



Welcome to The Meeting Post!

It gives me much pleasure to be introducing the latest edition of *The Meeting Post*. This will also be our final edition for the year and the staff of Management Solutions Qld and I would like to take this opportunity to send our best wishes to you for the holiday season.

Delegates at the recent Kalgoorlie Boulder Summit identified that well planned, coordinated tourism development strategies were strongly identified as critical to the sustainable economic growth for the Goldfields Esperance region. My experience is that this is a goal identified by, and shared with, many regions. Regional practitioners would also be aware that tourism is not a panacea for regions. Successful tourism requires vision, knowledge and passion that is interpreted and marketed well to reap appropriate benefits. [Read More](#)

From The Parliamentary Secretary's Desk

The Rudd Government and Regional Australia

The Rudd Government is acutely aware of the importance of Australia's regional wellbeing. Events such as the current global recession, the extended drought and flooding that have occurred in Australia's regions underscore how crucial the engagement of the federal government is in Australia's regional development. In my role as the Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, I have been focussed on community infrastructure and regional development.

The Rudd Government has worn its commitment to regional development on its sleeve. In our response to the global financial crisis, our main stimulus measure in community infrastructure the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (RLCIP) sowed the seeds of recovery in all 565 councils across Australia. It is a truly universal program which is spreading more than \$1 billion in funding across regional communities. [Read more](#)



Hon Maxine McKew MP

Professional Perspectives

Reinventing Rural Places

From Elvis impersonators to economic development - rural festivals in Australia

Results from a three-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Festivals Project, which show the significant financial and employment benefits from festivals held in rural communities, have been outlined at a seminar at the University of Wollongong.

Rural festivals have proliferated and diversified in recent years from the traditional country show to evermore whacky niches - the Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival, the Woolli Goanna Pulling Festival, the Thoona Latin American and Wheely Bin Festival and Parkes' Elvis impersonators festival.

Are such festivals significant for rural communities in contrast to their apparent short-lived nature? The ARC festivals project sought to answer this question. [Read More](#)



Festival Participants

Local Tourism Networks and the Global Marketplace

Dr Patrice Braun

Today's tourism market is global. This article helps tourism managers understand how the dynamics of their local or regional tourism network fit into the global marketplace.

The growing influence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), networks and relationships as critical factors in shaping the distribution of economic advantage is relevant to tourism, as it directly impacts on interactions between local and global forces. The realities of global competition require an understanding on the local level of global markets and the complexities of interactions with multiple stakeholders along global supply chains. [Read More](#)



Dr Patrice Braun



Outback Offsets

The Pilot Program

Outback Offsets is a pilot carbon offset program established by the Northern Territory Government's tourism agency, Tourism NT. Launched in September 2008, Tourism NT supported three tourism businesses in Central Australia to become carbon neutral during 2008/09. The carbon offsets were provided at no cost to the consumer. They selected the touring sector in Central Australia as the basis for the program, particularly because avoiding carbon emissions is a difficult task for tour operators, due to their reliance on fossil fuels for transport. Tourism NT partnered with three Central Australian tour operators to establish this pilot program: [Adventure Tours Australia](#), [Connections Safaris and Connections Adventures](#) and [Wayoutback Desert Safaris](#).

Why develop an Offset program

Tourism NT developed the Outback Offsets program in response to growing consumer concern about the impact of climate change. Consumer research conducted by Tourism NT and Tourism Australia in 2007/08 showed a concern about the impacts of climate change and its long term effects on the environment. The research indicated that the potential exists for a large percentage of consumers to change their travel behaviour if they are not satisfied that enough is being done to address the carbon impact of leisure travel. [Read More](#)

People and Parks - a visitor strategy for South Australia's National Parks and Reserves Department for Environment and Heritage, South Australian Government

South Australia's National Parks and Reserves provide an extensive network of cultural sites, arid deserts, rugged ranges, untouched beaches and vast seascapes. The People and Parks strategy sets a clear, new vision that will:

