (singularly lacking during the process other than between Tourism Victoria and DNRE/PV) was evident to stakeholders in several important ways. For example, the Department of Infrastructure convened an inter-departmental committee in early 2000 to prepare a Great Ocean Road Corridor Strategy.

This was intended to enable transport planning to be integrated with environmental, economic and cultural considerations on a regional, rather than project specific basis. The fact that the Great Ocean Road is marketed as the destination (rather than the Great Southern Ocean), is indicative of the double-edged sword of increased visitation on fragile, eroding limestone bordering a narrow linear park. Management and further promotion of single vehicle transport to the park is arguably the major planning and management challenge facing government and the industry. Yet this was not addressed as part of the planning process.

Another co-coordinative initiative arising in part from the Twelve Apostles process, is the establishment of a joint officers group representing DNRE, Parks Victoria and Tourism Victoria, to develop a common policy on recreation in national parks. A recent multi-agency Sustainable Future initiative, serviced by Deakin University, may well provide a regional forum within which future development proposals may be collaboratively assessed. Such a cross-sector regional reference point was lacking in the period under study. The range of regional co-coordinative and advisory bodies (such as the Western Coastal Council and Shipwrecks Coast Tourism) operated within separate portfolios.

Inter agency co-ordination aside, the key indicator of ecologically sustainable planning and governance would appear to be effective public involvement and accountability. The discretionary avoidance by Ministers and local councils of Environmental Effects Statements (EES) has been a recurrent feature of development projects in environmentally sensitive areas nation wide, with some dire effects. The case of Oyster Point, adjacent to Hinchinbrook Island in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, is perhaps the most spectacular recent example of failure to protect World Heritage. No EES was

required by any of the three spheres of government involved in this saga of successive tourism developments associated with environmental devastation (Allison 1999). From this case, as in that of the Twelve Apostles, it is clear that not only the values of the environment but the obligations of government need to be precisely defined by statute, such that they can be less readily avoided for political expediency (Haigh 1999).

Given the delay and expense which have been associated with a full EES, ministerial and municipal discretion has frequently allowed it to be avoided, increasingly so during the term of the Kennett Government. By contrast, such discretion is minimal under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979 and 1999). Environmental Impact Statements are required on public or private land and in national parks, for designated projects or those likely to have 'significant effect'. It provides a legislative model for greater certainty of environmental protection than is in place in Victoria.

The questions of ministerial discretion and lack of standing for community and non-government organisations, to enforce legislation or seek redress for administrative breach or unconscionable conduct, has led many to argue for the development of a constitutional Bill of Rights, as in Canada and South Africa (Raff 1999). Such rights would relate to freedom of information, and to third party standing (such as for non-government organizations) to litigate in defence of the environment. Indeed, given existing Commonwealth commitment to ecological sustainability under many international agreements and conventions (such as the Rio Declaration and the Biodiversity Convention, 1992), it has been argued that the Commonwealth may be obliged to override state policies (Marlin 1996, p. 71).

#### **7.4 A PARADIGM SHIFT**

Reform of environmental law, if it is to occur, will depend on the vigour of the ‘conversation’ and ‘argument’ which Healey (1997) and Forrester (1989) regard as being at the heart of planning and government for ecological sustainability in a democratic state. Withholding reasonable public access to information in the name of commercial confidentiality, excludes those most likely to advocate for the environment, as has been documented in the recent audit of government contracts in the Kennett term of government (Victoria 2000). To present a proposal well down the path of formulation as with the Twelve Apostles proposal is also, as a member of the National Parks Advisory Council put it, to generate an adversarial rather than collaborative planning (Durham 1998).

Professor David Yencken, former Secretary of the Victorian Department of Planning and President of the Australian Conservation Foundation has observed that: ‘The environment is regularly treated as a sectional interest of a minority group, rather than the foundation on which all human well being and activity depends’ (2000 p. 14). Ecological sustainability is clearly unattainable if that is the case, and the Twelve Apostles saga tends to confirm that treatment. This is despite routine acknowledgment of the importance of environmental protection. The ‘vision statement’ in the Great Ocean Road Tourism Development Plan, for example, includes the commitment that: ‘the region will continue to offer a wealth of pristine environment; great care will be taken to conserve the region’s assets for the enjoyment of future generations’. The only indication of how this pristine environment may be ensured, however, is by ‘developing plant and



infrastructure in a sensitive and responsible manner', a somewhat blinkered approach to environment protection (Tonge 1996, p.216).

In view of the national and international marketing campaign of which Port Campbell National Park has long been the subject, the recent commitment to the development of effective environmental impact monitoring by Parks Victoria (1998) is overdue.

Insufficient monitoring of natural values and of implementation of Management Plans were major criticisms by the National Parks Advisory Council (Durham 1998, p.45).

However, the 'notorious inadequacy of planning laws to control or influence the quality of the landscape', based on Common Law, is of longstanding and well documented (Jenkins 1997, p.136; Raff 1999). Neoliberalism, with its reduction of the capacity and legitimacy of the public sector and of the citizen (as client of government) to protect the environment, has intensified the problem of environment protection (Christoff 1998; Campbell, 1999). This is evident in the decision-making process at the Twelve Apostles.

