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Islands on the Edge: Exploring Islandness and Development in Four Australian Case Studies

by

Rebecca Erinn Jackson, BSc (Hons)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Tasmania

July 2008

Declaration

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ABSTRACT

This research is positioned in the field of island studies and examines impacts of residential and tourism developments on four Australian case studies - Bruny Island off the island-state of Tasmania; Phillip Island, part of Victoria; Kangaroo Island off South Australia; and Rottnest Island, Western Australia. These islands are on the edge of metropolitan regions, so are readily accessible and subject to development pressures that may threaten ecological, social and economic well-being.

I use a qualitative research methodology, involving interviews with key island stakeholders, to explore relationships among three themes: islandness, development, and governance. 'Islandness' broadly refers to qualities of islands - geographical, social and political - that are distinct from those of continents. Consideration of development focuses on (i) tourism as a key economic activity on the case islands, and (ii) residential development and the associated 'sea change' phenomenon involving amenity migration. I investigate governance structures for the case islands, and the capacity of communities to advance local sustainability.

Islandness is an ambiguous concept, partly due to the openness/closure of island boundaries (openness refers to connectedness with the wider world and closure relates to insularity). Such ambiguity is evident in tensions between islanders' desire for autonomy, and parity with mainlanders. Islandness can be diminished by increasing accessibility (a form of greater boundary openness), such as bridges or faster ferries, or by developments that do not pay due heed to principles of sustainability or specificities of island context. However, insularity can also be problematic: many offshore islands need to be open to tourism to sustain economic viability. A key issue then is how to balance apparent needs to further economic development (and possible homogenisation with mainlands) with other needs to maintain distinct island qualities. Suggested strategies include striving for economies of place (capitalising on a geographical uniqueness that adds value to goods); preserving unique island features such as sense of place, character, and environmental values; and ensuring that relevant governments (if

mainland-based) provide for some form of island representation. State and local government policy and planning strategies may also need to consider distinct island characteristics. Consistency between spatial and administrative boundaries is important from environmental and social perspectives (islands can foster sense of community and social capital), but such governance arrangements are often constrained economically.

This research contributes to the field of island studies by addressing the lack of comparative case studies and research on offshore islands. In relation to existing island literature, I augment theoretical understandings of the concept of islandness, and link this concept to that of sustainable development. This research also highlights the natural and social values of four offshore islands and the importance of maintaining their distinct island qualities (and suggests some strategies for doing so). I conclude that islandness is an important resource for island and other peoples as they grapple with the challenges of sustainable development. Research findings may be applicable to offshore islands in other parts of the world, considering some of the common sustainability challenges and opportunities associated with islandness.

Acknowledgements

Similar to islands, I have not been completely isolated. I have reached beyond my personal boundary to several external networks which have enabled me to undertake this piece of work.

Firstly, I am deeply indebted to my family, especially my mother Maxine for her unwavering support throughout the course of my candidature, but particularly during the past year. I also appreciate the encouragement from my sisters Skye and Caitlin and my grandmother Joy.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my supervisors: Elaine Stratford, for her guidance, invaluable help with structuring the thesis, and enthusiasm (I was lucky to find a supervisor with such an interest in islands); Michael Lockwood, for his support and for asking the difficult, but necessary, questions throughout several drafts; and I appreciate the insights and suggestions from my international research supervisor, Arthur Dahl.

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents, Mae and Herb Jackson.

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PROLOGUE

Writing a dissertation is very much like being in a long-term relationship: there are likely to be some very good times and some perfectly dreadful ones and it's a big help if you like what you've chosen (Bolker, 1998: 9).

Before I begin, I believe it is important to explain why I chose to study islands. Growing up in the Australian island state of Tasmania (although not born on Tasmanian soil and hence perhaps not a true islander, depending on various definitions of what it takes to be a Tasmanian), I largely saw the disadvantages of living on an island: as a child, experiencing seasickness when travelling on the *Abel Tasman* across Bass Strait to visit relatives in mainland Australia; as a teenager, the boredom which I associated with having fewer shops and television stations than on the mainland; and as a young adult, the sense of inferiority and defensiveness when I moved to the nation's capital, Canberra (believing a common Tasmanian opinion that if you want to 'make something of your life', you have to move to the mainland) and faced a constant barrage of jokes about inbreeding, particularly 'Hey, where's your scar?' (a result of supposedly having my second head removed). This sense of islander inferiority is reinforced when Tasmania is left off maps and souvenirs of Australia, as if it were a matter as trivial as not dotting an i (or in the case of souvenir manufacturers, perhaps it is just too difficult to connect Australia's southern island to its 'North Island', the mainland of Australia). It was not until I had left the island state and particularly not until I was living in a large Australian city, Melbourne, that I began to appreciate the benefits of an island lifestyle, including minimal travel times and a stronger identification with place (as opposed to feeling like an ant in the flat, seemingly endless suburbs of Melbourne). As Gillis (2004: 168) notes, 'islomania' is generated by absence rather than by presence: "only when we leave a place do we come to fully appreciate it".

Hence, it seemed logical to return to Tasmania to begin my PhD in island studies. However, I sensed that Tasmania itself was too large an island to tackle over a relatively short period of time and it did not appeal to me as an entire study site. I turned my attention back to a topic I had formulated in early 2000 while assisting with research on

an island offshore from Perth, Western Australia. Captivated by the beauty of Rottnest Island, yet equally conscious of the risks of mismanaging this distinctive place, I considered undertaking research on the management of islands offshore from Australian capital cities for my upcoming Honours research. However, I quickly realised that this subject matter was far too substantial for the ten-month Honours timeframe, and instead studied a selection of Hobart beaches from a coastal geomorphology perspective. However, the islands project remained in my mind and became my PhD topic four years later. Hence, in terms of reasons for writing dissertations, Bolker (1998: 4-5, 9) would say that I am one of “the lucky ones who have a burning question that they want to spend time answering ... some people seem always to have known what they want to write their dissertations about ... You follow your curiosity, and, if you’re lucky, your passion”.

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The island lay before their eyes like an unfolded map
(Verne, 1874-5: 119).

Residential and tourism developments affect places and people across the world – their sheer number, their scale and intensity, and their capacity to displace existing traditions, values and practices are especially problematic. In this work, I examine the particular impacts of such developments on islands, places where geography has created or otherwise influenced certain political, economic, environmental and social conditions. In broad terms, islands may include oceanic landforms and landforms on continental shelves. Some islands are extremely isolated from continental influences; others are subject to strong continental influences. The focus of this work is on islands near metropolitan centres which are readily accessible and thus subject to various development pressures¹ that may threaten ecological, social and economic well-being. In an era where the basic principles of sustainable development are now given, and the intrinsic value of place is acknowledged, for those who live on, govern or care for islands, such pressures are often understood (however partially) in terms of sustainability and in relation to their effects on what is known as sense of place.

This work is qualitative (the method of approach is documented in chapter two) and is in some ways an ‘anatomy of islomania²’, to borrow Durrell’s (1953) phrase. The research addresses three fundamental questions, formulated as hypotheses. The first is that islands

¹ “Those areas abutting urban regions often serve as their pleasure periphery, providing easily accessible, relatively unspoiled day and overnight outdoor recreation opportunities and short break escapes. These places have also become popular locations for holiday homes” (McKercher & Fu, 2005: 511).

² Durrell (1953) refers to ‘islomania’ as an affliction of spirit and he admitted to being an ‘islomane’, a person who finds islands irresistible.

produce a particular sense of being in place that forms one component of ‘islandness’³. The suffix *-ness* denotes a quality or condition (Oxford English Dictionary), and so islandness may be described as island qualities, including geographical, social and political elements. I elaborate on the concept of islandness in chapter three. The second hypothesis is that islandness is an important resource for island and other peoples as they attempt to grapple with the challenges of (sustainable) development because it ‘grounds’ them in the particularities of their circumstances. This discussion is expanded on in chapter four. The final hypothesis is that islandness may be diminished by residential and tourist developments, especially where these do not pay due heed either to the principles of sustainability or the specificities of island context. This hypothesis is examined in work spanning chapters five to nine. The significance of such potential loss of island qualities may lie in the observation that:

islands – *real* islands, real geographical entities – attract affection, loyalty, identification. And what do you get when you take a bounded geographical entity and add an investment of human attachment, loyalty and meaning? You get the phenomenon known as ‘place’. Islands are places – special places, paradigmatic places, topographies of meaning in which the qualities that construct place are dramatically distilled (Hay, 2006: 31).

Islands are, for example, well-known as settings for research on isolated flora, fauna and cultures (notably Darwin’s Galapagos and Mead’s Samoa). They have, in addition, strongly featured in fiction for many centuries, particularly since Robinson Crusoe’s (DeFoe, 1719) shipwreck on a remote island. In both cases – scientific and fictional alike – storytelling has been a significant element of how islands, islandness and their importance are conveyed. Islands have been treated as laboratories to test theoretical propositions in continental disciplines. Gillis (2004: 107) notes that “it was not that science was interested in the islands for themselves. The appeal of islands lay more in the fact that ... they would serve as easily comprehended stand-ins for the whole natural and human world”. For example, biogeographical studies on islands played a key role in evolutionary theory:

³ Islands and island people vary greatly but there are “similarities and common experiences which go far beyond their position as pieces of land surrounded by water” (Royle, 1989: 107). These similarities and experiences might be described as islandness.

An island is certainly an intrinsically appealing study object. It is simpler than a continent or an ocean, a visibly discrete object that can be labelled with a name and its resident populations identified thereby ... By their very multiplicity, and variation in shape, size, degree of isolation, and ecology, islands provide the necessary replications in natural “experiments” by which evolutionary hypotheses can be tested (MacArthur & Wilson, 1967: 3).

Whittaker (1998: 3) describes the central paradigm of island biogeography: “islands, being discrete, internally quantifiable, numerous, and varied entities, provide us with a suite of natural laboratories, from which the discerning natural scientist can make a selection that simplifies the complexity of the natural world, enabling theories of general importance to be developed and tested”. However, Greenhough (2006: 226) contends that “the laboratory-like simplicity of island spaces is deceptive because it fails to take account of the ... sea which actively interferes with the boundaries of island spaces”. Greenhough (2006) notes that the narrative of genetic homogeneity of Iceland’s population has been contested, particularly by social and historical accounts which question the isolation of Icelandic culture (considering the seafaring networks of the Vikings).

Considering the successes of using islands as natural laboratories, some researchers may be tempted to view islands as social laboratories and apply the natural template to the social world. Many studies of islanders revolve around anthropology and the study of non-Western cultures: “as a metaphor for closed cultural systems the ‘island’ has been central to anthropological theorising” (Peckham, 2003: 500). Long-term anthropological studies in small communities became the research norm, and Skinner (2002: 205) observes that “research on islands has continually engaged with continental thought, and is likely to continue to do so in the new millennium as debates move beyond tribal economics, kinship and salvage ethnography to studies of globalisation, post-colonialism and ‘movement’ in a new era caught between trade blocks and free trade agreements”. Skinner (2002: 209) considers that the island remains “a legitimate subject for social scrutiny, whether as conceptual device, as metaphor, or as social, economic or political distinctive location” and is well-suited for the extrapolation of in-depth data for generalisation and comparison.

Gillis (2004: 4) believes that islands have rarely been understood on their own terms because “they have occupied such a central place in the Western imagination ... As master symbols and metaphors for powerful mainland cultures, their own realities and consciousness have been more obscured than illuminated”. It is only in recent decades that academic interest has begun to focus on the claim that islands be studied on their own terms. Some suggest this interdisciplinary field be labelled *nissology* (Depraetere, 1990-1991). McCall (1994: 2) for example explains that because of “misunderstandings about islands and the lack of an organised body of knowledge suitable for islands, I propose the concept of “Nissology”, the study of islands on their own terms; the open and free inquiry into island-ness; and the promotion of international cooperation and networking amongst islands”. McCall (1997) later clarifies that the “their” in “on their own terms” refers not to the land itself, but to the inhabitants of those places – to islanders.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, others then suggest that islands might be viewed differently. Baldacchino (2004a: 278), for instance, has been a leading advocate of *island studies*:

Island Studies is not the mere study of events and phenomena on sites which happen to be islands ... Islands do not merely reproduce on a manageable scale the dynamics and processes that exist elsewhere. Islandness is an *intervening variable* that does not determine, but contours and conditions physical and social events in distinct, and distinctly relevant, ways (emphasis added).

Further, Baldacchino (2006a: 9) asserts that:

The core of ‘island studies’ is the constitution of ‘islandness’ and its possible or plausible influence and impact on ecology, human/species behaviour and any of the areas handled by the traditional subject uni-disciplines (such as archaeology, economics or literature), subject multi-disciplines (such as political economy or biogeography) or policy foci/issues (such as governance, social capital, waste disposal, language extinction or sustainable tourism).

Rather than focusing on diametrical (island/continental) points of view of islands, it is important to consider islands as “part of complex and cross-cutting systems of regional and global interaction ... ‘island studies’ need/should not be focused only on islands

themselves, but also on relations between islands and mainlands” (Baldacchino, 2006a: 10). This research is positioned in the field of island studies, not nissology, as it considers islandness as an intervening variable.

Like geography, island studies has the scope to facilitate interdisciplinary research. Its scholarly base derives from a range of disciplines and its reputation has grown considerably over the past two decades. A number of seminars and international conferences now focus on islands in their own right (for example the International Small Islands Studies Association conferences, Islands of the World; the International Geographical Union’s Commission on Islands; and the International Conference on Small Island Cultures); several institutions encourage island networks (such as Global Islands Network); and there is now a journal dedicated solely to island studies (*Island Studies Journal*). Perhaps one reason for the recent scholarly uptake of island studies resonates with that of earlier research on islands: an island presents as a relatively simple study area to grasp because it is a discrete entity, as opposed to continental places where boundaries appear more arbitrary. In a study of island tourism and sustainability, Kokkranikal et al. (2003: 428) point out that the smaller size of islands “allows for detailed analysis of the sustainability issues, which may be problematic in the case of larger human settlements where it could be difficult to separate the effects of tourism from other aspects of human activities”. Islands provide valuable opportunities to explore human-environment relationships, as they allow for the concurrence of human boundaries and those of the natural (terrestrial) world.

Geographers have long sought to partition the world and people into various areas (Cook & Phillips, 2005). Islands are naturally partitioned and no doubt this forms part of their appeal to geographers. Islands may comprise several smaller units of place common to continents (for example, built environment, wetland, sandy coastline), and perhaps for this reason it is often the *entire island* which appeals to scholars as a study site because it (re)presents a whole, contained place that can be ‘grasped’:

because it is surrounded by water, an island is like a framed picture, appearing to its viewer as small but at the same time all the more comprehensible. The framing allows us the illusion that we know an island

more thoroughly, lending weight to the modern notion that it is through the small that we can understand the large (Gillis, 2004: 151).

Island categories

We live in a sea of islands (Hau'ofa, 1994) or a world of islands (Baldacchino, 2007a). Almost ten per cent of the world's population (approximately 600 million people) live on islands, which cover about seven per cent of the Earth's land surface (Baldacchino, 2007b). Islands can broadly be divided into two main categories based on their origin: oceanic and continental. Oceanic islands are those produced by volcanic activity (such as the Hawaiian islands) and continental islands are those that lie on the continental shelf of a continent (including islands as large as Greenland). Generally, continental islands are larger and older than oceanic islands (Nunn, 2007) and as they are a result of the relationship between sea and land, they depend on sea level for their status. Many were parts of continents in the past and, with sea level expected to rise in the future as a result of global warming, there is potential for loss of existing islands and creation of new ones from existing mainlands.

Islands can also be categorised based on other criteria: for example level of sovereignty or development (a category to which the United Nation's Division for Sustainable Development directs much attention is Small Island Developing States or SIDS). Island states are nation states containing one or a group of islands, while sub-national islands are those islands within nations, including continental nations, and they may be relatively proximate (such as Sicily) or distant (for example Tristan da Cunha). A sub-national entity generally refers to an administrative region within a country below that of the sovereign state, so it follows that sub-national islands have some form of administrative power below that of the sovereign state. Examples are Prince Edward Island (a province within Canada), the Isle of Man (a British Crown dependency) and Tasmania (a state within the Commonwealth of Australia).

Offshore islands are those islands situated close to a continental mainland (or to a larger island) and they are also known as coastal islands. Since offshore islands are usually

located on the periphery of a larger political unit based on a nearby mainland (Watson, I 1998), they are commonly considered appendages of mainlands. Theroux (1983: 77) likens them to wayward puzzle pieces: “Just under the irregular coast was the Isle of Wight, shaped like the loose puzzle-piece that most offshore islands resemble”. However, the number of offshore islanders is significant. It was estimated in 1989 that more than 34 million people inhabit offshore parts of mainland nations (Royle, 1989). In comparison to island nations, academics and institutions have directed limited attention to the study of offshore islands on their own terms. In Agenda 21 the United Nations (1992) recognises small islands as fragile ecosystems and acknowledges that, in addition to SIDS, islands which support small communities are special cases both for environment and development and have specific problems in planning sustainable development. However, the majority of work focuses on SIDS. Of the developed islands that are the subject of academic research, there tends to be an emphasis on nation states and warm island regions such as the Mediterranean. There has recently been rising interest in sub-national island jurisdictions or SNIJs (Baldacchino, 2004, 2006; Bartmann, 2006; Groome Wynne, 2007; Kelman et al., 2006; Stratford, 2006a). While this research is much needed, it largely ignores offshore islands that do not have autonomy.

Although those offshore islands close to metropolises are ‘under the noses’ of the many academics based in cities, there are significant gaps in research about them. For example, McKercher and Fu (2005) comment that much of the research on tourism and the periphery has focused on fringe destinations such as Pacific islands or rural communities; few studies have examined the periphery of existing destinations. While many offshore islands (particularly those near metropolitan centres) do not lack attention from the general public, they are perhaps the most neglected category of islands in a research sense. This lack of research may stem from the fact that many offshore islands are not considered isolated and hence not perceived as ‘exotic’. For example, Gillis (2004: 118) notes that in the field of anthropology, “as late as the 1990s the more distant and isolated the place, the greater the prestige it bestowed”. Ian Watson (1998: 133-4) considers the obscurity of offshore islands: “[they] are on the periphery of a larger landmass, can be considered culturally or geographically or geologically part of that landmass, are usually somehow subordinate or dependent to it, and collapse into that

landmass on a map which is highly generalized”. Perhaps offshore islands are not perceived as ‘different enough’ from their adjacent mainland to produce any great research insights. However, I consider that it is precisely *because* they can be so geologically, biologically and culturally similar to their adjacent mainlands that we can learn much about offshore islands, as these factors can be held constant to an extent; this constancy allows greater attention on islandness as an intervening variable.

Research setting

While offshore islands face many common problems due to their insularity and separation from mainlands, I want to hone in on particular issues facing islands offshore from metropolitan regions. Such places tend to attract large numbers of day and overnight visitors, many temporary (seasonal) and permanent residents, and are insidiously under pressure from a range of sources. While much of the island tourism literature focuses on the problems of remote islands in attracting tourists, the issue with offshore islands near metropolises may well be how to limit visitor (and resident) numbers in order to minimise environmental and social impacts. Brown (2006: 101) notes that community responses to land use and development decisions are often contingent on the type of development involved:

Whereas increased residential development often appears consistent with the prevailing human population growth paradigm, tourism-related development often lacks the same inevitability because of implied community choice regarding the type of economic development to be encouraged. Consequently, tourism-related development decisions can be particularly contentious because these are viewed as more discretionary and non-essential from a community perspective.

While many development pressures are common to offshore islands across the world, it is Australian offshore islands that I focus on. Australia, the world’s smallest continent, is a federation of six states, two major territories and several external island territories⁴. The Australian coastline extends for almost 60,000km and approximately 40 per cent of

⁴ The Australian Government also administers a mainland territory, Jervis Bay Territory, as a naval base and sea port for Canberra, the inland national capital; and the Australian Antarctic Territory.

this comprises island coastlines (Geoscience Australia, 2003). Its offshore islands vary in size, population, climatic conditions and natural resources, and experience various pressures, resulting in different types of environmental impacts. Considering that Australia has 8,222 islands (Geoscience Australia, 2004), there are many research opportunities around the continent, but I want to focus on those islands that are likely to experience significant development pressures: those near capital cities. The four offshore islands that form the central focus of this research are each within 120km of a capital city: Bruny Island off the island-state of Tasmania⁵; Rottnest Island in Western Australia; Phillip Island, part of Victoria; and Kangaroo Island, South Australia. These islands are located within the continental shelf (Figure 1.1).

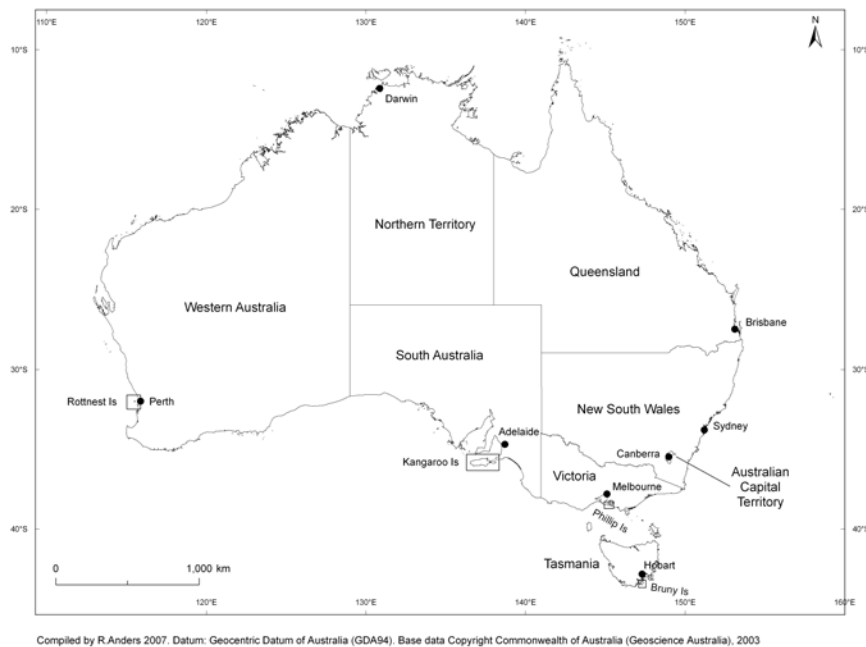


Figure 1.1 Location of the case islands

Depraetere and Dahl (2007: 71) argue that proximity of islands to continents is an important geographic detail:

⁵ Tasmania is an archipelago of at least 334 islands.

for that purpose, a useful criterion is the coastal maritime zone legally defined as the territorial sea (12 nautical miles~22.2 km), which also corresponds to the distance from which the coast is visible at sea level ... This criterion defines two classes: the 'pericontinental' islands located within this continental coastal zone and subject to strong continental influences, and 'open ocean' islands distant from immediate continental areas.

All of my case studies are in this sense pericontinental islands – hence Rottnest Island, the furthest of the case islands from its mainland shore (18km), is visible from the coastline of suburban Perth (the capital city of Western Australia).

Australia is one of the world's most urbanised countries, with more than 85 per cent of its population living in major towns or cities. I chose to concentrate on islands near metropolitan regions in part because settlement in Australia is so heavily concentrated in these primary urban areas, which are sources of tourism and residential pressures. Hence, it is to be expected that islands near metropolitan regions generally experience changes more rapidly and on a scale greater than islands more remote from cities. Australia has a relatively mobile population and in recent years has been characterised as a 'sea change' society (Burnley & Murphy, 2004; Hamilton & Mail, 2003; Salt, 2004). Sea change describes a major lifestyle shift, often literally involving a move to the coast and it "has come to represent the wider social and environmental transformations resulting from rapid population growth and associated urbanisation within coastal areas" (Gurran & Blakely, 2007: 113). Salt (2004) argues that the sea change phenomenon represents a third Australian culture, following on from that of the city and the bush. In the past decade coastal migration has accelerated particularly in communities in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia that are within a three-hour drive of a capital city (Gurran et al. 2007). Coastal communities that are a similar distance from Brisbane and Sydney have experienced longer-term coastal migration over the past 30 years (Gurran et al. 2007). Although not included by Gurran et al. (2007) as significantly impacted by coastal migration, I frame coastal communities near Hobart, including Bruny Island, as places that will increasingly experience coastal migration within the next decade. Research on sea change tends to focus on mainland coasts but I will explore whether this phenomenon extends to the case islands.

Under the Australian Commonwealth Constitution of 1901, the Australian Government's legislative powers include taxation, defence, foreign affairs, and telecommunications services, while the States retain legislative power over a range of matters that occur within their borders, including police, hospitals, education and public transport. In addition to the States and Territories, Australia has a second tier of sub-national government: local government. Local government powers are not referred to in the Constitution; they are determined by state government legislation. Traditionally concerned with the 'three Rs', or rates, roads and rubbish, in recent times local governments have acquired a greater range of responsibilities, including environmental management and policy. While offshore islands are typically subordinate to or dependent on their mainlands, I do not refer to the case islands in this research as sub-national islands because this label implies some form of jurisdiction, which not all the cases possess. I refer to the case studies as 'offshore' islands because not all of them have autonomy at a local level. Most offshore islands in Australia come under the jurisdiction of a mainland local governing body (often called councils), but two of the case studies in this research are exceptions to this generalisation. Kangaroo Island has its own local government, Kangaroo Island Council, and Rottnest Island is managed by a Western Australian Government statutory authority. Both Bruny Island and Phillip Island have had their own councils in the past but were amalgamated with mainland councils in the 1990s. Given these jurisdictional matters, in this research I will also explore the relationships between mainlands and islands – since “to define something as an offshore island presupposes a mainland and an island which stand in a hierarchical relationship to each other” (Watson, I, 1998: 134) – and particularly between cities and islands.

In an international research context, Australia's offshore islands are perhaps overshadowed by their continent, because Australia is often categorised as an island. If any sub-national islands are cited, it is often only Tasmania⁶, although this relatively large island (68,300km²) can also be forgotten: Australia is “commonly imagined as a single landmass without its surrounding islands – as with the ready exclusion of Tasmania in representations of Australia” (McMahon, 2005: 2). In island tourism

⁶ Or perhaps Queensland's Fraser Island purely because it is the world's largest sand island.

studies, it is usually only tropical Queensland islands that are cited; less exotic locales tend to be ignored, despite their popularity as destinations.

Although comparative island studies are rare, Baldacchino (2004b: 270) suggests that “this research strategy contains enormous promise, now that it has appeared on the horizon of logistic and financial possibility”. Australian examples of comparative island research are few but a notable example is that by Hercock (1998) who examined the relationship between public policy and the environment on four islands offshore from Perth, Western Australia. However, Hercock’s is a local comparative study. By undertaking an interstate comparative study I can examine different state and local government positions on islands, especially in relation to tourism, residential development and environmental management – each tending to have multilateral and multi-jurisdictional importance.

Research questions and significance

The qualitative research reported in this work is the result of collection and analysis of narratives about the relationships between development and islandness with a view to testing the hypotheses noted at the beginning of this chapter. I use a sustainable development framework, encompassing economic, environmental, social and political components, to examine the effects of tourism and residential developments. While it is commonly argued that sustainable development is an over-used, ill-defined term difficult to apply in practice, I find the concept valuable: as Villamil (1977) points out, islands are highly integrated and sustainable development is premised on a strong commitment to the integration of decision-making about environmental, economic and social life (United Nations, 1992). Sustainable development is also based on an understanding of the intrinsic worth of non-human nature (Layard, 2001).

Several questions concern me about how communities and stakeholders of the four case islands experience, understand and manage residential and tourism developments. These are guiding questions and their treatment is implicit in the content of chapters five to

eight. How do such developments affect natural and social island values that are constitutive of islandness *per se*? How do the island communities and stakeholders gauge opportunities for, and challenges confronting, sustainable development? What roles do governments and local communities have in managing the four islands for sustainable development? These questions are explored through three major themes. The first is *island and islandness*. Exploring the case study islands and islands at an abstract level, I examine both their alluring and challenging characteristics (particularly in relation to their differences from mainlands generally and cities specifically). I focus on their appeal to long-term, new and temporary residents, and tourists; and the flipside: I address the difficulties associated with island life and challenges facing their tourism industries. Is the island distinct from its adjacent mainland as a function of islandness in a geographic sense? If so, what environmental, social and economic characteristics of the island differ from its mainland? Do residents use islandness to assert a distinct identity and to justify specific economic, social and political demands? I also examine the relationship between islands and metropolises: offshore islands are typically characterised as marginal or peripheral places, and cities as cores or centres. What is the relationship of each case island to its mainland capital city? Are there tensions between island life and desire for parity with mainlanders?

The second theme embraces two components: *tourism*, a key economic activity of each case island; and *residential development*, in Australia, subject to a ‘sea change’ phenomenon involving amenity migration⁷. In investigating this second theme, I examine the effects of tourism and residential developments on the natural and social values of the case islands. Do tourism and residential developments conflict with environmental management objectives or are there instances where they can lead to improved environmental outcomes? Does the influx of tourists and new residents (and associated developments) affect social values pertaining to the case islands, and if so, how?

The third theme is *governance for local sustainability* on the case islands, and it is significant because government bodies have vital roles in respect to managing change,

⁷ Amenity migration is the movement of people in search of a better lifestyle to attractive settings characterised by high natural amenity (Gurran et al. 2007).

including the impacts of tourism and residential development on natural and social values. I describe and evaluate the range of governance structures and systems that exist for the case islands, and establish whether state and local government legislation, and policy and planning initiatives take into account their special island characteristics. What jurisdiction is responsible for the island, and if this differed in the past, what was the reason for the change? For islands that are a part of mainland jurisdictions, are there any island-specific governance provisions? Are there tensions between autonomy and dependence on mainland jurisdictions? Do offshore islands need to be governed any differently from mainlands and should there be consistency between spatial and administrative boundaries? Since the four islands' state governments are based in the capital cities, I also explore their power and influence over island planning decisions. Considering the growing recognition of the importance of community participation in governance, I also assess the capacity of local communities to channel development to advance their visions for the island and to resist inappropriate developments. What are the roles of the local (and wider) communities in governing the islands for sustainability? Can offshore islands be models for local sustainability and community visioning⁸? For each case island, what are some constraints and opportunities for sustainable development?

Chapter nine revisits these three main themes in a comparative analysis of the four islands, and here I suggest some strategies to improve possibilities for sustainable development and for maintaining islandness. In chapter ten I conclude by presenting the main research findings, consider the limitations and significance of the study, and suggest further research opportunities. I also make recommendations for improved island management which are aimed at maintaining or enhancing islandness.

According to Baldacchino (2004: 280), the need for a coherent island studies has never been more pressing because “locality has come within global reach” and islands are faced with threats such as the global village, global warming, overpopulation and depopulation. In such light, this research is significant for a number of reasons. It

⁸ Community visioning may be defined as “a process by which a community envisions the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it” (Ames, 1993: 7). Ames (2001) also suggests that the term visioning derives from the conjunction of two words – vision and planning.

provides a detailed theoretical and empirical contribution to the field of island studies, particularly addressing the lack of comparative case studies. Considering the gaps on research about offshore islands (despite the range of development pressures they are facing) this research is timely and valuable in terms of furthering the understanding of Australian offshore islands.

The research has a broader significance beyond island studies; it also contributes to Australian tourism and environmental studies, and demonstrates the value of island case studies in local sustainability research. Considering the lack of academic (particularly qualitative) research in the policy arena, this research may prove useful: qualitative research can make a significant contribution to that arena. There are tensions between the long-term time frames of qualitative research and the relatively short time frames of policy formulation cycles (Rist, 2000), and quantitative ‘solid facts’ are no doubt easier to justify in policy development. However, “the utility of case research to practitioners and policy makers is in its extension of experience” (Stake, 2000: 449). This research also has a role in demonstrating the value of both qualitative research within the island studies discipline, and of presenting viewpoints of islanders and other island stakeholders (through the interview method) rather than only those of mainlanders researching islands.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

You're the journalist who's been doing all the interviews
(manager of a hire car company on a case island).

Rationale

It is pertinent to explain why I chose to study islands. On reflection I realise that I wanted to explore bounded, 'graspable' places, but did not wish to limit myself topically for a three to four year study. As a geographer, I wanted to explore a variety of issues and islands appeal because they 'have it all' in contained spaces. My personal background has also influenced my choice of topic, in terms of not being 'continent-centric'. I have lived on the island of Tasmania since I was seven (apart from a typical mainland stint following university). However, I am still unsure as to the definition of a Tasmanian. Such is the case with many people living on islands - for example regarding Scottish islands, Kohn (2002: 146) notes that the word islander "implies genealogical depth or at the very least, birthplace". To qualify as a Tasmanian, some people consider that you must have been born here; others maintain that you must have lived more than half your life in Tasmania, in which case I qualify. My island experiences have, I believe, facilitated my understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by those living on even smaller islands, but in terms of researching offshore islands, my perspective is 'in between'. I am living as an islander (in the island state of Tasmania) but in relation to residents of Tasmania's offshore islands, including Bruny Island, I am a mainlander. My position as an Australian geographer is also relevant, even though I am not investigating other cultures. Gillis (2004: 2) considers that:

Dividing the world into discrete things, islanding it as a means of understanding, is a peculiarly Western way of navigating a world that seems otherwise without shape and direction. Western thought has always preferred to assign meaning to neatly bounded, insulated things, regarding that which

lies between as a void ... ignoring that which connects in favour of stressing that which separates and isolates.

This Western view contrasts with Hau'ofa's (1994) own of the Pacific Islanders' universe, which comprises not only land surfaces but also the surrounding ocean. The background of an island social researcher can be an important research variable. While outsiders or mainlanders may provide a greater sense of objectivity and may not feel as conscious of any need to tiptoe amongst social relations as an islander might, outsiders no doubt face problems in grasping the complexities of island life in typically short research timeframes and in gaining the trust of islanders. Nevertheless, "island scholarship remains dominated by those observing from the 'outside-in'" (Baldacchino, 2007b: 2).

Island studies is interdisciplinary; similar to the discipline of geography, it can involve a variety of subject matter. Phillips (2005: 83-4) concedes that it is difficult to identify where one stands within geography's philosophical debates: "it is very easy when reading some accounts of philosophy in geography to be left with the impression that it largely involves picking one out of a number of pre-existing, clearly delimited philosophies". I am unwilling to 'place myself in a box' and identify entirely with one philosophical position or another, and this will be reflected in my writing style. It seems somewhat incongruous to collect data from participants in everyday language and then present data in what may appear to some people to be an arcane language. The issue is that of accessibility of language and while a thesis is written for an academic audience, I do not want to exclude a wider potential audience by filling the pages of this dissertation merely with philosophical terms. To some extent, my choice of research topic and methodology, in the form of case studies, also dictates my writing style:

Case study material gives aesthetic appeal by providing human interest, good stories and a more humanistic mode of presentation than that of the traditional 'scientific'/quantitative style. To the extent that the material must particularize, it is harder to write about it in abstract theoretical jargon, and so it is (at least superficially) simple, even if what is described is complex. This makes for easy and pleasant reading, and a wider and not exclusively professional appeal (Platt, 1988: 7).

In my worldview, knowledge is gained both through observations in the world, and through accounts of the observations of others, and this view is reflected in my research methods. I acknowledge that in researching case studies, “seen from different worldviews and in different situations, the “same” case *is* different” (Stake, 2000: 449). My description and interpretation of each case island will differ from that of another researcher using either the same or different methods of inquiry.

Research methods

My research design has been shaped by the need to ensure that I have the data necessary to address the research questions (Mason, 2002) and influenced by my view, substantiated in the following chapter, that islands are important in their own right and not merely as landforms that facilitate various research topics. Qualitative research requires a consistent framework of research questions, data collation, data analysis and presentation of arguments.

I draw on qualitative research methods, namely data gathering through documentary evidence, observation, and semi-structured interviews with key island stakeholders (islanders and mainlanders) including developers, tourism operators, representatives of local community groups, and state and local government officers involved in planning, natural resource management and tourism. Research design is not always a smooth process. As with McKercher and Fu (2005: 512), “Because qualitative research by nature involves an emergent structure, the research design ... evolved as the study progressed”. For example, before commencing Bruny Island fieldwork, I had designed a questionnaire for tourists to administer at the ferry terminal. However, in considering the workload involved in administering this questionnaire across four islands (in the interests of consistency) and in analysing the resulting data, I decided against this method. Using such additional research methods (another I had considered was a telephone survey of island residents) would be more appropriate if I had only one case island.

While case studies are commonly considered a methodological choice, Stake (2000: 435) believes that a “case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used”. My research topic arose from my interest in islands, and hence I do not consider the choice of these case studies to be a *method* of collecting data; rather the choice of islands is the *raison d’etre* of this research. Nevertheless, I will address in the following section the value of case studies, and some of the issues involved with collective case studies.

Case studies: general principles

Stake (2000) identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. While intrinsic case studies are undertaken to better understand a particular case, instrumental case studies are examined “mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else. The case still is looked at in depth ... but all because this helps the researcher to pursue the external interest” (Stake, 2000: 437). A *collective case study* is instrumental study extended to several cases “in order to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition ... it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (Stake, 2000: 437). As such, this study of four case islands may facilitate understanding of islands in general. In researching a collection of instrumental case studies, I will present findings in terms of how each island illustrates common island issues, rather than focusing on ‘thick description’ as is typical with intrinsic case studies.

Herriott and Firestone (1983) use the term ‘multisite qualitative research’ to refer to multiple case studies. They consider that the importance of such studies lies in strengthening the ability to generalise while preserving in-depth description: “multisite qualitative studies address the same research question in a number of settings using similar data collection and analysis procedures in each setting. They consciously seek to permit cross-site comparison without necessarily sacrificing within-site understanding” (Herriott & Firestone, 1983: 14). For multisite research, there tends to be an emphasis on either site-specific reporting or cross-site, issue-specific reporting: the former “enhances

description but tends to mask similarities and differences across sites, thereby inhibiting generalization. Cross site, issue specific reporting facilitates generalization, but often at the expense of site-specific context” (Herriott & Firestone, 1983: 17). With a relatively small number of case studies, I believe it is possible to balance both types of reporting.

The methodology of examining case studies supports my aim to investigate common problems across islands. One of the more practical aims of this research is to uncover lessons that can be shared between the case islands, and perhaps beyond. The majority of island case study research concerns individual islands or archipelagos. Baldacchino (2007b: 14) recognises that while all islands are unique, their differences are patterned:

there may be no better comparison for an island than another island, over and above the relevance of comparing the observation of processes and dynamics on mainlands with those which habitually also occur, enhanced or exacerbated, in an island setting. Yet, such deliberate comparisons remain exceptional.