- Make South Australia an even better place to live and visit
- Involve more people in the care and protection of parks
- Make parks integral to the lifestyle of South Australians
- Increase the contribution of parks to the economy
- Establish South Australia as a lead in sustainable park management [Read More](#)



Anne Sellar, Director, Visitor Management
Conservation Policy and Programs

Assisting the Australian Tourism Industry to respond to Climate Change

Climate change presents significant challenges, particularly for the Australian regional tourism industry. Australia's tourism industry is vulnerable to the impacts of both the physical effects of climate change and potential changes in traveller behaviour as a result of climate change concerns. The industry will also be affected by national and international policies introduced to reduce emissions.

The importance of ensuring the tourism industry is provided with relevant and practical information on climate change Issues has led to the development of the *Climate Change Guide: Mitigation and Adaptation Measures for Australian Tourism Operators* by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (RET) in consultation with the Department of Climate Change. [Read More](#)



National Landscapes Indigenous Tourism Initiative

On 25 March 2009, the Minister for Tourism, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, announced a one-off grants initiative which provided \$150,000 in funding to a range of Indigenous specific tourism projects within the *National Landscapes* program.

The *National Landscapes* program is a partnership between Tourism Australia and Parks Australia to identify and promote landscapes which capture the essence of Australia and offer distinctive natural and cultural experiences. It identifies the very best that Australia has to offer, then brands and markets these areas according to the unique experience each one

Australian Government

**Department of Resources
Energy and Tourism**



Operation Rainforest Big Bird: Cassowary Habitat

For thousands of years the tropical rainforests of Northern Australia have been tended by a unique gardener, a gardener who has not demanded anything other than to be able to work in peace. This rainforest gardener is the **Southern Cassowary**.

However, in the last 200 years this gardener's rainforest habitat has been fragmented, cleared and infested with competing species such as wild pigs and feral dogs. CSIRO now estimate the number of Cassowary to be between 1200 and 1500.

The Australian Rainforest Foundation, in partnership with Tourism Tropical North Queensland, have launched a world wide competition to win the best holiday in the world in-order to raise funds to create a cassowary habitat corridor stretching from Cooktown to Cardwell.

[Read More](#)



**SAVE THE OLDEST
RAINFOREST AND
PROTECT OUR
ENDANGERED SPECIES**



Sustainable Ideas

Sustainable Planning and EcoDesign in Rural and Remote Australia Hitesh Mehta

Master Physical Planning and Design in this global age of heightened cultural and environmental sensitivity needs to be holistic in nature and sustainable in all aspects of the planning and design process. This article, addresses how Sustainable Planning and EcoDesign can be implemented in Rural and Remote parts of Australia; highlights monetary and social benefits to stakeholders and outlines tangible means of how people can work with the concept of Sustainable Planning and Eco Design.

For the past ten years, I have in my work practiced what I call a "quadruple-bottom" line planning and design approach - one that balances economic, environmental, social and spiritual issues. Each site plan and building design is a response to the local context: physical, metaphysical and cultural.

[Read More](#)

Alternative ways of creating tourism

The Brolga Project

With a clear goal of encouraging regional economic growth, a 12-month-old initiative is drawing young, enthusiastic, graduating professionals towards regional careers.

The Brolga Project matches final-year university students with host agencies in rural and regional Australia. Its rationale is to offer the students a chance to try life and work in a regional community, in the knowledge that many students will enjoy the experience enough to return to the community when they've completed their studies.

Interest from students has been overwhelming, with over 500 coming forward to be part of the project in the first year. They represent a range of more than 40 career choices too, with the most popular being accounting and engineering, although marketing, law, health and tourism studies are also well represented.

The diversification of students studying tourism reflects the diversity across the project. Tourism students range from people already living in country areas keen to promote their local communities, to international students seeking work as translators and field guides.

The Brolga Project is a really simple initiative offering huge-scale benefits to everyone involved and the success stories coming out of the project testify to its strengths.