So we are confronted with a paradox in pursuit of the holy grail of ecological sustainability. Fourteen years after the Brundtland Report (1987), Australia and its constituent states are committed to the implementation of binding international treaties, such as the Biodiversity Convention (1992). But in that period the entrenchment of the free market paradigm, with its short term and exclusive focus on the financial bottom line, have neutralised those commitments in an era when 'corporations rule the world' (Korten 1995).

In theory, there is virtual unanimity as to the necessity for the involvement of the community and for institutional collaboration, though varied rationales are proposed. As

the Great Ocean Road Tourism Development Plan states: ‘The attainment of this vision will be underpinned by the full commitment of local government, tourism interests, business and the wider community, in working cohesively towards a common goal’ (Tonge 1996, p.216). As with the practical commitment to environmental protection, however, so with collaborative planning, the gap between rhetoric and reality is considerable. That this plan immediately preceded a three year contest over the development of the proposed tourist facilities at the Twelve Apostles illustrates that gap.

### **Stakeholder analysis**

The application of stakeholder theories has proved fruitful in translating sustainability, in Murphy’s terms, from a mental state to a physical reality (1998). For it is in the process of stakeholder audit and in the design for and evaluation of stakeholder participation, that managers and researchers may identify the values, resources, information and participation (or non-participation) of these conflicting interests. They may also disaggregate the distribution of impacts, positive and negative, flowing from the planning process or development.

There are three crucial attributes of the framework of Williams et al (1998) and of the model of land use planning adopted by the provincial government of British Columbia, in terms of stakeholder analysis. First, there is a clear distinction between decision-making agencies and stakeholders; second, citizenship is central; and third, ecological sustainability is explicitly pursued in land use planning. For it is common in tourism literature to find reference to the need to get the stakeholders (often defined to include government) around one table, and even for the tourism industry to take a ‘proactive

leadership role' in convening that round table (McKercher 1993 p.136). It is here that the question of legitimacy in decision-making arises, and the role of government in representing the citizenry in a democratic state. The British Columbia land use planning experiment gives practical meaning to a paradigm shift to sustainability in terms of all three attributes – definition of stakeholders, centrality of citizenship and statutory entrenchment of ecologically sustainable development.

Gibson's development of a moral basis for stakeholder theory provides an insight into the paradigm shift required (2000, p.245). It is apparent from the Twelve Apostles case study that stakeholder interests were not taken into account other than as intelligence gathering and a means to a predetermined end. Belated realisation of the threat posed by unacknowledged stakeholders led the central agencies, for instrumental reasons, to consider stakeholder interests – 'sugar-coated strategic thinking' in Gibson's words (2000, p.255).

The ethical dimensions of planning and governance for ecological sustainability are rarely referred to in sustainable tourism literature. The ethical issues raised by Gibson in are those of justice, fairness in the selection and involvement of stakeholders and equitable allocation of benefits and disbenefits. The non-participation of the Indigenous community and significant under-representation of women in the decision-making on the Twelve Apostles reflects a far from level playing field in planning for ecologically sustainable tourism. Such an observation itself, however, is indicative of the utility of stakeholder audit and analysis in identifying (and potentially rectifying) deliberate or inadvertent exclusion.

Gibson stresses the moral claims of stakeholders, best represented by the definition of the duties of decision makers (2000 p. 248). Such duties in democratic governance are generally expressed in constitutions, legislation and bills of rights. Since the government clearly sought to circumvent its legislated obligations in the planning process for the Twelve Apostles, it may be judged culpable in Gibson's terms. To the extent that institutional measures such as an Environmental Effects Statement could be readily avoided through ministerial discretion, reflected inadequate statutory definition of the duty of care and availability of avenues of redress. The need for such definition of duties (rather than the traditional focus on values to be protected) was a major conclusion drawn by Haigh (1999) in his analysis of the failure to protect World Heritage at Hinchinbrook Island.

The application of the corporate stakeholder metaphor, however, has limitations in application to government. Indeed it parallels the limitation of the application of the neoliberal metaphor of the corporation to government. For whereas democratic governments are elected by and accountable to the citizenry, corporations are not; they are legitimately focused on the financial outcomes, and their key stakeholders are shareholders and lending institutions. While researchers may acknowledge the need for government to be able to enforce certain standards in the tourism industry (Murphy 1998, p.178) few seem to acknowledge the role of citizens and their non-government agencies in enforcing such standards as do exist (or should exist) on government. When government is the proponent or actively supporting the proponent, it cannot be 'left to reconcile competing interests' as Hall perceives it (1999, p.136). Collaborative planning

in the public interest can have little meaning unless it is mandated and unless there are avenues for citizen redress besides ‘guerilla warfare.’

**In summary,** the conclusions to be drawn from the literature and applied to a single case study cannot be generalised. However, state-based stakeholders such as the VNPA and National Trust (Victoria) regarded the Twelve Apostles development and planning process as an example of a general threat to the integrity of the national park system. This suggests that it is likely to resemble the planning processes operating elsewhere, certainly in Victoria. Judging from contemporary press coverage, the case was interpreted as symptomatic of ‘the national frustration over the way our environment is shaped ... the system is near impenetrable and the outcomes inexplicable’ (Harley 1997). As the Canberra Times (1996) editorialized, if the Twelve Apostles visitors centre went ahead, it would ‘reveal that we are prepared to turn anything into a buck – even a view of the coastline ... that we are a nation of spoilers’. For the tourism industry, the consensus among leading environmental bodies that tourism represents a serious challenge to protected areas, is a view that must be taken seriously, if only out of self-interest (Durham 1998, p.47; Humann 1997). The crisis of legitimacy which Lawrence (1997) identifies in ecotourism, implicates the tourism industry at large if the paradigm shift to ecologically sustainable tourism is to be sought.