Pearce (1993: 32) describes comparative studies as a neglected approach in tourism research but notes their value as they “offer tourism researchers a way forward in a field still largely dominated by descriptive, ideographic work”. Pearce (1993: 21) maintains that effective comparative research should involve “more than the mere juxtaposition of case studies, for to be comparative the analysis must at the very least draw out and attempt to account for similarities and differences”. However, comparative studies are rare, due to logistical, financial and methodological problems (King, 1997). Like King (1997) I have tried to limit the number of variables⁹ in order to give greater precision to the research conclusions. For example, I have restricted my study to the higher latitudes in Australia, so avoiding tropical and subtropical destinations (of the case islands, Rottneest has the warmest climate, a Mediterranean climate). Another reason why I chose to undertake a comparative study stems from my concern about developing boredom with only one case island over a relatively long time frame. Casey (2001: 683) cites Hartshorne (1939: 15): “It was to satisfy man’s [sic] curiosity concerning the differences of the world *from place to place* that geography developed as a subject of popular interest” (emphasis added).

⁹ The Preface (following chapter four) outlines why and how I selected the four case islands.

Concurrent with my position that islands should be studied on their own terms, I also consider it important to investigate each case island in its own right. While I am focusing on a collection of case studies, I am careful to retain the individuality of each case (Platt, 1988) and am interested in what can be learned from the singular case. This dual approach is the reasoning behind the structure of the results section of this thesis. In presenting the findings for each case separately in chapters five to eight, I highlight the intrinsic importance of each island (I focus both on particular issues facing each island that may not be relevant to the other cases, and on the common themes that have emerged from the four islands). Chapters are structured by island rather than by theme, not only for clarity, but also because of my view that each island should be considered in its own right. According to Platt (1988: 9) “a case study is the best possible source of description ... about a particular case seen as inherently interesting in its own right”. In these four chapters I will weave the interview data, material from island-specific documentation and observations from visits to the case islands with wider island studies literature. Chapters nine and ten then, are the synthesis of results from these four chapters and an analysis of what is common to the islands and what is unique, and what *may* be generalised to other islands beyond the scope of this work.

A difficult issue, considering my intrinsic interest in the islands, was the realisation that I could not tell the full story about the case islands. However, qualitative research is not about covering everything (Mason, 2002). Throughout the research process, I have grappled with the issue of balancing depth against breadth of information. In considering four sites, I have inevitably sacrificed some capacity to collate and present data on the intrinsic case studies for breadth across the collective case studies. Considering the depth of material and issues for each island, I could have focused only on one island and indeed, having one case study would have made the entire process much easier, but this type of reasoning probably contributes to the lack of multiple case research on islands. As King (1997: 16) notes, “No single researcher can be expected to cover all of the relevant sources where they are drawn from diverse origins ... The inevitable gaps are accepted by the author as a worthwhile sacrifice in the pursuit of a ‘total’ picture”. In order to deal with the mountain of material emanating from the four islands, and to reduce the complexities involved with focusing on four cases, my strategy was to focus

attention on one island at a time. I undertook fieldwork one trip at a time, rather than purchasing a 'round Australia' air ticket. This strategy allowed me time to prepare adequately for each trip and to fully digest the contents of my discoveries upon my return to Hobart, before returning to the airport to travel to another island. Obviously my brain could not be divided into compartments for each case, so throughout this process I was constantly comparing and contrasting issues between each island – for example jotting notes about Phillip Island on a receipt from a Kangaroo Island hire car company. This process of criss-crossing grew in intensity when I began to write the chapters on the individual islands and when reading wider island literature, and it facilitated the writing of chapter nine, comparing and contrasting the cases. In conducting field-based research, I can only report on a moment in time. I refer to some major historical events, particularly those that have shaped islandness such as development in transport services, and identify some contemporary key issues that are likely to be ongoing problems and that should be considered in terms of sustainable development strategies for the future.

Stake (2000: 444) views comparative description as competing with learning about and from the particular case (and hence thick description). In this research, I believe it is possible to manage the challenge of balancing between description of a single case and comparative description across four cases by focusing on the key themes described in chapter one. In this way, I can elucidate both the key findings from each case island in relation to the themes (including what is unique about each island in regard to these issues) and compare the results across the islands. Stake (2000: 444) clearly favours intrinsic case work over collective studies and I disagree with his statement that “a research design featuring comparison substitutes (a) *the comparison* for (b) *the case* as the focus of the study”. Through my underlying belief in the intrinsic value of each case island, and through my dissertation structure which focuses on results by each case island and then by comparison, I have found an appropriate balance between the two. Selection of the actual cases will be discussed following chapter four, but now I turn to the collation of documentary evidence as a research method.

Documentary evidence

Island data collection is not easy – for example I had difficulty collating statistical data for the islands as stand-alone units: “the vast majority of the world’s inhabited islands are statistically-invisible geographical units within larger countries” (Bertram & Poirine, 2007: 326). Hence, qualitative island research is vital. Data generation included a range of documentary material. In addition to providing a more comprehensive understanding of the islands, such texts provided valuable information in the context of governance for sustainability, and enhanced my understanding of the interview data. Documentary analysis also aided triangulation of the study. Triangulation refers to using more than one method and/or data source to check results. Mason (2002: 108) discusses the value of documents “to verify or contextualize or clarify personal recollections and other forms of data derived from for example, interviewing”. I sourced a variety of documents that directly relate to the case study islands, including documents produced by Australian, state and local governments, legislation, management plans, information from Internet sources, annual reports, strategic plans, local government planning schemes, tourism plans, development proposals, research reports from both government departments and private sector agencies, population statistics, tourism statistics, tourism promotional material, Hansard records¹⁰, minutes of local government committees, media reports, visual data, and fiction and non-fiction. Some historical documents were also sourced from island libraries and museums. During interviews, some participants referred me to useful documents or provided me with in-house information not available publicly. I also collated material on other islands around the world, mostly through academic journals and internet media sources, to gain an understanding of common island management problems and various sustainability initiatives. I conducted comprehensive academic literature searches (on empirical and theoretic island research) and monitored media for issues concerning the case islands throughout the course of the research.

By completing preliminary readings of various texts, I arrived in the field with ‘foreshadowed problems’, or an idea of what to look for rather than preconceived ideas

¹⁰ Hansard is the name given to transcripts of parliamentary proceedings of the Parliament of Australia and state parliaments.

(Stake, 2000). I had a broad focus of inquiry around which I based my interview questions but this comprehensive agenda was only narrowed at the analysis stage, when the key themes emerged. Platt (1988) considers that a key strength of case studies is their openness to unanticipated findings, and this has certainly been my experience.

Semi-structured interviews

In addition to arriving at study sites with foreshadowed problems, I undertook a (mostly) standardised approach to data collection across the four islands. Herriott and Firestone (1983) believe that a reliance on semi-structured methods in multisite studies (in order to facilitate cross-site comparison) is a major departure from the traditional single-site case study approach which tends to rely on unstructured data collection. At the research design stage I determined that the technique of conducting semi-structured interviews would allow greater scope to discuss the research topic with participants than would be possible through a more structured questionnaire.

After gaining an overview of each island through background research using documentary evidence, I employed theoretical or purposeful sampling to initially select key participants for interview. Theoretical sampling “means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position and analytical framework, your analytical practice, and most importantly the argument or explanation that you are developing” (Mason, 2002: 124). This form of sampling linked with my intention to generate explanations deductively through the data. I initially identified key island stakeholders from publicly available information. My aim was not to collect a sample representative of a wider population; I did not want to obtain a representative orbit of views across the islands¹¹ (which in any case would not have been possible through publicly available information). My aim was to provide a range of viewpoints of *key actors*: people in decision-making and other dominant positions (their views underscore their decision-making and they are not merely personal opinions but are often based on institutional knowledge), and those with

¹¹ Information on the wider views of islanders is available in the form of surveys from various sources, including local government, and some of these will be discussed in individual island chapters. However, they are still not considered representative as it tends to be the same groups of people who attend community meetings and complete surveys.

a depth of knowledge of the island or of particular issues facing the island. Representative sampling would not generate data sufficient to address my research questions, and the collection of a large sample would not be practical¹². The participants considered most critical in terms of providing data relevant to my research questions were state and local government officers with some responsibility for island management; representatives of community organisations; tourism operators and developers. In cases where the participant is also an islander, I included interview questions relating to their perspective as an island resident. Participants were selected on the basis of their professional or community position (and hence their knowledge and experiences) rather than by attributes such as age and gender.

Using a ‘progressive focussing structure’¹³ (Wolcott, 1994: 18), I devised a list of broad interview questions (see Appendix A for the general interview schedule) based on themes drawn from academic literature and from island-specific texts. Some of the questions were standardised, while others depended on the participant’s present or past position, and on issues that he or she raised at interview. After identifying broad stakeholder groups and indicative research questions, I received human ethics approval from the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee. I sent information letters (Appendix B) to potential informants, explaining the research and inviting their participation. I then made follow-up telephone calls to determine interest and to arrange interviews at a suitable location. At all stages of the interviewing process I kept in mind that “qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world” (Stake, 2000: 447). Interviews (ranging from 20–90 minutes) were conducted over a 15-month period, between January 2005 and April 2006. I used established but open-ended questions which enabled me to pursue follow-up questions, ask for clarification, and change the ordering of the questions depending on responses. Questions explored a range of issues, including participants’ association with the island under investigation, the role of their organisation if relevant, and changes observed over time, particularly environmental and social transformations. Questions also elicited views on key issues facing the particular

¹² Mason (2002: 126) cautions that “representative sampling may not be the most effective and efficient way either to generate data which will address the research questions of the study, or to develop analysis and theory. Furthermore, the pursuit of representativeness often requires the construction of very large samples which make the use of qualitative data generation methods very time-consuming and costly”.

¹³ Using this structure means that as analysis and data collection continue, the research questions should be developed and clarified.

island. Participants signed consent forms (Appendix C) at the time of interview. I digitally recorded interviews and augmented aural data with written notes. As interviews proceeded, the wording of some questions was slightly altered or if a particular issue (such as a development proposal) was raised by several participants I then asked remaining participants about their views on that issue. The sequence of questions was altered if the participant had referred to that particular issue in an earlier answer. As such, there was some flexibility in the interviewing technique and it was not strictly structured (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

As interviews proceeded I used a second sampling method called snowball sampling¹⁴ where I asked participants to suggest other contacts who met my initial sampling criteria (i.e. based on position or experiences with the certain island). Alternatively, without prompting, some participants offered names of other relevant people to approach for interview. This secondary sampling strategy was necessary given the limited amount of publicly available information which individually identifies stakeholders, and because in some cases it was difficult to pass through organisational ‘gatekeepers’. I acknowledge the possibility of this snowballing method skewing the results¹⁵ and of the probable dominance of elitist perspectives, but my aim was to gain an understanding of the dominant contemporary issues on the islands, and key actors play important roles in relation to these issues. Nevertheless, to mitigate against a participant suggesting someone on the basis of friendship rather than knowledge, for instance, I only approached the suggested contact if they were recommended by more than one person. It was also interesting to examine the formal and informal networks generated from snowball sampling, and to gain others’ views about who is an important player.

The interview sample number was limited by practical considerations including time and financial resources (particularly considering the cost of interstate travel). Due to such constraints and as a result of some participants’ limited availability, I also conducted a small number of telephone interviews and one email interview (in which cases consent

¹⁴ The snowball or chain referral sampling method “yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981: 141).

¹⁵ Suggestions as to further contacts often revolve around existing professional and/or social networks, which may skew the data in favour of the opinions of a defined group of people, but in island communities there are inevitably limited networks and key players who are often identified by multiple contacts.

forms were sent by fax). I found that I reached saturation point when the data showed repetition rather than new information and collecting additional data seemed counterproductive (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) after interviewing around twelve participants for each island. At that stage, themes became repetitive and the pool of suggested further contacts was limited and many of these people were outside the sphere of influence or were not available for interview. In total, across the four case study islands I interviewed 58 people. I was conscious of ensuring that I had adequate material to address my research questions, while not being burdened by too much data (transcripts are very time consuming to generate and analyse) as I wanted to do justice to the analysis by not being overwhelmed with information. In accordance with ethics procedures, verbatim transcripts were typed and sent to participants for verification, and any requested changes were made accordingly.

I began interviews on Bruny Island for practical reasons: my location in Hobart and thus the flexibility to refine interview techniques without the time or resource limitations involved with interstate fieldwork. While I was already familiar with the Island, through both day and overnight trips whilst growing up, I was not aware of key issues confronting the Island. I had informal discussions with four individuals, and then interviewed 19 participants between January and August 2005. In September and October 2005 I conducted 13 in-person interviews with key Rottnest Island stakeholders; then in November and December 2005 I interviewed 12 key Phillip Island stakeholders. Finally, in April 2006 I interviewed 14 stakeholders associated with Kangaroo Island. In the case chapters I refer to most participants by their speaking positions (local government officer, resident, for example). Provision of further details about participants is not possible without breaching confidentiality. In a small island community the pool of 'key actors' (my sample group) is relatively small, so providing an additional layer of differentiation in speaking positions could potentially identify participants. For example, I do not break down the resident category to further identify participants as either sea change residents or as being from a long line of islanders. I am unwilling to position my respondents with labels such as 'sea changer' that are not necessarily accurate. To reduce people to such narrow categories as resident type or age would be to deny the complexities I am trying to flesh out. Since some participants currently have or have had multiple positions (i.e. some are or were members of more than one stakeholder group)

and since their views and knowledge are informed by both their past and current roles, it is not appropriate to note only one speaking position, and it would be potentially identifying to list all of their positions. Instead, I label some speaking positions as MH (multiple hats) to protect participant anonymity.

Before I move onto a discussion of field observations, I first want to touch on two matters that arose during interviews, not only in the interests of reflexivity¹⁶ but also because I believe that they are important issues to consider in future research. They relate to studies of elites and conducting social research in island communities.

Interviewing elites

While much sociological research (which is the source of much literature on qualitative research methods) involves powerless or disadvantaged subjects, in my research many of the participants are relatively empowered. However, despite or perhaps *because* of the dominant positions of such elites, social scientists rarely ‘study up’ (Ostrander, 1995). Ostrander (1995: 133) considers that this “lack of knowledge about elites contributes to obscuring and therefore maintaining their position in society”. Hunter (1995: 151) describes the study of elites as “a political act insofar as researchers attempt to acquire knowledge from and about elites and to distribute it more broadly in a public domain to the masses”.

Amongst the participants interviewed in this study, I would apply the term ‘professional elite’ to those on boards and in senior management positions, and also middle managers within state and local government, and participants who formerly occupied such positions. I found the impacts of elite power on my research to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the power base of such subjects drew me to them. As one of my elite participants noted, “knowledge is power”, and I needed to tap into their knowledge in order to understand key island issues. Senior managers and board members have the broad knowledge to provide overviews of island management, so they were critical

¹⁶ Pini and Haslam McKenzie (2007: 34) describe reflexivity as involving “a researcher engaging in an introspective, subjective, self-conscious and critical analysis of their research, the research process and their research self in order to produce more trustworthy findings”.

participants. I also interviewed several middle managers who provided more in-depth knowledge of specific issues.

The main drawbacks associated with interviewing elites are threefold: gaining access to the participants, gaining valuable information from them, and presenting such information. In relation to gaining access, Ostrander (1995) suggests starting at the top of an organisation, and this is particularly important in terms of gaining approval from senior management to interview other staff. However, I found my entrance blocked on several occasions by the elites' gatekeepers, who were mainly middle managers. In one instance, I only gained access to a senior manager from above, through a board member (and I only gained access to this board member through a contact external to the organisation in question). Pini and Haslam McKenzie (2007) consider that access¹⁷ may be one of the most challenging aspects of a qualitative research study. They examine how changes in the Australian local government sector may have contributed to the difficulties they faced in gaining access for their research on natural resource management, and identify three macro-level issues which they consider impacted on their entry to the field: the increasing roles and responsibilities of local governments, the emergence of a surveillance and litigious culture in local government and fears of this culture, and the dismissive and negative view of academic work expressed by council staff and elected members. In my own work, I also encountered access difficulties which I consider also reflect the above issues, but access problems also extended to some state government agencies. In some cases, Pini and Haslam McKenzie (2007) had restricted access because gatekeeping administrative staff and CEOs thwarted their attempts to talk to mayors and councillors. Similarly, of the three local councils I approached, I only gained access to one councillor and one CEO (from different councils).

The second drawback that I found with studying elites was gaining valuable information from them as elites tend to be able to 'just talk' about issues that are not of direct relevance to the research (Ostrander, 1995). A useful strategy to overcome this issue is to thoroughly research background information and to be aware of some of the current key issues before entering the field. Gaining valuable information also depends to some

¹⁷ Pini and Haslam McKenzie (2007) use the term 'access' in the context of a means of gaining data or having the capacity to gain data.

extent on the researcher's personal attributes and in my experiences I consider that this issue was in part influenced by my gender and age (under 30) and hence my perceived level of experience. In one instance a senior manager assumed control of the interview from the outset, grabbing the tape recording and saying "This is an interview with such and such on such and such a date", taking my prepared questions and asking them to himself. To attempt to overcome such instances with government officers, I adopted the strategy of telling them a little about my background at the beginning of the interview (or in some cases participants asked about my background), including three years working for the Australian Government in policy and program delivery divisions. This strategy seemed to have a notable impact on participants' perceptions of me and hence the information I obtained from them, with an implicit understanding that I knew how the system worked; I was not 'just a student'. Considering the power imbalance between researcher and elite subjects and the low level of respect that government officers often accord to academics (Pini & Haslam McKenzie, 2007), I felt it was necessary to state my credentials in order to gain more in-depth information from participants. While some researchers may avoid asking difficult questions of elite subjects, I consider it to be important. Ostrander (1995) suggests basing these questions on particular situations known from independent sources that can be used to challenge the elite's point of view, and this is what I did, along with the strategy of 'Some people would argue that ...' to present common contrary views as external to my own opinions. I also used non-verbal language such as nodding to encourage participants to keep talking, rather than indicating through body language that I may disagree with their opinion.

My third dilemma concerns the presentation of the research and the level of control elites have over this process. While Stake (2000) advocates member checking in the form of providing drafts of work to participants so they can see how they are quoted and interpreted, I consider that this type of verification should be contingent on the power status of the participants. Bradshaw (2001) provides a rare account of the difficulties in researching 'the powerful' as opposed to researching 'down', and calls for caution regarding member checks for the former due to the possibility of censorship – which he experienced. At the research design stage I considered that the integrity of my research would be at risk if I allowed participants to effectively edit draft chapters of my dissertation. In respecting the rights of my participants, I instead opted to send them

verbatim transcripts of their interview (minus ‘ums and ahs’ as these utterances can be embarrassing for participants and are not necessarily indicative of anything) and gave participants ample opportunity to review and comment on these raw data, rather than on my interpretation of the data or my conclusions. Some participants made changes to their transcript (some changes were factual or grammatical; others related to content) and only these revised versions were used in my analysis. I found that this form of member checking upheld my ethical responsibilities to participants, while limiting excessive or inappropriate control over how I interpreted the data. However, on reflection, I think it would have been wise to offer participants the *opportunity* to review their transcripts rather than sending it to them as a matter of course, as some participants (generally the more elite) did edit out some of their more ‘controversial’ comments. In addition, by sending them the transcript, participants probably felt obliged to read it and to make changes (often to suit written rather than verbal responses) which is time-consuming.

Interviewing in island communities

The islanders with whom I spoke were not interviewed purely because they are island residents: all have specific positions as representatives of community organisations, state or local government officers, or tourism operators. The issue at hand relates to conducting interviews among members of island communities. It is an issue similar to that which researchers face in small continental communities, but in island communities a range of people of position live within a compact space. Locals may wish to know why an outsider is on the island if they are not a tourist. For instance, when I returned a hire car on one of my case islands, the manager said “You’re the journalist who’s been doing all the interviews”. Another issue is the small scale of island settlements. For example, after interviewing one participant in the morning, I appeared at another interview in the afternoon in a building directly opposite the site of the first interview, to be told “Oh, I saw you across the road this morning”. In many instances, participants asked who else I had spoken to, and some seemed put out when I replied that I could not say due to ethical requirements. While I do not believe these issues raised any ethical concerns in my study, it is something researchers need to be mindful of when working in island communities.

Field observations

I did not undertake the traditional form of participant observation which involves “methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research ‘setting’ so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting” (Mason, 2002: 84). Rather, I carried out a limited type of observation - for example by noting infrastructure and use of the case islands, particularly by visitors. This form of observation was carried out largely in tourist settings, an unobtrusive way for me to observe interactions. Tourist activities I undertook included an eco-cruise around Bruny Island, a guided tour to sea lions on Kangaroo Island, a guided tour of Rottnest Island, and observation of the Penguin Parade at Phillip Island. My aims were also to observe the places firsthand, so that I could relate my experiences to those discussed in texts and by interview participants; to observe the workings of tourist operations in sensitive environments; and to note residential development issues such as urban sprawl into rural and coastal areas.

I also undertook self-guided tours around each island to get a sense of the entire place. I explored as much of each island as was possible between interviews, visiting key tourist sites and the main settlements. This fieldwork was documented in photographs which were used in international and Australian conference presentations (Jackson, 2004; 2006a; 2006b). It was only by ‘playing a tourist’ that I was able to get a sense of some of the key island issues. For example, visiting proposed development sites enabled me to understand more easily the objections of residents to the developments. It also enabled me to get a sense of the size of the islands and the time needed to explore them, which is difficult to ascertain from maps that do not show, for example, unsealed roads. On Kangaroo Island I was able to understand a common problem that tourists perceive the island to be small when in fact at least three days are needed to see the key attractions. I understood the potential negative impacts of tourism when avoiding several large kangaroos hopping towards my car at great speeds along dirt roads; luckily no collisions occurred in these remote corners of the Island where my mobile phone was out of range (another common problem on islands). Where possible, I also attended (through open or personal invitation) organisational and community-wide meetings to gain an

understanding of issues of importance to islanders and to gauge community dynamics. In all cases I made notes either in-situ or shortly afterwards and will share some of these observations in chapters five to eight.

Data analysis

I consider that my role as researcher involves synthesising a mosaic of data from such observations and interviews, with local documentation and broader literature concerning the key research themes. I used thematic units (chunks of text that reflect a theme) as the basis of analysis. I initially identified possible research themes from island-general and island-specific literature, but have largely deduced themes through a process of immersion in the data (close and repeated readings of the transcripts). This form of initial analysis is in line with my view of learning through observation: it was not until I had visited the sites and spoken to key participants that I could gain an understanding more comprehensive than that provided by texts. Thematic analysis began manually, by printing the full batch of transcripts for each island and reading them all before re-reading them and noting recurrent themes, key issues and any controversies. This process was undertaken with interview data from each island, and then the common themes were derived. I present the arguments addressing the research themes both intrinsically by case study (in chapters five to eight) and comparatively, across the case islands (in chapter nine) in line with my view that islands are of interest in and of themselves, and that it is important to compare their governance and management with a view to sharing lessons between places which have common experiences due in part to their islandness. Despite some unique issues on each island, I found a surprisingly high degree of correspondence between the key themes across the islands. The qualitative data analysis package, NVivo 7, was used as a tool to facilitate comparison of themes across the case studies to aid the analysis for chapter nine (cross-comparisons across the four islands). This computer package assisted in managing the large number of transcripts and other electronic documents. I did not use NVivo in initially determining the key themes for each island as I was concerned that reducing the data to ‘codable’ items would obscure some important information and the context of the data.

Collation and analysis of a variety of documentation concerning four study sites proved very time-consuming. However, I primarily used these documents to compile facts about the islands and searched them by key research themes. A significant amount of data was also generated from the 58 interviews. Herriott and Firestone (1983: 18) comment that “the potential of any study or useful, valid description and generalization depends on the analysts’ ability to reduce data to a manageable form without distortion or loss of meaningful detail”. By focusing on key themes and excluding data that, while interesting, were not relevant to the research questions, I was able to process a manageable amount of data and ensure a sharp focus. Identifying common themes and issues that emerged from island-specific texts served as a form of triangulation, and it was interesting to note the issues that are not publicly presented in texts but were discussed during interviews. Readings of both island-specific documents and wider island academic literature had generated the initial research themes. Mason (2002: 38) clarifies this process:

Your theoretical position at the beginning of your research will come out of your reading of existing research, other literature, and possibly some preliminary research or observation of your own. But, as you go on, your theory and developing explanation themselves will be informed by your analysis of your own data.

In this chapter I have outlined my position as researcher, including my rationale for the study, and detailed my research and data analysis methods. Before I turn to the case island chapters I will first detail the key literature that has informed this study. Chapter three focuses on islands in general and in it I introduce the concept of islandness and chapter four concerns sustainable development in the island context – here I particularly focus on tourism and residential developments – and how islandness may be an important tool for dealing with (sustainable) development.

CHAPTER THREE

ISLANDS AND ISLANDNESS

[Water] generates particular kinds of spatial configurations: island, point, promontory, peninsula, bay and fjord, all of which must be counted among the most distinctive natural places. The island thus, is a place par excellence, appearing as an “isolated”, clearly defined figure. Existentially the island brings us back to the origin; it rises out of the element from which everything was originally born (Norberg-Schulz, 1980: 39).

While my empirical focus is on four case study islands, I also explore islands at a more abstract level. In this chapter I will lay down the theoretical background behind my first research theme, *island and islandness*, and review some of the academic research regarding islands. I discuss the contestable definition of an island, whether connecting islands to continents via fixed links such as bridges results in ‘islocide’¹⁸ (Wells, 2007), and examine common representations of (particularly offshore) islands. I also explore the concept of islandness, including some common island characteristics and how islands can provide a strong sense of place and identity for residents and mainlanders. Finally, I investigate relations between core and peripheral places (to inform relations between cities and offshore islands). But first, what is the subject matter of nissology – exactly what is an island?

What is an island?

Describing the meaning of an island is not as straightforward as first appears. The common dictionary definition is simply a ‘piece of land surrounded by water’, smaller than a continent¹⁹ and larger than a rock. This definition encompasses a vast array of land-sea compositions, including islands within the landmass of continents which are

¹⁸ The term ‘islocide’ is attributed to Malcolm Wells, who used the term at a public forum, Island Insight, as part of the Ten Days on the Island festival, Hobart, Tasmania, March 2007.

¹⁹ Conversely, a continent is defined as “a connected or continuous tract of land” (OED) but how is continuous defined?

surrounded by water in the form of lakes; artificial islands; icebergs; and islands connected to continents via bridges, tunnels or causeways. The status of islands also depends on the properties of the water surrounding the land (if ice, they are often temporarily part of the mainland). In Hebrew the word for island was applied to the lands across the sea, the coasts of the mainland Mediterranean (OED). Ships are sometimes referred to as floating islands, enabling the insular way of life to become mobile (Lehari, 2003). The definition of an island is a temporal and a spatial concept. For example, “to the Vikings, a piece of land surrounded by water was not regarded as an ey or island unless it was sufficiently distant and distinct for the sound separating it from the mainland to be navigable by a ship with its rudder in place” (Royle, 2007a: 40).

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UN, 1982: 66) defines an island as “a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide” and thereby excludes artificial islands, such as the ambitious projects being constructed in Dubai²⁰. The term ‘island’ has also been extended to situations where water need not be the surrounding medium, in the form of habitat islands. However, “islands in the sea have the virtue of having clearly defined limits and thus providing discrete objects for study ... the whole surrounded by the aquatic realm. In contrast, habitat islands exist typically within complex landscapes, with which they may share uncertain boundaries and overlapping populations” (Whittaker, 1998: 8). Islands naturally are discrete identities by virtue of their water boundary. This research does not consider islands in lakes and rivers. It is only natural and marine islands that I focus on and hence it is these islands that I discuss in relation to academic literature. As noted in chapter one, I am examining only one category of islands²¹, continental shelf islands, which may have been connected to their adjacent mainlands during periods of significantly lower sea levels (Whittaker, 1998).

Another common debate within island studies is that of size classification of islands, and the resulting impacts of size on various aspects of island life. Smaller islands may

²⁰ A jigsaw of 300 private islands is being constructed through reclamation, to create a nation-by-nation replica of the world (Hardman, 2004).

²¹ Whittaker (1998) ignores non-marine islands and describes two classes of islands: continental shelf islands, and oceanic islands, which are located over oceanic plates and have never been connected to continental landmasses.

experience more significant problems than those of larger proportions: there is a “common assumption that the smaller the island, the more intense the experience of islandness” (McMahon, 2005: 3). For example, Australia’s island state of Tasmania (68,300km² and 240km south of the Australian mainland) has considerably greater economic opportunities than that of its smaller offshore islands, not least because it has more resources, both natural and human. As such, size may influence island sustainability but then larger populations on larger islands may also create greater sustainable development problems. The term ‘isle’ is usually applied to smaller islands, and ‘islets’ to even smaller islands, but there is no set size limit. The term ‘small island’ is used freely by island scholars but its use is contestable. While many nissologists (for example, Briguglio, 2004; Royle, 2001) claim that the effects of insularity are felt more keenly on small islands, it is not clear what constitutes ‘small’. For example, ‘small islands’ have been defined as those approximately 10,000km² or less in area and with 500,000 or fewer residents (Hess, 1990) but this definition encompasses a broad range of islands, and many offshore islands have considerably smaller areas and populations. While acknowledging that size limits are arbitrary, Brookfield (1990) suggests that ‘small islands’ are those smaller than 1,000 km² and/or with fewer than 100,000 people, in which case Kangaroo Island would be considered a larger island, at 4,416km². The United Nations (1992) recognises that islands supporting small communities are a special case both for environment and development, and that small island development options are limited, which creates special challenges related to planning for and implementing sustainable development. Villamil (1977) discusses the links between reduced scale and problems of viability (particularly diseconomies of scale). Royle (2007a: 42) points to Péron’s (2004: 328) comments on island scale:

the notion of an island shall be discussed, deliberately restricting ourselves to small, inhabited islands: those specks of land large enough to support permanent residents, but small enough to render to their inhabitants the permanent consciousness of being on an island.

Here Péron moves beyond typical physical dimensions of island status and considers social meanings of an island but then the issue becomes how to describe a “permanent consciousness of being on an island”. Nunn (2004) contends that labels such as ‘small’ have been imposed unthinkingly on islands by continental-trained thinkers and are

demeaning. Surely size must matter if we are distinguishing islands from continents, since continents themselves have land-sea interfaces, but I do not consider there to be any great value in setting strict size limits. Hache (1998: 43) has reservations about size limits, noting that “if the mechanisms of insularity can be found and demonstrated, that demonstration should show a “breaking point” between small and large islands through its own merits, and not thanks to some pre-set limits”.

I will now move to one of the most robust debates concerning island definitions, that surrounding fixed links. This debate is one that particularly concerns offshore islands (many of which are within linkable distance of a mainland) and specifically relates to one of the case islands, Phillip Island, which is connected to its mainland by a bridge.

Fixed links

What of islands with permanent links – bridges, tunnels or causeways - to the mainland? Are they still islands? Are they artificial peninsulas, no different to a naturally formed peninsula connected to a mainland by a narrow land bridge? An island is completely surrounded by water; a peninsula is surrounded by water on three sides (as an aside, how narrow does the width of the land joining the peninsula to the mainland have to be for the land to be called a peninsula?); and an isthmus is bordered by water on two sides (again, how narrow does the connecting strip of land have to be to be called an isthmus?). Conversely, peninsulas may act as islands. For example, it could be argued that the former Port Arthur penal settlement on the Tasman Peninsula in southeast Tasmania was effectively an island prison within an island, due to the landform and the guard line of soldiers and dogs at the isthmus, Eaglehawk Neck. Indeed the word peninsula, derived from Latin, means ‘almost island’²². The term ‘island’ was formerly used less definitely and included peninsulas and places insulated at high water or during floods (OED). Different forms of fixed links may influence the perception of islandness. In the case of bridged islands, water still flows all the way around the island, whereas causeways impede water flow. Tunnels are not visible from above, and it could be postulated that no visible connection to the mainland translates to greater islandness in a

²² Insula is Latin for island.

psychological sense. Vehicular ferries are a moveable link; the gap between the island and the continent remains visible, and the connection is slower than that provided by fixed links. Ferries have the capacity to increase tourism but there is still a limit. Air travel is another important consideration. For example, when I travel to other Australian states, mainlanders often assume that I have travelled by ferry which I find puzzling (would they really drive considerable distances between mainland capital cities rather than fly?). I find the 240km water crossing to be an inconvenience when I can travel more comfortably, cheaply, and quickly by air²³.

An important consideration in the fixed link debate is the impact of bridges, causeways or tunnels on the journey to the island. However, much of the following literature on such impacts does not draw on empirical data; hence in chapter seven I will draw on perceptions of some tourism stakeholders on Phillip Island in this regard. Ian Watson (1998: 136) notes that for offshore islands, the water barrier between the island and the mainland creates a sharp discontinuity, so “building a bridge to an island removes the discontinuity that is characteristic of islands in the first place. It means that an island, viewed from the mainland, no longer appears mysterious and inaccessible ... The rituals of passage to an island ... are reduced to an unremarkable car journey”. Conversely, with moveable links islanders may take “a kind of pleasure in the long, slow ferry ride home from more ‘spoiled’ locations, [and] see a boat ride as a desirable transition between the hectic and the bucolic” (Petroski, 1997: 11). For visitors, a fixed link may reduce the fascination of the destination and the sense of adventure associated with getting to and being on an island: “travel becomes seamless between the interior of the mainland and the actual transfer to the island ... the risk element, the romantic notion of being cut off and isolated on the island ... is also removed” (Baum, 1997: 24). While sea and air links can be used to manage carrying capacity through limits on number, size and frequency, Baum (1997: 24) argues that a “bridge or tunnel land link threatens this control and, thereby, can undermine one of the most attractive features of many island destinations – limitations on the number of visitors who can ‘invade’ the restricted space”.

²³ It takes three and a half hours to drive from Hobart to the ferry terminal in Devonport in northern Tasmania and the ferry to Melbourne takes ten hours. It is much simpler to take the 70-minute flight to Melbourne direct from Hobart, which is a faster air travel time than that between Melbourne and Sydney.

Cowley (2000) suggests that modernity and technology are creating borderless places, growing closer both physically and electronically. Deschenes and Chertow (2004: 203) note that while modern transportation has “made most geographical boundaries permeable and increased the connectivity of islands to the rest of the world”, transportation time and cost still leave islands isolated to some degree.

Bridges are a form of development. Philosophers, sociologists and architects have reflected on the meaning of bridges but they tend to consider only bridges linking riverbanks, which is perhaps a function of the technological capabilities of the day. Norberg-Schulz (1980: 18) describes a bridge as a building which enables the environment to become a unified whole and he cites Heidegger (1975: 152), for whom a bridge creates a presence from absence: “It does not just connect banks that are already there, the banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other ... It brings stream and bank and land into each other’s neighborhood”. While Norberg-Schulz emphasises that the landscape acquires its value *through* the bridge, in the case of a bridge spanning the stretch of water between an island and a mainland, the island is unified whole *before* the presence of the bridge and indeed it can be argued that the island *loses* some of its values or islandness through the construction of a bridge. Simmel (1994²⁴: 6) maintains that although people may go back and forth between two places and thus connect them subjectively, “it was only in visibly impressing the path into the surface of the earth that the places were objectively connected”. In a similar vein, it could be said that while ferries and other watercraft may regularly ply the waters between a mainland and an island, it is only through construction of a bridge and its visibility that island and mainland are objectively connected.

Building bridges is a physical way of integrating an island with a mainland (Watson, I 1998) and island communities can benefit economically from land links, in the removal of limitations imposed by water barriers. Perhaps islands with land links are simply

²⁴ Originally published in 1909.

another category of island, more closely integrated²⁵ (in economic and social terms) with their mainlands, but still distinct. In chapter nine I will examine the possible impacts of fixed links on islander identities in reference to islandness, and draw on some examples of impacts of bridged islands around the world. The next section reports on representations of islands. In noting that many representations are academic claims that are not backed up by empirical data, it is appropriate and necessary to place my research in the nexus between theoretical notions and empirical data, which will be synthesised in chapter nine.

Representations of islands

It is important to understand how islands have been represented over time, as historical views impact on current perceptions and uses of place. Island metaphors have been well-employed, with islands variously positioned as utopias and dystopias. Western culture, argues Gillis (2004), has had ambivalent relationships with islands; a combination of attraction and repulsion. Their isolation has been exploited for use as prisons and quarantine stations, and as escape *to* destinations of paradise for continental tourists. Religious groups have long sought seclusion on islands, a “refuge for the soul” (Royle, 2001: 13); while a recent trend of the wealthy is to seek out island hideaways. Peckham (2003: 502) explores the island as a site of double identity, on the one hand representing a place of incarceration and alienation (“precisely because the island held out the possibility of absolute control and dominion, it became the site for the struggle between freedom and authority”), and on the other hand imagined as a place of authenticity where individual resourcefulness was tested and confirmed. Peckham (2003: 499) explores how the island has served as a model for the organisation of knowledge and functioned as an “ideal body politic, in which political and cultural boundaries were congruent and readily defensible from invasion”. Island metaphors have been employed across a number of disciplines: “The island has become an archetypal metaphor that helps us to imagine and understand abstract social structures, either on the level of

²⁵ The degree of integration or connectivity with the mainland also depends on less tangible links, such as telecommunications technology (which can provide greater job flexibility and mean that employees are not necessarily tied to cities for jobs).

politics, morals, social or individual psychology. The metaphor of an island also comes in useful in tackling the urban environment” (Lehari, 2003: 99).

There is a considerable body of fiction based on islands, and classic island adventure narratives such as Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719-20) and Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883) have contributed to the appeal of islands by stimulating readers’ imagination in depicting ‘undiscovered’ land, or adult recreational playgrounds (although island settings can also bring out darker sides of human nature as in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954), in which the island was a setting where social values disintegrated). More recently, several films and television programs (for example *The Island*, *Lost*) have also depicted metaphoric and (possibly) real islands (as places of hope and as places where individual identity can be reinvented, respectively). Artists, such as Gauguin in Tahiti, have found sources of inspiration and creativity in island settings. While the realm of island metaphors can be explored in much more detail, my research is concerned with literal islands. In this context I agree with Hay (2006: 21) that islandness and island studies is to do with “the stuff of *real* geographical entities”.

Like in biogeography, where islands are used by species to spread from one region to another, humans have also used islands as stepping stones, particularly for advancement in war, for example in the Pacific during the Second World War. Islands are of immense research and educational value. The twin features of isolation and boundedness have allowed islands to function as field laboratories where theories can be tested in a semi-closed system (King, 1993) and this applies not only to biogeographical research but also to human genetic and epidemiological studies. Islands are also globally significant in the context of the planet’s biodiversity. While much scientific research on islands has been carried out on oceanic islands, Herccock²⁶ (2003: 118) recognises that the value of some offshore islands to biological scientists is in part due to “their insularity, unique biota, and relative analogy to mainland nature reserves”. Islands may also “serve as the proverbial ‘miner’s canary’, providing early warning signals to unsustainable environmental degradation” (Baldacchino & Milne, 2000: 241). For example, in the

²⁶ Herccock (2003) examines how different scientific regimes have contributed to the management and landscapes of two Western Australian islands, Rottnest and Garden islands, significant locations for local scientists due to their use as experimental laboratories and proximity to the city of Perth.

tuatara, a vulnerable species of New Zealand reptile, incubation temperature affects the sex and there are concerns that global warming may result in its extinction (Newby et al. 2004). As such, the tuatara may act as a canary, warning of global environmental change. Islands can demonstrate the negative consequences of humans and introduced species on the environment. Several flora and fauna populations have become extinct on islands through hunting, habitat loss, introduced diseases, or competition or predation from introduced species. Conversely, offshore islands can act as refuges for conservation of threatened species. For example, scientists may relocate Tasmanian devils (*Sarcophilus harrisii*), a species listed in 2007 as endangered, to offshore islands in Tasmania to protect healthy populations from facial tumour disease (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007a). For humans, some islands are “perceived as places of refuge from the overcrowded and poorly-managed environments of continents” (Nunn, 2007: 131).