The first student has been placed into full time employment, and some host agencies are finding the activity so rewarding they are up to taking their third placement, while students themselves are astounded at the range of experiences they can participate in.

The project's only very new, but there are plenty of prior examples where young people who have moved to country communities early in their career, settle and build their lives in the rich diversity of local life. Managers of the project believe that as it evolves there will be flow-on benefits to towns where the students are placed, as active encouragement will be directed to the students' friends and family to visit them on placement.

Please visit the [website](#)



Alternative ways of creating tourism continues..



Volunteer Tourism & Community Development

The history of *host communities* and mainstream tourism has been an interesting, if not controversial, one. Many of the ideas that have supported the development of a community based approach to tourism have come about through the enormous impacts that tourism developments in Australia in the 1980's had on host communities. These communities often had little say and control in the development that was occurring. The social impact of unrestrained tourism developments caused upheaval in many communities. Volunteer tourism however may offer regional communities in Australia an alternative way of developing tourism. In looking at approaches to Volunteer tourism, we must examine:

Dr. Stephen Wearing

- The values on which it is developed,
- The goals of its development, and
- How it impacts the host community.

In mainstream tourism, we often find an unquestioning acceptance of the effects of unrestrained development of the natural environment, such as the exploitation of natural resources. Numerous critiques by environmentalists and others have attacked this pro-development viewpoint. Volunteer tourism also tries, I believe, to move beyond the more selfish focus on 'self' - so apparent in today's societies (and travel behavior is no exception). Volunteer tourism recognises the effects of visitors on an area and does not hold a naive faith in the so-called benefits of development as unrestrained growth of tourism; but rather, seeks to use tourism to provide other types of resources focusing on community-based projects.



It is one thing to talk about the ideas, values, and principles of community and how they fit into the world in which we would like to operate; but it is another to actually do something about it. [Read More](#)

Voluntourism - travelling to make a difference

The 'voluntourist' is an experience seeker looking for a holiday which is engaging, enriching and informative. They are an active rather than passive traveller and people who have a desire to interact with the local environment and communities to make a meaningful difference.



Combining a vacation with volunteering on local projects is one way many travellers feel a world away from their daily routines and get to make a difference. Volunteers donate time and money to be hands on in everything from rolling baits to setting traps and collecting data from the animals, planting trees, clearing marine debris from remote coastline, restoring seabird habitat, building walking tracks in National Parks, participating in turtle research, removing weeds to restore native habitat, assisting with erosion control and fencing.

In 1982, the first conservation volunteers came together in Australia to revive severely degraded farmland surrounding the regional township of Ballarat in Western Victoria. Today, 27 years on, this small community group is now one of Australia's leading, multi-award winning, non-profit conservation and volunteer tourism organisations, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA).



In fulfilling their mission, "to manage a force volunteers to complete practical conservation projects for the betterment of the environment", CVA created volunteer tourism experiences that embrace the principles of sustainability, engaging volunteers from Australia and abroad to conserve the environment.

[Read More](#)

Events



*Costas Christ
National Geographic*

Papers Available – Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference 2009

An international delegation of over 220 leaders in sustainability gathered in Alice Springs Australia recently to discuss the latest issues and opportunities across sustainability, ecotourism, tourism in protected areas and climate change response. These were further discussed during the Theme Stream Workshops on Day Two providing further discussion and tangible outcomes for delegates to implement in their organisations and operations.

Over 60 papers from Keynote and Theme Stream presenters provided delegates with an outstanding array of the latest approaches to sustainable tourism. [Read More](#)

SEGRA 2009

Post Conference Communiqué is now available

The *SEGRA* 2009 Communiqué including more than 40 proposals for advancing regional Australia put forward at the conference is now available at the *SEGRA* [website](#). The next edition of The Meeting Post will feature some key learnings and initiatives of *SEGRA*.

If you would like to find out more about hosting *SEGRA* next year or in the future, please contact Kate Charters at 07 3210 0021 or by email kate@segra.com.au

*The destination
for SEGRA 2010
is still under
consideration*