What is indisputable, on the basis of this study, is that citizens operating through a hastily assembled local lobby and through well-established non-government organisations, were the chief public advocates for due planning process and for the ecological sustainability of protected areas. They worked against great odds. The ‘community’ (local, statewide, national) in this context is thus more accurately to be viewed as citizenry – central rather

than peripheral to the planning process and to the paradigm shift required. Collaborative planning is a precondition to achieving the democratisation of planning and natural resource management on which ecological sustainability depends. So too are rights of access to information and redress. Hence the relevance of the emerging discipline of political ecology, with its analysis of multiple interests with conflicting values and unequal power negotiating environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Stakeholder theory, subject to varying definitions and values, offers useful approaches to both designing and evaluating models of collaborative planning which accommodate such multiple interests. Its application in this case study highlighted the exclusion of both the Indigenous community and of women from the decision-making process. This has important implications for the culturally relevant design and conduct of such processes if the outcomes are to be and seen to be legitimate. Given that conflict is inherent in environmental planning and management, its anticipation and legitimate management is vital. The 'argumentative discipline' of planning (Forrester 1989) requires institutional support.

The debate about sustainable tourism, which government and research institutions have dominated, needs to be opened up to include the tourism industry, though not necessarily 'to operate from the same text' (Murphy 1998, p. 174). Since governments in Australia are accountable to the citizens and since it is chiefly through non-government environment organisations that citizens have been key drivers of ecologically sustainable development, they too must be brought into the debate. More than debate, if this understanding is to have effect, the impediments to citizen involvement in planning must be removed. Collaborative planning together with institutional provision for enforcement

may provide for the application of ecologically sustainable principles to tourism. To paraphrase Fuller, 'Each step, each shift in the path of activity, has social and environmental consequences and will require governance. We are all stakeholders in this' (2000, p.79).

## **7.5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Both challenges and opportunities for research can be identified on the basis of this paper. That tourism development is currently seen as a threat to protected areas by leaders in the environment movement and by a significant section of the community (Tonge 1996; Humann 1997; Durham 1998, p.47; ATC 2000) must be addressed, if the intractable conflict which The Twelve Apostles case study examines is not to persist. This is a tall order in the field of tourism policy process and planning, especially in rural areas in which, according to the recent review by Hall, such analysis 'is all too rare' (1997p. 143).

There are three broad gaps in analysis of policy and planning relevant to the present study, the first of which is **the role of the government**. Much of the tourism literature appears to be undertaken from an industry perspective and to reflect a free market approach with equanimity. As Hall puts it: Development processes will probably continue to exhibit a Darwinian flavour' (1997, p. 140). Yet the present research suggests (and many researchers acknowledge) that the strategic and regulatory role of government is crucial both to environmental management (Murphy 1998, p.178; Bramwell, 1998, p. 361) and to 'legitimacy management' (Lawrence 1997).

The issue is especially important in terms of the dominance of neoliberal economics and of globalisation and the consequences for governance, some of which was apparent in the current study. If sustainability is to be achieved, the role of government must be a prime focus of critical inquiry, not simply in ensuring industry compliance with environmental standards but in enabling citizens to ensure government compliance with its own legislation and with international treaties which the commonwealth government ratified with state support. The implications of a free market global economy for sustainable tourism need to be examined.

It follows that the second research priority that emerges is that of **the political economy of tourism**, since the 'conversation' or 'argument' over which government presides is a political one - a conflict of values and beliefs and competition over particular land uses. Analysis of the decision-making process, often revolving around property development, and often in or adjacent to protected areas, requires a detachment from the tourism industry stakeholder. However, there is a tendency in much of the literature for research and education in tourism to be regarded as a contribution to the industry – effectively vocational training and industry research and development (Go 1998). Insufficient attention has been paid to the power relations of stakeholders and the implications for democratic process and for ecological sustainability. Research as to collaborative planning with Indigenous stakeholders, effectively excluded from the decision-making process for the Twelve Apostles development is urgently required by the communities themselves and by the industry.

To some extent the difficulties confronted by the tourism industry in the statutory planning process encumber all natural resource users. Ecologically sustainable tourism



will require both land use planning and institutional reform, such as the clearer specification of government duties and citizen rights and the inclusion of the tourism sector in regional land use planning. While evaluation of alternative measures of environmental impact, such as carrying capacity and limits to acceptable growth are important, they are tools whose effective use will depend on the political will of government and on political process (Murphy 1998, pp. 180-1; Hall 1998, p. 132). The debate is essentially political rather than technical, as some may contend, and research should reflect that (Baric 1997, p. 154).