The Australian context

Turning to Australian offshore islands, the lack of formal records makes it difficult to assess indigenous representations and uses of offshore islands. Most islands were occupied on an ongoing if temporary basis; the existence of middens points to long-term use of island resources by Aborigines. Considering that colonisation of Australia more than 40,000 years ago involved sea crossings, Bowdler (1995) reasonably assumes that the use of watercraft would have had a long tradition and thus she expected a significant history of exploitation of offshore islands, but concludes that this assumption is not supported by evidence. It seems that islands were abandoned once they became separated from the continental landmass and the common understanding is that offshore islands were too small to support permanent occupation and remaining populations died out or migrated (Tasmania being the only island large enough to sustain an isolated population). However, the less explicit assumption, according to Bowdler (1995: n.p.), is that “people on the nearby mainland ... either did not possess the appropriate maritime technology, or did not have an economic interest in the resources of these islands, or

both”²⁷. While the discovery of some offshore islands by indigenous people is reflected in their names, most are now known by their European names, such as Bruny Island (Lunawanna-alonnah) and Rottnest Island (Wadjemup).

Reflecting similar practices around the world, European administrators perceived Australian offshore islands as ideal sites for prisons, with the water barriers providing enhanced security so that prisoners were ‘out of sight, out of mind’. Kirby (1995) reflects on the island as a symbol of exclusion since ancient times and in different cultural traditions (for example Devil’s Island, offshore from French Guiana, and San Francisco’s Alcatraz). Rottnest Island hosted various prisoner populations – that of an Aboriginal Prison (1838-1903), a Boy’s Reformatory (1882-1901) and prisoners of war in both World Wars. Australian offshore islands have also proven suitable locations for quarantine stations for both humans and animals, in controlling diseases through isolation (for example, St Helena Island offshore from Brisbane, Queensland). Island leper colonies served as places to banish and contain sufferers. There has been a contemporary return to the imprisoning use of islands in the form of immigration detention centres (Christmas Island and Nauru, known as the ‘Pacific Solution’). In 2005 the Australian Government excised thousands of offshore islands from the migration zone to limit refugees entering the country, which was necessary to “close off the shortcuts to Australia” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2002a: n.p). But aren’t offshore islands part of the nation of Australia? Conversely, some governments may seek to add islands to their nation for economic gain, particularly through extending exclusive economic zones.

A social impact of isolation is that islanders tend to be derided by mainlanders. Similar to a common view across many countries that the countryside and its people are conservative, dull and slightly backward (conceptions which are often expressed through such notions as the ‘country yokel’ or ‘hillbilly’) (Cook & Phillips, 2005), many mainlanders have derisive views of islanders which are particularly evident in jokes about inbreeding, and which demonstrate the influence of place on perceptions of

²⁷ Further, Bowlder (1995: n.p.) finds no discernable pattern in human use of Australian offshore islands: “There appears to be no relationship between the time of occupation of an island and its distance from the mainland, its relationship to other islands, the area of the island, nor any combination of these”.

people. Offshore islands are often forgotten places, frequently left off maps²⁸ - sometimes even large islands such as Tasmania which is about the same size as Scotland. For residents, islands may still act as prisons if opportunities are not available locally (for example, the exodus of young people from Tasmania seeking employment on the Australian mainland; this loss is visible in the structure of the ageing population).

Another debate in island studies concerns the extent of isolation/connectedness of islands, or the permeability of the boundary. I will consider such debates in my discussion on islandness.

What is islandness?

Islandness is a term which I will discuss here in its theoretical context; I will draw on empirical support from the case islands when I consider islandness further in chapter nine. However, I should note that it has only been through an understanding of the other research themes and of the case islands that I have been able to comprehend the nuances of the term 'islandness'. Islandness, much like the term island, is a contested concept and one that is variously defined in nissological literature; there is "much scope for unpacking what is meant by *islandness*" (Baldacchino, 2004: 272). Consulting the dictionary, I note that a quality or condition is denoted by the suffix *-ness*, and so islandness broadly refers to island qualities, which are distinguishable from those of continents. At its broadest level, parallel to the definition of islands in relation to continents, islandness then relates to the distinctive characteristics of islands as compared to those of continents. But are islands really distinct from continents in the modern era? Péron (2004: 328-9) perceives increasing homogenisation of islands with mainlands, yet notes the survival of island distinctiveness:

Today it would seem that nothing any longer distinguishes an island from a section of a contiguous mainland, where this exists. Roads, houses and

²⁸ Such invisibility is not a new phenomenon: "islands moved about on early modern maps, changing size as well as position. Islands found were easily lost, adding to their reputation for being the most mysterious of all land forms ... It is difficult to imagine losing a mountain or a continent, but islands are forever going astray" (Gillis, 2004: 105-21).

communal facilities may have nothing really distinctive about them. All modern conveniences can be found, and the transport links with the mainland 'close by' are generally now more swift, easier and more comfortable; so much so that the distances seem to be reduced, as does the effect of the maritime barrier that has for so long cut off island dwellers from the rest of the world. And yet, if the inhabitants are to be believed, and if we listen as well as to the enthusiastic commentaries of regular visitors from the mainland, our conclusion might well be the same as that of commentators in the nineteenth century. A typical claim would be: 'Here, things are different'. How does one explain the fact that this enduring distinctiveness of small islands is still so powerful and obvious that it easily confers an original identity to those who live there, emanate from there, or even just go there frequently?

I will explore distinct characteristics of islands, and of island identity, later in this chapter. The extent of isolation/connectedness of islands, or the permeability of their boundary, is a key debate in island studies (Hay, 2006) and an important component of islandness. After all, "Island studies is very much about the implications of permeable borders" (Baldacchino, 2007b: 5), and "tensions and ambiguities [such as isolation/contact] disclose the very stuff of 'islandness'" (Warrington & Milne, 2007: 382). Islands are bounded systems but its boundaries are porous, open to both positive events and threats, such as over-development. Norberg-Schulz (1980: 13) considers that "the enclosing properties of a boundary are determined by its openings"; this can be applied to island boundaries which have tangible openings, or links to the outside world, such as airports and ferry terminals, and intangible openings such as trade and social exchanges with continental dwellers. Pitt (1980) points out the sharpness of boundaries and notes that boundaries do not only contain groups but permit all kinds of boundary crossings. For example, islanders may commute to work in cities and thereby diversify the island's income base.

Villamil²⁹ (1977) discusses the characterisation of islands as closed systems, in that they have a fixed stock of resources, especially land, and fixed capacity to absorb additional inputs; any additional input into the system substitutes something already there. In a similar vein, it can be postulated that increasing integration with continents substitutes part of the system's islandness. Villamil (1977: 2) recognises problems arising from the

²⁹ Villamil (1977) focuses on planning in island states, but considering the shared characteristic of islands as bounded systems, his work is also applicable to offshore islands.

fact that islands are also open systems which could “lead to disfunctionalities between the nature of these small systems and the type of activity which is carried out in them, and could generate the characteristics of a large scale society in a small scale territory”. Accordingly, diminished islandness may result from physical factors (for example, allowing tourists in through sea and air ports); and from intangible openings in the island boundary such as telecommunications technologies which expose the island and its real estate to national and international viewers. Islanders are in turn exposed to information flows through mass communications which, according to Villamil (1977), do not reinforce local values and strengths.

Lehari (2003) maintains that being open and/or closed is the most significant determinant and feature of an island’s ontological status. As ontology is concerned with the nature of being, we could infer from Lehari’s comment that the degree of openness then is the most important determinate of islandness. Islandness is perched between the forces of closure (isolation) and openness (connectedness). Even as a transition zone or liminal space, the boundary is double-sided; it has an inward-looking aspect and an outward-looking one (Pitt, 1980). Hence, I would like to define islandness as the dynamics of the natural boundary and the resulting island qualities, including elements geographical (for example, degree of separation from a mainland), political (often expressed through tensions between autonomy and dependence on a mainland jurisdiction) and social (such as islander identity and sense of place). While Meistersheim (1989, cited in Hache, 1998: 41) settles on several terms: “‘insularity’ is what belongs to the realm of geography and economics, and can be quantified, while ‘insularism’ is all that is pertinent to politics, and ‘l’îleite’ (‘islandness’) is all that is related to the field of perception and the imaginary that surrounds islands and their societies”, I collapse these terms into components of islandness. Offshore islands have a degree of islandness, with greater islandness equating to more inward-looking and/or independent islanders and less islandness meaning greater integration with and/or dependence on a relevant mainland. Thus, islandness is an ambiguous concept:

islands and ‘islandness’ may best be understood in terms of a characteristic set of tensions and ambiguities, opportunities and constraints arising from the interplay of geography and history. *Geography tends towards isolation*: it permits or favours autarchy, distinctiveness, stability and evolution

propelled endogenously. *History*, on the other hand, *tends towards contact*: it permits or favours dependence (or interdependence), assimilation, change and evolution propelled exogenously. An island's character develops from the interplay of geography and history, evasions and invasions, the indigenous and the exotic (Warrington & Milne, 2007: 383).

Baldacchino (2007b: 15) uses the term islandness in place of insularity due to the latter's "negative baggage"³⁰ and he describes islandness as "... an intervening variable that does not determine, but contours and conditions, physical and social events in distinct, and distinctly relevant, ways" (Baldacchino, 2004: 278). The Oxford English Dictionary defines insularity in terms of both its physical status and the impact of this physical status on its human inhabitants: "1. The state or condition of being an island, or of being surrounded by water; 2. The condition of living on an island, and of being thus cut off or isolated from other people, their ideas, customs, etc.; hence, narrowness of mind or feeling, contractedness of view." Lehari (2003: 99) writes that "An island is a simile of a life style; an insular way of life or islandisation, however, is a social phenomenon and problem". I consider islandness to be a more complex term than insularity, and one that provides greater scope for positive connotations. Insularity is commonly used as a negative term, representing closure and closed minds. The term islandness invokes both closure and openness, and hence can be used as a more positive term. However, Hache (1998: 47) uses the term insularity and asks "is geography really the driving factor when it comes to understanding islands and insularity?" In his view, insularity as a social phenomenon is the use, by people who live on an island or who belong to an island, of this very geographical characteristic in view of asserting a distinctive identity; of explaining their economic, social, cultural and political situation; and of justifying specific demands in those fields. Hache (1998) also considers that islands are subject to at least two factors that justify the perception of insularity as a hurdle: the permanent nature of the constraints imposed by their geographical condition (excluding those big and/or close enough to the mainland to have a fixed link, islands have to live permanently with the implications of their maritime isolation); and the fact that an island economy is always in a situation of extreme vulnerability since the implications of

³⁰ Insularity did not originally have a negative meaning: "The term "insularity" entered the English literature only in 1755 and carried none of the pejorative meaning that later attached to the word. In the eighteenth century insular peoples were thought to be not only among the most free, but the most cosmopolitan and progressive people in the world. In the poetry of the day the island was, according to Markam Ellis, a trope of "connection, belonging, and community"" (Gillis, 2004: 112).

transport or of size limitations will always aggravate any economic difficulties. I disagree with Hache's (1998) view that the concept of insularity is an essentially political phenomenon. I recognise that insularity, or islandness (to use my preferred term), reveals itself through politics, but it is a much broader concept. For example, there are correlations between islandness and social capital, as I will discuss in the following chapter. Now I explore some of the distinct island characteristics that comprise islandness.

Island characteristics

A key characterisation of islands has been as vulnerable places, environmentally, socially and economically (Adrianto & Matsuda, 2004; Briguglio, 1995; Kelman, various). Generalisations are difficult, but it can be argued that islands are subject to the impact of a common range of challenges associated with their island status (Royle, 2001). Islands have fewer resource options than continents. Compared to continents, islands have a high ratio of coastline length to area, and coasts are particularly sensitive environments. Islands are subjected to wave action from all sides and tend to have limited natural resources, such as hydrological catchments. Resource shortages, particularly water, can restrict development. Blomgren and Sorensen (1998: 321) discuss the role of geography in the economic problems of peripheral places:

The geographical criteria [sic] is important not only in terms of absolute distance [from economic centres], but also in terms of accessibility. Hence, less accessible regions such as islands and mountainous areas are more prone to experiencing economic underdevelopment. This relationship between insularity and economic development has been termed 'the small island syndrome of underdevelopment', indicating further that size is inversely related to the seriousness of the development problem.

Small islands typically have a narrow economic base and diseconomies of scale mean higher *per capita* costs to provide basic infrastructure and services. The water barrier raises transportation costs which impacts across island economies. Transport constraints affect a range of economic and social issues, including tourism and access to health care (Baldacchino, 2004). Small populations also make islands more demographically volatile - for example, youth out-migration - with knock-on effects. The loss of a small

number of young families could result in the closure of an island's only school, while an influx of retirees could put pressure on health services. Such limiting characteristics of small islands can restrict sustainable development options.

However, islands also have characteristics of resilience, which can be defined as “the ability of human societies and associated ecological systems of land and water to cope with, adapt to and shape change without losing options for future development” (UNESCO & Contributors, 2004, n.p.), and islanders can have advantages - such as greater pools of social capital - over continental dwellers in this regard. However, Baldacchino (2004c) argues that the expressions ‘vulnerability’ and ‘resilience’ are not useful and that nissologists should move away from using such terms. My four cases are all continental islands, which are typically described as less ‘vulnerable’ than oceanic islands as they are physically closer to mainlands (although jurisdictional issues can influence resilience more than physical environments). Considering the diversity of islands and their multitude of economic, environmental and social variables, I do not consider it worthwhile labelling islands as vulnerable or resilient. Rather, it is important to recognise the various constraints that may face individual islands and to address these in management strategies. It is also imperative to identify opportunities for sustainable development which arise from particular island characteristics and these may include strong community bonds and the means to limit introduction of pest species and control tourist numbers.

In addition to focusing on the characteristics of individual islands, it is useful to recognise that offshore islands may share features that are distinct from their mainlands. Unlike many oceanic islands, offshore islands tend not to be significantly different from their adjacent mainlands in regard to geology and species composition, as they were once joined to these larger landmasses. However, for offshore islands, discontinuity with the mainland is an important component of islandness and Ian Watson (1998: 133) maintains that “discontinuity is most evident in the context of transport and communications. An island and its mainland may be culturally and geologically identical, but surface transport between the two will always require abrupt changes of mode”. Another important defining variable of offshore islands (in relation to their mainlands) is their limited land resources which can make land use decisions highly

contentious. Does the visible spatial limitation of islands mean that the available space is more valued by its residents (compared to those on continents), and that environmental impacts are more apparent because islanders tend to know every nook and cranny of 'their' island? Whereas environmental impacts are internal, many economic effects (such as tourism revenue) are external to islands. Environmental values may be protected by the water barrier to some extent, but advancements in transportation typically expose islands to greater environmental impacts. Size limitations of islands and their physical separation from larger land masses combine to impact on economic and social systems. Royle (1989: 112) notes that:

with regard to an island location, there must always be greater transportation costs, there is always that one extra journey to be made, often requiring a transfer from one mode of transport to another. Thus, an island can never compete on quite equal terms with a neighbouring mainland location ... costs of living and working on an island are always likely to be higher than most mainland areas in the same part of the world.

Research on the social impacts of tourism usually centres on islands which have cultures different to those of tourists. In the Western world, social impacts of tourism may not be obvious, yet they still revolve around conflict between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Similar to their natural environments, the cultures of Australian offshore islands are not significantly different to those of the Australian mainland. However, as with Auckland's Waiheke Island, which has no real ethnic difference from the rest of New Zealand, offshore islanders may view 'their' place as different in its values and way of life from nearby Auckland (Rimoldi, 2006). The particular combination of environmental and social values can create a distinctive island character. Island skeptics may argue that the social world of an island is no different from that of a small mainland community and this is certainly an issue that I have pondered throughout my research. Having spent my early years in a small town (population 500-600 but higher if outlying areas were included) in mainland Australia, I can see community characteristics similar to those of small islands: everyone knows everyone, the friendly wave when passing other drivers along country roads (which my mother still does, despite now living in a capital city), and the strong community bonds which are particularly evident in difficult times, such

as the Ash Wednesday bushfires³¹. Like in rural areas, island communities tend to be perceived by urban residents as idyllic and authentic. However, there are key differences with island communities and they are consequences of geography. On a mainland the surrounding areas expand the size of the community, the economic reach of its services, and the social networks of its residents; whereas an island community is more contained. Islanders know the shape of their island: children can draw the outline and recognise it on a map. The same cannot be for residents of a town on the mainland which can only be seen as part of the greater whole and within the map of a larger region. The boundaries of mainland towns are administratively bounded, rather than geographically bounded. The particularities of island geography are most powerfully manifest in sense of place and identity (for communities and individuals, including visitors), an argument I develop in the next section.

Sense of place and identity

Gillis (2004) writes of the philosopher Montesquieu assigning a determining role to geography, arguing that it shapes human populations and as such there is something peculiar about islanders. Islandness relates to the consequences of the geographical description of a piece of land as an island: specifically the environmental, economic, social and political consequences of this demarcation:

The physical boundaries of islands create not only a bounded entity in which society is structured, but a recursive dynamic between physical boundaries and social and cultural characteristics. The cultural and social imperatives appear to bounce off the physical boundaries which then reflect back, amplify, and reinforce those features that determine the island's identity (Billot, 2005: 394).

It is these social and cultural characteristics (the more intangible elements of islandness) that I wish to focus on – the effects of islands on people, particularly the identity of islanders and sense of place. Norberg-Schulz (1980) writes of the Roman concept *genius*

³¹ The Ash Wednesday bushfires swept across south-east Australia in 1983, and galvanized massive community support for victims.

loci, the ‘spirit of place’³². His focus is on architecture and he makes a distinction between landscapes and settlements: “whereas landscapes are distinguished by a varied, but basically continuous extension, settlements are enclosed entities” (1980: 12). However, islands are an exception to this generalisation: they are landscapes that are naturally enclosed entities. As such, I would like to apply Norberg-Schulz’s ideas to islands instead of architecture. Islands have a sea-land boundary that gives them their status and they are visually separate entities, like stand-alone buildings. Casey (2001: 690) describes a horizon as the boundary for a landscape and as such “the horizon does not merely close off the landscape; it opens it up for further exploration”, which reflects Heidegger’s (1971) view that a boundary is not that at which something stops, but that from which something begins its presencing. For landscapes within continents, the horizon forms a boundary but this is not fixed – if one moves then the landscape contained within the horizon also shifts. For an island, the land-sea boundary is relatively fixed (excluding tides and sea level changes) which gives a sense of certainty and small islands provide natural horizons. When we refer to an island we tend to think of it as a whole islandscape, rather than components of places.

Baldacchino (2005: 35) considers that “‘place’ can be invented and reconstituted – although it can also be lost – with encroaching globalization”, while Casey (2001) argues that places can become increasingly uniform but will not cease to exist altogether as places. Norberg-Schulz (1980) notes that although the character of a place is not fixed, that does not necessarily mean that the *genius loci* is lost and in a similar vein, I am not proposing that islandness can completely disappear³³; but that its composition can change. As Norberg-Schulz (1980: 18) claims: “any place ought to have the capacity of receiving different ‘contents’, naturally within certain limits ... To protect and conserve the *genius loci* in fact means to concretize its essence in ever new historical contexts”.

³² Relph (1976) also refers to the spirit of a place and believes that it resides in its landscape. Durrell (1960, cited in Durrell, 2004: 4) described the ‘spirit of place’ as the important determinant of any culture, and argued that “We travel really to try and get to grips with this mysterious quality of ‘Greekness’ or ‘Spanishness’”. In a similar vein, we may extend the notion of islandness to refer to a general culture of islands, and hence the importance of their spirit or sense of place. Durrell maintains that people are expressions of their landscape.

³³ Even when islands are threatened with physical disappearance due to climate change impacts, the community form of islandness may survive if communities are relocated intact (for example, calls to relocate villages from the island of Shishmaref in the north-west of Alaska).

An island has a continuous, encircling land-sea boundary. But it is not only what is inside that boundary that comprises the island. The island includes the sea around it and the island community extends to those people living on continents who still call the island home³⁴. One way of explaining the continuing island consciousness of many people beyond the physical island boundary is by applying Casey's (2001) deployment of Bourdieu's idea of *habitus*. Casey (2001: 686) proposes that place and self are mediated by *habitus*, which brings and keeps them together: the geographical self "is constituted by core habitues that incorporate and continue, at both psychical and physical levels, what one has experienced in particular places". Casey explores the root of habitation, *habère* (Latin for 'to have, to hold') and notes that when someone inhabits a place, either by visiting it or staying in it, in addition to having it in their purview, they also hold it through being in its ambience, first in body and then in memory. Islands are often seen as concentrated, intense places³⁵ and Casey's explanation may help to clarify why tourists can feel such strong place attachments, and perhaps return to purchase second homes or to retire.

Whittaker (1998) notes that whereas on continents the increasing insularisation of habitats is of major concern, the problem for island biotas is the increasing breakdown of the insularisation of theirs. This notion can also be extended to the social world of islands. Islandness can be diminished with decreasing insularisation, which is related partly to increasing accessibility, but on the other hand, increasing insularisation can also be problematic: for example in terms of economic viability, many offshore islands need to be open to tourists. The issue then is how to balance tourism, and also residential development, with maintaining distinct island qualities. In view of the increasing use of offshore islands for tourism and residential purposes, the ultimate threat to these places may be diminishment of their islandness. Turning to international examples of

³⁴ According to Gillis (2004: 121, 158), "... islands remain our most poignant symbols of temporal absence, the locus of longing peculiar to the modern era ... memory abhors vast spaces, so bounded sites – the garden, the cottage, the island – came to be regarded as mnemonically powerful".

³⁵ Casey (2001: 688) also discusses the coming in of places into the body: "once having been in a particular place for any considerable time – or even briefly, if our experience there has been intense – we are forever marked by that place, which lingers in us indefinitely and in a thousand ways, many too subtle for us to name ... There is an *impressionism of place* by which the presence of a place remains lodged in our body long after we have left it".

diminishing islandness, Whittaker (1998: 251) cites the example of tourism growth in the Galapagos which has in turn encouraged an increase in the resident population:

The basic conservation problem of the Galapagos is the ever-accelerating breakdown of the islands' former isolation due to dramatic changes in human population size, activity patterns, and mobility. The real impact of the tourist business occurs not through the direct disturbance to animals by tourists armed with cameras but indirectly via the socio-economic changes ... where population is growing rapidly due to the tourist industries.

Another international example of a threat to islandness is that of St Helena citizens who are facing a dilemma relating to air access, which is likely to foster economic development, but such increased interaction with the outside world could threaten islander identity and the community's way of life (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005). It is pertinent to reflect on the modern definition of a community. Due to increasing mobility of the workforce, new versions of community are being created, particularly in the form of virtual internet communities or 'virtual place'³⁶ (Casey, 1997) where there is no shared physical space. Herein lies an important value of islands – they provide individuals with an instant community (and identity) and they are real, tangible places.

Sense of place refers to human perceptions of the special characteristics of a place. Tuan (1974) proposes that a place comes into existence when humans give meaning to a part of the larger, undifferentiated geographic space. In my view, islands are automatically differentiated spaces by virtue of geography, separated from greater landmasses, and so perhaps it is easier for humans to feel attachment to such places. However, the literature of place has been somewhat neglected in island studies; as Hay (2006: 31) articulates: "What puzzles me most about the present state of island studies is that the latter proceeds with so little acknowledgement of what is now a vast theoretical literature on the nature of place and place attachment".

Tuan (1974) coined the term 'topophilia' (love of place) to refer to a particularly strong sense of place. Conversely, places that lack a sense of place may be referred to as

³⁶ Casey (1997) believes that virtual place has a sense of having boundaries, if not definite limits, which makes it a genuine phenomenon of place.

placeless (Relph, 1976), as they could be anywhere. Rather than a dichotomy of place or placelessness, I consider there to be a continuum of 'placeness'. For example, as I discuss below, islanders may feel a diminished sense of place through various avenues, such as increasing exposure to other places and resulting homogenisation of their island. Some people characterise large cities as placeless, and offshore islands can stand in stark contrast to them:

Already in the nineteenth century, people on the mainland were experiencing the erasure of place produced by increased mobility and speed of communication. The resulting sense of rootlessness triggered the uniquely modern quest for place in a placeless world, for home in the vast, featureless landscapes of urban industrial society. The search was not just for residence but for that elusive sense of being at home in the world, as much a mental as a physical endeavour ... By the twentieth century, islands ceased to be thought of as destinations and became places of return, fixed points where an increasingly mobile mainland urban population eager for seasonal respite could savor a sense of stability and continuity (Gillis³⁷, 2004: 139-40).

Norberg-Schulz (1980) defines a place as a space which has a distinct character. Islands are spaces that are defined by water: they are encircled by water, and so can be considered distinct geographical places. What impact does that water barrier have on the space and the people that occupy that space? As distinct from continents, the world of islands is shaped by their geographical separation from larger landmasses and their boundedness. But what makes them different to mountain or desert regions which are also isolated? After all, "geographically, an island ... [may be] a mountain (or a hill) that emerges from the bottom of the sea to tower above the water" (Lehari, 2003: 102). I consider the difference in the properties of land and water to be a key factor in the differences between 'true islands' and 'land islands'. Liquid is a medium in strong contrast to land (and a stronger contrast than either the vertical or horizontal distances that separate mountains and deserts, respectively, from other places). The land-sea interface is a clearly defined boundary, different to land-land interfaces: "Islanders are a coastal people. Coastline is the most significant place in economic, political, ideological and cultural function. Coastline – the boundary between the sea and land – is an area that simultaneously separates and unites them" (Lehari, 2003: 96). Gillis (2004: 4) also

³⁷ Although Gillis' focus is on the islands of Europe and America, many of his observations are relevant to Australian islands.

recognises the importance of water: “in Western cosmogony water stands for chaos, land for order. Islands are a third kind of place, partaking of both earth and water, something betwixt and between”. Islands are surrounded by water, which gives some sense of the unknown or unexpected; lack of control over the elements in a world where humans have gained control over much of nature. Water is a medium different from land (consider the classical elements – water, earth, air and fire) and has a sense of constant renewal. An island is distinct, compared to an ongoing stretch of mainland. According to Norberg-Schulz (1980: 39), the presence of water gives identity to the land and, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, it:

generates particular kinds of spatial configurations: island, point, promontory, peninsula, bay and fjord, all of which must be counted among the most distinctive natural places. The island thus, is a place par excellence, appearing as an “isolated”, clearly defined figure. Existentially the island brings us back to the origin; it rises out of the element from which everything was originally born.

In addition to being distinctive natural places, islands can also be distinctive social places. Sense of place can structure an individual’s identity and, as distinct geographical places, islands can foster identity (in comparison to the seemingly endless suburbs of large Australian cities which may overwhelm a sense of personal identity). Hache (1998: 47) considers that if the geographical characteristic is meaningful to an island resident, “they will precisely make use of it to assert their identity ... Insularity, in its social sense, can be described as all that surrounds this assertion: its origins, its forms of expression, and its purposes”. Erikson (1970) suggests that people experience an identity crisis when they lose a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity. Changes³⁸ associated with globalisation may contribute to such crises, as might increasing personal mobility and corresponding lack of historical continuity. Islands can provide a clear unit of identity for residents, particularly in comparison to mainland localities which have become increasingly interconnected through transportation developments. Pitt (1980: 1054) recognises identity as “a key dynamic in island communities and along with it often there is an important role for tradition, the historical continuity which underlies the geographical separation”. For people who visit islands only seasonally, they may also

³⁸ “The tenacity of place may require that human-induced change occurs at a measured pace” (Hay, 2006: 32).

find a sense of identity, as Gillis (2004: 156) explains: “The circular journey, reinforced by the circularity of the calendar year, has a way of erasing intervals of time ... we do not feel that different upon return to a place we love. A firm sense of identity, so dependent on a sense of sameness over time and space, is thereby reinforced rather than disrupted”. Casey³⁹ (2001: 685) considers the relationship between place and self and believes that the more places are levelled down, the more selves may “be led to seek out thick places in which their own personal enrichment can flourish”, and in this sense I consider that islands are ‘thick places’, of increasing importance in the global world.

If you did not know that they constitute only 6.7 percent of the world’s land surface and 10.5 percent of its population, you might think the globe was nothing but a vast archipelago because islands take up such a disproportionate part of the contemporary mindscape ... Islands have become a source of personal and social identity for millions of people who never have been or ever will be resident islanders (Gillis, 2004: 143).

Norberg-Schulz (1980: 21) defines ‘identification’ as becoming friends with a particular environment but: “for modern urban man [sic] the friendship with a natural environment is reduced to fragmentary relations. Instead he [sic] has to identify with man-made things”. Such modern human-nature relations are perhaps one reason why offshore islands are attractive to city dwellers; they provide a contrast to cities and can facilitate identification with the natural environment. Lowenthal (2007: 203) claims that “today’s lust for islands is unmatched in scope and avidity. It is fueled by a yearning for seclusion from modernity”. Just as an island’s character develops from the interplay of isolation and contact (Warrington & Milne, 2007), so does islander identity. Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop (2005: 98) refer to spatial identity as the “feeling of attachment to a territory at a certain geographical scale, perceived as unique to and by an individual or group ... [but] the total spatial identity of an individual is multi-layered and multi-scale, and it consists of different spatial *identities*”. Further, spatial identities at different spatial scales may influence each other, which raises interesting questions about the impacts of increased interaction with the outside world on the spatial identities of islanders (Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop, 2005).

³⁹ Further, Casey (2001) believes that actual places persist and are strengthened rather than diminished by the challenges presented by virtual space.

Similarly, Lehari (2003: 97) describes an islander's personal identity as multi-level (which of course is not unique to islanders), being both an islander and also belonging to wider entities: "The continuous choice and the dynamics of emphasis in shaping an islander's personal identity have produced an attitude to life with active and intensive self-consciousness". In my view, this notion of ambivalent identity also relates to the opportunity islands can present to reinvent oneself; to pick and choose identity; and to manipulate other's perception of oneself depending for example on whether self is represented as an islander or as a citizen of a nation. Lehari (2003: 97) considers that an island "has, compared with other border areas, a clearer social place identity, more intense inner life and level of independence. For mainland Estonia, an island is an element of the state system that 'repeats' the big system's institutional structure and level of self-regulation. An island is the mainland's synecdoche." Island place and identity are perhaps as much about excluding others as about being inclusive within the boundaries. In establishing an individual or social identity, one is also identifying people as others. In mainland suburbs, there tends to be less of a sense of ownership of place and residents from other suburbs can enter freely and unobtrusively. Islands can retain a more traditional⁴⁰ sense of community than many mainland areas and hence could appeal to people who have little (but seek) identification with place, particularly those living in large cities: "Islands may offer distinct identities and spaces in an increasingly homogeneous and placeless world" (Baldacchino, 2007b: 1).

In considering who islands are 'for', Nunn (2004) believes consensus would probably favour 'islands for islanders', but I will argue that mainlanders also need to be considered, particularly in the case of islands which are in public ownership or have common good values, and I will demonstrate this in the case of Rottneest Island in chapter six. The final element of this chapter concerns the relationships between offshore islands and cities.

⁴⁰ Perceptions of what constitutes traditional values often revolve around safety: many islanders leave houses and cars unlocked; local crime cannot spread far in a closed community (Lehari, 2003).

Relations between cores and peripheries

Excluding mega-urban places such as Manhattan⁴¹, offshore islands are generally considered to be marginal or peripheral places, “at a remove from the dynamism of the national heartland” (Royle, 1999: 242). The term ‘peripherality’ is used within the social sciences predominantly as a means of describing the position of a subordinate country or region in relation to a superordinate centre region (Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998). Are offshore islands near cities particularly marginal places because they are in the shadow of cities, or does their geographical position near cities place them in the spotlight, under the direct gaze of metropolitan residents and governments? For each case island I will question whether there is tension between islanders’ dependence on the mainland (or aspiration for parity with mainlanders), and desire to distinguish island from mainland and achieve greater autonomy. Does spatial marginalisation lead to economic, political and social marginalisation? McKercher and Fu (2005: 510) argue that:

Peripheral areas tend to be economically, socially, politically, psychologically, and developmentally isolated from and marginalized by the core. They generally share a number of common features that accentuate their geographical disadvantages. They tend to have poorer infrastructure and services than the core; they are inaccessible, making communications difficult; their economic base is geared around primary production, which is now in decline and what economic activity that does occur often has high leakages, as materials must be sourced from the core. The peripheries’ disadvantages are exacerbated by limited knowledge by the core and a power base vested in the hands of the core. Socially, communities are characterized by small, close-knit populations with a strong sense of place.

I examine island-metropole relationships⁴² as a form of periphery-core relations. Although my case islands are relatively close to metropolitan centres, they are nonetheless typically on the margins of these cores due to their geographical separation. Offshore islands are inevitably positioned in relation to their mainlands, with the former

⁴¹ Gillis (2004: 125) classifies Manhattan as part of the mainland: “Manhattan had already ceased to think of itself as an island when the Brooklyn Bridge was opened in 1883”.

⁴² When I refer to an island’s relationship with a metropole, I am not implying that ‘the island’ as a piece of land has a voice; rather I refer to the island in the more abstract voice, or to the affairs of the island. I will make the actors explicit when I refer to specific relationships, such as a particular group of islanders. Likewise, I refer to the metropole in the abstract, but will be more specific when I refer to policies of state government, for example.

typically being dependent on the latter, particularly in economic and political terms (although exceptions include times of invasion when islands can act as stepping stones to cities):

The most typical islands have a mainland from which one can look across at the island and think of the island as “off” the mainland, subordinate to the mainland, an outpost of the mainland, and more remote and isolated than the mainland. To call something as an island is to presuppose that there is such a mainland with potential observers on it (Watson, I 1998: 133).

For islands near cities, the island and the metropole automatically have unequal power relations: metropolises are intrinsically dominant places and islands are commonly construed as being vulnerable, as noted above. In Gillis’ (2004: 155) view, “Remoteness is the product of a relationship between two places, but these places are unequal to one another ... powerful mainlands bestow remoteness on relatively powerless islands”. Nevertheless, there are several advantages in being located close to a city. The metropole may provide a source of additional income for island commuters and act as a tourism gateway (particularly those cities with international airports). In return, islands can be second home locales (or permanent new homes in light of the sea change phenomenon) and weekend escape destinations for city dwellers. Islands near cities may have a higher profile than more remote islands as they are ‘under the noses’ of both local and state governments. In some cases, offshore islands may be large enough or economically important enough to be autonomous and have their own local council or other special administrative arrangements. On the flip side however, islands near cities may attract what island residents perceive as too much attention, especially as transport infrastructure improves. Residents may feel as though ‘their’ island is being overrun by city dwellers and losing its special charm. As the spatial footprints of cities expand and highway access improves, offshore islands become accessible to greater numbers of people and, depending on their level of access, may become island suburbs.

Being close to a city but providing a contrasting attraction can also position islands as high demand destinations, although business viability in peripheral destinations can be problematic due to seasonality and cyclicity - destinations that abut urban centres tend to experience weekend peaks (McKercher & Fu, 2005). Both tourism and residential

developments on islands can be constrained by infrastructure difficulties (particularly the costs of crossing the water barrier) but such developments can also drive infrastructure improvements (for example new residents may demand infrastructure upgrades to a standard equivalent to places they left – most with metropolitan comforts).

Depraetere and Dahl (2007: 96-9) discuss the economic and political marginalisation of some islands:

While independent island states have found a political voice at an international level, other islands have remained part of larger nations ... Thus, while transportation and communications links have reduced the isolation of many island communities, their marginality is expressed today more in economic and political terms ... the political interest of states in island issues is related to the importance of islands in their national territory. For most countries, their islands are relatively insignificant in terms of area, population or economic activities, and are usually marginalized in political processes.

Royle (1989: 110) notes economic and political domination of offshore islands by external powers of larger size and/or greater resources: “with regard to the relationship between states and their offshore islands, the usual situation is that the mainland dominates the island. Indeed, the affairs of islands can sometimes get neglected because of their relatively small size and lack of power”. However, sometimes the reverse is true. King (1997) explores the relationship between his case islands, in Queensland and Fiji, and their adjoining (continental and island) mainlands, examining the extent to which the main decision-making concerning management and marketing is undertaken on the islands or on the mainland. He demonstrates that islands are not always marginal to their mainlands. For example, Queensland’s Whitsundays tourism region consists of two distinct areas – the 74 islands and the mainland which has smaller tourism operations. The islands have the largest marketing budgets and there is criticism that the mainland gets forgotten (King, 1997). However, like the Irish islands (Royle, 1986; 1989⁴³), the Whitsunday islands can be influential through cohesion (i.e. leveraging strength in

⁴³ Royle (1989: 110) cites the example of island communities in Ireland, “all tiny offshore responsibilities of many different mainland administrative areas, were so concerned that they were being separately neglected that they banded together to form a united federation to seek assistance for their common problems”. After going over the head of their local county authorities, in 1987 a government committee was founded to oversee their common affairs. The Irish Islands Federation is the representative body for inhabited offshore islands and currently has 33 member islands.

numbers for greater political and economic attention) as opposed to the limited power of singular dispersed islands.

Cook and Phillips (2005) discuss notions of marginality and examine how the wealth of core areas is often achieved by exploiting the periphery, which is seen as dependent on the core even though disadvantaged by it. Considering the predominant use of many offshore islands for tourism, it could be argued that tourism is a contemporary example of the core exploiting the periphery; of consuming natural resources that are no longer features of cities. However, Cook and Phillips (2005) wish to move beyond the dualisms of centre-margin, core-periphery, and urban-rural because they are contested and changeable categories. This ambiguity is true of offshore islands - for example, some near metropolises are variously positioned as centre and margin, core and periphery; urban and rural⁴⁴ but, despite their proximity to cities, have been protected from being overly urban by the water barrier. Some of the case islands are rural areas on the periphery of metropolitan regions, which creates an immediate contradiction and potential conflict in land uses. McKercher and Fu (2005: 511) consider that “Peripheries are as much psychological constructs as they are a reflection of spatial isolation ... communities that are proximate to core areas may also be regarded as peripheral if they exhibit the conditions of relative remoteness, social marginalization, political isolation, economic decline, and depopulation”. Similarly, Gillis (2004: 154) argues that remoteness is not necessarily related to distance:

Islands have become the contemporary world’s favorite location for remoteness not because they are distant but because they necessitate the spatial practices that create a sense of remoteness ... in an age when distance is so easily transcended, simply going far is insufficient. It is now necessary to travel through time as well as space, for contemporary remoteness is as much associated with a sense of pastness as with physical distance.