The third area requiring research and integration within tourism policy analysis is that of **the environment**. Reference to natural resources is often superficial and instrumental, embedded in the economic paradigm. The warning ‘that the tourist industry would collapse if too much of its wilderness was destroyed’ (Morse 2001) or that ‘one of the main challenges ... is to avoid spoiling the main assets of tourism (Hall 1997, p.142), is far removed from Brundtland’s case for a paradigm shift to sustainability. The moral duty to future generations, the ecological imperative and the need for a precautionary approach is yet to shape tourism policy and planning. Environment is typically seen as a setting, a tourism product and, in terms of management and planning, the responsibility of other sectors. Just as research on the political economy of tourism will require a multi-disciplinary approach and more broadly based planning solutions, so too sustainability will require the application of ecological expertise. There is a pressing need to integrate ecological discourse into tourism policy and for it to be informed by such specialist expertise.

All three of these related areas present a particular opportunity for the tourism sector. In Murphy's words: It is 'ideally situated for a leadership role in sustainable development given its multi-dimensional nature and private/public sector duality' (1998, p. 185). The sector could well set the pace for environmental and urban design, and even promote land rehabilitation. Handicapped in policy and planning by lack of statutory control over natural resources, government tourism agencies in partnership with other stakeholders – business, non-government, and academic, are in the rare position of straddling functional sectors. These include land use and transport planning, environmental management, Indigenous affairs, regional and cultural development, as well as those of energy, water and waste management. The opportunity for the tourism industry to breach the hermetically sealed functional sectors of government is great.

The pursuit of ecologically sustainable development itself is inevitably a multi-disciplinary research endeavour. Tourism departments are well placed to negotiate collaborative research involving, for example, environmental law, regional geography and ecology. On the basis of this research, projects for which such collaboration could be fruitful are the conduct of comparative case studies within states, between states and, as appropriate, between nations, similar to that of the Twelve Apostles. The decision-making process and institutional framework of the Hinchinbrook Channel in Queensland offers a productive basis for such comparison.

A focus on shared decision-making, using models such as that developed by Williams et al (1998), in British Columbia, would enhance such comparability and promote the essential elements of citizen accountability and sustainable development. Pearce (1981) argues that: 'despite many models about various aspects of tourism, they appear to have

been developed independently of one another with little or no recognition of previous efforts or attempts to build on them'. Stakeholder audit and analysis and the design and evaluation of the planning process as applied by Williams, is a practical model, readily applied to a conflictual development process. Its clear distinction between decision-makers and stakeholders avoids the corporatist and undemocratic blurring of the power differentials in a 'round table' consensus between selected parties, often advocated.

Comparative analysis of policy instruments is a related field requiring research conducive to ecological sustainability, as Bramwell has identified (1998, p.372). Environmental impact assessment was regarded by community and non-government stakeholders, in the case of both The Twelve Apostles and at the Hinchinbrook Channel developments, as critical to ecologically sustainable outcomes. Its application or otherwise, in differing statutory and political circumstance and with differing impact is a significant research area to be pursued.

The legal framework and the efficacy with which a mix of instruments is defined and operates in each of the states, and in comparable countries such as Canada, is also a critical field of research in which the tourism sector has a stake. 'Best practice' instruments (such as mandatory state of the environment reporting and impact assessment) are matters which, instead of being quarantined in town planning and environmental law, could inform inter-disciplinary research on sustainable tourism.

The research agenda on planning processes and institutional arrangements is daunting and one shared with industries and university faculties well beyond tourism. But it is clear there are leverage issues whose clarification is likely to have disproportionate

effect. Research which examines the barriers to and opportunities for active involvement of citizens in decision-making, is a critical and manageable component of ‘moving sustainability from a mental state to an economic and physical reality’ (Murphy 1998, p.174).

## **APPENDIX 1:       STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

### **1     VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT**

- **Department of Natural Resources and Environment**

Andrew Grant: former Manager, National Parks Division, South West Region

Brian Doolan: Senior Recreation and Tourism Planner

Nick Winbush: former Executive Officer, Western Coastal Board, current Executive Officer, Central Coastal Board

- **Parks Victoria:**

Brett Cheatley: Manager, Corporate Strategy; former Manager, Assets Programs

John Amor: Special Projects, Warrnambool Office

- **Tourism Victoria (Department of State and Regional Development)**

Peter Keage: General Manager Infrastructure

- **Member of Parliament in the Victorian Legislative Assembly:**

John McGrath: Member for Warrnambool, 1985-99

### **2     LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

- **Corangamite Shire Council**

Terry Binder: Manager, Economic Development and Tourism:

- **Moyne Shire**

Neil Martin, Community and Economic Development Officer

### **3 TOURISM INDUSTRY**

- **Shipwrecks Coast Tourism Inc:**

Libby Wilson, Manager

### **4 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY**

- **Framlingham Aboriginal Trust**

Lionel Harridine: Chairman

Herby Harridine: Cultural Heritage Officer

### **5 LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATION**

- **Friends of the Twelve Apostles**

Neil Trotter: Convenor

- **Port Campbell National Park Advisory Committee**

Julie Brazier: Member and former Deputy Chairman

### **6 NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS**

- **Victorian National Parks Association**

Doug Humann, Director, 1989-98

- **National Trust of Australia (Vic)**

Ian Wight: Conservation Manager, 1985-98

**Others consulted without formal interview:**

Russell Mason: Manager, Tourism and Visitors Programs, National Parks Policy and Strategy, Parks Victoria

John McInerney, Ranger in Charge, Port Campbell National Park, Parks Victoria

Alison Stone: DNRE

John Giniven: Executive Officer, Victorian Coastal Council, DNRE

.Paul Albone: Nature Based Tourism Manager, Strategy and Industry Development, Tourism Victoria