An example of the shifting positioning of places is when offshore islands move from being on the fringes of the core to being the hotspot of a real estate boom. Gillis (200: 152-3) writes that pockets of remoteness are appearing:

⁴⁴ It is difficult to place islands along the rural-urban continuum if they have both urban settlements and rural hinterlands.

quite close to major urban centers where the greatest demand for remoteness is generated ... The remote has drawn ever closer, with the results that its value, as measured in property sales and in the profits made by the tourist industry, has increased many fold ... Remoteness is not a matter of physical distance ... Toronto Island, almost within the shadow of the Canadian city's skyscraper, is a world apart ... Most locations which now qualify as remote exist within a certain zone of accessibility, within reach of modern transportation and communications but beyond the range of the easy commute ... remoteness is constituted of just the right mixture of time and space.

Metropolitan players may have a strong influence on offshore island development. Considering the general economic disadvantages of islanders, significant tourism or residential developments by locals are limited as they tend to lack wealth and power. Instead, large developments typically are proposed by city-based companies; developers who are looking for something different and are catering for the market demands of wealthy clients for coastal locations. Metropolitan actors can play influential roles not only at initial development proposal stages, but throughout the development process and after construction when profits return to the metropole.

To conclude this chapter, I have established that the definition of an island is not straightforward, and island scholars debate the impacts of factors such as size and fixed links on islandness. The definition of islandness is also complicated, partly due to the ambiguous open/closed nature of the island boundary. However, it is precisely this ambiguity; this richness of meaning that characterises islands and islanders. The exploration of islandness in this chapter will inform subsequent case study chapters and, combined with the empirical insights from these chapters, will form the basis for further discussion of islandness in chapter nine. The geographical basis of islandness not only bestows certain environmental and economic characteristics on islands; but also social characteristics. I have drawn out two of these social elements: sense of place and identity. Islands are typically positioned as marginal in relation to metropolitan cores; they are particularly subject to economic and political forms of marginalisation. In the following chapter I examine some of the sustainable development literature, specifically that which relates to islands, tourism and residential developments, and governance for sustainability.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Attaining the twin goals of sustainable development and management for conservation requires attention to fields ... concerning the politics, economics, sociology, and culture of island states (Whittaker, 1998: 6).

Alongside the previous chapter, this chapter forms part of the conceptual scaffolding on which I draw upon in greater detail when analysing my original research in the case material. In addition to providing a broad context for the study, this chapter introduces the concepts that inform the research themes of tourism and residential development, and governance for sustainable development. I will largely draw on island sustainability literature in examining reasons for tourism and residential development pressures and their impacts, before examining ways to manage these impacts through governance and planning. In the process, I will also examine how islands can be a valuable source of social capital, and ultimately how islandness can be an important resource to facilitate sustainable development.

Many sustainable development concerns on continents also pertain to islands, but it is important to consider the particular constraints and opportunities associated with the island dimension. This narrowing of the theoretical lens is consistent with my intent to focus on common issues facing offshore islands. Continental solutions to problems of sustainable development are not necessarily transferrable to islands: “islands are not simply miniature continents and ... continental solutions do not simply need to be scaled down in order to be successful” (Nunn, 2004: 319). However, first it is pertinent to briefly look beyond the realm of island studies to the wider context of sustainable development.

The most cited definition of sustainable development is that by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987): “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This definition emphasises principles of intra-generational and inter-generational

equity⁴⁵ and is an anthropocentric concept (Davoudi & Layard, 2001). It is a much contested definition (for example see Connelly, 2007; Le'le', 1991), particularly on grounds of the apparent inconsistency of the term, and of being a vague concept⁴⁶ which is difficult to translate into practice. Sustainability advocates view environmental protection and economic growth as mutually compatible, rather than conflicting, activities (Selman, 2000). There is a well-rehearsed literature on sustainable development but it is beyond the scope of this work to enter into a theoretical debate on the merits or otherwise of the term and of applying it in practical situations. As Davoudi and Layard (2001: 17) argue, "the holistic concept of sustainable development remains a powerful long-range goal which links issues and provides a policy bridge".

The majority of instances where I refer to the sustainable development literature will be those that relate specifically to offshore islands⁴⁷. There is a growing body of literature that focuses on islands and sustainable development (for example, Beller et al. 1990; Deschenes & Chertow, 2004; Kokkranikal et al. 2003; Nunn, 2004; Streeten, 1998). Considering the integrated nature of islands (Villamil, 1977), sustainable development is a useful concept to apply to islands as it refers to a holistic notion of development encompassing economic, environmental and social components. According to Whittaker (1998: 253), "In many ways the ecological management goals are the easiest part of the equation to specify, while managing the societal, economic, and political issues is very difficult". I will examine the applicability of this statement in regard to my case study islands. Tourism and residential developments are framed as important facets of sustainable development; they impact on island economies, environments and societies. I will first focus on residential developments, which can create significant land use challenges for island planners and managers, and developers and residents.

⁴⁵ "Sustainability is more than just 'quality of life' – it requires us also to consider the interests of 'strangers in time and space' as well as considering ecological limits and other species" (Layard, 2001: 2).

⁴⁶ Davoudi and Layard (2001: 13) cite Wackernagel and Rees (1995: 64) arguing that "the deliberate vagueness of the concept, even as defined by Brundlandt, is a reflection of power politics and political bargaining, not a manifestation of insurmountable intellectual difficulty".

⁴⁷ Much international attention, particularly by the United Nations, has focused on sustainability problems facing Small Island Developing States but these issues are not necessarily commensurate with those facing offshore islands of developed nations.

Residential development, sea change and gentrification

Human migration is a key component of the permeability of island boundaries. Connell (2007: 471) argues that islands are invariably characterised by migration and while he focuses on tropical small island states and their general population decline, he does recognise that:

in islands of a particular perceived charm ... where they are not too remote from home counties, island populations have been boosted by both the emergence of second homes and retirement migration. This [boost] has been especially so in and around the Mediterranean ... stimulated by relatively cheap property, climate and environment, low crime rates, a semblance of home amenities, and adequate air connections.

There is a dominant research focus on migration dynamics in remote island states, (where population decline is the general trend); much less research is undertaken on second home and retirement migration flows to islands - another gap in the island studies literature, as these forms of migration tend to occur on offshore islands that are not too different or too distant from their mainlands. Connell (2007: 471) recognises potentially positive impacts of second home and retirement migration: “Alongside tourism, retirement migration and the arrival of summer residents have also transformed some once-dying islands, through new injections of capital – and thus employment – and rising populations (even if sometimes only seasonally)”.

However, migration can have significant negative impacts on the destination communities and environments. In Australia, coastal urbanisation has been identified as one of the most significant challenges for sustainable coastal management (Gurran et al. 2007). Shacks (originally do-it-yourself style holiday houses) had begun spreading around the Australian coastline from the 1920s and while they were a “significant investment, not available to everyone, [they] extended beyond the upper middle class to the better off and committed skilled worker, and the terminology of ‘shack’ or ‘weekender’ attested to its democratic and deliberately understated meaning” (White, 2005: 136). Sea change, part of the wider international trend of amenity migration which involves “the movement of people from large urban areas in search of a better lifestyle

in attractive settings characterized by high natural amenity, particularly along the coast” (Gurran et al. 2007: 445-6), “has come to represent the wider social and environmental transformations resulting from rapid population growth and associated urbanisation within coastal areas” (Gurran & Blakely, 2007: 113).

Proximity to protected natural areas has become an important factor in drawing residential activities to rural areas (Elbersen, 2005) and I will examine whether the same applies for islands, many of which retain rural qualities, and some of which experience a double dose of peripherality, in terms of their accessibility from the core and their rural qualities. Rural areas have typically been seen as the spatial margins of modern society which is centred on the urban, although the forces of modernity were closing in on the rural and threatening traditional social systems (Cook & Phillips, 2005). Some offshore islands are experiencing social changes due to sea change migration from the urban core; hence sea change may be positioned as a post-modern phenomenon⁴⁸ closing in on islands. Islands have been insulated, to some extent, from modern changes due to their access difficulties but this protective barrier of water is now lessening due to transportation improvements; also, as suburbs spread outwards, commuters are prepared to travel greater distances to the core. Gillis (2004: 144) claims that “The surge to the shore has now moved onto the nearest continental islands”.

Australia is a highly urbanised nation, with more than 60 per cent of its population concentrated along the coast in six state capital cities. It has one of the world’s most mobile populations (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). The significance of the sea change phenomenon in Australia is reflected in the fact that a consortium representing approximately 70 coastal local governments has formed the National Sea Change Taskforce to address issues associated with growth across non-metropolitan coastal Australia (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). Salt (2004) argues that Australia is experiencing a ‘big shift’ towards the coast, sufficient to comprise a new third culture as distinct from that associated with the city or the bush. It is not clear whether islands are included as part of this third culture. Indeed, much of the sea change literature tends to ignore islands (Burnley & Murphy, 2004; Gurran & Blakely, 2007; Gurran et al., 2007). For

⁴⁸ Characterised by increased flexibility, mobility, and the changing nature of work.

example, Gurran and Blakely (2007) have developed a typology of five idealised coastal settings that are targets for urbanisation but they do not include islands as a separate category, despite Australia's archipelagic status:

- 1) *Coastal commuters* are suburbanised satellite communities located in peri-urban locations⁴⁹ within one and a half hours' drive of a capital city. These areas have changed from traditional holiday or retirement destinations to suburban agglomerations attracting residents for lifestyle reasons and their proximity to significant centres of employment.
- 2) *Coastal getaways* are local government areas comprising small to medium settlements within three hours' drive of a capital city. This proximity means they are attractive destinations for domestic tourism, including day trips and weekend escapes.
- 3) *Coastal cities* represent substantial urban conurbations beyond the state capitals
- 4) *Coastal lifestyle* destinations are more than three hours' drive from capital cities. New residents are attracted by their lifestyle, leisure and tourism appeal, as they often contain significant natural and rural landscapes.
- 5) *Coastal hamlets* are classified as remote local government areas (more than three hours' drive from a capital city with populations of less than 15,000). Their isolation means that they have escaped major development pressures and many are surrounded by conservation areas which act as a growth boundary.

Offshore islands near metropolises meet the criteria of places likely to attract amenity migrants – high natural and rural scenery values, recreational amenities, and proximity to metropolitan areas (for those who need to retain job connections) but islands are excluded from Gurran and Blakely's (2007) typology through inclusion of the criterion of driving distance from a capital city (although Phillip Island qualifies, due to its bridge connection). In any case, new island residents may be seeking something different to that sought by sea changers to mainland coasts; something that can be offered by isolation. Since distance from metropolitan centres influences the scale and nature of

⁴⁹ Urban margins or peri-urban fringes are often contested places where rapid growth and change conflict with pressures for rural preservation (Bourne et al. 2003).

coastal growth, to some extent islands near cities are protected by their slower access times, despite their proximity to metropolitan centres.

Further residential development contributes to problems of environmental degradation through land clearing and subdivisions, and increased human pressures. However, environmental outcomes of sea change are not necessarily all negative. New residents, particularly those from urban areas, may have a stronger environmental ethic than local residents⁵⁰. It is often the case that local residents desire further development to boost their economic standing, whereas incomers may wish to preserve existing values (Fees, 1996) which have attracted them. For example, “Retirees on places like the Isle of Man, Majorca, Malta, and Corfu become staunch conservationists of the islescapes that they first came to love as tourists and that brought them back as permanent residents. They often resist developments favored by less affluent locals, resulting in simmering conflicts” (Gillis, 2004: 156).

Many social conflicts in small communities revolve around contestation between ‘insiders’ (generally those people who were born in the local area or island or have lived there for a long period) and ‘outsiders’ (new residents and second home owners). Phillips (2005: 6) cites Jess and Massey (1995: 134) who suggest that issues of place have become both more salient and more fraught, with senses and identities of places being “frequently disputed – sometimes by groups living in ‘the same’ place, sometimes between ‘insiders’ [who may feel that they belong to or are part of a particular place or community] and ‘outsiders’ [who may feel excluded from being a member of a place or community], sometimes in ways which open to question all of these categories”.

In regard to both residential and tourism developments, I will consider whether a form of gentrification is occurring on the case islands. Gentrification⁵¹ is a term broadly used to refer to physical and social restructuring – generally of urban areas. At a basic level, gentrification involves the upgrading of an area and accompanying changes in its social composition (Phillips, 2005), which tends to result in the displacement of lower income

⁵⁰ Butler (1991) suggests that there is a stronger conservation ethic in large urban areas than in many small rural communities.

⁵¹ The term gentrification is attributed to Glass (1964) who observed that the process can result in the whole character of a district changing.

households. While gentrification studies have primarily focused on urban spaces, the process is claimed to be evident in rural places (Phillips, 2004) and may also occur in retirement areas such as coastal resorts (Smith, 2002). Drawing on recent literature, Clark et al. (2007: 484) assert that gentrification is a more general process than previously conceived: “gentrification does not only occur in inner cities, it does not manifest itself only through renovation, it is not only market-driven, it is not limited to residential spaces, and it is not even limited to specific classes, regardless of etymology”. I consider that the term gentrification should be applicable to new buildings rather than being restricted to existing buildings. It should relate to place (rather than being based on what existed in the past). The term gentrification was initially applied to London (Glass, 1964), a place which at that time was a densely built environment; in comparison, Australia has much greenfield space. Davidson and Lees (2005) argue that the term should be opened to new forms of gentrification such as new-build gentrification.

Clark et al. (2007) cite instances of gentrification on islands around the world, and suggest that future island gentrification research could focus on examining the extent to which gentrification generates displacement and decline of local economies and cultures. I will explore whether contemporary trends involving affluent mainlanders buying into offshore islands (and subsequent social impacts) can be described as gentrification. When mainlanders purchase island property as second homes they tend to inflate real estate prices and so may exclude lower income classes. In relation to tourism (particularly on Rottnest Island – see chapter six - where private ownership of land is not permitted), I explore whether tourism gentrification is occurring; by this, I mean the transformation of a place into a destination that is largely exclusive to wealthy tourists. On islands, such gentrification can occur not only as a result of expensive access fares but also through changes in accommodation styles, which may displace a traditional egalitarian form of tourism.

Tourism

The issue of tourism impacts on the social and natural values of places around the world has been well-documented in the literature. However, it is important to consider the particular case of islands. Baldacchino (2004e: 18) emphasises that “tourism impact is nowhere more sudden, pervasive, transparent – and perhaps even irrevocable – as on islands and their communities, especially smaller islands”. In recent times there has been a growing body of tourism literature specifically focused on islands (Briguglio et al. 1996; Butler, 1993; Conlin & Baum, 1995; García-Falcón & Medina-Muñoz, 1999; Lockhart & Drakakis-Smith, 1996). Some island scholars consider that features such as small size and isolation make sustainability concerns more pressing on islands than in continental areas. For example, Kokkranikal et al. (2003: 445) argue that:

Islands, with their geographical, environmental, structural and political limitations, are more vulnerable to the effects of tourism and in many cases lack the capacity of the mainland to absorb these impacts. As a result, sustainability-oriented tourism development strategies assume greater importance in island tourism destinations.

However, there is a distinct lack of empirical research concerning tourism on offshore islands, particularly in developed nations. It is beyond the scope of this research to delve into the considerable depths of the tourism literature⁵²; instead I will provide a brief overview of tourism, before focusing on tourism in island destinations.

Tourism, the practice of touring or travelling for pleasure, is the world’s largest industry. Like Butler (1991) I refer to a wide concept of tourism as representing the combination of leisure and recreation, travel and sightseeing. Tourism has a geographical element at its core as it involves the movement of people away from their usual places of work and residence (Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998). The growth of the tourism industry is a result of a combination of factors including increased accessibility, affluence, and leisure time.

⁵² Some useful theoretical approaches to the study of tourism (beyond that which focuses on islands) include MacCannell (1976); Pearce & Butler (2002); Urry (2002).

The negative⁵³ environmental and social impacts of mass tourism are well-documented and have prompted nature-based tourism strategies to be advocated and adopted (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996; Hall & Lew, 1998; Harris et al. 2002). Nature tourism denotes all tourism that directly depends on the use of natural resources in a relatively undeveloped state (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996), but such resource use is not necessarily sustainable. The close links between tourism, the environment and development have been recognised for centuries but the contemporary popularity of the concept of sustainable development has raised expectations that tourism can be developed in line with this concept (Butler, 1991). Indeed, Sadler (1987: xxii, cited in Butler, 1991: 202) states that “No other economic activity lends itself to this approach [sustainable development] better than tourism” because tourism is in many cases dependent upon the maintenance of the natural environment for its survival. Blomgren and Sorensen (1998: 331) consider that “the question is not whether ‘tourism kills tourism’ but rather if ‘development kills tourism’”. Butler (1999: 12) defines tourism in the context of sustainable development as:

tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well being of other activities and processes.

Ecotourism is a prominent component of sustainable tourism. The IUCN’s Ecotourism Programme defines ecotourism as:

environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996: 20).

Like the term ‘sustainable development’, sustainable tourism and ecotourism are broad terms, open to interpretation (for more on this matter see Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996; Ziffer, 1989). In Australia, ecotourism is defined in the *National Ecotourism Strategy*

⁵³ Beyond economic benefits, tourism can also have positive outcomes by encouraging environmental and heritage conservation, and tourism income can assist in the development and improvement of facilities (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996).

(Australian Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994: 17) as “nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable”. The Australian Government (Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, 2007: n.p.) recognises that “Much of Australia’s \$75 billion tourism industry is based on [the nation’s] unique natural environment, biodiversity and rich cultural landscape”. Gössling and Wall (2007: 436) describe sustainable tourism as “a situation where the uniqueness of destinations in terms of their environments, economies and socio-cultural structures is considered in development processes, not disrupting these in any detrimental senses”. Hence, sustainable tourism should maintain a distinctive sense of place. Gössling and Wall (2007) consider that sustainability is more likely to be achieved on islands where local populations participate in tourism-related development processes, and I will examine this argument in relation to a tourism monitoring program on Kangaroo Island in chapter eight.

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) made no mention of leisure, tourism or recreation in ‘Our Common Future’ and this oversight mirrors the general neglect of tourism by public sector agencies, according to Butler (1999). Tourism is a highly fragmented industry and Butler (1991: 208) has identified problems in integrating environmental, economic and social aspects of this industry, noting that it “is unrealistic at the local level to attempt to minimise tourist numbers because of environmental impacts, when a higher policy is to increase numbers because of positive economic benefits”. I will elaborate on this issue in chapter eight in relation to a specific tourism development on Kangaroo Island and the conflicting planning policies of the state and local governments, as an example of state-local tensions.

In the quest for sustainable development, ecotourism is often viewed as an environmental saviour, but it can be just as damaging as mass tourism (Butler, 1991). Nevertheless, there is considerable scope to improve the management of various forms of tourism and their impacts. Butler (1991: 209) cites “Coordination of policies, proactive planning, acceptance of limitations on growth, education of all parties involved, and commitment to a long-term viewpoint” as prerequisites to the linking of tourism and sustainable development. I will examine a tourism strategy on Kangaroo Island as a form of linking tourism and sustainable development of the Island.

There is a considerable body of literature on island tourism and sustainable development (for example Baldacchino, 2004; Briguglio et al. 1996; García-Falcón & Medina-Muñoz, 1999; Grant, 2004) but much of the research revolves around tropical island states and island regions such as the Mediterranean, Caribbean and Pacific. King (1997) focuses on tropical Australian (and international) islands in his study of the social, cultural, environmental and political dimensions of tourism. Island tourism, however, is not all about sun, sea and sand. Temperate islands, often ignored in the literature, can offer the best elements of cold (Baldacchino, 2006b) and warm water islands, a combination of relaxation and exploration. Some tourism constraints can be generalised across islands and they are a result of some typical island characteristics cited in the previous chapter, such as limited natural resources which are often the basis of tourism; limited capacity to absorb wastes and to provide adequate infrastructure; and access difficulties. While island environments are commonly construed as vulnerable, islanders can have advantages over their mainland counterparts in managing tourism by having greater scope to control visitor numbers with limited entry points. I will now explore why islands are appealing tourist destinations in the modern world and hence are subject to considerable challenges concerning sustainable development.

Tourism appeal of offshore islands

In comparison to the economic constraints associated with agricultural and industrial activities on islands (largely a result of access costs), tourism is an industry that can overcome the water barrier. Indeed, this barrier often acts a drawcard for tourists. Offshore islands are a destination region rather than a transit region under Leiper's (1990) tourism system typologies. Isolation is a resource (particularly useful for islands with limited other resources) consumed by tourists (Royle, 1989). The very features that made islands attractive to prison administrators – isolation and separation – are now desirable for many mainland tourists. Former penal colonies and prisons may even be the main attraction (for example, Alcatraz in San Francisco and Robben Island in Cape Town). Shifting perceptions of islands can be reflected in name changes. For example, Sentosa, an offshore island in Singapore, was originally known as Palau Blakang Mati (the 'island beyond which lies death') and was used by the British military until 1967,

but following dedication of the island to recreation it was renamed Sentosa, Malay for 'peace and tranquillity' (Henderson, 2001).

Offshore islands close to major urban (industrial) areas were the first islands to experience the impact of tourism (Lockhart, 1997). They were easier to access than remote islands and some acted as second homes for business people. The geographical range of tourists has expanded with modern air travel, meaning that some offshore islands are now overlooked in favour of more exotic locations, as the reachable pleasure periphery moves further away from the centre (Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998). However, islands on the doorstep of major cities are likely always to have a ready source of domestic tourists, and these backyard markets can provide repeat business. White (2005: 166) considers the transformation of the Australian holiday resulting from postmodernism, noting that one such impact is "the increasing disappearance of distance ... between home and the places where we take our holidays". Islands that are proximate to cities and that require limited land travel to ports attract day-trip and weekend markets, whereas more remote islands tend only to capture seasonal holidaymakers. While regions such as the Pacific are largely associated with international tourists, the tourism landscapes of offshore islands have generally been shaped by visitors from neighbouring landmasses (Lockhart, 1997).

Islands attract visitors for a range of reasons, and I will examine some of these in relation to the case islands in following chapters. McKercher and Fu (2005) recognise general attributes of peripheries that make them appealing to tourists, including their natural environments, small populations and relatively undeveloped character which create a refreshing alternative to cities. While smaller islands restrict movement, they also provide a manageable scale to explore. Baum et al. (2000: 215) suggest that islands represent "a finite geographical environment, one with defined, and frequently, relatively small delimiters which are easy to cope with both in physical and in psychological terms", giving visitors the opportunity to understand the totality of the destination. The limited size of many islands "make it possible to encompass space mentally, to feel oriented and secure ... clear physical borders also constitute psychological borders, which aid the imagination of being isolated, and are thus attractions for visitors seeking to escape routines, stress and responsibility" (Gössling &

Wall, 2007: 429). Island isolation and geographical separation from mainland masses form part of their appeal, as does the journey to the island. Baum (1997) claims that the feeling of being cut off from the mainland is an important physical and psychological factor for holidaymakers. Islands adjacent to cities may be appealing because of their marked contrasts to urban mainlands and they might offer a quick escape to nature: “the tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary” (Urry, 2002: 3). The tourism industry on offshore islands may nevertheless depend on the reputation of adjacent cities, which act as gateways.

Islands can offer the opportunity to escape from the pressures of urban lifestyles to environments that are perceived to be different, with a slower pace of life (Baum, 1997). Indeed, perhaps islands represent an illusory opportunity to ‘travel back in time’⁵⁴, and be among communities perceived as more cohesive and offering a greater sense of identity than those on mainlands. Perhaps the appeal of islands will increase further as mainlands become increasingly homogeneous, characterised by endless suburbs, non-places (Augé 1995) and increasing separation from the natural environment. While the water barrier may to some extent protect islands from such homogeneity, there is also a risk that islands may become outdoor museums of our natural and cultural heritage: “islands ... have become, often despite themselves, a prime repository of pastness ... Community, something that modernity had torn apart, seems to have survived only on islands” (Gillis, 2004: 123).

Baum’s (1997) view is that the ‘fascination factors’ discussed above act together to create an ‘island experience’ which is greater than the sum of its component parts. However, Lockhart (1997: 5) argues that the attraction of islands is largely a matter of speculation because “few researchers have examined the motivations of visitors in depth or attempted to make comparisons between visitor perceptions of different islands”.

For some islands, tourism is considered the only viable industry and this dependency increases their economic vulnerability. Although communications technologies may

⁵⁴ Islands can represent a journey outwards in space and a move backwards in time (Peckham, 2003), excluding of course urban islands such as Manhattan.

partly overcome the tyranny of distance, islands are not typically centres for tertiary industries. Instead, it is metropolises that are reinforcing their dominance in the modern economy:

Population, employment and economic capacity continue to concentrate in and around large urban centres. Globalisation and global competitive trends are leading to the greater concentration of resources associated with the modern economy (high-tech industries, flexible IT-skilled labour pools, research and development institutes, ICT-specializing universities) in large urban centres and metropolitan areas (Baldacchino, 2006c: 91).

Such urban centres may in fact be islands (such as Hong Kong or Singapore). In the case of islands close to metropolises, it is likely that they will experience greater human pressures as cities become increasingly important in the modern world. With the dual forces of tourism and residential development on offshore islands, it is inevitable that they will face many sustainable development challenges and governments may need to provide policy and planning strategies suitable to particular island characteristics.

Governance for sustainable development

Gurran et al. (2007: 455, from Hyden, 1998: 2) define *governance* as “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority [and the] mechanics and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences”. Governance operates across public, private and voluntary sectors and so represents the relations between governments, the private sector and civil society. Warrington and Milne (2007: 396) draw on Kooiman (1993) to describe governance as emerging from:

the governing activities and interaction of a variety of social, political and administrative actors ... It extends beyond the framework of institutions and activities that are purposefully employed to guide, steer, control or manage societies in order to embrace elements of civil society that share the role and authority of formal governing institutions.

Governance refers to both the organisational and institutional arrangements of the state, and community governance, the process of engaging social and political actors in the governing of their community (O'Toole, 2003). My interview participants are public, private and community stakeholders and they contribute to my examination of governance. Good governance is characterised by sustainability, civic engagement, citizenship, decentralisation, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability (Gurran et al. 2007). I wish to focus particularly on the first two elements – sustainability and civic engagement, or community participation in governance (including community initiatives on the case islands that are independent of government consultation strategies). I will explore the scope of islands to demonstrate 'local sustainability' (Selman, 1996), not only through formal governance but also through community governance and use of social capital.

Sustainability, community participation and social capital

Agenda 21 (from the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development) identifies local authorities as the sphere of governance closest to the people, and calls upon local authorities to consult with their communities and develop and implement a local plan for sustainable development - a 'Local Agenda 21' (LA21). Australia's national Local Agenda 21 program was established in 1997 and aims to build upon existing local government strategies to better integrate environmental, economic and social goals (Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 2007). Sustainable development is an important concept for environmental management and for planning. Indeed, it is a key goal of environmental management, which can be defined as:

a process of decision-making about the allocation of natural and artificial resources that will make optimum use of the environment to satisfy at least basic human needs for an indefinite period of time and where possible, to improve environmental quality ...[It] involves the application of a mixture of objective scientific and more subjective, often qualitative approaches. It is a blend of policy making and planning (Barrow, 1999: 250).

Sustainable development is an overarching agenda for planning, which may be described as a "generic activity of purposeful anticipation of, and provision for, the future [that specifically comprises] the actions taken by public sector organisations to regulate land

and water use on behalf of society, often through town and country planning legislation” (Selman, 2000: 1). Environmental planning is concerned with “society’s collective stewardship of the earth’s resources”, and its ultimate role is to facilitate the transition to sustainability (Selman, 2000: 1). Planners must determine sustainability decisions in a spatial sphere (Davoudi & Layard, 2001). The concept of planning is tied to “the general objective of balancing conflicting interests if the collective good is to be realized in terms of a sustainable future” (Batty, 2001: 283).

Davoudi and Layard (2001: 17) argue that the sustainable society “has to be sought through day-to-day contested negotiations over land use, transport, housing, property development, waste management and many other policies”. These contestations are likely to present particular challenges to sustainable development in island settings where, for example, land is a finite resource and transport is a challenge. Seddon (1975) maintains that land-use conflicts are typical of a dynamic society and generate much of the pressure for change, and that the difficulties created by land-use conflicts generally arise from the way in which decisions are made. Zoning is a common land-use planning tool, specified in planning schemes⁵⁵ in Australia: “Traditional land-use planning partitions a landscape into different zoning classifications under the assumption that the potential for conflict is reduced by spatially separating incompatible land uses and clustering complementary land uses” (Brown, 2006: 112).

Formal governance strategies or ‘top-down’ approaches alone are not sufficient to work towards sustainable outcomes (Layard, 2001). Community participation is increasingly important for the pursuit of local sustainable development (Selman, 2001). Community participation in planning processes is an approach commonly referred to as participatory or consensual planning (Briassoulis, 1989; Selman, 2001). Brown (2006: 101) explains the salience of community engagement and input in the planning system: “Land use and development decisions are consistently among the most important decisions at the community level because they are perceived to have direct linkages to resident quality of life”. Considering that lifestyle decisions are a key driver of sea change migration, island residents may particularly have vested interests in land use and development decisions.

⁵⁵ A planning scheme is a legal instrument that sets out the provisions for land use, development, and protection.

Defined spaces can be a source of contestation, yet can also provide resistance to contests by becoming a source of community (a strategic resource) (Cook & Phillips, 2005). Community as a resource can be demonstrated in instances where islanders band together against external forces. A contemporary example of contestation is concern over impacts of globalisation and how it may reduce people's abilities to influence what goes on in the places where they live, leading to calls for more localised forms of economic and social interaction (Phillips, 2005). In light of sustainable development debates, it may be useful to consider whether islands are particularly contested spaces because they have more visibly finite land resources than mainlands. For example, the approval in 2007 of a pulp mill in northern Tasmania has resulted in divided opinions across the entire island, not just the affected region. Because islands are typically small spaces, mainlanders may assume a harmonious life and social consensus⁵⁶, but it is often the opposite case: "many island populations are internally fragmented by deep divisions about whether and to what extent they should conserve or develop those [limited] resources and engage in the processes of economic globalization" (Stratford, 2006b: 274).

In regard to the term 'local' community, I do not refer to only island residents. I use the term locality in both its physical and social senses⁵⁷ (Selman, 1996). The meaning of local extends beyond the geographical boundary of the island to the mainland community, including second home owners and other mainlanders who are associated with or feel a sense of attachment to the island. 'Social catchments' are defined as "The territory occupied by a group of households and individuals who are in some form of regular interaction and which the inhabitants identify as 'their' community or region" (Brunckhorst & Reeve, 2006: 151, from Hugo et al. 2001: 49). While social catchments

⁵⁶ "One consequence of seeing islands as bounded, internally consistent wholes is to attribute to them a spatial unity and temporal synchronicity they rarely have in reality. Though it is common to think of continents as harboring regional diversity and sheltering peoples at various stage of development within their bounds, this has been consistently denied to islands, which are normally seen as culturally and temporally homogenous" (Gillis, 2004: 115).

⁵⁷ As Selman (1996: 2-3) understands, the notion of 'locality' is twofold. In physical terms it refers to a place, the people who inhabit it, and the spatial and administrative systems around which their activities revolve. In social terms it refers to groups of individuals who are associated through common responsibilities, occupations, cultures or interests. There is often considerable geographical correspondence between these two interpretations of locality.

are usually centred on urban areas or central places (Brunckhorst & Reeve, 2006), entire islands may be considered social catchments, particularly smaller islands which have a single community within their boundaries (as opposed to several communities found within townships on larger islands).

Local community involvement can come from strategies initiated by (usually local) governments to consult the community, and from community-driven strategies. Community engagement methods include public participation in development plans, focus groups, and envisaging the future. Community visioning is “a process by which a community envisions the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it” (Ames, 1993: 7), and the term is derived from a conjunction of *vision* and *planning* (Ames, 2001). Governments may find visioning a useful tool, particularly for determining regional sustainability strategies (Waller, 2003) and for managing change: “A community that is able to develop a shared vision of its future, and how it could achieve this vision, shows a capability to manage change” (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2003: 504). Beller (1990: 16) argues that it is important to “learn what values an island community believes that it should preserve, enhance or exorcise for the next generation”. In Grant’s (2004: 220) action research on the Isle of Wight (supported by the Agenda 21 process), the aim was to formulate a strategy for linking tourism and sustainability by developing an “... approach to tourism development in which local economic objectives, social priorities and environmental issues would have more influence on the tourism agenda”. In order to achieve this, he adopted a collaborative planning approach as a collective process for resolving conflicts and advancing shared visions. This method was “not based on control through planning but of supporting a wider ownership and a new collaborative spirit” (Grant, 2004: 235). The strategic visioning technique involved stakeholders developing a vision of Isle of Wight tourism twenty years in the future.

Social capital is a useful concept to examine how communities manage change. The OECD (Keeley, 2007: 103) defines social capital as “networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups”. Baldacchino (2005: 32) provides a more practical understanding of the term, describing it as “the resourcefulness of a people to respond positively, collectively and responsibly to an identified challenge – be it political, economic, labour-related or social”. Social

capital has “the potential to improve outcomes for communities by developing their capacity to manage change” (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2003: 511).

Social capital and community governance can be mutually reinforcing. Selman (2001: 14) describes social capital as the:

glue which holds communities together through mutual interdependence. Its bonds are the organizations, structures and social relations built up by communities and individuals independently of governments and corporations; its solvents are lack of civic commitment, lack of shared memories (historicity) or future hopes (futurity), and the rise of individualism.

As noted in the earlier chapters, islands are valuable sites for natural studies; they are also ideal settings in which to study social capital (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2003). Islands can have distinct advantages in employing social capital and in developing community visions: “The bonding ties that can form the bases of island communities’ constructed identities are partly defined by the boundary of water that surrounds them. A shared history can be drawn on in crafting a shared vision that has chronological continuity” (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2003: 511). Bonds and bridges are two common terms within the social capital literature. Bonds refer to links to people based on a sense of common identity, while bridges are links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity (Keeley, 2007). In relation to islands, bonding ties are usually internal to the island and bridging ties tend to be with people who are geographically external to the island. Excess bonding may result in over-insularity while an excess in bridging ties (both social and physical over-bridging) could diminish islandness.

Sharing a common boundary does not necessarily engender bonds between its residents. Boundedness does not automatically produce bondedness and intra-island social divisions may threaten the development of a community vision. Nunn (2004) recognises the different needs and aspirations of various groups of islanders, and their differing power to effect change. Participation in community activities may develop shared values and build social capital, as networks are formed and maintained through interaction (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2003). However, temporary or second home residents may not participate in community activities, or the voices of newcomers may be more articulate

than those of long-term residents (sea change people for example tend to be better educated than local residents, and wealthy retirees generally have more time to attend community events to voice their opinions on various issues). In terms of the composition of people constituting the stock of social capital for local sustainability action, generally more educated individuals are most involved, and retirees are a key element of social capital (Selman, 2001); this raises the question of whether the future of some offshore islands is in the hands of continental retirees. Although Baldacchino (2005: 37) cautions that “it would be wrong to succumb to the tempting simplicity of geographic determinism, arguing that smallness and insularity *per se* generate social capital in some strange, almost automatic or natural manner”, he suggests that small islands can have advantages in relation to the constitution of social capital:

First, small islands are special because their “geographical precision” facilitates a (unique) sense of place; a deployment towards the sea and a maritime destiny that facilitates trade and an obvious sense of alterity with the rest of the world beyond the horizon. Place, and its shared definition, fosters (though it does not guarantee) a sense of ‘unitarism’ (Baldacchino, 2005: 35).

Offshore island governance

Warrington and Milne (2007: 396) note that the field of island governance is under-researched. They identify some elements of governance that are particularly prominent in and important for islands, including the political system operating within an island and its surrounding region; dominant policy concerns, including threats of peripherality and vulnerability, economic and social dislocation, and the choice of development strategy; and islander identity. They also propose a typology of seven patterns of island governance, but ignore islands offshore from sovereign states; even those with some level of local jurisdiction do not fit into any of these categories. Offshore islands seem to be invisible in governance literature, as well as often being ignored by nations: “most continental states with a coastline have only marginal interest in islands because they are small and located within the continental coastal zone” (Depraetere & Dahl, 2007: 100).

Offshore island governance involves tensions between the desire of islanders for some degree of autonomy, and their need for dependence on the mainland. Watts (2000: 22) recognises the need for islands to depend on other political entities:

The geographical character of islands accentuates their distinctiveness as communities. 'Islandness' has been a major factor in their cases in accentuating the pressures for significant autonomy, both substantively and symbolically. But even islands find it difficult in the contemporary globalized world to be totally self-sufficient. They have felt the need, therefore, for forms of political partnership with other political entities that would at the same time respect adequately their desires for autonomy.

Autonomy can reinforce islandness, specifically islanders' sense of distinction from the mainland, whereas integration with a mainland governing body may diminish islandness, particularly when it results in homogenisation of policies with the mainland rather than recognition of distinct island needs. The level of autonomy may depend on island size and location in relation to other jurisdictions, the degree to which autonomous environmental sustainability is made possible by geographic remoteness, the possibility of telecommunications as a means of countering smallness and remoteness, and the quality of the education of islanders (Watts, 2000). According to Baldacchino (2005: 40) "islandness is almost certain to provide an inducement for some degree of political or administrative autonomy".

The Australian context

Many agencies and actors are involved in island governance and management in Australia. My focus is specifically on their environmental and tourism policies but considering the plethora of national, state and local level policies, legislation and plans for the four case islands, it is not possible to discuss the entire range of documents. Instead, I will cite specific examples in the case chapters to demonstrate aspects of tourism and environmental management.

National responsibilities are consistent across the case islands. Under the Constitution, the Australian Government's legislative powers include taxation, defence, foreign affairs, and telecommunications services, while the states retain legislative power over a

range of matters that occur within their borders, including police, hospitals, education and public transport. Environmental responsibilities are divided between the Australian Government and state, territory and local governments. The Australian Government manages some national parks and the marine environment outside state coastal waters (three nautical miles), and is responsible for protecting features of national environmental significance, such as World Heritage areas and threatened species (Aretino et al. 2001). The states and territories “exercise most powers and responsibilities for natural resource management and environmental protection, including management of Crown land, Crown forests, national parks and reserves, native wildlife, fisheries and pollution control” (Aretino et al. 2001: 37). Local governments are not recognised in the Constitution⁵⁸; they were established by state and territory governments. The 722 local governments across Australia are variously called shires, towns, councils or municipalities. Since their roles and powers are determined by state and territory legislation, the responsibilities of local government differ but they include a range of infrastructure, economic and community services to residents, such as waste collection, public recreation facilities and land use planning (Australian Local Government Association, 2007).