Stuart Toplis: Tourism Development Officer, Geelong Otway Tourism

Dr Dick Braithwaite: Co-ordinator, Tourism Research Program, CSIRO

Mary Hollick: Lecturer, School of Business, Ballarat University

Margaret O'Toole: Convenor, Port Campbell Environment Group and Member, Western Coastal Board, DNRE

## **APPENDIX 2           STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

- 1   What role did you/your organisation play in the planning and development of visitor services near the 12 Apostles, Port Campbell, in 1996 -99?
- 2   Who do you regard as the major stakeholders (those relevant to and/or impacted by) the proposed development of visitor services near the 12 Apostles?
- 3   What did you/your organisation seek to achieve and why?
- 4   Is there a document/s which best summarises or justifies your/agency's aim and/or view in relation to the specific development or tourism in the wider region?
- 5   What formal structures existed to bring the parties together?
- 6   Were all major interests represented and with opportunity to participate, and how was the public kept informed?
- 7   Were those interests effectively represented eg in terms of commitment, communication with their constituency, resources and skills? If no, what constraints were apparent?
- 8   What was the nature of government agencies' support for/involvement in the process? (Staff, budget, framework). Was there a statement of terms of reference, mandate of lead agencies, criteria and time frame?



- 9 How would you describe the formal and informal decision-making process: ie Did it relate to a pre-existing state/regional plan/s, such as the Great Ocean Road Development Plan (TV 1996) What statutory steps were entailed in it? What were its strengths and weaknesses?
- 10 What were the outcomes of the decision-making process and how satisfied were you/your organisation? What were the grounds for such assessment?
- 11 What lessons, if any, may be drawn from the decision-making process in relation to the 12 Apostles that may be more widely applicable to tourism development in Victoria or elsewhere?

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1	Establishing ecological limits and more equitable standards	'requires the promotion of values that encourage consumption standards that are within the bounds of the ecological possible and to which all can reasonably aspire'.
2	Redistribution of economic activity and reallocation of resources	'Meeting essential needs depends in part on achieving full growth potential and sustainable development clearly requires economic growth in places where such needs are not being met'.
3	Population control	'Though the issue is not merely one of population size but of the distribution of resources, sustainable development can only be pursued if demographic developments are in harmony with the changing productive potential of the ecosystem.'
4	Conservation of basic resources	'sustainable development must not endanger the natural systems that support life on Earth: the atmosphere, the waters, the soils, and the living beings.'
5	More equitable access to resources and increased technological effort to use them more effectively	'Growth has no set limits in terms of population or resource use beyond which lies ecological disaster . . . But ultimate limits there are, and sustainability requires that long before these are reached the world must ensure equitable access to the constrained resource and reorient technological efforts to relieve the pressure.'
6	Carrying capacity and sustainable yield	'most renewable resources are part of a complex and interlinked ecosystem, and maximum sustainable yield must be defined after taking into account system-wide effects of exploitation.'
7	Retention of resources	'Sustainable development requires that the rate of depletion of non-renewable resources foreclose as few future options as possible.'
8	Diversification of the species	'sustainable development requires the conservation of plant and animal species.'
9	Minimize adverse impacts	'Sustainable development requires that the adverse impacts on the quality of air, water, and other natural elements are minimised so as to sustain the ecosystem's overall integrity.'
10	Community control	'community control over development decisions affecting local ecosystems'
11	Broad national/international policy framework	'the biosphere is the common home of all human-kind and joint management of the biosphere is prerequisite for global political security.'
12	Economic viability	'Corporate environmental policy is an extension of total quality management.'
13	Environmental quality	'Corporate environmental policy is an extension of total quality management.'
14	Environmental audit	'An effective environmental audit system is at the heart of good environmental management.'

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## **APPENDIX 4            THE TWELVE APOSTLES PROJECT CHRONOLOGY**

### **1992**

December      PCNP Information Centre Redevelopment Proposal, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources;

### **1994**

26 December    Announcement by State Government of upgrade of Great Ocean Road tourist facilities;

### **1996**

Great Ocean Road Tourism Development Plan published by Country Victoria Tourism Council and Tourism Victoria;

February 12    Detailed and critical response by CEO, Corangamite Council, to draft visitor centre proposal near The Twelve Apostles being prepared by DNRE consultants, warning that it was in conflict with local and state planning controls and that a precedent would have negative environmental and economic impacts;

March 16        Corangamite Council elected after period of administration by government appointed commissioners, during council amalgamations and other reform;

March 30        Election of the Kennett Coalition State Government for a second term;

- April Department of Natural Resources and Environment established, with one Minister for Agriculture and Resources and one Minister for Conservation and Land Management;
- September 5 Minister for Conservation, Hon Marie Tehan, launches *Proposal for Great Ocean Road Visitor Centre*, National Parks Service (DNRE) with Tourism Victoria;
- September 23 Corangamite Council convenes public meeting: *Port Campbell at the Cross roads*, at request of PCNPCG and Progress Association;
- October 24 Port Campbell National Park Consultative Group makes critical and comprehensive submission to Parks Victoria on Visitor Centre Proposal;
- November 14 Draft Victorian Coastal Strategy released;
- December 3 Premier Jeff Kennett defends plans ‘by private developer’ for visitor centre, restaurant and car park for 300 cars (Canberra Times);
- December 12 Surprise announcement by Minister for Conservation , Hon Marie Tehan, of the establishment of Parks Victoria as a corporate entity, bringing together the National Parks Service and Melbourne Parks and Waterways, contracting with DNRE to manage parks;
- December 16 Friends of the Apostles (FOTA) formed at public meeting of residents, called to oppose the commercialisation of the national park overlooking the Twelve Apostles;