In order to facilitate natural resource management across the different levels of government, *The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment* (1992) was signed by the Australian, state and territory governments, and the Australian Local Government Association. This Agreement establishes a cooperative national approach to the environment and requires sustainable development principles to be implemented, including intergenerational equity and the precautionary principle. The Australian Government facilitates cooperation between the states on environmental and resource management issues through a National Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council⁵⁹ (NRMMC) which was established in 2001 by agreement of Australian, state and territory governments. The NRMMC oversees the joint implementation of two

⁵⁸ Vince (1997: 157) argues that local government can never be fully regarded as the third tier of government in Australia: “Local government is not an independent level of the Australian constitutional or governance framework. Local councils exist as statutory authorities brought into being by state legislature and can just as easily be removed or cease to exist by the enactment of relevant state legislation”.

⁵⁹ The NRMMC has endorsed Integrated Coastal Management as the preferred approach for managing coastal pressures in Australia. ICM treats the coastal zone as a single, cohesive spatial entity (but the ICM plan fails to mention islands) and it reflects the principles of sustainable development but does not extend to socioeconomic issues (Gurran et al. 2007).

Australia-wide initiatives: the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) and the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). Landcare is a program of the NHT at the local level (along with Rivercare, Coastcare and Bushcare); it aims to support collective action by communities to sustainably manage the environment and natural resources in partnership with government, whereby the government provides grants and advice to community-based groups and landowners (Aretino et al. 2001). In order to facilitate integrated natural resource management (NRM), 56 regions were identified in 2002, and each has produced integrated regional plans and investment strategies.

While local governments were traditionally responsible for services concerned largely with roads, rates and rubbish (a predominantly ‘services to property’ role), since 1989 “all States have instigated new local government acts which have resulted in the sector having a much broader brief, including responsibilities for community development, economic growth and natural resources management” (Pini, 2007: 162). In this shift in responsibility from the three Rs to the three arms of sustainable development, the financial pressure on local governments has been significant. Local governments have limited capacity to raise revenue: more than 50 per cent of their funds are collected through land taxes or rates, but clearly attempts to increase revenue by raising rates would meet community resistance (Pini et al. 2007). Pini et al. (2007) argue that while local government is typically perceived as less important than federal or state levels of government, it is vitally important in environmental matters due to its proximity to community, its potential to integrate federal and state environmental policy, and its traditional roles in planning.

Regions are increasingly becoming the focus of environmental governance (and can also facilitate the integration of social, economic and environmental considerations), and an island automatically presents as an easily-defined region. However, an island is not only one place. It is important to consider the diversity of landforms within these contained spaces. For example, islands are well-endowed with coastlines, sensitive environmental zones, but they tend to be under great pressure from tourists and residents. Gurran et al. (2007) consider that Australia’s land use planning system offers an important framework for implementing coastal policy and resolving disputes about the use of coastal space, but they note the limited capacity of land use planning to proactively address current

environment problems (the planning system can prevent or modify inappropriate proposals but generally cannot initiate remedial action). While Gurran et al. (2007) argue that Australian coastal settings are broadly characterised by problems of disjointed systems of governance and cross jurisdictional planning, islands may present opportunities for more effective planning and management if they have island agencies. In addition to coastal planning challenges, offshore islands have the problem of isolation. Pini et al. (2007) found that the geographic location of rural Australian councils aggravates barriers to engaging sustainable development initiatives (but their study does not include island councils). Non-metropolitan councils are faced with ageing populations and declining agricultural returns (Pini & Haslam McKenzie, 2007).

Diseconomies of scale for self-governance usually mean that offshore islands are incorporated in mainland jurisdictions. In addition to being marginalised spaces, islands are managed by marginalised governments (at the local level). State and territory governments decide which geographical areas local governments are responsible for. Most local government areas are still based on boundaries established a century ago when transport and communications were greatly different (Brunckhorst & Reeve, 2006). The prominence of neoliberalism in Australia has played a role in widespread council amalgamations, particularly last decade (Pini et al. 2007). Vince (1997: 154) describes amalgamations as “a mechanism for distributing and re-distributing resources and power”, and notes that council size is a critical variable in the amalgamation process. Amalgamations can disempower both local residents and local governments. Economic rationalisation led to widespread amalgamations of local government bodies across Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia in the 1990s, to which islands were not immune. State government policymakers typically base the need for amalgamations on economic grounds, with the belief that ‘bigger is better’ (Dollery & Crase, 2004a). Despite international and Australian evidence to the contrary⁶⁰, policymakers believe that significant economies of scale⁶¹ in service delivery can be gained. Economies of

⁶⁰ Byrnes and Dollery (2002) evaluated international and Australian empirical evidence on economies of scale in municipal service provision and concluded that there is considerable uncertainty as to whether economies of scale exist or not, which places significant doubt on using this as the basis for amalgamations.

⁶¹ Economies of scale refer to “a decrease in average cost as the quantity of output rises” (Dollery & Crase, 2004: 295). In regard to council jurisdictions, it is argued that the bigger the jurisdictional unit, the lower the per capita costs of service provision (Dollery & Crase, 2004).

scope are also thought to flow from council consolidation, and it is commonly argued that small councils have difficulty acquiring specialists (Dollery & Crase, 2004a).

Crowley (1998) argues for “an ecological redrawing of local government boundaries as part of the amalgamation process in order to achieve more comprehensive and cost-efficient environmental management”. In recent debates on municipal amalgamation in New South Wales (NSW), an argument in favour of council consolidation holds that economic and environmental advantages can arise from alignment of local government boundaries with natural boundaries (Dollery & Crase, 2004b). Brunckhorst and Reeve (2006) claim that regional frameworks used in resource governance (including catchment arrangements) have had limited success integrating resource management for sustainability, and they argue for more careful analysis of the placement of boundaries to define regions for resource governance that best reflect the social functions of regional communities, as well as the ecological functions of the landscape⁶². While the rationale for structural reform in local government has largely focused on the economic efficiencies of joining existing local government areas, Brunckhorst and Reeve (2006: 148) argue that regional boundaries should “best capture the representation of ‘place identity’ of local areas of most interest to community residents”. Here islands have automatic advantages due to their separation from larger land masses (and hence biophysical boundaries do influence administrative boundaries). Brunckhorst and Reeve (2006: 147) use an eco-civic methodology⁶³, proposing three principles to guide the development of regionalisations for government administration of, and community participation in, natural resource governance:

First, the nature and reach of environmental externalities of resource use should determine the size and nesting of resource management regions [i.e. the jurisdictional boundaries must be capable of being scaled up and down for integration for other kinds of service delivery or management]. Second, the boundaries of resource governance regions should enclose areas of greatest interest and importance to local residents [the place that captures the social capital]. Third, the biophysical characteristics of a resource

⁶² Matysek et al. (2006: 88) argue that “landscape scale is a highly significant scale of human interaction with the environment, but one that is poorly understood in terms of practices of governance”.

⁶³ The optimal superimposition of social surfaces and biophysical classifications results in ‘eco-civic regions’ (Dollery & Crase, 2004).

governance region should be as homogenous as possible, which provides resource planning and management efficiencies.

However, in relation to this last principle of relatively homogeneous biophysical characteristics (i.e. for effective natural resource governance it is important that the administrative region contains a relatively homogeneous set of landscapes), islands⁶⁴ may not fit neatly as they typically have a variety of landscapes and ecological communities. Dollery and Crase (2004b) dispute the applicability of eco-civic regionalisation as the foundation for local government boundaries and argue that the methodology should be discarded by state government policymakers as the basis for restructuring NSW municipal governance because it does not consider the direct costs involved in council consolidations, nor the indirect economic and social costs imposed on communities. Councils in small towns are often the largest single employer of local people and one of the largest purchasers of local goods and services, and they thus play a pivotal role in the economic sustainability of communities. Further, “Councils often represent the focal point of small communities and enhance people’s ‘sense of place’ and identity” (Dollery & Crase, 2004b: 297). Dollery and Crase (2004b) also note the inter-temporal opportunity costs that may arise from eco-civic regionalisation, and they draw on the work of Challen (2000) who argues that changing governance institutions may close off future options and make it impossible to rebuild present social and economic structures.

Islands have obvious ecological boundaries; what is often not recognised in management is their distinct social and economic issues. According to Phillips (2005: 5):

[Politics] makes use of space in that it is frequently constituted *territorially* ... Amongst the reasons why changes in systems of representation and decision-making are often contested is that they transgress existing spatial associations that people have made with other people and with particular territorial complexes. In other words, people come to live in geographically constituted *imagined communities*, whereby they feel they have some common bond or interest with others in an area even though they may never have met them ... and/or, feel a sense of *place attachment* in that they come to value various attributes located in a particular area.

⁶⁴ Indeed, Brunckhorst and Reeve (2006: 153) ignore islands altogether in stating that “The biosphere can be divided into continents and oceans”.

The amalgamation of an island government with a mainland local government is a change in the system of representation and decision-making, although rather than involving imagined communities, they are *real* communities where small size can facilitate association with fellow islanders and place attachment, in valuing island attributes. In the case chapters I will explore some effects of amalgamating island governments with mainland governments, and also some downsides to island autonomy. The sea change phenomenon can have significant impacts on governments and infrastructure: different communities mean new electorates, often with varying political views and with new expectations about the provisions of urban services (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). Coastal growth demands additional physical and social infrastructure but existing revenue sources available to local governments (rates, development charges, and special taxes) have proved insufficient to meet growing residential demands and to accommodate peak visitation periods (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). As a result, “communities are struggling to accommodate growing numbers of people with urban tastes and rural dreams in areas with governance structures and physical infrastructure designed for occasional tourists” (Gurran et al. 2007: 445). I will now turn to the case chapters and explore whether authorities are able to adequately manage tourists and those with urban tastes and island dreams.

PART II

PREFACE

SELECTING THE CASES

*When in a glossy promotion
of coastline, the island
was simply left off
the residents reached
the conclusion they're
an expendable rock ...
Identity deleted
(Sant, 2002: 6).*

In this second part of the thesis I report on how and why I selected the four case islands and then present findings from the research. The purpose of this preface is to outline the former. I used purposeful or criterion-based sampling to select the island cases. The original research proposal was ambitious and featured ten case study islands in Australia and New Zealand. These were islands located near the cities of Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch⁶⁵. It was largely due to my unfamiliarity with qualitative research methods at that time that I selected this large number of cases. It was not until I had begun interviews on my first case island (Bruny Island) that I realised the extent of the task and the need to limit my scope. Logistics and resources played a role in case selection. Budget and time constraints (for analysis, as well as fieldwork) ruled out including New Zealand islands in the study. I also eliminated from my inquiries some Australian case studies in line with stricter selection criteria based primarily on the key research themes of tourism and residential development. I wanted islands with comparable accessibility: the departure point for the island must be within 120km of a capital city (in order to allow for day trips from these cities, sources of tourism pressure). The island must have ocean on at least one side rather than being an inshore island. Such was the case with one of the original ten cases, Scotland Island in Sydney, which tends not to attract as much tourism activity – probably because of a limited range of water activities and perhaps less of a sense of

⁶⁵ In terms of the Australian territories, Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory is landlocked, and in the case of Darwin in the Northern Territory, there were no islands that met the initial sampling criteria.

escape. The island must be inhabited. Tourism must be a key economic activity. The island clearly must be the ‘dominant’ island if there is more than one island near the capital city. By ‘dominant’ island, I mean that it is the capital city’s primary island for tourism uses. For example, Brisbane has several offshore islands that attract tourists, including Moreton and Stradbroke islands (which were on my shortlist) and despite having discussions with staff from Tourism Queensland and Brisbane City Council, it is not clear which of these is dominant. While Sydney has several harbour islands, it is distinctly lacking in offshore islands (with ocean on at least one side). The area of all islands in New South Wales totals only 14 square kilometres (Geoscience Australia, 2001). I did not select Lord Howe Island as I wanted nearshore or pericontinental islands which have a close relationship with their mainland. Perth has four offshore islands but only Rottnest Island satisfied all of the sampling criteria⁶⁶.

I also selected cases on the basis that they offer opportunities to learn. Stake (2000: 446-7) suggests that potential for learning can be a criterion superior to representativeness: “Isn’t it better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case? ... Even for collective case studies, selection by sampling of attributes should not be the highest priority. Balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance”. Certainly the four islands chosen provide contrast in terms of some key factors, including size, administration and transport options. In terms of contrast, Burns (1990) suggests a sampling frame that includes the deviant, the unique and the reputational. Phillip Island could be described as a ‘deviant’ island as it is connected to the Victorian mainland by a bridge. Rottnest Island is ‘unique’ since it is managed by a Western Australian Government statutory authority rather than by a local government body. Kangaroo Island may be seen as a ‘reputational’ case in term of its internationally-recognised tourism management strategies. In addition to being an easily accessible island from my research base in Hobart, Bruny Island may offer greater insights into certain research questions through being a particularly marginal place – an island off an island off an ‘isolated’ continent. I chose case islands from more than one state in order to compare relationships with different capital cities and state and local governments.

⁶⁶ Penguin and Carnac islands are uninhabited nature reserves and Garden Island is managed by the Department of Defence.

Using the selection criteria described above, and taking into account an additional logistic criterion (considering practical limitations such as time, budget and quantity of data), the pool of possible candidates was narrowed to four case studies which, according to Herriott and Firestone (1983), may be the upper limit that individual researchers can reasonably manage. Recognising that in qualitative research the researcher is often the crucial ‘instrument’, Herriott and Firestone (1983: 18) consider that “the use of a single investigator to carry out all field work in all sites ... standardizes the data collection ‘instrument’ across sites without sacrificing the potential for in-depth description, but it seems limited to situations involving no more than three or four sites”.

Interestingly, several months after I had chosen the final four case islands, I came across an article by Seddon (1983: 38) concerning Rottnest Island which contains a rare mention of ‘metropolitan islands’ around Australia:

In serving as a playground for Perth, Rottnest is a special kind of island - a metropolitan island - but it is not unique in this. Each of the Australian capital cities has one or more islands to play with, and their history, character, land-use and management throw into relief some of the characteristics of Rottnest. Brisbane has Fraser Island and the islands of Moreton Bay, especially Stradbroke, Moreton and Bribie Islands. There are nine islands in Port Jackson, and more in Pittwater and the Hawkesbury. Melbourne has Phillip Island, and Wilsons Promontory, in effect, an island. Hobart has beautiful Maria and Bruny Islands; Adelaide has Kangaroo Island.

Considering the difficulties I experienced in narrowing the number of case islands, to my mind this excerpt confirmed the legitimacy of my chosen case studies. For example, Seddon notes that Brisbane has several islands in Moreton Bay (Fraser Island is situated more than 250km from Brisbane), and Sydney has several harbour and estuarine islands. Wilsons Promontory is not an island and Maria Island is offshore from Tasmania’s east coast; it is not considered a Hobart island.

The data in Table 1 concern the four case islands and are presented here in order to aid comparison of this background information, and provide a context and point of reference for subsequent discussions.

Table 1: Case study island facts

	Bruny	Rottneſt	Phillip	Kangaroo
<i>Access from capital city</i>	33km from Hobart by road (40-minute drive) and 2.8km offshore (15-minute ferry crossing)	30km from Perth (60-minute ferry trip) and 18km from Fremantle (25-minute ferry crossing)	120km from Melbourne by road (90-minute drive); the majority of visitors arrive via the 640 metre-long bridge but a ferry also operates from the Mornington Peninsula	107km from Adelaide by road (90-minute drive) and 15km offshore (45 minute ferry crossing) or 30-minute commercial flight from Adelaide
<i>Access fee (\$AUD)</i>	Visitor ferry fare with vehicle up to 5m is \$25 return	Ferry from Perth is \$65 - \$69 return; includes \$12.50 Rottneſt Island Authority admission fee	No bridge toll; ferry fare from Stony Point, Mornington Peninsula, is \$20 return	Visitor ferry fare from Cape Jervis is \$162 return for vehicle up to 5m and passenger fare is \$80 return
<i>Population of nearby capital city (2006)</i>	Hobart 200,525	Perth 1,445,078	Melbourne 3,592,591	Adelaide 1,105,839
<i>Resident population (2006)</i>	672	128 ſtaff (and families) of the Rottneſt Island Authority and businesses	8,136	4,259
<i>Annual visitor numbers</i>	Approximately 120,000	Over 500,000	3.2 million	More than 160,000
<i>Resident to tourist ratio</i>	1 : 178	1 : 3906	1 : 393	1 : 38
<i>Area (ha)</i>	36,210	1,900	10,100	440,000ha
<i>Dominant governance arrangements</i>	Mainland local government (Kingborough Council, following amalgamation of Bruny Island Council in 1993)	State government ſtatutory authority (Rottneſt Island Authority and Board; report to Tourism Minſter)	Mainland local government (Baſs Coaſt Shire Council, following amalgamation of Phillip Island Shire Council in 1994)	Local government - Kangaroo Island Council
<i>Reserves</i>	Almoſt 14 per cent of Bruny Island's land area is National Park (South Bruny National Park, 5,059ha); ſeveral other areas of reſerved land	A-Class Reſerve for public recreation; the terreſtrial reſerve comprises almoſt 89 per cent of the Island	Phillip Island Nature Park (fragmented across the Island) comprises 18 per cent of the Island	Protected areas cover 116,000ha (26 per cent of the Island), including Flinders Chase National Park, 32,600ha
<i>Natural Resource Management (NRM) Region⁶⁷</i>	Within NRM South, one of three regions in Tasmania (also includes Hobart)	Swan (also includes Perth)	Port Phillip and Westernport (also includes Melbourne)	Kangaroo Island NRM

⁶⁷ In 2002, 56 NRM regions were eſta bliſhed around Australia. Plans for each region conſider the environmental, ſocial and economic impacts of NRM deciſions on a regional baſis, in order to help improve the ſustainable management of natural reſources on a regional ſcale.

As Table 1.1 shows, access to Bruny and Rottnest islands is more dependent on ferries than Phillip and Kangaroo islands, which can be accessed by bridge and commercial flights, respectively. However, Bruny and Rottnest islands are located closer to their capital cities than are Phillip and Kangaroo islands. Phillip Island has the largest resident population and the greatest number of visitors. However, it is Rottnest Island, the smallest island, which has the greatest discrepancy in the resident to tourist ratio (due in part to the fact that it is specifically a tourist island, not a residential island - private land ownership is not permitted). Kangaroo Island is by far the largest of the case islands; indeed, it is Australia's third largest island after Tasmania and Melville Island in the Northern Territory. Both Bruny and Phillip islands had their own local government but were amalgamated with mainland local government bodies in the 1990s. In comparison, Kangaroo Island has retained its local government. Rottnest Island is managed by a state government statutory authority, under the Minister for Tourism; it is only nominally within a mainland local government. Each island has significant amounts of reserved land; all except Kangaroo Island are within the same Natural Resource Management region as their capital city.

The following four chapters present findings from each case island. Each chapter is structured by key themes, but begins with a brief geographical and historical description. It is not possible, given space and time limitations, to provide in-depth historical accounts of each island. Weaving interview data with island-specific literature and nissological literature, I examine the impacts of tourism and residential developments on the natural and social values of each islands, and also examine governance strategies for sustainable development. In this governance sections my purpose is not to be comprehensive in describing all of the relevant institutions involved in island management and planning. Instead, my main aim is to focus on tourism and land use planning. Regional economic development and transport planning are also relevant but I have to draw the line somewhere.

CHAPTER FIVE

BRUNY ISLAND: REDISCOVERY OF AN ISLAND HIDEAWAY



Figure 5.1: Isthmus between North and South Bruny Island (source: the author)

BRUNY ISLAND:

REDISCOVERY OF AN ISLAND HIDEAWAY

The Tasmanian coastline and coastal areas and islands are pretty much about the last places that can be hit in Australia for development and they're going to get hit (D1)⁶⁸.

The purpose of this chapter⁶⁹ is to examine the relationships between and among islandness, development and governance of Bruny Island. In addition to considering the questions posed under the research themes in chapter one, I address three specific matters. Is Bruny Island particularly susceptible to development impacts because it is an island? Is islandness eroded when systems of governance are imposed from outside? Are there opportunities for Bruny Islanders to maintain their islandness in the face of externally-generated changes?

Like the supposed location of Swift's Lilliput (1726), Bruny Island is "at one remove – smaller and more remote – than the known location of a small island at the opposite end of the earth, which is Van Diemen's Land" (McMahon, 2001: 4). Bruny Island is offshore from an island state of an isolated continent and no doubt can be classified as a peripheral place. It is located south of Hobart, the small capital city of Tasmania (Figure 5.2). Bruny Island is the fourth largest (36,210ha) of Tasmania's 334+ offshore islands. It is separated from the Tasmanian mainland by the D'Entrecasteaux Channel to the west; the eastern side of the Island faces the Tasman Sea. The coastline extends for almost 300km and the Island's highest point is Mt Mangana at 571m. Bruny is almost divided in two by an isthmus called 'the Neck' (see Figure 5.1), and the two halves are known as North and South Bruny. Like the rest of Tasmania, Bruny Island has a temperate maritime climate. The Island is accessible from the Tasmanian mainland by a short vehicular ferry crossing⁷⁰ from Kettering to Roberts Point on North Bruny. There is also an airport but no commercial airline services operate.

⁶⁸ Throughout this chapter, and the subsequent three case chapters, participant quotes are in italics. Their status is identified thus: R is a Resident; SG is a State Government official; LG is a Local Government official; T is involved in the tourism industry; and D is a developer.

⁶⁹ Much of this chapter is based on an article published in *Island Studies Journal* (Jackson, 2006c).

⁷⁰ The Bruny Island Ferry service is operated by North Western Shipping & Towage Co. (NWS&T) Pty Ltd under a contract which runs to December 2007. The ferry, the MV Mirambeena, is owned by the



Figure 5.2: Location of Bruny Island, Tasmania

Crown and chartered by NWS&T. A subsidy is paid to enable Bruny Island residents and ratepayers to travel to and from the Island at fares below commercial rates (Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, 2006).

Bruny Island is historically significant: the Aboriginal Nuenonne band occupied Lunawanna-alonnah (the indigenous name for the Island, retained in the name of two island settlements, Lunawanna and Alonnah) for many centuries. Abel Tasman was the first European in the region in 1642 and was followed by explorers Furneaux, Cook, Flinders and Bligh. The Island was then named after French Admiral Bruni D'Entrecasteaux, who proved that it was separate from Tasmania. Bruny Island was the ancestral home of Truganini, the so-called (but incorrectly labelled) last Tasmanian Aborigine, who died in 1876. A survivor of the 'Black War' that followed European settlement in Tasmania, Truganini's life symbolises the plight of indigenous Tasmanians. Whalers and sealers began operating in 1804; from the 1830s Bruny Island was predominantly used for timber, fruit growing, fishing, and sheep and cattle grazing.

Development

This section focuses on the impacts of tourism and residential developments on Bruny Island's values. The appeal of islands to tourists has been extensively documented (Baum, 1997; Lockhart, 1997; Royle, 2001), as described in chapter four. Islands close to concentrated domestic markets tend to attract significant visitor numbers, as they present a convenient destination for short breaks by city dwellers, and cities act as a gateway for interstate and international tourists. As such, Bruny Island's location, and its islandness make it a drawcard for domestic and international visitors. Islandness is also a feature that attracts permanent and seasonal residents.

Tourism development

Bruny Island has experienced a decline in traditional economic activities, particularly agriculture. The Island's *economic base is very, very narrow and quite fragile so to get any income off the Island is a challenge. Some people live on the Island and work in Hobart every day, so it is another way of getting money into the local community* (LG4). Islanders have a median weekly individual income lower than the average Australian

(AU\$302⁷¹ compared with \$466) (Australian Bureau of Statistics or ABS, 2007). The tourism industry is increasingly important to the local economy: the economic effect of visitors to the Island, including the activities of absentee landowners, as well as Tasmanians and interstate and international visitors, is estimated at just under \$12 million annually (Kingborough Council, 2006a). *The guy next door makes more money out of accommodation cabins than he did out of cattle* (R1). Tourism is a significant source of local employment. *It is by far the biggest employer now. Probably over 100 jobs indirectly could be related to tourism ... 42 businesses reliant on tourism* (R1). Tourism Tasmania⁷² (2007) figures show that 47,300 tourists from mainland Australia and overseas visited Bruny Island in 2006-07 (a seven per cent increase over 2003-04). The last Tasmanian Intrastate Travel Survey, for 1997⁷³, estimated 71,800 visits to Bruny Island by Tasmanians (Tourism Tasmania, 1998). The Island's proximity to Hobart makes it a feasible day trip destination; but has negative consequences for overnight tourism: during 2006-07 less than one-third of visitors (14,500 people) stayed overnight (Tourism Tasmania, 2007). LG4 described some economic and environmental implications of being a day trip destination: *Most of the dollars are spent back in the city, in this case Hobart, where the people are actually staying. They [day-visit destinations] take all the impacts during the day and don't get much of the benefit*. Some participants identified the absence of public transport and insufficient accommodation as limiting factors for tourism.

Traditionally a relaxing hideaway for Hobartians, characterised by a strong shack culture, Bruny Island is increasingly being exposed to mainland Australians and international tourists. *Key attractions are its wilderness and wildlife and its laid-back atmosphere and lack of people* (T1). The South Bruny National Park⁷⁴ was gazetted in 1997 and comprises almost 14 per cent of the Island's area, including rainforest, and is surrounded by spectacular coastal scenery. An eco-cruise business operating around that

⁷¹ All \$ values are in Australian dollars (AU). As of 18 January 2008 the conversion rate to US dollars was 0.88.

⁷² Tourism Tasmania is a statutory authority operating within the framework of Tasmania's Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment. It is an autonomous unit with its own Board, governed by the *Tourism Tasmania Act* (1996) (Tourism Tasmania, 2007).

⁷³ More recent figures specific to Bruny Island are not available as the Tasmanian Intrastate Travel Survey ceased in 1997.

⁷⁴ The Tasmanian Government, through its Parks and Wildlife Service, manages the South Bruny National Park and state reserves on the Island.

coast attracts thousands of visitors annually to view bird and marine life. The Neck is also a popular location for wildlife viewing, particularly of Little Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) and Short-tailed Shearwaters (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) in their nesting seasons. The main tourist town is Adventure Bay on the eastern side of South Bruny, oriented away from the mainland.

As noted in chapter four, tourism often generates social tensions on islands. Several participants voiced concerns about increased traffic and crowded ferries. Here, the significance of islandness is most apparent as ferry access is an issue specific (although not unique) to islands. On Grand Manan Island in the province of New Brunswick, Canada, tourism is becoming an increasingly dominant economic sector, which has implications for social relations (Marshall, 1999). Prior to the introduction of a larger vessel, islanders had resented tourists as they were taking their spaces on the ferry and there was no reservations system (Marshall, 1999). A similar problem is occurring on Bruny Island (where reservations are not allowed), especially over summer periods and at other peak visitor times. Participants reveal that the issue of ferry capacity impacts not only on residents, but also on some tourism businesses. Social tensions may also arise between islanders from issues such as competition for space between those who are involved in tourism and those who are not, and from differing opinions about change: *There is major conflict between the people who want change and the people who do not ... residents basically want more control over what can come to the Island* (R4). Tourism developments may be perceived by residents as a threat to the Island and their lifestyle. One of the mainland participants recognises the importance of maintaining Bruny's island character, noting that a key issue is:

Sustainability in the context of the character of the place; the values that the residents place on living there; what is Bruny all about? Sustainability in terms of maintaining the character that obviously appeals to visitors ... lots of those 'bloody visitors' starting to detract from the aesthetics, the lifestyle that people have there. Does that suddenly mean that residents do not want to live there anymore? Do they start to leave the Island and does that suddenly change the character of a place - the friendly locals? (SG1)

The issue of balancing tourism growth with maintaining the Island's natural and social values is acknowledged by a tour operator, who suggests that, as Bruny Island is becoming a more iconic destination, a key challenge is:

how to balance the visitors to not spoil why the first ones came there in the first place and not to destroy what the residents, and holiday people who come regularly, love about the Island. The infrastructure that gets put in has to be compatible to that. I'm all for more infrastructure, accommodation, tourists, and so on, but I'm dead against massive development without looking at the overall picture (T1).

Butler (1997) suggests that Scotland's Orkney and Shetland islands offer good prospects for a successful relationship between tourism and the social, economic and natural environment, partly because their climatic characteristics, high cost of access and short season are unlikely to attract resort-type development. Similarly, Bruny's temperate climate may be a blessing in disguise, as recognised by one resident: *I hope we don't go the way that some other places have gone. The saving grace here is probably the climate (R6)*. Tourism impacts appear to be minimal at this stage and tend to be localised, such as over-fishing and water pollution from domestic systems (and from forestry which is a divisive issue in the community). One participant suggests that:

questions of sustainability are more to do with social and economic on the downside; the plus side I think is environmental sustainability ... It is much easier to protect landscapes because that is what tourists come to see so you get tourist operators swinging behind it ... One of my worries is that there is no direct revenue-raising from visitors ... no levy on vehicles, no environmental levy, which could be used to reinvest back in the Island (R1).

Marshall (2001) refers to tourism as a form of economic salvation in isolated rural areas and notes the increasing interest by the provincial mainland Canadian government in using tourism to generate revenues on Grand Manan. The provincial government has been a source of externally generated change and "with its plans for more 'upscale' tourism ... has indicated interest in a more aggressive type of tourism, with higher commercial value and a different type of tourist" (Marshall, 1999: 107-8). In a tourism exit survey, Marshall (1999: 112) found an overwhelming consensus that the Island should "stay natural", "not change", and remain "non-commercial". While this point will be discussed further below, in some cases existing tourist types and locals are

compatible in their visions, and it is governments and developers who are at odds with them, through favouring economic outcomes over environmental and social values. Kingborough Council, Bruny's local governing authority (but based on the Tasmanian mainland) appears to recognise the value of the Island in terms of tourism. *It's probably the biggest asset we have* (LG5). Their visitor strategy focuses on "facilitating appropriate development consistent with the values of local communities" (Kingborough Council, 2006a). State Government, through Tourism Tasmania, also influences the Island's tourism industry – initially through attracting international and interstate tourists to Tasmania, and also through showcasing selected Bruny Island products.

In terms of Bruny's tourist types, many 'mainland' Tasmanians regularly visit on camping or bushwalking trips, attracted to the Island's natural values and the absence of other visitors and five-star resorts:

Tourism on Bruny comes from people who don't want to see that new tourism come in with a lot of money and a lot of high-class resort type thing where people will have to pay a lot of money to have a holiday, so it's the sense of the beauty being exploited that people don't like (R4).

Bruny is a fantastic island - not as fantastic as it was, so while you see it now and you think how great it was on the scale of what it was once, that's the price of development and tourism adds to the price (SG3).

Clearly tourism has been a strong force of change on Bruny Island and is likely to continue to be as the Island is geographically isolated (yet proximate to urban Hobart) and has high natural values. Another important change in recent times has been in Bruny Island's residential composition, as many newcomers are attracted to the island lifestyle.

Residential development

Resident participants describe a range of benefits of island life, including the isolation, relaxed lifestyle and close-knit community: *Bruny is the last vestige of privacy and solitude and a haven away from things* (R3). Isolation, a key component of islandness, was recognised by many participants as both an attractive feature, and a challenging element of island life:

There are people tucked away in them there hills ... If you are a reclusive type of person it is an ideal sort of environment; but on the other hand, if you are not it is a major challenge. You feel as though you have to go to a city at least once a week to get your hit of whatever you need ... it takes you a few days to kind of acclimatise to it ... it's like a culture shock (R4).

Bruny Island's permanent resident population was 672 in 2006, only marginally higher than 2001 when it was recorded at 668 (ABS, 2007)⁷⁵. However, there are at least 2,000 ratepayers, reflecting a sizeable population of shack or holiday home owners. Of the total private dwellings on the Island, 66.5 per cent are unoccupied (ABS, 2007)⁷⁶. Bruny Island can be characterised as a second home sea change destination. It was recently named a 'top ten' property investment hotspot in Australia: "Affordability, proximity to the state's capital city and the pristine nature of its southern coastline and islands, such as Bruny Island, will make this part of Australia a popular sea-change destination" (eChoice, 2005). Reflecting the popular trend for coastal housing in Australia, Bruny is dotted with shacks and, increasingly, more upmarket second homes. A recent trend involving affluent mainlanders buying into the Island, and generating subsequent social impacts, may be described as gentrification. According to Clark et al. (2007: 485), gentrification "involves the re- or dis-placement of residents/land-users by relatively more powerful and resourceful residents/land-users". Unfortunately, like many islands which are not distinct jurisdictions, site-specific socio-economic data typically used to demonstrate gentrification are not available for Bruny Island. Moreover, since the visual effects of gentrification are not always overt, gentrification can be described as a latent problem for Bruny Island and one that should not be ignored. Discussions with residents and shack owners suggest there is anecdotal evidence of gentrification on Bruny. Recent media reports about permanent residences replacing shacks around Tasmania also suggest this; for example:

⁷⁵ Trend data across the four case islands are difficult to compile as the most recent Census statistics show population by place of usual residence, whereas earlier Census statistics were by place of enumeration and included visitors; only data from 2001 were also available by place of usual residence.

⁷⁶ The ABS (2007) defines 'unoccupied private dwellings' as structures built specifically for living purposes which are habitable, but unoccupied on Census night. Vacant houses, holiday homes, huts and cabins (other than seasonal workers' quarters) are counted as unoccupied dwellings. Also included are newly completed dwellings not yet occupied, dwellings which are vacant because they are due for demolition or repair, and dwellings to let. Unoccupied private dwellings in caravan/residential parks, marinas and manufactured home estates are not counted.

Real estate agents and residents say the old shack communities around the state are being transformed into satellite suburbs with grandiose houses replacing ramshackle holiday homes ... the population make-up of Bruny started to change about four years ago when property prices boomed ... people started advertising houses and land on the internet, and mainland buyers thought they were bagging a bargain and snapped them up. That encouraged many shack owners to jump on the bandwagon and also sell (Vowles, 2006: 22).

Bruny Island is exposed to gentrification via tourism and technology, especially in the form of the internet as a property guide for mainland and international investors. Residential subdivisions are fragmenting Bruny Island's arable land and environmentally-significant landscapes, and rundown shacks are being upgraded by newcomers. The shack culture forms part of the Island character, but shacks are being replaced by suburban-style and architect-designed dwellings. One participant told me that in the past ten years there has been considerable new investment in housing construction: *Housing was very cheap here, but now there is huge demand for builders. There are four builders full-time on the Island but lots and lots of builders and trades people are coming to the Island to work now* (R6). Rising land prices have induced some farmers to sell their land:

Land prices are just crazy. It's having an interesting impact because people who have been sitting on land not worth a crumpet suddenly find themselves with money in their pockets so they sell up and disappear ... the increase in land prices has helped some people to become mobile - get them out of Bruny Island ... those trends are going to continue and what will happen is that a lot of the old shacks will be bought up and replaced with better dwellings and you will also see more permanent residents (R1).

However, some long-term residents told me they are concerned that their children will not be able to afford to buy property on the Island. Increasing land prices are also excluding many lower income people from buying into Bruny Island. In one participant's view this trend is *extremely unfortunate because it means that our coastal locations and areas of high amenity will be occupied only by those with the resources* (R1). As waterfront properties along the Australian coast are increasingly only available to millionaires and multi-millionaires, the nation's islands may also become exclusive territories. Pitt (1980: 1056) uses the analogy of succession in describing the process of more passive, lower-ranked groups socio-economically being driven out or down by

more active, exploitative, powerful, wealthy groups. It appears that the rural character of Bruny Island is fading, particularly as improved access has made the Island closer (in terms of travel time) to a central location, the city of Hobart. Faster ferry access has created greater opportunity for mainlanders to have secondary residences on the Island: much as how Baldacchino (2007c) suggests that the introduction of fixed links can accelerate the process of gentrification. Improved access has also shifted the focus from the island community to the wider world. *Once the vehicular ferry came to the Island (which was 1950) ... it was not just your local community ... it has gone from being quite an isolated place to being like a little suburb* (R4). R2 considers that many islanders oppose further access improvements: *As soon as you put big ferries on, you've got every other bit of infrastructure and then you haven't got an island anymore ... Bruny is rapidly going downhill because they are trying to get the access better and better. Is Bruny becoming an outlying suburb of Hobart and losing some of its distinctiveness or islandness in the process?*

The beauty of the Island is that wild and romantic getaway feel, but now you're looking at subdivisions the whole island romance is disappearing ... The Island is only going to get more popular. In fact, it will be a well-known commuting area for people in Hobart now that the ferry is more reliable and faster so that access is easier ... it's really disappointing to have relinquished islands for that purpose (SG3).

As suggested in chapter three, the boundedness of islands is likely to provide residents with a greater sense of identity and community than their mainland counterparts, particularly when they are faced with external threats to their way of life. Marshall (1999: 95) suggests that community opposition to particular issues on Grand Manan reflects “a collective will to protect an insular culture against external forces of change”. However, she also recognises “complex internal ‘webs’ of relationships that are in constant tension and occasional conflict”, most significantly between native islanders and those “from away” (1999: 108). One participant explains that *it is a tribal thing and everybody on Bruny more or less pulls together if they see something against them; then they all fight like cats when it is something internal* (R2). In his study of Whalsay, one of the smaller islands off the Shetland mainland, Cohen (1987: 24) reflects that:

the Island's boundaries are secured, on the one hand, by the sea; but on the other, by a densely knit web of kinship and a powerful sense of historically founded discreteness. Its insular history has placed the community at the very centre of Whalsay people's consciousness ... this does not signify parochialism so much as a deeply ingrained view of the outside world as the source of unpropitious influences.

Moreover, Cohen (1987: 144) asserts that the "struggle to accommodate change and to maintain the boundary requires Whalsay people to be constantly vigilant, and to be prepared to fight for the preservation of their community". A Bruny resident discusses the impacts of islandness on social relations:

We are vulnerable but people on an island tend to be more close-knit as well because we rely on the neighbours ... They're the only other people around ... you have to learn to get on with them on a certain level even though they may not be people that you necessarily socialise with or be friendly with if you were living somewhere else but there's a certain sort of respect that you have to develop ... Everything is word of mouth around here ... The negative side of that is gossip which you probably can get anywhere but you're more aware of it on the Island. People know more about you than you know about yourself half the time (R4).

However, as this secluded island is being 'discovered' by mainland Australians and international investors (many of whom only visit once or twice a year), the close-knit community appears to be unravelling:

In the '70s ... everyone knew everyone because there was only a population of 311 ... but about ten years ago the population started to increase quite dramatically ... In the last five years, the trend has been for a more elite mainlander (mainland meaning the eastern seaboard [of Australia] and America and other nations) coming here to buy land to either build on and live part-time or as an investment. Very rarely these people have anything to do with community activities ... there would be lots here I have never heard of and never see ... There has been a changing tone with the newer residents ... the open, carefree atmosphere of Bruny is being undermined by people fencing everything; locking gates; having alarm systems on; and they even fly in and fly out with aeroplanes. What is our island coming to? (R3).

Participation in community activities may foster shared values and build social capital, as networks are formed and maintained through interaction (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2003). The percentage of population who undertake voluntary work may be taken as a broad measure of sense of community and stocks of social capital (because of transport

constraints, it may be assumed that much of this work is local). On Bruny Island, 27 per cent of the population are volunteers (compared to 14 per cent of the Australian population)⁷⁷.

Focusing on a group of Swedish islands near the city of Gothenburg, Clark et al. (2007: 487) ask whether gentrification on small island communities “is welcomed as beneficial to local development (the alternative presumably being depopulation, decay, and the decline of local economy), or resisted as a threat to existing forms of livelihood, causing displacement and demise of local culture”. The period when the agricultural sector was economically dominant on Bruny Island was associated with strong community ties. However, tourism has now shifted the Island’s economic base and exposed Bruny to the outside world and to potential investors. Clark et al. (2007: 502) suggest that what distinguishes gentrification on many islands from that in urban contexts is “the strength of recreation, tourism and summer homes as (so-called) ‘higher and better’ land-uses”. Urban gentrification typically leaves the poor on the fringes, pushed out by rising property prices. However, in the case of sea change, affluent people and developers are gentrifying coastal fringes and extending their reach to more peripheral spaces: islands. *An increasing number of people seem to be able to live in isolated places ... comparatively a lot of North Americans come to Bruny Island and set up home* (LG4).

Is there a certain type of people that could be called gentrifiers? Ley (1994) considers that a cultural class, consisting of artists⁷⁸ and cultural professionals, begins the process. These ‘trend-setters’ are usually economically marginal groups but they have a high educational status. As their numbers grow, first stage gentrifiers create amenities (particularly service establishments) valued by those with more economic capital, who may then follow (Ley, 1994). Ley (2003) suggests that intellectuals are often early successors to artists. Tasmania tends to attract a significant number of artists, and so too does Bruny Island, where several new residents are artists, or intellectuals, many of them well-known:

⁷⁷ The ABS Census 'Voluntary Work for an Organisation or Group' variable records people who spent time doing unpaid voluntary work through an organisation or group, in the twelve months prior to Census night (ABS, 2007).

⁷⁸ Phillips (2005) argues that being positioned at the margin (particularly the countryside) does not necessarily entail constraint and domination, but may offer potential for creativity and empowerment. Similarly, islands can offer potential for creativity.

People who have moved there as part of a sea change - a lot of them are highly qualified professionals. I think we have six women and four men with PhDs on the Island and that's a large number - ten people in a population of 600. There are other people with quite significant qualifications and we have notable people; three world-class artists ... these people are bringing skills and knowledge ... [and] have a strong environmental ethic, almost exclusively ... There has been an emergence of a more sophisticated community attitude which has seen things like a film society, Christmas pantomimes and art shows ... There is some absolutely brilliant work being produced (R1).

There are cultural shifts. There are things happening on Bruny Island that wouldn't have happened five or ten years ago. We've got theatre sports happening in Adventure Bay which we would never have seen, Landcare groups and so forth (LG5).

These comments about cultural changes and the strong environmental ethic of some newcomers demonstrate that there are positive outcomes from recent changes. The changing residential composition is reflected in a shift in environmental attitudes: *People who have recently acquired land or moved to Bruny Island have a strong interest in environmental values; this is a really positive outcome from the recent development. The locals are less concerned (LG2).*

Ley's (2003) observations of artists as gentrifiers are based on inner cities, where artists have rejected the suburbs, and he notes that life on the edge is their preferred social location. In the case of migration to Bruny Island, perhaps artists are also rejecting the suburbs, and prefer life on the edge in a geographical sense. Retirees are particularly attracted to Bruny Island, perhaps because they are not constrained by employment or schooling considerations as other demographic groups are. In 2006 the median age of islanders was 53, significantly older than the Australia-wide median age of 37 (ABS, 2007). Participants discussed changes in community composition. Various groups are identified as 'alternates', 'rednecks', 'shackies' and 'sea changers'. Social tensions between some of these groups are evident and they can be related to changes in the Island's economic base. For example, some descendents of the early settlers, mainly associated with farming, are claimed to show:

extreme hostility to outsiders, quite palpable. If you go into the hotel where a lot of these people, particularly the men are, they gather their strength and support in one another in places like the pub. It's almost dangerous to go in there - just the vibes ... they have very traditional attitudes. They feel under threat and their lifestyle is under threat ... There are extraordinary tensions between the groups and it's easy to make mistakes ... if you cross boundaries and try to do what you might normally do in, say an urban situation where these things are less obvious, then you do get hostility because places like this operate on rumour (R1).

I was the first sort of greenie to go there really – there were some that went before me but their place got burnt down and they got run out of the place ... so I was warned when I went there (R2).

Some mainland participants also recognise tensions arising from changes in the types of people living on Bruny Island; one describes newcomers as:

generally more educated ... more likely to be fairly sensitive to conservation issues, a lot of clashes culturally between them and a lot of the older more traditional land owners – they have more of a shoot it and chop it type approach (LG5)

You've got the traditional residents and the newcomers, and there is a certain degree of tension between the two. You tend generally to find a different values set between people who have chosen a sea change (LG4).

Such internal social tensions are not limited to Bruny Island. Connell (2007: 471) recognises the probability of strained social relations across a range of islands: “in every case, from Grand Manan, Canada and Whalsay in the Shetland Islands to Norfolk Island, the new ‘outsiders’ may be resented, remain temporarily and pursue lives wholly dissonant to those of indigenous islanders”. On Grand Manan Island, for “new permanent residents on the Island, known locally as people ‘from away’, there is a pervasive sense in all their relationships with locals that they are outsiders”, and they are excluded from decision-making opportunities and leadership positions (Marshall, 2001: 166; 1999). Marshall (2001: 173) suggests that this divide between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ occurs because “people from away are seen as intruders who may threaten historically rooted values and norms of behaviour. In the struggle to maintain identities directly tied to shared histories and experiences of the island, people from away are marginalized”. Hence, newcomers may threaten the social component of islandness – specifically islander identity. On the other hand, Kohn (2002: 150) notes that on Sial (a

pseudonym for a Scottish island), some newcomers opt to become social recluses, having moved there “with a wish to belong to an imagined lifestyle, not to a socially interactive community”. ‘Summer swallows’ (people who own holiday homes on the island but reside elsewhere):

like the ‘good-lifers’ who come to live like hermits on Sial, have engaged with the popular, romantic, and even academically condoned image of the simple, empty, rural haven. They identify with the place through their property ... to which they escape ... they become entirely free of obligation. They experience their holiday, and a holiday is like a dream far away from work and commitments. Being part of the community, on the other hand, or becoming an islander, entails developing a rich set of obligations that are confirmed through active and regular engagement with others (Kohn, 2002: 153).

It appears then, that these summer swallows identify with sense of place rather than sense of community. This also appears to be the case on Bruny Island, as reflected by R3’s comment above about the *more elite mainlander ... coming here to buy land to either build on and live part-time or as an investment. Very rarely these people have anything to do with community activities ... there would be lots here I have never heard of and never see.*

Interview data from Bruny Island reveal problems with service and infrastructure provision in the small community. Both tourism and residential developments strain the capacity of the Island’s existing infrastructure and services. This issue has been recognised by the Tasmanian Government, which initiated a Bruny Island transport review as a result of an “increase in demand for coastal properties, increased tourist numbers and continued economic activity” (Tasmanian Government, 2005). Isolation is a feature that attracts many new residents to Bruny; yet: *Then they want a hamburger joint or services and demand it from the council. Tourists and new residents come from Sydney or elsewhere and expect services comparable to where they previously lived* (LG2). Clearly, the reality of their island dreams does not match their urban tastes. With increases in property values, accompanying increases in rates (property taxes) benefit the mainland local government; but they then need to upgrade services and infrastructure, which in turn may encourage more newcomers to relocate to Bruny Island.

Governance

This section considers institutional arrangements for Bruny Island, the relationship between islandness and governance, and some specific planning issues, particularly focusing on strategies for community visioning and its incorporation into the local planning scheme.

Institutions

Baldacchino (2004d: 80-1) notes that metropolises may try to prevent island devolution by “deliberately avoiding the creation of exclusively island-based administrative or political units, ensuring that geographic “island regions” are incorporated within larger sub-national units”. As noted in Table 1 (in the preceding preface), Bruny Island Council was amalgamated in 1993⁷⁹ with Kingborough Council, the adjacent mainland local government body. None of Kingborough’s twelve councillors (elected representatives) permanently lives on Bruny Island. When the Island council operated, its administrative centre was the town of Alonnah on South Bruny which faces the mainland; now the council headquarters are in mainland Kingston (see Figure 5.2), located 10km south of Hobart’s CBD. Dollery and Crase (2004) note a common argument among proponents of municipal consolidation that substantial economic benefits will inevitably result from fewer, larger municipal councils, but they challenge this ‘bigger is better principle’ as the basis for local government amalgamations (as discussed in chapter four). Considering that Bruny Island has a distinct community, Haward and Zwart (2000) suggest that the amalgamation was ‘unnatural’, formed only on the basis of administrative efficiency. Nevertheless, some resident participants acknowledge problems with the former Bruny Island Council, particularly relating to diseconomies of scale in terms of providing services. In addition, everyone tends to know each other well – perhaps too well – on small islands; this familiarity may affect decision-making:

⁷⁹ This amalgamation was part of a state-wide structural reform of local government. Since 1992 the number of local authorities in Tasmania has been reduced from 46 to 29.

It was difficult for a Council like Bruny to manage this island professionally and not to be parochial. There tended to be almost petty corruption on the scale of the Bruny Council because everybody knew everyone and decisions were often made on the basis of local interests or self-interest or the interests of the people that you knew rather than with a greater vision (R6).

This comment reflects McCall's (1994: 4) observation that "Bureaucratic procedures, developed for populous continental places may simply fail to operate in small island places and officials who ought to be following universalist precepts, instead favour persons known to them, or who are from their areas". Hein (1990: 37) notes that on small islands, "most people are either closely related or know each other well ... decisions are inevitably highly influenced by personal and kinship considerations". Skinner (2002: 212) emphasises the importance of maintaining divisions between formal and informal relations in managing social life on a small island, "where there are repeated interactions between individuals and groups in a variety of settings". Like small island states, offshore islands can be dominated by elites and display social monopolies: "due to a reduced social field, there is a tendency to concentrate social and economic relationships among fewer contacts" (Villamil, 1977: 3).

Following amalgamation, the Bruny Island Community Association was established as a 'watchdog service', and is now affiliated with other island organisations (R7). Despite the negative influences of social relations on previous governance decisions, many islanders are displeased about their perceived loss of independence since amalgamation:

Ninety five per cent of the island residents were against the amalgamation ... I'm yet to be convinced that it was a wise move. We used to make our own decisions and that's pretty important to an independent islander ... [There should be] an island authority set up, rather than have us relying on the good wishes of a mainland council (R7).

Kingborough's land mass has doubled by taking us on but of course we have not got the votes; we have not got the residents ... Urban area managers concentrate their funding on ... infrastructure for high density population areas and all of these are just unnecessary on Bruny. We still pay the rates but we do not get a lot for it ... we should have been amalgamated (which we said all along) with a rural council rather than an urban council ... Kingston will be a city any minute and what are we going to do with a city mentality? (R3).

However, one view from the ‘other side’, the mainland, is that islanders should be treated the same as everyone else in the municipality:

They see themselves as special and different; not sure if we do ... Their sensitivity is on the basis that they used to have their own council in 1992 and therefore they see themselves as being different, perpetuated particularly by the old-timers who used to be on the old council. They liked the old days because they could do what they wanted ... There’s been a push for years for a separate committee to exist for Bruny Island matters, as part of the push for sort of semi-autonomy (LG5).

I would like to draw briefly on field notes to illustrate a view among some mainlanders that islanders are a financial burden; that they are not special so should not receive special treatment. As part of my local community engagement, I presented a talk outlining some preliminary results on Bruny Island⁸⁰ during cultural activities associated with the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in 2007. After my presentation I was questioned by a Hobart resident about health care on the Island – in a financially-constrained health system, why should people who deliberately choose to move to an isolated place put strain on the system due to additional costs involved with services such as helicopters? Such comments reflect the view of some mainlanders who consider that islanders should have parity with them – in the sense of no additional funding over and above that received by mainlanders (in this instance, of a larger island).

Whether or not merely as a matter of appeasement, recent Council initiatives towards Bruny Island are promising. In late 2005 the Council established a Bruny Island Advisory Group as a special committee under the *Local Government Act 1993*: *Since 1993 when we were amalgamated, we’ve been plugging for a special advisory group ... they’re calling for nominations ... finally, after over ten years of hoping to one day have a voice* (R3). The purpose of the advisory group is to facilitate improved communications and consultation on matters relating to the planning scheme and future amendments; council services; strategies for agriculture, tourism/visitors and environmental management; and liaison with State Government on services (Kingborough Council, 2006b). However, the advisory body does not have the standing

⁸⁰ As an aside, it was also interesting to note that at this talk, locals were trying to guess who had said what when I presented some anonymous participant quotes, and this reflected my experience throughout the interviewing process that islanders seem bemused at ethics requirements.

of a council committee; its activities are reported to Kingborough Council through the Community Development and Arts Committee. Nevertheless, the advisory group has played an important role in community visioning, as I discuss below.

Planning

Tasmania is divided into three Natural Resource Management (NRM) committees; their key role is to develop and implement an NRM strategy for their region (Natural Resource Management Tasmania, 2006). Bruny Island is included in NRM South, which covers approximately 38 per cent of the State, including Hobart. The regional vision of NRM South is that the “natural resources will be protected, sustainably managed and improved for the shared environmental, social and economic benefit of our region by a well-informed, well-resourced and actively committed community” (NRM South, 2005). The NRM strategy includes localised issues relating to Bruny Island rather than reference to island-wide issues.

Land-use planning is largely the responsibility of local governments, as they administer planning schemes (documents regulating or prohibiting use or development of land). The Tasmanian Government Resource Planning and Development Commission encourages public involvement in planning scheme proposals and planning scheme amendments; when required, it also conducts public hearings where representations are lodged by members of the public in relation to draft amendments or draft planning schemes (Resource Planning and Development Commission, 2007). In 2004, Kingborough Council introduced a new municipality-wide planning scheme which replaced the *Bruny Island Planning Scheme 1986*. The *Kingborough Planning Scheme* is a performance based planning system that aims to achieve sustainable use and development of resources in the planning scheme area. Changes to the planning scheme have concerned some long-term islanders, particularly in relation to subdivision of rural land:

They have great tracts of land which they are reserving for forty-spotted pardalotes, swift parrots ... The mostly arable farmland does not harbour these [endangered] species so we are looking at land that is no good for agriculture being kept and agricultural land being subdivided ... in the

previous planning scheme they were not allowed to subdivide arable farmland (R7).

While some residents express preference for a separate island jurisdiction, R6 considers that planning issues on the Island need to be addressed separately from the rest of the municipality:

The Bruny Planning Scheme was a good planning scheme ... but it was very difficult for them to organise professional services such as building inspections and health services so those things have an economy of scale ... It would be important to develop a particular planning strategy for the Island as a separate thing from the rest of Kingborough ... Some form of administering that from the Island would be an ideal situation, in consultation with the services that are available from having a larger council office - that infrastructure which we can never achieve on Bruny.

Gurran et al. (2007) consider that local plans can be important tools for coastal policy implementation. They chose to examine Kingborough's planning scheme as a local plan regarded as 'progressive' (described as instruments that have been recently prepared or amended, by authorities recognised regionally for their coastal policy or planning initiatives). Kingborough is labelled as a 'coastal commuter' destination in Gurran's sea change typology (as Bruny is part of Kingborough now it is assumed to belong to this category too, despite its more difficult access). Kingborough's planning scheme includes overarching objectives on sustainable coastal development and it specifies additional assessment criteria for coastal development. The scheme refers to the *State Coastal Policy 1996*, which is invoked as an additional policy document to refer to when a development proposal is being assessed, yet it fails to provide a detailed local interpretation of the state policy, and has no social or economic strategies or special consultation requirements for important coastal planning decisions.

Local governments make key local tourism planning decisions (at the State level, Tourism Tasmania plays the principal role in marketing Tasmania as a tourist destination and helps the industry to achieve sustainable growth). In analysing the integration of sustainability principles into the planning processes of local tourism destinations in Australia, Ruhanen (2004) questions the experience of local governments. She argues that as primary industries face decline and tourism rises in

importance, local governments need to re-channel their planning and management skills. A key consideration is whether tourism should be managed as a separate industry or as part of a wider island sustainability plan, linked to other economic sectors and to social and environmental values. Drawing from the experiences of various small island destinations, Ioannides and Holcomb (2003) emphasise the importance of adopting planning and policy frameworks that do not treat tourism in isolation; Grant (2004) advocates a similar form of integrated tourism planning with respect to the Isle of Wight.

A group of tourism operators recently formed Bruny Tourism Incorporated, which aims “to promote and facilitate tourism on Bruny Island while at the same time protecting the Island’s unique culture, way of life and environment” (Bruny Tourism Inc., 2006). Such recognition of Bruny Island’s cultural distinction from the mainland mirrors Rimoldi’s (2006) observation that residents of Auckland’s Waiheke Island see their island as different from Auckland in its values and way of life. Bruny Tourism’s short-term goals include developing a strategic tourism plan and branding Bruny as a unique destination. T1 explains the benefits of such a formal group: *the more people that we get into a group like we have formed and incorporated and everything, becomes a voice that Council and Government listen to a lot more and it is the preferred way that the Government – local, state and Federal Government – would listen to groups*. A participant from Kingborough Council notes that it has started looking at a process of branding the Island,

to decide what their competitive advantages really are, what their key values are, and how they can develop their tourism experience around those values, but we’d like to think that rather than just do a tourism planning exercise, it is a brand for the whole island - the guys that are producing the food, the farmers and other industries (LG4).

This branding exercise indicates that the Council is recognising ‘economies of place’ - defined as “economies which capitalize on a geographical uniqueness that adds value to their goods” (Ratter, 2007: 523). Definable spaces in particular present opportunities for branding in marketing.

As a tool for managing development, the local planning scheme is pivotal to sustainability strategies. The *Kingborough Planning Scheme* is under review, a process which presents a formal avenue for islanders to provide input. In terms of community consultation, it is important to resist the temptation to group ‘the islanders’ together as one voice. As shown in the discussion above concerning ‘old-timers’ and ‘newcomers’, various groups have very different views on the future of ‘their’ Island. However, it can be argued that islandness presents an opportunity for more coherent visioning, as the boundedness of islands may lend their residents a greater sense of identity and facilitate development of social capital.

Governments may find community visioning a useful tool for determining regional sustainability strategies (Waller, 2003). At the island state level, *Tasmania Together* is a long-term plan developed by Tasmanians for Tasmanians that outlines goals and benchmarks to be achieved by 2020. *Tasmania Together* measures and reports progress to encourage informed decision-making in government, business and community organisations, and provides a cooperative framework to achieve the community’s vision, which is: “Tasmania is an island community, unique for its natural and cultural environment, where people enjoy a prosperous lifestyle based on quality, creativity and opportunity” (Tasmania Together Progress Board, 2006). Community visioning can represent an expression of internal views about the future, as opposed to the external visions of the mainland local government. R2 emphasises the importance of a vision for Bruny Island:

Council has got to get this vision business for Bruny Island ... incorporated in the planning scheme fast and that is the only thing that I can think of in the short term that might save something for Bruny ... everybody has to have their say and the if rich people have the bigger say, we will go nowhere because they still want their big house on top of the sand dune looking at the sea.

Following a petition to Kingborough Council from ratepayers, the Bruny Island Advisory Group facilitated a survey of residents and ratepayers to obtain views on a vision for the Island. The petition stated:

while not being opposed to development in principle, request that all large scale housing development submissions for Bruny Island be deferred until a

future vision plan for Bruny has been provided by Council in collaboration with residents. We are concerned that insufficient attention is being paid to the ability of the Island's infrastructure to cope with increases in population. We would like to see a Future Vision Plan that provides a balance between the permanent population and the supporting infrastructure, while preserving the appealing uniqueness and nonsuburb like character of Bruny Island (Kingborough Council, 2006c: 1).

The survey, 'A Future Vision for Bruny Island', received 185 responses (a 14.7 per cent response rate). As such, the survey results present a wider spectrum of views of Bruny Island stakeholders than that possible from interviewing (and presumably include the views of newcomers as well as longer-term residents). The following survey results generally reflect comments from interview participants. In terms of advantages of living on Bruny Island, the top responses were the environment, relaxed lifestyle, supportive community, and isolation (these are commonly identified as appealing features of islands). Most survey respondents view island isolation as a positive feature because it enables "a more relaxed and quieter lifestyle, and a more self-sufficient and supportive community", and that "as it took a definite choice to live here, many of the disadvantages are accepted within that choice of lifestyle" (Kingborough Council, 2006d: 1). Negative aspects about living on the Island largely relate to infrastructure: the ferry service (an island-specific feature) and roads. Council reported a survey finding that over-governance is to be avoided (Kingborough Council, 2006d), but did not elaborate on this point. Other notable survey results were that realistic opportunities for the Island revolve largely around tourism, particularly encouraging low key ecotourism, and development (in a controlled way). A balance between development and lifestyle is seen as important. Inappropriate/excessive development and loss of heritage and natural resources were recognised as threats to the Island (Kingborough Council, 2006d). There is tension between islanders not wanting over-governance, yet perceiving inappropriate development as a threat (and hence wanting it to be controlled), alongside loss of heritage and natural resources. Such ambiguity can be related to tensions in the island boundary – locals desire autonomy but need to rely on the resources of a larger mainland local government in order to protect heritage and natural resources and to control development.

One survey question asked whether Bruny can “sustain an increased permanent or holiday resident population without compromising the Island’s important values” (Kingborough Council, 2006d: 7). Most respondents consider that the Island can sustain a population increase but that it would require infrastructure upgrading, particularly in health and emergency services, roads, and ferry services. Interestingly, no survey questions were asked about whether the Island can sustain an increase in tourist numbers. Perhaps this disparity reflects the economic value of tourism to Bruny: *The population of the Island would be 90-95 per cent positive about tourists ... Because it’s such a small community, everyone can see the benefits ... jobs; having their eyes opened to different experiences; and they’re proud of their island* (R1).

Survey respondents were also asked to state their vision for the Island and responses were collated into the following top two statements: “maintain the Island in its naturally beautiful, unique, clean state, keeping it balanced and in harmony between rural and urban settings” and “retain a sense of community which recognises tolerance and caring by friendly people who are perceived as vibrant, creative and diverse” (Kingborough Council, 2006d: 10). The same document states that the survey results will form a valuable source for future planning, with plans to integrate them into the planning scheme review. Subsequently, Kingborough Council (2006e) released a report for public input on the review of the *Kingborough Planning Scheme*. This report comprises proposed amendments to Desired Future Character Statements (DFCS), which provide a basis for place-based planning and a guide to future development and land use. Public consultation outcomes have translated into these broad DFCS statements, which are to be included within a new schedule in the planning scheme. The DFCS also reflect the Bruny Island vision survey results. The inclusion of distinct DFCS for Bruny Island augur that Kingborough Council recognises the Island’s unique character; yet, whether such statements will actually guide future development remains to be seen.

Key learnings from this case

Bruny Island is distinct from its adjacent mainland as a function of islandness. It has a variety of landscapes within a compact space (Bruny is often described as a microcosm of Tasmania) and has several wildlife viewing locations on land and at sea. The Island has a culture (which is partly based on the shack culture) and way of life distinct from its mainland. These natural and social values, in addition to the common appeal of island places, combine to make Bruny Island attractive to tourists and to new temporary and permanent residents, particularly those seeking a sea change. Some of the challenges involved with living on Bruny Island include earning an income from the narrow economic base; social tensions that come with living in a diverse, small community; and problems of governance - both when the Island had its own local government and currently, under the jurisdiction of a mainland local government body. Considering that Hobart is a small city (population just over 200,000) which is typically characterised as laidback and 'behind the times' (in part this perception is based on it being the capital of an island), Bruny Island does not stand in stark contrast to, and is not dominated by, the capital city.

While some environmental impacts from tourism and residential developments are inevitable, there appears to be scope for some more compatible environment-development relationships on Bruny Island. For example, tourism can foster residents' pride in their island and may lead to better environmental protection. Some new residents are reported as having a strong environmental ethic. However, seasonal and new residents can upset the social dynamics in small communities; but not necessarily for the worse: new residents appear to have rejuvenated the creative side of the community. However, if Bruny Island becomes an exclusive place for the wealthy then the laidback, relaxed character of the Island is likely to change.

Kingborough Council now has an island advisory group but the Council has replaced the *Bruny Island Planning Scheme* with the same planning scheme that applies to the mainland. There are clear tensions between islanders' desire for autonomy and reliance on mainland jurisdictions. Although the amalgamation is described as 'unnatural', based

on administrative efficiency (Haward & Zwart, 2000), it does not appear to be economically feasible to provide a local government body for a permanent population of less than 1,000.

A local 'hideaway' destination for some decades, Bruny Island is progressively being exposed to tourists, investors and developers from further afield. Having been 'discovered' by such groups, Bruny Island is prone to development pressures and subject to the influences of external governments:

[Property magazines have] targeted Bruny Island as the next big place for private investment and development. Federal and State Tourism as well, in their tourism development for Tasmania, have identified the really untapped resource that needs to be marketed. It is going to come under increasing pressure for development, serious pressure. I'd suggest there's a lot of ... offshore owners there now, just waiting to do something (D1).

If policy-makers, planners, developers and investors view offshore islands as untapped tourism destinations, development outcomes are likely to diminish their environmental and social values. While not denying the powers of external influences and the difficulties of integrating internal opinions, Bruny residents have the opportunity to have their say in the future of the Island through the Advisory Group and the review of the planning scheme, before developers pounce and the unique island character changes: *The biggest challenge for the Island is ... the people together deciding what sort of place they want Bruny Island to be and then getting involved actively in the management of the Island to ensure that it heads in the direction they want it to go (LG4).* While significant problems of development may not be evident now, things may be very different in the short-term future: *It is managing okay but it is on the edge - Bruny could take off tomorrow and who knows what would happen then (SG1).* Hence the importance of taking steps now to define an agreed desired future.

Marshall (1999: 111) notes that "while corporate and government planners may encourage the migration of people and dollars to the Island, the history and culture of Grand Manan suggest a level of resistance that may continue to ensure its insularity." She argues that "insularity for Grand Manan will continue to mean a strong collective identity and community values associated with strength and flexibility, as well as

determination to define their own future” (Marshall, 1999: 111). Hence, local resistance to external forces and processes that could homogenise islands with mainlands may in fact reinforce islandness. If Bruny Islanders are able and willing to define their own future, such local input would present an opportunity for resilience against developments and exogenous changes imposed by mainland governments.

In analysing the key contemporary issues facing Bruny Island and its residents, I have sought to document how islandness interacts with the other key research themes: tourism and residential development, and governance for sustainability. Although Bruny Island has historically been protected from over-development by its geographic islandness (isolation and difficult access), its environmental and social values (also expressions of islandness) are now being recognised by the continental worlds beyond the Island. Such awareness is expressed in the increasing amount of tourism and residential developments; but these developments ultimately impact upon the Island’s environmental and social values. By virtue of its island status, Bruny attracts significant numbers of tourists, and an increasing number of seasonal and permanent residents, locally and globally. In this way, islandness is a positive feature economically, but can contribute to environmental and social vulnerabilities. While gentrification can cause social problems, particularly by displacing lower income residents, it may have environmental benefits, in that some newcomers have a stronger environmental ethic than some of the older, traditional ‘shoot and chop it’ residents. No doubt Bruny Island’s environmental assets and low population density were part of its attraction to newcomers in the first place, and so these residents would not want developments which could jeopardise their newfound lifestyle.

Bruny Island, like many offshore islands that are regarded as appendages to their mainlands, was liable to incorporation by a mainland local government. However, governance challenges were also identified when Bruny Island had its own local council (due to the small population and resulting diseconomies of scale and ‘almost petty corruption’). Hence, like many islands, Bruny Island is to some extent a victim of those economic, social, environmental and political features that characterise sparsely populated, isolated jurisdictions. However, rather than eroding islandness, systems of governance imposed from the mainland may strengthen the island identity of the

community (a social component of islandness) and help them to recognise what is distinct about their island as opposed to the mainland. Whereas governance by the Bruny Island Council appeared to favour certain local interests and thereby divide the internal community, governance from the mainland may result in greater recognition of islanders' identity as expressed in calls for some form of island voice. However, islandness may be threatened if mainland policies and planning strategies do not recognise the particular problems facing island environments, economies and societies. In terms of tensions between the undesirability of external over-governance and inappropriate development, appropriate local influences are necessary but there is also a need to recognise the Island's common good values to the wider (including international) community, while respecting local community values.

Islandness can be a source of resilience in terms of shaping identity and sense of place and in fostering social capital. In coping with isolation, islanders are often described as self-sufficient, independent people, and this seems to apply to permanent residents of Bruny, as noted above in the vision survey results, and by a participant: *People need to be self-reliant as there is little infrastructure. There is no public transport; a higher cost of living; the long distance to travel for basic commodities* (R3). Such independence stands in stark contrast to the demands of some new residents for urban comforts.

There are some opportunities for Bruny Islanders to maintain their islandness in the face of externally-generated changes. The island community has an important role in contributing to local sustainability. For example, it can leverage its social capital and contribute to good governance. Community visioning presents an opportunity for Bruny islanders to articulate the environmental and social values that are important to them. Integration of these visions into local government policies and plans may help to build resilience. Such recognition of environmental and social values does not imply resisting change altogether, but making appropriate decisions in regard to sustainable development. Resilience involves the capacity of humans to anticipate and plan for the future (The Resilience Alliance, 2005). Hence, the importance of both islander visioning and effective planning and management: *if Council sets the right direction and locals set the right direction, they can get a good sustainable outcome* (D1). Baldacchino (2000: 68) challenges the notion of small islands' vulnerability and identifies their comparative

advantages - for example, limited exploitable resources can lead to a resourcefulness “which confirms that necessity is the mother of invention”. Well-defined boundaries allow easier monitoring of tourist arrivals and departures and provide research opportunities across a range of disciplines. Compared to its mainland, difficult access to Bruny Island has and can continue to constrain development, since materials need to be ferried across. Defined boundaries also present opportunities for better environmental management, quarantine, and branding of both island produce (as with King Island⁸¹, Tasmania) and the Island itself as a unique tourism destination.

Bruny Island has been subject to global trends such as the increasing accessibility of isolated places (which has in part changed perceptions of remoteness), the changing nature of the workforce and the flexibility in work practices that technology affords. As such, it is difficult to imagine a return to the hideaway that Bruny Island once was. With its proximity to a metropolitan centre, island appeal and low population, Bruny Island is on the edge of falling victim to development that destroys local values. However, it is also on the edge of possibility, as an example of a community that can influence change and define its own future (particularly through utilising the advantages that islandness confers) and possibly be a model for local sustainability; yet, to a large extent this now hinges on whether the mainland-based local government recognises the distinct challenges and opportunities that face Bruny Island, and that differentiate the Island from its adjacent mainland.

⁸¹ King Islanders have capitalised on economies of place – primarily the Island’s clean green nature - as recognised in their well-known fine food brands.

CHAPTER SIX

ROTTNEST ISLAND: PLAYING LOTTO WITH ROTTTO?



Figure 6.1: Thomson Bay, Rottneest Island (source: the author)

ROTTNEST ISLAND: PLAYING LOTTO WITH ROTTO?

*You're not going to be able to get ecological sustainability **and** economic sustainability (MH3⁸²).*

Rottnest Island (or Rotto, as it is affectionately known to locals) differs from the other three case islands in that it is managed by a State Government statutory authority and has no landowners; it is a public island of social importance to a wide community comprising temporary residents, mainland visitors, and tourists from further afield. This chapter⁸³ begins with an introduction to the Island's natural and social values. I then review the Island's governance, management and funding arrangements, and examine tourism and its impacts on the Island's values. Considering that sustainability encompasses economic, environmental and social factors, is it possible for Rottnest to become a model for sustainability, which is a strategic goal of the managing authority (RIA, 2003a) or are economic pressures making its future seem a bit like a lottery?

Rottnest Island (Figure 6.2) is in the Indian Ocean, offshore from Perth, the capital of Western Australia (WA) and the world's most isolated city. Passenger ferries depart from three mainland locations, including Perth, to the Island's hub, Thomson Bay⁸⁴. Other than operational vehicles, cars are not permitted on the Island so the main transport modes are bus, bicycle and foot. The Island has a Mediterranean-style climate. Rottnest is a relatively small island, covering approximately 1900ha, of which the Thomson Bay settlement is 212ha. At 45m above sea level, Wadjemup Hill is the highest point on the Island.

⁸² As a number of participants currently have or have had multiple roles (some were members of more than one stakeholder group) I have in some cases not identified speaking positions for the quotes and instead indicated these multiple positions by the label MH (multiple hats) to protect participant anonymity. Other speaking positions are SG - a State Government official; and CG - a community group representative. Note that SG1 (for example) in this chapter is not the same participant as SG1 in the previous chapter (the same applies for other speaking positions in the following two chapters).

⁸³ This chapter is largely based on a forthcoming paper in *Australian Geographer*.

⁸⁴ The shortest ferry trip takes 25 minutes and departs from the port of Fremantle, 18km from Rottnest.



Figure 6.2: Location of Rottnest Island

The indigenous Nyoongar name for Rottnest Island is Wadjemup, the meaning of which ('the place across the water') reflects a mainland perspective. Artefacts such as stone tools have been found on the Island, indicating Aboriginal occupation before sea levels rose circa 6,500 years ago (Rottnest Island Authority, 2005a). Rottnest then appears to have remained uninhabited until European settlement. The first Europeans landed in 1658 and Dutch navigator Willem de Vlamingh named the Island in 1696 after seeing several quokkas (*Setonix brachyurus*, small marsupials endemic to Western Australia) which he mistook for large rats (Watson, EJ 1998) – hence rott nest. Following proclamation of the colony of Western Australia in 1829, a small number of settlers requested land grants on the Island for farming, fishing and salt mining. However, the Crown resumed all land following establishment of an Aboriginal prison, which operated from 1838 to 1931 (although it was used less from 1902 when it became an annex of Fremantle Prison; from that time ferries began transporting excursionists to Rottnest). During the period from 1854 to 1913 the Governors of Western Australia also used Rottnest as a holiday destination so there was a *huge paradox of these poor Aboriginal prisoners who were treated abominably and then you had the crème de la crème of Perth society spending three months of summer there* (MH6). As I will discuss later in the chapter, this incongruity continues in the present day.

Following resistance to a proposal by the Colonial Secretary's office to subdivide Rottnest in 1907, Governor Bedford declared the Island a public park. Joske et al. (1995: 191) cite Somerville's⁸⁵ objections to the subdivisions in 1907: "The only result which will come from the proposal as it now stands will be to encourage snobocracy by establishing a little oasis where our local silvertails can retire, secure in the knowledge that they are safe from intrusion by the common herd". Rottnest was made an 'A Class Reserve'⁸⁶ for public recreation in 1917 and a Board of Control was established under the *Parks and Reserves Act 1895*, whereby no portion of the land could be leased or sold

⁸⁵ William Somerville went on to become a member of the Rottnest Island Board from 1929 and he had a major influence on the landscape of the Island, particularly through his reafforestation work (Hercock, 1996).

⁸⁶ In Western Australia the security of tenure of Crown land reserves varies, depending upon whether the reserve is Class A, B or C. Class A affords the greatest degree of protection for reserved lands, requiring approval of Parliament to amend the reserve's purpose or area, or to cancel the reservation. The A classification is used solely to protect areas of high conservation or high community value (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2006). A Class reserves are regulated under the *Land Administration Act 1997*.

except by legislation, and the land resided with the Crown in perpetuity (Joske et al. 1995; Somerville, 1949). Apart from closures in 1914 and again from 1940 to 1945 for military purposes, recreational use of the Rottnest Island has continued and private ownership of land is not permitted.

The Island is now managed by the Rottnest Island Authority (hereafter RIA or Authority), a statutory authority created by the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*. The RIA is directed by the Rottnest Island Authority Board (reporting to the Minister for Tourism) which determines policy, sets budgets and is advised on specialist policy areas by expert committees. The functions of the RIA are to provide and operate recreational and holiday facilities; protect fauna and flora; and maintain and protect the natural environment and cultural resources and, to the extent that the Authority's resources allow, repair its natural environment (RIA, 2003a). The only residents (reported in interviews at approximately 200 but the most recent Census (ABS, 2007) shows 128 residents, down from 173 in 2001) are staff of the RIA and businesses, and their families; their tenure on-island being only temporary. The median age of residents is 29, younger than that of the Australian average of 37 (ABS, 2007), which reflects the fact that most residents are staff. Their median weekly individual income is \$645, significantly higher than that of the Australian median (\$466) (ABS, 2007).

The main settlement area is Thomson Bay at the eastern end of the Island, facing the mainland. Rottnest is one of Western Australia's most popular holiday destinations and is a tourist icon for Perth, attracting approximately half a million visitors annually (this figure represents a doubling of visitor numbers in 25 years). Western Australians make up 79 per cent of visitors and the remainder are from interstate or overseas (RIA, 2006a). The accommodation capacity exceeds 2,000 beds but a ballot application system operates over summer and other peak periods such as school holidays, when applications to stay outstrip the amount of accommodation available. Rottnest is also an important boating destination; during 2005-06, for example, approximately 37 per cent of visitors arrived by private or charter vessel (RIA, 2006a). The RIA leases moorings to recreational vessels.

Island values

Rottnest Island's natural, cultural and social features are key elements of its appeal. Rottnest has a fragile natural environment⁸⁷, due largely to its limestone base and exposed conditions. It has five major habitats: coastal, brackish swamps, woodlands, heath and salt lakes (which occupy about ten per cent of the Island's area) (Rottnest Island Authority, 2005b). There are approximately 135 indigenous plant species (Joske et al. 1995) and the current quokka population is estimated at 10,000 (Rottnest Island Authority, 2005c). The Island has 63 beaches and 20 bays and its scientific values are important - for example, the unusual feature of having both temperate and subtropical reefs - and for many decades Rottnest has been a research base across a range of disciplines (University of Western Australia, 2004). Thomson Bay settlement includes many 19th century colonial-style limestone buildings of historical importance which are listed on the Register of the National Estate⁸⁸. Rottnest has one of Australia's oldest intact streetscapes, and after the former Port Arthur penal settlement in Tasmania, is the most significant example of colonial architecture⁸⁹ in Australia (RIA, 2006a). Rottnest's island qualities also make particularly distinctive its social environment, or ethos. By ethos, I mean the character and values of a place. Although this word is typically applied to people or communities (the Oxford English Dictionary defines ethos as "the characteristic spirit, prevalent tone of sentiment, of a people or community"), in the case of Rottnest Island, where private land ownership is not permitted, I will apply ethos to the wider community's values of place. Ethos can also be related to sense of place (as noted in chapter three, sense of place refers to human perceptions of the special characteristics of a place).