December 30 Front page pictorial coverage in The Melbourne Age of 1000 towels marking HANDS OFF at Tidal River, Wilson's Promontory, opposing 150 bed hostel and other commercial facilities at 'this large and busy resort', as Parks Victoria described it (Humann 1997);

## **1997**

Tourism Victoria Strategic Business Plan, 1997-2001, released with high priority to Great Ocean Road infrastructure;

January 31 State Opposition Media Statement generates publicity on limited response by government to request under Freedom of Information for documentation of Twelve Apostles visitors centre concept and planning;

February 2 Liberals lose safe Liberal seat of Gippsland West at by-election, in which parallel development at Seal Rocks, Phillip Island, was a major issue;

February 14 Premier, Jeff Kennett, declares support for BHP gas rig and pipeline from Minerva field; Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism, Pat MacNamara, expresses reservations regarding the visual impact of a rig 4km from the Twelve Apostles;

February 25 Meeting of 13 key stakeholders due to be convened by Minister for Planning and Local Government, Hon Rob Maclellan, to discuss requirement for Environment Effects Statement (EES), cancelled the previous evening;

- February 25 Corangamite Shire Council resolve to advocate to the Minister for Local Government and Planning that an EES be prepared on the visitor centre proposal, as Responsible Authority for planning consent and in view of sensitivities of and alternatives to preferred site;
- February 26 Media statements by Parks Victoria, National Trust and VNPA as plans for visitors centre deferred pending further study; media coverage of project ‘shelved’, ‘abandoned’;
- February 27 Statewide Hands Off Our Parks (HOOP) rally organised by coalition of non-government and community-based environment and planning organisations in Melbourne (including VNPA), with 88 organisations represented;
- March 21 Letter to CEO, Corangamite Shire, from Minister for Local Government, Hon Rob Maclellan, explaining cancellation of EES meeting. Reasons given were that: public submissions were still being considered by DNRE, ‘additional assessment of the concept’ being made and that it was ‘premature’ until DNRE had ‘clarified the nature of the proposals’;
- March 30 400 people gather on site, with significant television and print media coverage, to protest construction of \$12M visitor centre 300m from the coast at Twelve Apostles;

- April 30      State Government Budget Papers provide for ‘world class’ visitor infrastructure at Wilson’s Promontory, The Nobbies, Phillip Island and at Twelve Apostles, Port Campbell National Park;
- September 5      Draft Management Plan for Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park released for comment by Parks Victoria; withdrawal of plans to build \$12M tourist centre on the coastline, to be relocated in Port Campbell, because of scale of conservationists’ objection. ‘People Power Razes Glass to Apostles (Weekend Australian 6/7 September).
- September 6      Premier Kennett declares support for original proposal of commercially operated visitors centre at Twelve Apostles, despite Minister for Conservation and Parks Victoria position in Draft Management Plan;
- November      Victorian Coastal Strategy released by Victorian Coastal Council;
- November 25      Corangamite Shire response to the Draft Management Plan evaluates each of five options in detail and supports Port Campbell township location on social, environmental and economic grounds;
- December 12      Liberal Party loses seat of Mitcham at by-election, largely focussed on issue of public accountability and contracting out of functions of the Auditor General;

## 1998

- January 21 Premier, Jeff Kennett, visits Twelve Apostles by helicopter to 'see the site for myself ... if the locals were not in favour then Port Campbell would be ruled out' (Colac Times, January 28);
- April 16/19 Celebration of Centenary of National Parks in Victoria: Symposium at Mt Buffalo, VNPA;
- April 30 Terms of all members of National Parks Advisory Council due to expire and National Parks Amendment Bill prepared (Durham 1998);
- May 26 Parks Victoria Act assented to, establishing Parks Victoria including objectives and roles (see December 12, 1996);
- June 23 Media reports of negotiations by government with private landholder to acquire land for an information centre and kiosk;
- July 15 Spokesman for Friends of the Apostles critical of Minister for Conservation for 'the impromptu calling of a meeting' the following day. 'It appears to be designed to minimize opposition' (Warrnambool Standard);
- July 16 Minister for Conservation, Hon Marie Tehan, announces decision of government to build information centre and kiosk at public meeting called at one day's notice, attended by 'outraged crowd' of 300 at Port Campbell, (The Age);



July 24 Member for Warrnambool, John McGrath quoted as opposing commercial facility: I have some major concerns about a kiosk facility ... I don't believe it is warranted. Furthermore, I think it will create problems for the park as visitor numbers grow (Warrnambool Standard);

September 30 Final Management Plan for Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park released by Minister for Conservation, Hon Marie Tehan. Announcement that visitor facilities would be scaled down, constructed on private land north of the road and due for completion mid 2000. There would be no commercial component. Private investment would be sought for construction of Information Centre/kiosk on one of five government owned sites in and around township of Port Campbell; media coverage of 'scrapping' and 'shelving' visitor centre and 'community groups hailing decision as victory' ;

December 18 Parks Victoria calls for tenders for conduct of Visitor Management Project for PCNP;

## **1999**

January 19 Planning Permit issued by Corangamite Shire Council for \$2.9M visitor centre development;

January 21 Public meeting at Port Campbell called by Minister for Conservation, Hon Marie Tehan, (with little notice and publicity), following issue of permit

by Corangamite Shire Council for \$2.9M visitor facility on farmland adjacent PCNP;

March 6 Tenders called by PV for visitor information services and registration of interest for design and construction of visitor amenity facilities at Twelve Apostles;

September 18 ALP State Government elected;

December 4 Government media release and related press reports that Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Sherryl Garbutt, is wary of ‘plans for toilets’ near Twelve Apostles;

December 14 State Government approves plans for \$4.735m toilet block, carpark and static display linked by pedestrian tunnel under the Great Ocean Road to Twelve Apostles, and revegetation of existing carpark;

## **2000**

Parks Victoria applies with Corangamite Shire Council support for federal funding for a feasibility study for Twelve Apostles Interpretive Centre on publicly owned land in Port Campbell township;

October Parks Victoria report in *Bushy Tales Newsletter*, that the ‘state of the art’ Visitor Centre under construction is assessed at \$5.6M, one of the largest budgets for a capital works project by PV. Carparking capacity stated to be ‘more than four times the capacity’ of the existing 44 vehicle carpark;

Date: 23 June 1999

Our reference: PV Agreements

Mr Peter McKay  
Chief Ranger  
Parks Victoria  
78 Henna Street  
Warrnambool

Dear Mr McKay

**Re: Cultural Heritage Management.**

Further to our meeting earlier this year to discuss cultural heritage management on Crown Land that is managed by Parks Victoria (PV) and is within the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust (FAT) Management Area I would like to confirm the following outcomes.

I also wish to advise you that FAT is concerned that members of your staff continue to ignore due process and the agreement reached at this meeting in regard to cultural heritage management and as recently as this month (June) failed to advise the Cultural Protection Officer, Graeme Harradine of the need to disturb a site during works at Childers Cove.

• **Relevant Legislation.**

The Victorian Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972 and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 define the responsibilities of Parks Victoria in relation to management of Aboriginal cultural sites and materials.

• **Management Area.**

The FAT Management Area is from the footbridge on the Erskine River in Lorne and westward along the coast to Boundary Rd, the boundary between Moyne and Glenelg Shire Councils. From these 2 points the area then extends northward in a triangular shape to Stawell. Deen Maar Island, (Lady Julia Percy Island) is included in this area. A map of this area is enclosed.

• **Cultural Heritage Management.**

Under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 1984 FAT is the appointed manager of this area; Mr Graeme Harradine is the Cultural Heritage Officer for this area. Mr Joe Chatfield is the coordinator of the Cultural Heritage Program.

• **All management issues that relate to cultural material or sites must be referred to Mr Harradine who acts on behalf of FAT.**

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria has registered a multitude of shell middens, quarries and burial sites along this section of coastline and in the hinterland. It is a very important and often sacred area to our community, we continue our relationship with the land, and rivers and the sea and many locations are of spiritual and religious importance. Aboriginal history and use of this land has created an enormously significant archaeological area and some locations have been accorded National Heritage designation.

As our culture has a very strong attachment to the land, rivers and the sea in terms of dream time and life style beliefs, the cultural attachment is often more to a "sense of place" than to a specific spot. As such it is usually difficult to outline which areas of land are or are not important by using the European method of planning for development.

As well as a legal responsibility FAT has a moral and cultural obligation to ensure the protection of Aboriginal cultural sites for Aboriginal people and the wider community

To assist PV in the planning process relating to the protection, use and development of these parcels of Crown Land it is sensible to include Framlingham Aboriginal Trust as a partner in the process of strategic management.

I recommend that PV and FAT enter into a management structure that gives FAT equal responsibility in the management of Parks Victoria managed Crown Land in areas relating to Aboriginal culture.

FAT supports the concept of **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Agreements** with land managers and is in the process of finalising agreements with Local Governments that also have responsibility for the management of Crown Land.

Moyne Shire Councils Draft Coastal Action Plan recommends that agreements be entered into.

PV can also agree to this process as being the best outcome for both parties.

This process is described in **Section 21k of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984**. Which states;

- (1) A local Aboriginal community may enter into an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Agreement with a person who owns or possesses any Aboriginal cultural property in Victoria.
- (2) An agreement may cover the preservation, maintenance, exhibition, sale or use of the property and the rights, needs and wishes of the person and of the Aboriginal and general communities

If this proposal is not acceptable to PV then **Section 21D** of this Act states the following;

- (1) If a local Aboriginal community decides, whether after an application is made to it or on its own motion, that;
  - (a) A place or object in the community area is an Aboriginal place or Aboriginal object; and
  - (b) That place or object is under threat of injury or desecration;

The community may advise the Minister that it consider a temporary declaration of preservation should be made.