The common appeal of islands has been discussed in chapters three and four. It is difficult to do justice to Rottnest's allure in words but to summarise, much of its attractiveness lies in it being an island and in its marked differentiation from the

⁸⁷ Rottnest Island is the largest in a chain of islands on the continental shelf opposite Perth. These Islands are formed of limestone rocks with a thin covering of sand, which limits vegetation types (Rottnest Island Authority, 2005b).

⁸⁸ The Australian Heritage Commission has compiled this Register since 1976; it now has more than 12,000 places of natural, historic and indigenous significance.

⁸⁹ Joske et al. (1995: 1) claim that in addition to the penal influence lingering through a visual legacy in the Island's architecture, it is "almost palpable in the authoritarian nature of the island administration".

mainland. As with many islands offshore from large cities (for example, Pulau Ubin in Singapore – see Henderson, 2000), much of Rottnest Island’s appeal lies in its distinction to the adjacent city (functions of not only geographic islandness but also resulting social components of islandness). For metropolitan residents, Rottnest is a proximate holiday destination (yet physically separated, allowing some sense of escape) and is Perth’s main tourist island⁹⁰. An important factor in Rottnest’s relationship with city dwellers is the visibility of the Island from the western coastal suburbs of Perth (a source of regular visitors), which suggests a constant consciousness, compared to other offshore islands located further from their city – ‘out of sight, out of mind’ perhaps. Conversely, the visibility of the mainland from parts of the Island, especially the main settlement, provides a psychological ‘umbilical cord’ to the city. Seddon (1983: 38) compares metropolitan islands around Australia, noting that Rottnest is relatively accessible, as it does not require a long drive from the city to the ferry terminal:

Rottnest lies clear and beckoning on the horizon, a continuing reassurance that escape is easy ... The metropolitan coastline is equally visible from Thomson Bay ... Contact is maintained ... Nevertheless, the water barrier gives a comfortable separation, and the city can be regarded with impregnable detachment.

Seddon (1983: 34) refers to a “Rottnest experience”, claiming that the Island has played a “significant part in sustaining Western Australians’ self-image as a society that is friendly, gregarious, simple, unpretentious, physically oriented, pleasure loving and egalitarian”. MH2 is one of several participants who echoes such values: *It’s casual - it’s not a place where people go to wear their nice clothes and look flash*. To some extent, the egalitarian appeal of Rottnest has been retained, as CG2 comments:

You could have the Premier of the State holidaying in Cottage B and Joe Blow from Innaloo next door and everybody is walking around in shorts and T-shirts, and all sorts of people who have plenty of money and could go anywhere in the world still choose Rottnest for at least one of their holidays a year. Most of those people don’t want it upgraded or fancied up.

Seddon (1983: 35) considers that Rottnest “has a mythic quality as a simple, better, truer world than the one we usually tread”. Two participants reflect similar sentiments: *It has*

⁹⁰ There are three other islands near Perth but two of these are nature reserves and one is managed by the Department of Defence.

a mystical sense about it - something about getting away from the hustle and bustle of Perth to somewhere where you seem so much further away from your life ... even though you're only 20km away (SG2); Immediately when you get on that boat, your mind goes into neutral ... There's just something about the place ... It's magic, laidback, very, very appealing (MH1). Rottnest is "socially comprehensible because of its small size, the compactness of the Thomson Bay settlement, and the visibility of many public functions [such as arrivals and departures]" (Seddon, 1983: 38). Visitor transport on the Island is by tour bus or bicycle, since all but operational vehicles are prohibited. This vehicular ban means that safety is a key feature of the social environment: kids can go off on their bikes ... you can't do that any longer in the suburbs of the big cities (MH2).

I will return to the social ambiance of Rottnest below, and argue that its egalitarian feature is at risk from further tourism development, but will first describe governance arrangements and the apparent priority of economic concerns over natural and social island values.

Governance

Rottnest Island is in the unusual position of being governed by a sole State Government statutory authority. However this governance arrangement has not resulted in abundant financial support. Rottnest has had a history of little government funding: *it is not now, nor at any other time, envisaged when they set up Rottnest, to give it any money and it had to sink or swim by itself (MH6).*

[The State Government has] always run it on a shoestring ... insisting that the Island borrow money so it carries a considerable debt ... They think once they advertise the Island as a tourist island and charge money for people to live on the Island as tourists, that it should be some sort of commercial arrangement (MH1).

Several participants identify financial problems as the major issue facing the Island. The RIA has had to be largely self-sufficient in managing the tourism business, utilities and the environment and, as with many islands, costs tend to be higher than on mainlands

due to isolation and diseconomies of size. The RIA has a limited way of earning income and that amount is legally capped (the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987* states that the Island must be affordable to the average family). SG4 summarises the financial constraints facing the RIA:

We don't get any consolidated revenue funding. We're a self-funded government agency so our operating budget is generated from the accommodation costs, the landing fee ... moorings that we rent for lease to recreational vessels and business leases ... no permanent residents ... so there's no ratepayer base ... The island [authority] has to provide the tourist resort and the basic utilities that a local council would so we generate our own power; treat our own wastewater; provide our own fresh water and waste management services; roads and infrastructure. All of that's funded by the Authority, as well as the protection and conservation of the natural environment and we have a big heritage aspect ... an enormous range of responsibilities that basically are being funded by the tourist population.

Since a significant proportion of the Authority's income is generated from landing fees (\$12.50 per person), visitor numbers are clearly important: *it's now being heavily promoted as a tourist resort because if we don't get the tourist dollars in we're never going to be self-sustaining financially* (SG3). While it is reasonable that visitors pay for environmental management, the danger with this user pays system on Rottnest is that more visitors are encouraged, translating to greater impacts on the Island environment, and on its social ambience.

Since the mid-1990s a number of reports have reviewed the Island's governance, management and funding arrangements, including the *Rottnest Island Review* (Government of Western Australia, 1995), the Auditor General for Western Australia's report (2003) and the Rottnest Island Taskforce report (2004). As MH1 explains, the key recommendations from the 1995 Review were to upgrade infrastructure; return the Island to the customer; move non-essential service staff off the Island and have them commute; contract out some services to a private contractor; and upgrade the quality of accommodation and delivery of retail services. Although 99 per cent of the Review recommendations were implemented, Rottnest was still not in a financially sustainable position by the turn of the century: *There's been a degeneration of the infrastructure, the power, the water and the standard of the units, so the Auditor-General ... wrote a fairly*

damning report (SG3). Indeed, the Auditor General (2003: 5) raised the prospect of closing the Island to the public:

The Rottnest Island Authority's financial performance is not sustainable and this is adversely affecting economic, social and environmental performance. Without urgent attention, the RIA will be left with little choice but to reconsider public access [to] and use of the Island.

In response to this report, in 2003 the Western Australian Minister for Tourism announced the formation of the Rottnest Island Taskforce to address structural and financial problems and to report on management and governance issues. The Taskforce did not find any need to restrict public access to the Island but made 103 recommendations. Subsequently, the State Government has invested \$26 million over six years (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007a) in upgrading accommodation and other essential infrastructure, but the RIA is expected to be self-sustaining in the long-term. One of the Taskforce recommendations concerns the RIA improving external relationships (i.e. developing connections beyond the island boundary) and having a philosophy of 'open for business': "It should be more open to outside ideas, more willing to form partnerships with others in the public or private sectors, and more business-like in its approach" (Rottnest Island Taskforce, 2004: 6). Participants give interesting insights into the poor relationships between the RIA and Western Australian Government agencies: *Rottnest is our big urgency and focus but other government departments have a different set of priorities ... there's a degree of goodwill but it's just a non-meshing of the priorities* (SG3). MH2 discusses changes in the state public service system:

In the past, Rottnest was such an icon in WA that if they wanted a road, the Commissioner of Main Roads would just ship over all the paraphernalia and put down the road and in return they put him on the Board and he used to get accommodated at the Board cottage ... but those were the old days, all the colonial nepotism ... government departments tend to now have corporate responsibility and they're much more jealous about their budgets ... and the head of Main Roads hasn't got that same power ... These changes have destroyed that previous system of outside help.

Other participants suggest that limited interaction with the rest of government is internally generated; that the RIA deliberately limits outside connections due to

perceived vulnerabilities: *it seems a sign of weakness that you might be vulnerable to takeover by another agency* (SG2). Hence, the political element of islandness can be strong, even though there may be economic advantages from stronger mainland links. Such limited links with mainland agencies indicates that the RIA has an insular management style (although it is perhaps not only the authority that is insular: some RIA staff are residents and may be concerned about potential impacts on their island lifestyle). MH3 considers that Board members:

have a personal interest in Rottnest and want to build a wall around it ... They've been very insular and that's what you get with statutory authorities. They tend to stake too much ownership and ... then not be connected with broader governance arrangements.

SG2 also recognises an 'island mentality' in managing islands: *You start to act as if you're disconnected from the rest of the world, the rest of government, and start thinking that you're isolated and can't call on the resources of the mainland.* For example, while state environment legislation applies to the Island, Rottnest has its own environment staff, who MH3 believes have:

minimal links with the scientific community and the conservation machinery in Australia, or in the state. They just sit out in this little pocket ... they like it like that because it's their own little cosy world ... but they become very behind the times. They're never at the table when important things are being discussed ... because they're in the Ministry for Tourism they're left out, whereas their environmental charter is a huge charter.

Indeed, the fact that an A Class Reserve is under the portfolio of the Minister for Tourism is a clear indication of the priority that the Western Australian Government gives to tourism uses of the Island over conservation. Some recent proposed amendments to the Island's governing act also indicate the economic priorities of the Government. The *Rottnest Island Authority Amendment Bill 2007* (an amendment of the *RIA Act 1987*) has been debated in the Western Australian Parliament during the writing of this thesis. It requires approval of both Houses of Parliament. I have drawn on Hansard (parliamentary transcripts) from May and August 2007 from the lower house of Parliament (the Legislative Assembly) to follow the progress of the Bill and its debate by members before being directed to the upper house of Parliament. The Tourism

Minister introduced the Bill in the context of reforms required to improve the Island's overall financial sustainability and corporate governance. The Bill also contains a legislative requirement for the development of a strategic development plan and a statement of corporate intent.

The A-class reserve has three components: the marine reserve (which extends 800m seawards), the terrestrial reserve and the settlement. The amendment bill involves annexing 50ha from the terrestrial reserve (which will be named the Rottnest Island Wadjemup Conservation Reserve⁹¹ and remain an A-Class reserve in the control of the RIA⁹²) and adding it to the settlement zone, thereby expanding the settlement area by 25 per cent. The opposition party stated its support for the Bill but noted that the Taskforce recommendation to transfer responsibility and management of both the terrestrial and marine reserves to the (then) Department of Conservation and Land Management (more on this below) is the shortcoming of the legislation (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007b). Only one Independent member of the Legislative Assembly, whom had held discussions on the matter with a community group, the Rottnest Society, voted against the Bill due to concerns that “this new boundary change will leave the door open ... for development on Rottnest Island to increase by 25 per cent” (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007c: n.p.). The proposed extension of the settlement zone has raised suspicions that it is a land grab for future development, as reported in the metropolitan newspaper, *The West Australian* (3 September 2007). The Tourism Minister claims that the rezoning is merely intended to provide clear boundaries separating the protected conservation area and the settlement area, and to include the Kingstown Heritage precinct (see Figure 6.2) in the settlement zone (previously this precinct was partly within and partly outside of the settlement boundary). The Minister describes the boundary change as a minor adjustment and denies that it is a land grab or that there is

⁹¹ The name Wadjemup was chosen to highlight the indigenous history of Rottnest Island.

⁹² The Tourism Minister states that the RIA retaining control of the Reserve “will ensure the decisions making responsibility will remain with one minister and one government agency, whilst ... acknowledging the importance of seeking support, consultation and agreement on decisions, as appropriate, with key stakeholders” (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007a: n.p.). Although the Conservation Reserve will not be under the auspices of the Conservation Commission, a clause has been inserted in the Bill “to ensure that the expertise of the Conservation Commission is made available to the Authority through the development of management plans and in relation to conservation management decisions” (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007d: 3). The expertise of the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority will also be made available to the RIA.

any intention to develop that land, noting that “future developments must fall within the parameters of the Rottnest Island management plan” (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007c: n.p.). While the conservation reserve is to be “created in recognition of this area’s status as an environmental ‘icon’”, it is also being created to highlight its value which “will make the Island more attractive to potential tourism markets, assisting the Island’s drive towards financial self-sufficiency” (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007d). Hence, the reserve appears to be being created partly for economic outcomes.

It is interesting to examine the impact of islandness on governance and management decisions. In part due to its islandness, the local mainland population generally has a strong sense of ownership of and a strong emotional link to Rottnest (Back, 1995). While this strong public association towards Rottnest translates to financial and on-ground support from volunteer groups, it also places the RIA in the spotlight: *People love it dearly and as a result, you do one thing wrong over there and everyone knows about it ... Even the most minor things get blown completely out of proportion because of the high level of ownership that the Western Australian community have for the Island* (SG2). Hercock (1996: 242) argues that Rottnest has “become part of our cultural identity and local character, and therefore, in a democratic system, of interest to government policy”. *Rottnest is a very political place ... because it’s well loved and owned, particularly by the metropolitan area, but by West Australians in general. This is their island; it’s owned by the government so it’s the people’s island and everybody has an opinion. People’s opinions vary so it’s very difficult to keep everybody happy* (SG4). MH4 considers that being in the spotlight affects management decisions:

Because it’s seen as a popular place, many of the decisions made have a political slant to them, i.e. they are ideologically driven rather than being considered from a dispassionate management perspective ... [for example] quokkas denude the vegetation and die with the onset of dry weather. As soon as they start to die there are squeaks and squawks to newspaper reporters and politicians on the mainland.

MH4 cites the problem with asbestos roofs as another example of how being in the spotlight may affect management decisions:

Someone from Perth went over and discovered the asbestos roofs, wrote to the papers and the newspaper, then published articles with headings like 'Health authorities find asbestos scare on Rottnest'. As a result of the negative and somewhat misdirected publicity, the roofs had to be stripped and the asbestos carefully packaged, taken away and dumped on the mainland. The Authority has to bear the cost of that ... I'm not sure all the housing around Perth that has asbestos roofs is being forced to strip them. However, the island authority had to do so because it has a public image on which tourism depends.

As a result of such extreme scrutiny, Authority staff have, according to MH6, got a bunker mentality ... it's not free and open. Anything that goes out in the ether is front page news. We could have a third world war and Rottnest would take the headlines. They're all under pressure ... it's a hot potato. This constant spotlight underscores Rottnest's function of being Perth's main tourist island

Tourism

In this section I focus on the interplay between tourism and island values and, because Rottnest has no permanent residents compared to the other case islands, I explore social tensions between and within the wider community of temporary residents and tourists.

Environmental issues

Much of the conflict between managing Rottnest's tourism business and its natural environment appears to stem from insufficient financial resources. Allocation of these limited resources was also highlighted as a problem by participants. MH1 observes that environmental staff are:

decreasing in number, overworked and aren't getting sufficient resources on a priority allocation basis ... They're building their budget to improve infrastructure and services and upgrading the holiday units ... and downgrading the priority of their budget, staff and financial support to the conservation side ... If this Government continues its philosophy and model, there will be serious public outcry over selling the Island off.

SG2 believes the settlement drains financial resources from the natural environment, and he maintains that there is a conflict of interest in terms of the RIA not directing adequate resources to managing the Island's natural values

to ensure that they were sustainable, which would sustain the business component of their operation in the long-term. As a result, the environmental condition of the Island has perhaps fallen away slightly, and if that was allowed to persist we'd start to see some significant erosion in those values.

However, SG1 considers that having a zoned settlement area protects the rest of the Island: *if the whole island was a tourism and development area then you'd have issues, but under our Act we're not allowed to develop outside of the settlement area.* CG2 believes there is a serious flaw in the RIA Act which states that the Authority must conserve the natural environment but they have a let-out clause in it: *'to the extent that resources allow'.* The environment comes a very bad last in terms of actually budgeting money each year for it.

Limited funding is not the only governance issue that impinges upon environmental management. It is also important to examine the effectiveness of governance by one authority. While a sole statutory authority can facilitate integration between natural and built environments, it could also be argued that there is an inherent conflict in the Authority's charter, in managing both recreational facilities and environmental protection. However, in considering the most appropriate governance structure for the Island, MH1 believes it is important *that it retains its own statutory authority status in the sense of its own act reporting to a minister - because of its special characteristics it needs to be protected.* CG2 recognises problems with alternative governance arrangements:

I'd certainly not like to see it become a privately operated island and it's a good thing that it's not incorporated in a larger department ... If it was in a local council it would have much more development pressure ... Cockburn Shire announced that they'd like to get their hands on Rottnest – keep them off, no way.

CG2's view reflects the perceived risks associated with incorporation with mainland bodies, and the likelihood for further development if this were to occur. Although the

Island is officially part of the Shire of Cockburn, a mainland local government area, it is really in name only as the Island has no ratepayers and is not eligible for local government funding. MH4 considers that a sole statutory authority is the most appropriate governance structure for the Island:

One group has to manage everything or there's no integration between the built and natural environment ... To separate the two dooms the Island. But it's not too much for one body to handle? Not if they're properly resourced ... That means that the State has to look at Rottnest as a tourism icon.

My view is that the Island's management should not be fragmented. Considering the 'wholeness' of islands and the particular circumstances of the entire island being an A Class Reserve, I consider it appropriate to be managed by the one authority. There should be consistency between spatial and administrative boundaries. Although the RIA Board reports to the Minister for Tourism, it is necessary to develop more formal links with the Western Australian environment department (perhaps even through strategies such as secondment of staff from that department to the RIA) in recognition of the Island being much more than just a tourist resort.

SG2 argues that it is not appropriate to have the one authority managing everything, as there are different skills involved:

The complexity of running Western Australia's largest resort - to be viable and competitive it needs ... business people on the Board with those skills, and ... to manage its natural and cultural values requires a completely different skill set and there's a conflict of interest.

In recent years, membership of the Board has largely comprised business people, reflecting the focus on improving the Island's financial sustainability. MH2 notes the effect of changes in Board membership on its environmental philosophy: *The previous Board was friendly towards the environment ... their philosophy for the Island was quite good but they perhaps didn't have very sound business plans and I think that led to their downfall.* SG3 also comments on the high Board member turnover: *if you don't have a lot of residual in the decision-making, more power to the bureaucracy because knowledge is power.* MH1 considers that there needs to be more public accountability of

Board appointments and performance, as some members *are political appointments and they're clearly there to further the government's agenda without considering things in a broader context.*

Another important governance matter proposed in the amendment bill described above provides for changes to the membership of the RIA Board, “primarily to ensure that a broader range of skills is represented on the Authority. The Bill increases members by one and removes the prescriptive nature of membership, thus enabling greater flexibility to appoint members with a wider range of expertise” (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007d: 1). However, surely the currently prescriptive nature of membership, which requires one member each with environmental expertise, built heritage expertise, commercial expertise, and a regular recreational user of Rottnest, already represents a broad range of skills. While the opposition party has raised concerns that these changes may allow the Minister for Tourism to provide ‘jobs for the boys’ and for people politically aligned to a particular government, my concern is about the leaning towards financial skills in place of environmental and cultural heritage skills. It appears that the Government has been so concerned to ensure the financial sustainability of the Island that they were already stacking membership of the Board with financial people at the expense of environmental and cultural heritage expertise⁹³. These new arrangements provide the Government with a legislative avenue to ensure that Board membership is slanted towards those with financial skills. Indeed, it is acknowledged in the explanatory memorandum to the Bill (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007d: 2) that this removal of membership prescription “will ensure a broader range of available skills facilitating good management, with particular regard to attaining financial self-sufficiency” and the Tourism Minister (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007c: n.p.) notes that “flexible membership will provide invaluable support to the authority as we continue the program of financial reform”. It is understandable that the Government wants the RIA to become financially sustainable, but this should not occur at the expense of the very basis of the tourism industry, the Island’s environmental and heritage values.

⁹³ Although an indigenous person was recently (November 2006) appointed to the Board, and she has experience in environment and conservation management, two areas of expertise which had been lacking from the Board.

An important Taskforce recommendation was not implemented (even though the current RIA Chief Executive Officer was a member of the Taskforce) – namely, that responsibility for management of the terrestrial reserves be transferred to the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). The State Government had accepted this recommendation and announced that part of the Island would be declared a national park in recognition of its status as an environmental icon. However, in early 2006 it was decided that the entire island will remain under the control of the RIA and that a conservation reserve will be established instead of a national park. The Department of Environment and Conservation (which replaced CALM on 1 July 2006) will be employed on a management service agreement to undertake conservation work as required (Parliament of Western Australia, 2006). Why was it that the designation for national park status did not proceed? At interview in 2005, participants speculated on the delay in establishing a national park. According to MH3, the proposal may have solved the inherent conflict between managing the environment and managing the tourism business. However,

it seems to be being resisted (even though the Government accepted all the recommendations and told them to get on with it). I think the new CEO, even though he was on the Taskforce, decided, perhaps along with the Board, that some of the recommendations weren't in the Authority's best interest, even though the State thought it was in the State's best interest ... The Authority is concerned about their long-term, continued security over access to the natural area once it becomes a national park. They see that significant components of their business relate to running tours and other business into the Island ... if they were denied access to those or had competition in the market, that could impact very significantly on their financial bottom line (SG2).

MH6 considers that the national park proposal met with resistance from the Board, and this may well be a result of the changes in Board membership, as noted earlier:

It hasn't met with applause from the governing body. They don't want to lose it, even though they don't have the resources nor the expertise ... the problem is, and particularly this Board now, they're all business-oriented people. Not one of those people that this Government has put on [the Board] has an interest in environmental or heritage matters - in fact they know very little about it.

One participant later told me in 2006 (after the national parks proposal was rejected) that it appears that having CALM manage a national park would have been unworkable in terms of reporting to two Ministers (the Tourism and CALM Ministers) and that the RIA was concerned that CALM wanted a percentage of the landing fees. This view was substantiated by the Minister for Tourism, who stated that, although originally supported by the Government, it became apparent that the national park proposal would create “significant issues associated with having a dual management structure ... the authority’s tourism opportunities could have been curtailed” (Parliament of Western Australia, 2007c: n.p.). While the RIA has indicated a desire to transfer responsibility for utilities to external organisations, the same clearly does not apply to environmental management.

Are there now any alternatives to improving environmental management? MH1 argues that a different model is needed,

that has government money going directly to the conservation and sensitive management of the natural and heritage built assets ... if they stopped pretending that the commercial arrangement of the Island was such that it also paid for all that ... Keep the same Board and CEO but split the management and financial arrangements between commercial/tourism and conservation.

SG2 considers that the RIA should focus their resources onto their core responsibilities and:

draw on other government agencies to support them in intelligence and perhaps resourcing ... What becomes the issue then is how you get integration between those agencies so that they’re working together to achieve triple bottom line sustainability through partnership, co-operation, both formally (through memorandums of understanding) and informally (through relationships between staff members).

He also suggests that a Community Service Obligation (CSO) is needed to manage environmental and cultural assets:

Essentially it’s the holiday users that pay for the environmental management of the Island, which is wrong because those cultural and natural values – the

whole community benefits from them being in good condition, whether you go there or not. So that should be paid by the taxpayer.

CG2 also favours a CSO because it would provide an additional measure of certainty in terms of environmental funding:

The Government ... says that we shouldn't be subsidising people's holidays at Rottnest by making government grants ... if you separate out the accommodation and visitor services, the RIA should be expected to run that profitably ... but they still need help to manage the natural environment and built heritage components because these are of state and national importance ... [a CSO would mean there is] an annual sum committed to restoring and caring of the natural environment.

Several community groups have an interest in the Island and contribute to conservation work, which *has been a huge resource ... saved [the RIA] considerably in financial outlay* (SG4). For example, the Rottnest Island Foundation is a voluntary organisation that acts as a channel for funding research identified by the RIA, particularly for environment and heritage conservation; and the Rottnest Society is a not-for-profit friends group that promotes preservation of the environment and character of Rottnest and undertakes a significant amount of tree planting. In total, 23 per cent of the Island's residents are volunteers (ABS, 2007).

Social issues

Although Rottnest Island does not have a permanent resident population, there are social problems concerning the temporary population and tourists. Rottnest's natural environment has been described as vulnerable, and MH1 argues that its social environment is also at risk: *You've only got to get a football team staying overnight and get on the grog [alcohol] and it's really quite frightening how isolated you feel.* According to Seddon (1983: 35), islands are perceived to be outside the law: "expectation of some release from the restraints of the mainland is strong, and this creates special problems of management, which must try to create a sense of freedom that is not socially or physically destructive". SG3 considers that island tourists have a different mindset, particularly in relation to street drinking: *you get this feeling of real separation that can lead people to think that the laws are different.* Such issues were

particularly problematic in the mid-1990s, but SG4 argues that they have been effectively managed by the RIA:

There was a lot of 'blotto on Rotto'⁹⁴ mentality ... The Authority has worked really, really hard to manage that. Probably one of the greatest success stories would be our leavers' period⁹⁵ ... we're now recognised around Australia as a leading location in management of that kind of event ... New Year's Eve was another big event that was almost out-of-hand some years ago ... We'd wake up with 10,000 people in the settlement which is only 200 hectares, so the impact of that would be enormous - socially, physically and environmentally. We've been able to control ferry movements ... and the capacity of the hotel.

With limited entry points in comparison to mainland destinations, islandness confers the advantage of potential to control visitor numbers. The RIA also has some control over the number of private boats because there is a fixed number of about 900 moorings. School leavers are now accommodated away from the main settlement, as *before that it was all integrated and you'd get international tourists turning up and there could be dishevelled students lying around – not a good look* (SG3).

Joske et al. (1995: 5) describe the RIA staff as a community of common interest: “residential impermanence has dominated most social relations. The widest division in the population is between the resident workers and the visiting holidaymakers. The residents, themselves temporary, are less temporary than the visitors. This distinction identifies the local community and binds them with a common interest”. Tensions between tourism uses of the Island and its function as a temporary home to residents were made palpable in the mid-1990s⁹⁶. Following the *Rottnest Island Review* (Government of Western Australia, 1995), the quest to improve the function of Rottnest as a tourist destination resulted in conflicts with the resident community. Several staff were moved off-island and made to commute (facilitated by faster ferry services), partly so that the RIA could reclaim housing as tourist accommodation⁹⁷, and because a *culture*

⁹⁴ 'Blotto' is a colloquial term meaning drunkenness.

⁹⁵ Period of celebration for senior (grade 12) leaving students at the end of the school year.

⁹⁶ Another change at this time was that the RIA set up an office in Fremantle next to the ferry departure point, to ensure there were *proper management processes on the mainland and not relying on running it from an island which was extremely difficult* (MH1).

⁹⁷ Of the total private dwellings in 2006, 36 per cent were unoccupied, indicating that the RIA could lease out more dwellings (if these are in a satisfactory condition) to tourists (ABS, 2007).

of 'us and them' [had] developed. The people who lived on Rottneest didn't really want the visitors ... they felt as though they owned the Island (CG2). MH1 explains that by having staff off-island,

there wasn't that sort of local culture around an island community, which was terribly strong and focussed on its own social and work arrangements and the grey area between the two running the risk of compromising quality service delivery to the visitor.

Understandably, there was much resistance to this forced relocation and the CEO at the time (1995-6) *just about got lynched by the union people* (SG3). Such resistance can be related to the sense of place that islandness confers, and also the sense of personal identity, as MH1 suggests:

Some people get island-locked - those people who just get frenzied at the thought of living elsewhere. When [it was] suggested staff leave the Island and commute, some just went into panic mode ... You can get used to living on an island where it provides its own social and economic buffer ... they feel different and very secure away from the structures and demands of suburbia. Many avoid investment, mortgages, asset ownership ... with new management policies on Rottneest where there isn't a sense any more of the 'forever being able to live there' this need not be such a problem.

However, SG3 reveals that there are still problems with staff perceptions of island ownership, and hence with visitor service:

There's a mindset that 'this is our island and these people coming here are causing us a lot of inconvenience to our lifestyle' and they get so locked in. They get this insular attitude ... those people don't have any commitment to financial sustainability - that's irrelevant to them; they're living a lifestyle ... The customer service ethic has been so bad.

Before the mass relocation to the mainland there were 80-85 staff living on the Island, some with families; now 204 people (including families) live there, but that can increase to 300 during the peak season. Communications with resident staff is a problem: *sea-changers move away for a whole range of things ... finding ways to communicate to people who don't want to read a paper or go onto the internet is a tough call and a cultural shift ... some don't like their peace and tranquillity interrupted by tourists*

(SG1). This focus of some residents on lifestyle reflects the lifestyle choices that characterise sea change.

The island community has not necessarily been coherent. Joske et al. (1995: 8) cite former Rottnest Board member Somerville; as occurs with “humans living in small numbers in isolated places, the men and women of Rottnest invented plenty of trouble ... [including] petty squabbles over minor routine matters ... This phenomenon is known to permanent residents as ‘Rottnestitis’”. Joske et al. (1995: 287) also cite comments by a former accommodation lessee:

Tensions arise because you are living in a monopoly situation. For example, there is only one electrician on the island, there’s only one of everything on the island ... so that if for any reason at all you disagree with them on any subject under the sun ... they can immediately cut off your power ... and that’s the kind of petty way people behave when they’re in a small community.

While they may boost financial sustainability, further tourism developments and increased visitors numbers pose a threat to the social ambience of Rottnest Island. Participants report that Western Australians generally⁹⁸ hold the Island in strong affection. *People are passionate about it and it’s about its laid-back character; walking onto the Island and feeling all your cares drop away* (CG2). SG2 recognises that part of the charm of Rottnest is its *old-worldly development - part of that is the cultural values but the fact that it’s not high-rise, not modern tourism development and it caters mostly for local residents*. Seddon’s (1983: 38) view that “the relative simplicity of the society is a satisfying contrast with that of the mainland” is mirrored by MH1:

Everything’s done by foot so it lends itself to a closer, family-friendly, relaxed environment where you do things differently, unlike the mainland. It has an air of not being commercial and therefore being far simpler in its presentation of its product.

⁹⁸ Joske et al. (1995) note that opinion over Rottnest Island’s ambience is divided; some people hate it. More importantly, to many indigenous Western Australians, Rottnest or Wadjemup, is known primarily as a prison, and there are obvious tensions between this past use of the Island and its current use as a holiday island.

Gillis (2004: 141) recognises the general appeal of islands to families and relates this to personal identity:

By the late nineteenth century, islands and other remote islanded places had become the favorite locus of middle-class family holidays ... By then childhood had come to be a primary source of selfhood, the thing adults most frequently used to explain themselves to themselves and to others ... the isles allowed a brief sojourn in childishness that did not threaten the adulthood associated with mainland existence ... There adults could reconnect not only to their children and grandchildren, but to their own childhoods.

Rottnest has long been a popular place for family holidays:

People can take their kids there and show them how little they need to be happy ... leave your techno gear at home; don't bother getting a television set ... you often get cross-generations. The granddads know how to fish and where to catch the fish and the kids can learn something from grandad who is pretty useless with a computer. All these people go in groups every year to basically renew (CG2).

The RIA (2004: 2) defines the Rottnest ethos as “a relaxed, casual, and largely self-directed holiday experience”. It is recognised in the Taskforce Report (2004) that both the environment and the lifestyle are what gives Rottnest its special ethos. The RIA tries to maintain a *social ambience that's conducive to family-orientated, low impact, nature-based holidays ... We call that the Rottnest ethos ... which can get ruined with high impact visitors (SG4)*. It is not only visitor types, but visitor numbers that can affect the Rottnest experience: *The ultimate question is how many visitors is too many to take away from the essential character of Rottnest? ... The tension for management is this question of their income and the numbers, and how to manage them (CG2)*. MH2 has observed a great increase in day visitors with faster ferries⁹⁹, and an accompanying change in the quality of the experience:

⁹⁹ Seddon (1983: 35-6) acknowledges that “because of the special place islands hold in our imagination, the way in which we reach them is very important to some people ... [The ferry] is tradition, and thus begins ‘the Rottnest experience’ at the jetty, slowing the clock [and it includes] an element of simplification and a rejection of high technology”. However, ferries now go at full rip ... the hydrofoil zaps across there in 25 minutes from Fremantle at high cost (SG3).

In the past they were holiday-makers who came to stay for a while ... In places like Salmon Bay ... there were always a few families swimming and snorkeling and it was lovely. Recently we went over there and it was like going to a busy metropolitan beach ... they were all day visitors coming by bus, so that particularly nice area has been brought back to the level of a metropolitan beach. It has lost its special characteristics ... there's been a deterioration in the quality of the experience ... It's indicative of the kind of change that could make a very big difference to Rottnest.

MH2's comments reveal the increasing homogeneity of Rottnest Island with its mainland, and the resulting diminishment of its special characteristics, or islandness. Efforts to homogenise Rottnest with the mainland were demonstrated in the 1980s, with a proposal to bring manufactured entertainment activities to the Island (there has been a history of negative public reactions to development proposals on Rottnest but particularly in regard to this one proposed by the Burke State Government):

Brian Burke had been Shadow Minister for Tourism and the tourism mob had done a really good job on him and he got this architect to do a plan for Rottnest and it had skating rinks, water slides, all these terrible 'doing things' instead of just getting on a bike ... There was so much outcry but good things came out of that because the first environmental management plan was written and Rottnest got its own Act. There was a complete about-face by the government ... they dropped it like a red hot potato (MH6).

This outcome reflects the issue discussed in the previous chapter about how external threats can reinforce islandness – in this case through recognition of the island values at stake from development and consequent efforts to protect these values.

On the subject of major developments, CG2 comments that *governments now know it is dynamite ... it's pretty well embedded now in the consciousness of politicians that it's not the way to go*. However, the RIA is now trying to attract more international tourists (who are typically higher-yielding than domestic visitors) by developing higher quality accommodation. It was recently announced (Government of Western Australia, 2007) that a private operator will develop a four-star, 120 room hotel at Mount Herschel (see Figure 6.2) which, in MH1's view is *understandable in the sense of the Island not being a significant drain on the public purse forever, but the risk to be managed closely is the removal of the culture of the laid-back, lazy, shorts and thongs-type island ... They were clever in pushing it as ecotourism ... hard to argue against that*. SG3's following

comments on the perceptions of international tourists raise the issue of who the Island is 'for' – international tourists or locals (the RIA Act specifies the latter): *our concrete floors ... don't go down too well and the feedback that you then get is negative ... this hotel thing will bridge that ... it will have carpet on the floor and television sets and will be like an ordinary hotel*. However, many participants believe that Rottnest is an extraordinary place that should not be made to resemble other (mainland) tourist destinations: *my attitude is why put it here? Why not just put it on the mainland? We've got a million square kilometres of land ... if you've got something like Rottnest, don't destroy it* (CG1); *There's scope for some development but it would need to be very low-key and in keeping with the existing feel of the Island, that it didn't impact on that ethos - a laid-back place* (SG2).

Resistance to (over)development stems from islandness: "The pressures to keep the Island unsophisticated follow from the notion of Rottnest as a "get away from it all" holiday" (Joske et al. 1995: 5). MH2 is concerned about:

allowing unlimited expansion of accommodation and facilities and increased activities until it became identical with any other densely used holiday resort and so you've really lost something ... Rottnest is its own attraction. It doesn't need additional activities to make it more attractive. People going there are getting exercise riding bikes or swimming or snorkelling or walking around the Island and it's a good thing to do. It's healthy, both physically and mentally.

The Rottnest Society acts as a lobby group, which is reflected in its origins in 1984 *when Burke wanted to put a marina and five-star hotel on the Island and market it to the rich or overseas people - it got thousands of signatories overnight and blew the plan out of the water* (MH1). The Society (2007a) expressed concern that there was no formal public consultation period for the current hotel plans, as had been indicated by the Tourism Minister (Tourism Western Australia, 2005). Following a public campaign by the Society, the RIA opened up a brief public comment period on the proposed development (two weeks after the Government had announced the preferred proponent). The RIA (2007) subsequently made amendments to the Rottnest Island Management Plan, including changing zoning to allow the hotel to be built. Legally, it seems that these amendments should have been approved before the hotel development process

began, and not as a result of public pressure. Despite having no permanent resident population, community consultation about such developments is vital, as Rottnest is a public island¹⁰⁰. The hotel is expected to attract an additional 90,000 (or 18 per cent) visitors annually. In addition to its potential impact on Rottnest's social and environmental values, an increase in overnight visitors would place greater pressure on the limited island resources and infrastructure. Considering the target market for the hotel, this development appears to undermine a key feature of Rottnest's social values – that of its egalitarian nature. The hotel may well become an exclusive enclave, even though the Taskforce (2004: 85) warned that it would be inappropriate to “construct an enclave style development with restricted access, or which was viewed as being exclusive.”

Existing accommodation has been upgraded as a result of funding injections following the Taskforce recommendations. While this upgrading is in part due to deterioration of the units, it also relates to changing expectations:

What was at Rottnest 10, 15, 20 years ago was fine because a lot of people's own houses were similar ... but as people's standards of homes have risen, the disparity between that and Rottnest became quite extreme ... what we've said about the upgrading is that it's good, new, clean and utilitarian, but the kids can still come in with sand on their feet – that's like a measure (SG3).

People want to have the TV, comfortable lounges, soft floors ... The standard's being driven by the market generally and the tourism industry responding in other locations to provide high quality tourism accommodation, and now people see this huge disparity between Rottnest's accommodation and other places where you pay an equivalent rate (SG2).

In SG1's view, Rottnest *can't be left as a basically undeveloped type environment ... Up to maybe nine years ago, you didn't actually have water in your units; you had salt water for showers ... However the people who are against developments or changes don't want to lose the water now.* The Rottnest Society (2007b: 4) is concerned that “this kind of development [proposed for Mt Herschel] will bring more and more requests for

¹⁰⁰ The affinity of mainlanders for islands in the absence of permanent residents is also evident in the case of Lancelin Island, 100 kilometres north of Perth. Revitt and Sanders (2002) investigated conflicts regarding public use of the Island, particularly balancing ecotourism with conservation, which are issues of importance to the mainland community of Lancelin.

additional services and facilities which will turn Rottnest into everywhere else”. Indicators of Rottnest’s increasing homogenisation with its mainland are demonstrated by the island presence of franchise companies Red Rooster (Australian fast food company) and Dome (Western Australian coffee company).