Further, **Section 16** of the **Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972** states the following;

**16. Temporary archaeological area**

- (1) If the Governor in Council is satisfied that it is expedient to reserve a particular area of land for the preservation or protection of a relic and that it is necessary in the meantime to prevent or control the entry of persons into the area, he may by Order in Council published in the Government Gazette declare such an area as a temporary archaeological area.
- (2) A temporary archaeological area shall cease to be such upon the expiration of 6 months after its declaration as such unless it has been declared or has other wise become an archaeological area.

In this case FAT will require PV to apply in writing to FAT for a permit for any works or activities (project) that will disturb the ground or that may indirectly effect Aboriginal cultural sites within the FAT Cultural Heritage Management area. Unless FAT provides written consent to PV for a project then any work related to the project may be considered to be in breach of these Acts and legal proceedings may be initiated.

FAT charges a fee for inspections of sites where projects or works are proposed; a fee schedule is attached.

Framlingham Aboriginal Trust seeks to enter into a mutually cooperative arrangement with Parks Victoria rather than one that is based on the regulatory powers of the relevant Acts.

We believe that Section 21K of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Heritage Act provides this opportunity.

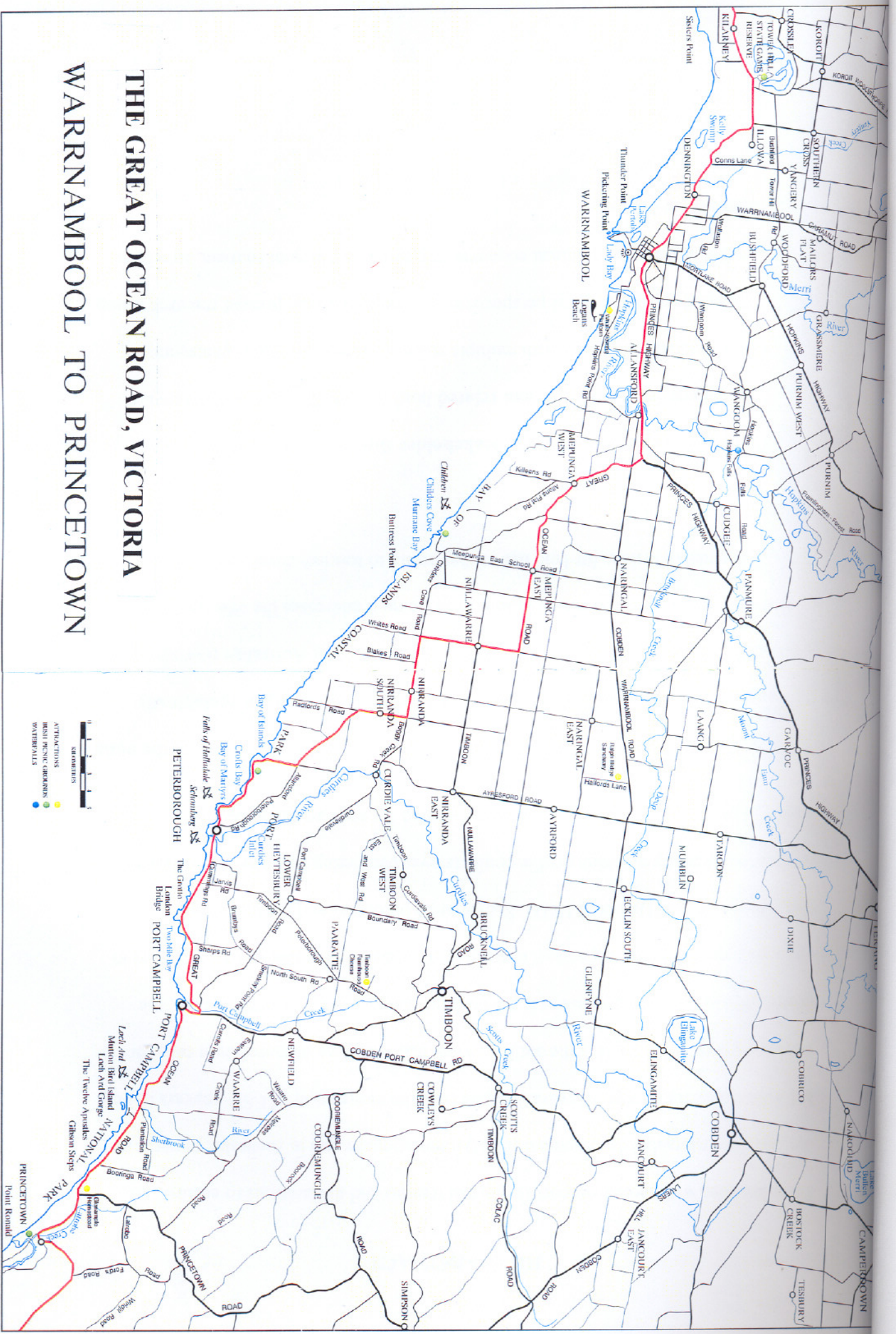
For further discussions regarding these matters please contact me on the listed telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Clark  
Administrator  
Framlingham Aboriginal Trust

Cc:	Geoff Clark	ATSIC Commissioner Victoria
	Tony Cahir	Director Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
	Lional Harradine	Chairman Framlingham Aboriginal Trust
	Graeme Harradine	Protection Officer Cultural Heritage Program
	Joe Chatfield	Coordinator Cultural Heritage Program





# THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD, VICTORIA

## WARRNAMBOOL TO PRINCETOWN

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