Following the accommodation upgrades (including the provision of televisions), the RIA raised tariffs by between nine and 30 per cent (RIA, 2006b). This cost increase, combined with the hotel development, raises the question of whether a form of tourism gentrification is occurring (in a place where private land ownership is forbidden), as opposed to island residential gentrification (Jackson, 2006c). *If they keep putting the price up to make it economically sustainable, to recover the costs of their operation, they’re going to limit it to only those wealthy people that can afford it* (MH5). Indeed, some of the Rottnest Society’s efforts have focused on “resisting development which we believe would lead to the *gentrification* and urbanization of Rottnest” (Rottnest Society, date unknown, emphasis added). A process of marine gentrification may also be occurring. With renewable mooring leases, there are some temporary but regular marine communities around the Island: *Every bay has got a very distinct social group in them because of the moorings ... they reapply for that every year and usually the same people get them* (MH5); *People are building bigger and bigger boats ... multi-millionaires have three-storey high boats, 80, 90 feet long ... in these little bays and they bump into other boats and you can’t see the view because of them and they loom over everybody* (MH2). Considering the cost of the ferry service (up to \$66 per adult return from Perth) and the fact that private watercraft tend to be owned by relatively wealthy people, Rottnest may be perceived as becoming an increasingly exclusive island.

Ioannides and Holcomb (2003: 40) argue against ‘up-market’ tourism development, claiming that it reflects a “preoccupation with economic objectives, often paying only lip-service to environmental and societal concerns”. They point to evidence that per capita water and energy demands of tourists in up-market facilities exceed those of mass tourists and domestic visitors. Their following observation suggests that Rottnest may struggle to attract high-yielding international tourists:

most island destinations lack the rich cultural attractions and diversity that can be found in cosmopolitan areas such as global cities and, therefore, face an uphill battle in their efforts to lure sophisticated and high-spending travellers ... it is the Islands' natural resources (i.e. beaches and sunshine) that attract most travellers (Ioannides & Holcomb, 2003: 44).

Hence, the RIA should focus on Rottnest's natural competitive advantages over the mainland, rather than trying to compete by constructing city-style accommodation and facilities.

To summarise the key tensions between managing tourism and the Island's environmental and social values, the RIA needs to boost its financial sustainability and one way to do so is to further tourist development and encourage more visitors. This strategy is the RIA's current approach and it is argued that by improving financial sustainability, more funding will be available for environmental management. However, increased development and visitor numbers will also place greater pressure on the environment, and may unsettle or disrupt Rottnest's social ambience and ethos. Both such impacts can, in turn, negatively affect the Island's financial sustainability by way of falling visitor numbers, since environmental and social values are the main foundations of tourism to the Island. The arguments for a CSO for the Island's environment and heritage are reasonable and a CSO would reduce dependence on funding environmental management through tourism. Considering these conflicts for management, is it possible for Rottnest Island to become a model for sustainability?

Sustainability

The 500,000 annual tourists to Rottnest Island impact upon a key visitor drawcard: the natural environment. Participants describe Rottnest's environment as vulnerable: *As an island, it's susceptible to high winds, erosion and degradation (MH1); Rottnest is a rock with sand and a very thin layer of vegetation ... The harsh environment that we're in is bad enough, so any additional pressure is heavy duty (SG4)*. Participants identified a range of tourist impacts on the environment, including coastal pressures, dune blowouts from uncontrolled access, reef and seagrass damage, marine pollution, and also wear and

tear on heritage buildings (many of which are tourist accommodation). Tourism has not been the only source of environmental impacts. Herccock (1996: 244) notes that the combination of earlier activities such as hunting and shooting, firewood collection, vegetation clearing and burning have all contributed to the alteration of Rottnest's landscape; as a result, "the vegetation of Rottnest more closely resembles the coastal vegetation on the mainland than it did when Rottnest was uninhabited". Little of the Island's original forest remains; this is also due in part due to scientific activities. In the 1950s and 1960s, quokkas were used in scientific studies and the population was encouraged to increase, which consequently limited vegetation regrowth and reforestation attempts (Herccock, 1996).

Although often described as environmentally vulnerable, islands also have qualities that offer some protection against development. For example, difficult access and limited natural resources can restrict tourist development. Seddon (1983: 39) notes that Rottnest's lack of naturally occurring freshwater streams "rules out the possibility of informal camping in natural areas. Rottnest is tied inescapably to a serviced settlement acting as a base for exploration ... for one day only". Surprisingly, approximately 90 per cent of visitors never leave the settlement, *which is a bit disappointing in a way, but it does mean they don't impact on the Island too much* (CG1). Reflecting the Island's lozenge shape, circular routes around the coast are popular, *so there is a lot of the Island in the middle where people don't go in quite the same numbers* (CG2). However, recent RIA strategies, such as increasing the frequency of tour buses, encourage tourists to venture outside the settlement. Wadjemup Lighthouse in the centre of the Island has recently been opened to the public as a tourism precinct: *An old military house will be turned into a café so people will hopefully be drawn to the centre of the Island* (SG1).

The RIA wants to develop Rottnest as a model of sustainability (encompassing economic, environmental and social sustainability) (RIA, 2003a). Where does it stand at the moment?

There's lip service paid to sustainability but this is a case of where things have been done in the past that require remediation before sustainability can be countenanced ... There's a need to tightly integrate people management with environmental care to make it sustainable (MH4).

We're on a journey to sustainable management. I wouldn't class us as sustainable at this point but that's a clear strategic direction ... We do quite well on our environmental bottom line; we're improving in our social bottom line; and slowly improving economically but that's probably a critical issue for us (SG4).

SG4's comment provides support to Whittaker's (1998) view that that ecological sustainability is the easiest form of sustainability on islands. SG2 agrees that economic and social sustainability are lagging behind environmental sustainability; he suggests that challenges associated with being an island have led to positive environmental outcomes:

[Islands have] to adapt to some pretty tough circumstances and that's why Rottnest probably is a leader in some of those areas of design, energy efficiency and water efficiency but, on the other hand, they're vulnerable socially and economically ... cost of transport ... If fuel prices go up ... If they get two weeks of bad weather and have to cancel all their bookings ... that could impact very significantly on their cash flow. So they have this mix of vulnerability plus resilience.

SG4 also points to island features have induced environmental sustainability: *Because we're isolated and have to supply water, power and all the rest of it, we've been quite shrewd over time to deal with water conservation and waste reduction. Waste, water and power are the main environmental sustainability issues. As part of a new waste management strategy, the RIA expects to have 95 per cent diversion of waste from landfill so we're really getting on top of all of those aspects. It will go to the mainland (SG4); They've started shipping the waste away from the Island. I don't know whether you'd call that sustainability – shipping your problem somewhere else – but Australia has got more capacity to cope with that than Rottnest does (MH2). The shipping of waste to the mainland represents a reversal of the typical use of islands by mainlands for negative functions. The RIA has also introduced a 'no plastic bag' policy, although they have a lot of trouble with the businesses to try to get them to reduce plastic bags (CG2).*

The Rottnest Island Environmental Advisory Committee has an important role in environmental matters but the RIA has not always followed its advice: *On the Thomson Bay foreshore the two tearooms have been built out and they're both really on the dune*

areas ... *The Advisory Committee unanimously objected to it* (MH2). The photo at the beginning of this chapter (Figure 6.1) was taken from one of these tearooms. Another example of the Authority ignoring the Environmental Advisory Committee's advice (or not acting on it promptly) was in the case of the desalination plant:

They found a freshwater mound and put lots of bores in ... and it's overlying saltwater¹⁰¹ ... The Advisory Committee recommended that they put in a desalination plant and pump less but they didn't and they came pretty close to running out of water and ruined the aquifer ... They started off the summer with about 35 bores working and ended with 9 or less that weren't pumping saltwater and so they put in a desalination plant (MH2).

Since desalination plants are very power-intensive, a wind turbine was installed in 2004 to reduce reliance on diesel. It appears that the turbine was installed primarily to reduce power costs, rather than for environmental purposes. While it may appear that the RIA is adopting a number of environmental innovations, many of these outcomes are due to a combination of challenges related to islandness and to economic necessity rather than because of any pronounced ecological drive:

Its sustainability initiatives, through necessity rather than necessarily other means, have been quite unprecedented ... it has been driven to that point by the fact that it has had to save money, and it's under the spotlight ... It has had to develop innovative ways in providing those resources, whether it be energy through wind turbines; gas generators; their recycling programs have been very good and that's a result of just running out of room to have rubbish tips (SG2).

The RIA has taken advantage of two characteristic island qualities - abundant wind and sea water - to provide wind power and desalinated water. Islandness, combined with Rottnest Island's governance structure (one authority in control of the entire island), could be employed to a greater extent to promote environmental sustainability:

Because of its location; because they have total control of it, they could set it up to be a wonderful model for sustainability ... It could demonstrate high levels of renewable energy use; water conservation; different methods of desalination; the fact that they only have management vehicles (SG2).

¹⁰¹ Like the surfaces of many limestone islands (Nunn, 2007), Rottnest is of low relief and has an underlying freshwater lens which rests above limestone saturated with sea water.

Hence, there is ample opportunity for Rottnest to become a model for environmental sustainability, but only if tourism is well-managed. Another goal of the RIA is for the Island to be a sustainable tourism icon for Western Australia (RIA, 2004). Leal Filho (1996) suggests various measures to promote rational development of island tourism. For example, structural measures such as limiting development can prevent damage to landscape attractiveness. In a recent move, perhaps in anticipation of the hotel development, the RIA (2006b) released a document, 'Guidelines for Sustainable Development at Rottnest Island', with the aim to ensure that future developments are low-impact and sustainable. The guidelines largely relate to environmental and social aspects of proposals. Leal Filho (1996) also notes that logistical measures, such as upgrading waste management systems, aim to maintain an area's ability to cope with visitors, while educational measures can raise awareness of local residents and tourists about the impacts of their behaviour on the environment. The Rottnest Voluntary Guides Association provides tour services to increase awareness of the Island's natural environment and historical significance, and the RIA produces visitor brochures and ample signage, and provides educational courses. However, underlying funding problems must be resolved before Rottnest Island can become either a model for sustainability or a sustainable tourism icon.

The place of history

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, there is ongoing incongruity between Rottnest Island's past use as an Aboriginal prison and its contemporary function as a tourism resort. The transformation from 'Holocaust Island' (Dixon, 1990) to holiday island began more than a century ago. Rottnest's island qualities appealed to the administration, in terms of providing both exile and isolation (Pearn, 1995), and it was claimed that the island prison would allow Aborigines some freedom, and that inmates would be rehabilitated into colonial society (Kwaymullina, 2001). However, since the prison was built at a time of resistance to white invasion, Kwaymullina (2001: 110) considers that "Wajemup was seen as a place on which Aboriginal people could be conveniently contained, 'out of sight and out of mind'", and that isolation made escape

back to the mainland difficult. The prison was established in 1838, and its inmates came from many parts of Western Australia, corresponding with European expansion throughout the colony. “Wajemup, a part of Noongar dreaming, became a place to be feared, a place of brutality, violence and death” (Kwaymullina, 2001: 109). The prison officially closed in 1904, although prisoners built roads and other works on the Island until 1931 (RIA, 2005d). During its operation, approximately 3,700 Aboriginal men and boys¹⁰² were imprisoned, and the death rate is said to be ten per cent¹⁰³ (RIA, 2005d): *There were 387 Aboriginals who died on the Island ... the best of the best from the whole state – the young people who were basically the radicals; the ones that wanted a better life, were brought to this island* (SG1).

Seddon (1983: 36-7) considers it symbolic that Rottnest “should have been both light and dark, holiday paradise and aboriginal prison ... Islands have such a weight of symbolic meaning in our culture that the experience of them resonates in the mind and imagination, and in this lies much of their power.” The current role of the Island as a tourist destination lies in stark contrast to its former use; yet Rottnest as a public tourist island owes much to its penal origins. Prisoners constructed many buildings and lighthouses, which now contribute to Rottnest’s tourist charm. The establishment of Rottnest as a prison put a stop to private land ownership, as the Crown resumed all grants in June 1839 and compensated the early settlers. Hence, the origins of the public recreation reserve stem from its use as a prison. If the prison had not been established, Rottnest might now be Perth’s island suburb.

The RIA claims that it is trying to improve its relationship with indigenous groups but the brutal chapter of Aboriginal internment seems to have been suppressed. Many tourists are no doubt unaware of the Island’s dark past, and indeed, perhaps it is not in the RIA’s best interests to focus on this chapter of the Island’s history, as it may be detrimental to tourism. Kwaymullina (2001: 117) notes only two visible signs of this aspect of the Island’s history: the museum and the Aboriginal cemetery, and comments that “the consignment of Wajemup’s Aboriginal history to a small corner of the museum

¹⁰² The Rottnest Island Boys' Reformatory opened in 1881 next to the Aboriginal Prison and operated for 20 years (RIA, 2005e).

¹⁰³ This figure is disputed by oral histories, which suggest a higher death rate (Kwaymullina, 2001).

exemplifies the relegation of Aboriginal people to the fringes of history”. The prison and Boys' Reformatory had been a hostel since the early 1900s but were upgraded and converted into the Rottnest Lodge Resort in the late 1980s; its rooms look out on a space formerly occupied by the gallows (Mickler, 1990). Concerning this redevelopment of the former prison, Green (1997: 83) argues: “Very few societies in the world would convert to tourist accommodation prison cells in which an estimated 287 people died in miserable conditions thousands of kilometres from their homelands and families. It is comparable to transforming Auschwitz concentration camp into holiday cottages”.

‘Tentland’, the camping ground on the Island, was closed in 2007 after ground probing radar found that the camp site was partially situated over the Aboriginal burial ground (where most of the prisoners were buried). The tension between Rottnest’s present and past is perhaps best expressed by two compelling pieces: artist Sally Morgan’s (1989) painting ‘Greetings From Rottnest’, showing happy tourists standing above unmarked Aboriginal graves, and Graeme Dixon’s (1990: 32) poem, ‘Holocaust island’; the following is an excerpt:

[Tourists come] To relax and turn to brown
To recuperate from woe and toil
and leave their problems far behind ...
But what they refuse to realise
Is that in this little Isle
are skeletons in their cupboards
of deeds most foul and vile

Limb (2000: 5) compares the history of Rottnest and Robben Islands and concludes that:

most South Africans would view Robben Island as a grim reminder of a detestable past, whilst most Australians are content to enjoy Rottnest as a tourist escape, either blissfully ignorant or – in keeping with John Howard’s [Australia’s former Prime Minister] assault on “black armband history” – deliberately neglectful of its horrendous penal history.

There are significant opportunities for the RIA to work with the Aboriginal communities of Western Australia to properly acknowledge both the Island’s long-term use by Aborigines and its more recent use as a prison, and to show more sensitivity regarding

the siting and use of tourism accommodation. In the quest for future island sustainability, the past cannot be forgotten.

Key learnings from this case

Conflicts regarding public use of land, particularly balancing tourism use with conservation, are issues of international significance but it is important to examine such problems in a local context. Rottnest Island is a small offshore island which makes an interesting case study because it has no permanent land-owners, yet is of immense social value to temporary residents and to tourists, particularly Western Australians. Rottnest Island provides an example of the importance of islands to mainlanders, particularly in providing a sense of place. As such, islandness has fostered a form of social capital that has been expressed in volunteer activities and resistance to inappropriate tourism developments. Aside from the value of islands in their own right, it is important to maintain islands (and islandness) because mainlands are becoming more homogenous: *In the face of loss of beaches, loss of public open space in metropolitan areas, and as we're facing more and more intensive development, Rottnest is more important than ever ... Having something like this on our doorstep is an absolute gift* (CG2).

Much of Rottnest Island's tourism appeal lies in its distinctiveness from its adjacent metropolitan mainland. While Perth has many attractive beaches, Rottnest is separated from the mainland and is a 'complete' destination - containing human scale built and natural environments. Rottnest Island is firmly in Perth's spotlight, in terms of its visibility from Perth's coast, and in terms of media attention. It is not only the Island's natural values that are at risk from tourism. Seddon (1983: 35) is concerned about maintaining the Island's social values: "In considering the future of Rottnest, the conservation of 'the Rottnest experience' has to be the prime concern". Both increases in tourism numbers and new tourism developments may threaten the ethos of Rottnest, and thereby undermine the social component of its islandness. Such developments, and the upgrading of existing accommodation, are posited as necessary in order to meet public expectations (due to higher standards of accommodation elsewhere). However, such a

mentality can ultimately result in Rottnest's homogenisation with the mainland that managers are comparing the Island to. Instead, it is important to focus on what is unique about Rottnest Island; to maintain, for example, the reasons why this Island remained an 'island of the mind' in my own mind after first visiting it in 2000. Ultimately, if higher income tourists are targeted, Rottnest may become an exclusive destination and so lose its character as an egalitarian place. Somerville, amongst others, recognised the values of Rottnest Island early last century, and he objected to proposals to subdivide the Island. It would be a shame, 100 years later, to surrender the people's island to 'snobocracy' now.

Although a mainland jurisdiction (state government) governs Rottnest Island, management is characterised as insular. Its managers desire autonomy – for example they did not want to share management with CALM. The wider community plays important roles in managing the Island for sustainability, from hands-on environmental activities to lobbying efforts against inappropriate developments. There are opportunities for Rottnest to become a model for sustainability but various economic and social challenges need to first be overcome. In particular, environmental management should be properly funded. A Community Service Obligation (CSO) is needed to manage the Island's environmental and cultural assets. As noted in chapter three, islandness relates to connections to the wider world; it is recommended that the RIA improve linkages with other government departments.

To conclude, it appears that Rottnest Island's ethos is at risk from further tourism development and greater visitor numbers. Will community visions for the Island guide its future or will it be in the hands of only the RIA¹⁰⁴ and Tourism WA? There is no doubt that it requires a difficult balancing act to improve economic, environmental and social sustainability in popular tourist destinations. However, the RIA has some comparative advantages that it can employ in trying to achieve this balance, some of which relate to islandness. For example, there are no permanent residents and accompanying issues of private land ownership to contend with and, in having control of the entire island (i.e. consistency between spatial and administrative boundaries), the

¹⁰⁴ I am in no way suggesting that RIA staff are deliberately neglecting the Island's environmental and social values in favour of economic gain. Rather, I believe that staff (particularly those that have the opportunity to live on the Island) hold the place in great affection.

RIA is in a strong management position and can simultaneously draw on specialist government departments for advice if it makes these connections with the wider world. If a small island cannot become a model for sustainability, what hope do larger jurisdictions have in achieving economic, environmental and social sustainability? When determining the future path of tourism, surely Rottneest Island's environmental and social values must not be left to a game of chance due to economic pressures.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PHILLIP ISLAND: A BRIDGE TOO FAR?



Figure 7.1: Bridge to Phillip Island, taken from the Victorian mainland town of San Remo (source: the author)

PHILLIP ISLAND: A BRIDGE TOO FAR?

The new bridge has in many ways been the downfall of the Island (R2¹⁰⁵).

This chapter examines how the key research themes apply to Phillip Island, considering its status as a bridged island. Phillip Island has been connected to the mainland of Victoria by a bridge since 1940; hence in relation to the Island's distinctions from its mainland, I will particularly focus on the consequences of this fixed link. I go beyond theoretical discussions about the impact of a bridge on the definition of an island (as discussed in chapter three) to examine an empirical case of a bridged island and explore participant perceptions of the bridge's economic, environmental and social consequences¹⁰⁶. Has the fixed link physically, socially and politically integrated Phillip Island to the mainland to such a degree that it has lost some of its island qualities, or islandness? I also focus on the intangible effects of the bridge, particularly on sense of place and islander identity. In chapter nine I compare Phillip Island with the unbridged case studies in terms of islandness.

Following an examination of how a bridge of a particular kind (not electronic, aviatory, nor maritime, but road-based) affects how the Island is seen and functions, I examine what tourists and residents value about Phillip Island (and whether there are any challenges involved with living on or attracting tourists to the bridged island). Phillip Island attracts the greatest number of tourists of all the case islands: 3.2 million visitors annually, the majority of whom are day trip visitors. Its residential population is also increasing; in 2006 the permanent population was 8,136 (ABS, 2007). I focus on issues of sustainable development through examining tourism and residential development impacts on the Island's environment and community. I draw on two examples of sustainability issues on the Island: tensions between tourism and environmental

¹⁰⁵ Participant speaking positions are identified as R (resident), SG (State Government officer), LG (Local Government officer), and T (participant involved in the tourism industry).

¹⁰⁶ It is difficult to compare the differences between an unbridged and a bridged Phillip Island, as it was connected to the mainland almost 70 years ago and, in any case I did not deliberately set out to find older continuous residents to interview. Also, it is difficult to determine to what extent any possible impacts should be attributed to changing times rather than to the impacts of a bridge. As with any bridged island, it is impossible to know what would have happened over time if the Island had not been bridged.

management at the Penguin Parade; and tensions between a residential estate and environmental management in the case of the Summerland Estate Buyback Scheme. The final section of this chapter concerns local and state governance arrangements for Phillip Island, and the relationship between islandness and governance.

Phillip Island (Figure 7.2) is approximately 85km (120km by road) south-east of Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria. After Sydney, Melbourne is Australia's second largest city. The Island is situated at the southern end and partially across the entrance of Western Port Bay and is bordered to the south by Bass Strait, the sea which separates Tasmania from mainland Australia. On the eastern side a channel (half a kilometre to 1.5km wide) called The Narrows separates the Island from the San Remo Peninsula on the Victorian mainland; this is where the bridge connects the Island to the mainland (Figure 7.1). Phillip Island is a comfortable day-trip from Melbourne and is accessible by road via the 640-metre long concrete bridge, or less commonly by passenger ferry¹⁰⁷ from Stony Point on the Mornington Peninsula. As a public transport link, the ferry is subsidised by the Victorian Government but approximately 95 per cent of tourists travel to the Island by car. Phillip Island is about half the size of its Western Port neighbour, the unbridged and sparsely populated French Island. Phillip Island has approximately 100 kilometres of coastline, is relatively low lying (the highest point is Cape Woolamai at 110m), and has a climate milder than Melbourne, one which can be described as moderate oceanic.

¹⁰⁷ There are plans to introduce a vehicular ferry from the Mornington Peninsula as part of a larger Victorian touring route, which would likely increase tourism to the Island. The island's airport is for helicopters and light rather than commercial aircraft (a 30 minute flight from Melbourne) and public transport within the Island is minimal.

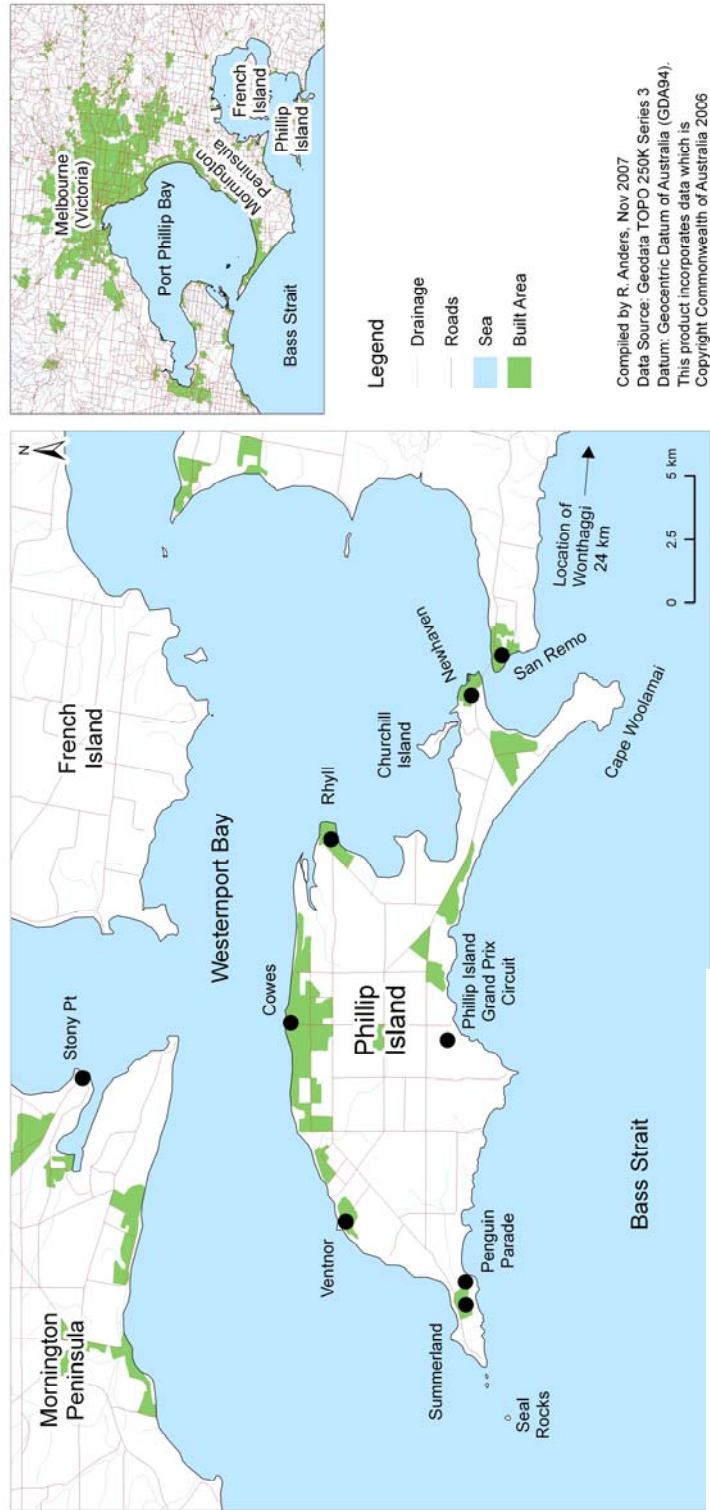


Figure 7.2: Location of Phillip Island

As with all the case islands, it is possible only to very briefly touch on Phillip Island's history. Edgecombe (1989) provides some interesting information in this regard. As established by the discovery of middens and stone axes, Aborigines made seasonal visits to Phillip Island for food supplies such as short-tailed shearwaters or mutton birds (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) but are not believed to have permanently lived on the Island: "the Aboriginal residents of the area, the Bunurong, seem to have focused on the [inland] swamplands and occupied the coasts more intermittently" (Head, 2000: 39). George Bass was the first European to find the Island, in 1798, and he named it Snapper Island. This changed to Grant Island and then to its current name after Australia's first Governor, Arthur Phillip. Phillip Island was subsequently used as a base by sealers and whalers. The first European settlers arrived in 1842 when the McHaffie brothers were granted a pastoral lease of almost the entire island; they used fire to clear the vegetation¹⁰⁸. In 1868 the Island was surveyed and opened for settlement. European settlement changed the landscape through clearing and burning, introduction of new species, subdivisions, farming and grazing (Seddon, 1975). Chicory (a coffee substitute) was once the major crop; the Island produced approximately 90 per cent of the total Australian crop (Seddon, 1975). Development of Phillip Island proceeded slowly as drought forced many early settlers to abandon their land. Agriculture and tourism are now Phillip Island's dominant economic activities.

The Island's main townships are Cowes, Newhaven, Rhyll and Ventnor. Cowes, on the northern coast, is the island capital and was named after its namesake on England's Isle of Wight. Originally the main point of arrival for visitors by vehicular ferry, the island gateway has now shifted to Newhaven on the eastern side of the Island, where the bridge joins the Island to the mainland town of San Remo. Many of the typical challenges associated with island status (as described in the other case chapters) are diminished through having this fixed link to the mainland. Although asked about both the challenges and attractions in living on Phillip Island, participants overwhelmingly discussed only the appeal of the Island. I will explore the implications of this discrepancy in greater detail in a discussion on islandness in chapter nine.

¹⁰⁸ Head (2000: 41) cites Gliddon 1958: 169): "the brothers cleared the island by setting fire to its scrub, a fire that enveloped the whole island. Its extent and density attracted attention for several days and nights on the adjacent continent and far out to sea".

Consequences of the bridge

In this section I discuss the primary distinction of Phillip Island from the other three case studies - its bridge – and the implications of this fixed connection on the Island economy, on managing development and the environment, and on social relations. As discussed in chapter three, a key debate in nissology concerns whether islands with permanent links to the mainland are considered to be true islands, but here I explore how bridged islands may affect other components of islandness. Does Phillip Island still possess island characteristics - economic, environmental and social distinctions from its mainland? Does the bridge provide the best of both worlds – the psychological appeal of being on an island, combined with ease of access?

As geographical landforms, bridged islands are technically still islands, since bridges are human constructions. However, it is important to look beyond mere definitions, and examine the consequences of the bridge for tourists, islanders and the Island. It is difficult to examine the differences between life on Phillip Island before and after the bridge since the original suspension bridge was built in November 1940, and my methodology involved selecting participants on their basis of their position and knowledge rather than their age. However, a couple of my participants are long-term Island residents who commented on the reasons for and some of the implications of the bridge; and I have drawn on their knowledge and on wider literature concerning the bridge in the following discussion.

Construction of the first bridge was driven by internal agricultural interests rather than by external pressures. At a time when agriculture was a more dominant economic activity than it is now, farmers requested a fixed link to overcome difficulties in transporting livestock and chicory to the mainland:

Farmers had deputation after deputation to the ministers because the punt service wasn't big enough ... they'd have to swim their cattle across ... chicory would get wet ... finally the government agreed ... but didn't foresee

the volume of traffic and it could only take so many tons (I think it was six tons). Even the tourist buses, when they started to come after the war, the people had to get out and walk across (R3).

Indeed, it is not only the presence of a bridge that influences island development, but also the capacity of that bridge. Due to the limitations of the original suspension bridge, the present steel and concrete bridge replaced it in 1969. R2 considers that the first bridge *effectively blocked development because one couldn't get the heavy trucks over ... the new bridge has in many ways been the downfall of the Island*. Edgecombe (1989: 63) comments that the second bridge “brought a huge expansion in tourist activities and the indiscriminate development of many new housing subdivisions near the southern beaches”.

According to participants, Phillip Island's improved accessibility has facilitated tourism and development as the bridge made it easier and cheaper to transfer people, materials and labour onto the Island. Seddon (1975: 80) notes that dependence on ferries from 1868 to 1940 was a factor in Phillip Island's slow growth rate and he suggests that completion of the bridge “heralded the increase in popularity of the Island for tourists and holiday home development”. The bridge extended the housing footprint (particularly of estate subdivisions for holiday homes) as without vehicular access housing had been limited to the ferry landing points at the main townships of Cowes, Rhyll and Newhaven. Increased traffic has decreased the Island's rural charm and as Seddon (1975: 151) comments “The State Government ... greatly improved access, but almost nothing has been done ... to solve the problems that access brings”. Combined with an increase in car ownership, the bridge enabled day trips to Phillip Island from Melbourne and opened up the Island to tourism following the Second World War: *it was the bridge that brought the crowds. There weren't too many against the bridge ... I don't think they thought it would be the end of it being an island (R3)*. A diminished sense of islandness is also indicated in LG2's revelation that some tourists do not realise they have arrived on Phillip Island after crossing the bridge:

The guy who runs the surf shop just over the bridge tells us that on a weekly basis people stop and ask 'where do I get to Phillip Island?' and they've just driven across this 600 metre-long bridge ... you don't get that feeling of going across the water because the bridge is way, way up, 60 metres up in

the air ... It's just another road ... It's very convenient - a three-laned highway onto a sealed road all the way to the end [of the Island] ... If you got to Rottnest you've got to hop on a ferry and hire a pushbike to get to the other side which is a real feeling of, well I'm going somewhere.

Several participants consider that the bridge has enhanced Phillip Island's attractiveness to tourists, as it retains the inherent appeal associated with islands while having easier access (particularly important for day trippers from Melbourne): *we distinguish ourselves as an attraction because we're an island* (SG2); *We really push hard the proximity and the access ... because people see islands as being remote and maybe having to travel ... Our major [marketing] photographs show the bridge because a lot of people don't like water* (T1). Hence, in addition to providing physically easier access, bridges may also represent psychologically easier access as islands can deter some tourists. Conversely, for some travellers, bridges may destroy the escapism associated with islands but in the case of Phillip Island many tourists are not coming to see the Island itself but to watch the Penguin Parade¹⁰⁹ or the Grand Prix racing (the Island hosts various motorcycle and car racing events). In short, the bridge has made it viable to hold major events or activities on the Island. T1 compares Phillip Island with unbridged Kangaroo Island in South Australia and notes that while its ferry ride may enhance the tourism experience of travelling to the Island, it is offset by the cost: *From a tourism point of view to have a mainland bridge link is a major advantage ... We wouldn't have major events if we didn't have the bridge.*

Blomgren and Sorensen (1998: 326) comment on how distance or other access obstacles are not necessarily considered deterring barriers to tourists but may instead be tempting hurdles that add to the value of the pursued peripherality.

Conversely, improved accessibility (including bridges, catamaran ferries, better roads, airports) may open the destination to new and larger market segments, but may also affect perceptions of peripherality. Islands possibly provide the best examples of the impact upon visitor types of improved accessibility.

¹⁰⁹ The Parade involves tourists viewing the nightly return of Little Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) from their feeding waters in Western Port and Bass Strait to their burrows in the sand dunes.

In gaining a permanent link to the mainland, Phillip Island has lost some of its perception as a peripheral place and hence it may appeal more to mass tourists who wish to visit attractions and events than to independent tourists who wish to visit an island because it is an isolated place.

Bridges allow mainlanders to commute more quickly to islands: *my principle place of residence is still in Melbourne and I have a place down here. I regularly commute from Melbourne but you wouldn't do that if you had to wait for ferries* (T1). Such improved access may trigger property price rises and increase residential subdivisions. It is interesting to compare the development history of Phillip Island with its larger Western Port Bay neighbour, French Island¹¹⁰, which has no bridge and is serviced by ferry. The total resident population of French Island is 89 (ABS, 2007), an increase of only four people since 2001; and 8,000 tourists visit annually¹¹¹. While this low level of visitation is partly a result of its limited tourist attractions compared to Phillip Island, the absence of a bridge no doubt contributes to the significant difference in residential and tourism figures between the two islands. One Phillip Island resident considers that in being linked to the mainland, *the Island has lost something ... That's why [someone] from French Island ... [gave a talk on] 'What it is like to live on a real island' because ours is not a real island any longer* (R3). Another Phillip Islander considers that the bridge democratises the community:

French Island is becoming up-market - Kylie Minogues¹¹², that type of thing ... it's so expensive to live on an island without a bridge. So Phillip Island is a pretty egalitarian community ... I don't particularly want to be locked away in an enclave with rich people any more than I want to be in a slum with poor. In fact, I think I'd rather be in a slum (R1).

Seddon (1975: 80) considers Phillip Island to be effectively an extension of its adjacent peninsula rather than a 'true island':

¹¹⁰ French Island is an unincorporated territory with no local government (the State Government Minister for Planning is the responsible authority). The community manages its own affairs as well as some public facilities (French Island Community Association, 2007).

¹¹¹ Hence French Island is not Melbourne's dominant tourist island and was not chosen as a case study.

¹¹² Australian pop star Kylie Minogue purchased a property on French Island (Lowndes, 2006).

Had the long-term future of the Island as a recreational and biological resource been adequately foreseen in 1940, the money spent on the two bridges – over three million dollars – might have been invested more profitably. The Island is now, in effect, an extension of the San Remo Peninsula, and although it is easier to get to, it is less worth the journey. The flood of cars ... has caused many conservation problems, and is not compatible with the tranquil haven that a true island can offer ... it is now too late to change Phillip Island, but it should serve as a warning against bridging French Island.

Phillip Island is now well-integrated with its adjacent mainland. The bridge is known as the San Remo Bridge and the local newspaper, the *Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser*, has a permanent logo on the front page showing the bridge connecting the two localities. Participants have mixed views on whether or not the bridge means the Island is still a true island. Two of their responses are as follows:

In terms of physicality I don't think it's a true island ... Perhaps mentally, particularly with some of the older time residents, it clearly is to them an island. I think some people on Phillip Island would be quite happy if the Island was a lot further offshore (LG1).

It's not a true island as far as transport and accessibility goes but ... it is an island from a perception point of view in the tourism industry and it's something we use to sell in our marketing strategies ... we're an island [and] that differentiates us from other tourism products (SG2).

Both of these comments refer to the existence of Phillip Island as a mental island. SG2 refers to the comparative advantage in employing the perception of an island which can be used as an economy of (psychological) place in tourism marketing. LG1 indicates that some islanders would reject physical integration with the mainland. Considering the age of the bridged island (almost 70 years), a loss of historical continuity in its residents may result in a diminished sense of islandness (particularly in terms of its expression as a sense of place). In the not too distant future, no one will have a lived experience of Phillip Island without its permanent connection to the mainland. LG2 recognises the effect of islandness on identity, but acknowledges that the bridge diminishes islander identity to a certain extent:

A whole group of people are defined as islanders so they get a real mindset about it ... they're a confined community because you're surrounded by

water. It's like having a fence around you and each time you leave you go out through this gate called a bridge to get off ... If you had to get a ferry across, that would be even more so; more of 'I'm an islander' ... Islands have defined boundaries ... It's not like more urban areas where it's just a link joined together.

In Seddon's¹¹³ work (1975), an important step in determining planning objectives involved identifying the Island's physical constraints and opportunities but Seddon recognises that Phillip Island's boundaries may be illusory - for example, limited availability of domestic water supply was an internal constraint on development but then became largely an external factor when it was piped across the bridge from the mainland. While infrastructure, particularly power and water, may be easier to provide on bridged islands, the bridge has no doubt increased pressure on such infrastructure through facilitating tourism and residential development. As R1 illustrates through exaggeration, *Our dam is about as big as a bath ... there's a big sign [indicating dam capacity] ... it's 100 per cent full and then somebody has a shower and it drops to 85 per cent.* Phillip Island has been on Stage Four water restrictions (the most severe level in Victoria) since November 2006¹¹⁴. In 2007 it was announced that Australia's largest desalination plant¹¹⁵ will be developed within the mainland area of Bass Coast Shire Council¹¹⁶ to supply up to 150 billion litres of water annually to the local region (including towns on Phillip Island) and Melbourne (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2007a). Typical challenges associated with islandness relate to infrastructure provision (as cited by several participants from the three other case islands) but to a large extent, Phillip Island's bridge diminishes these hardships. The Island is set to benefit from the desalination plant which does not need to be sited on-island (as is necessary on Rottnest Island).

¹¹³ Seddon (1975: 21) viewed his work on the Island as an exercise in cultural-ecological methodology, by evaluating the island setting in terms of both natural and human contributions to the landscape; documenting the Island's resource capabilities; and identifying conflicts between land uses and the groups and individuals who use and manage the resources.

¹¹⁴ Westernport Water Authority introduced Stage 4 restrictions following significantly less rainfall over the mainland catchments area.

¹¹⁵ The \$3.1 billion plant will start delivering water by the end of 2011 and will be capable of providing around a third of Melbourne's annual water supply (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2007a).

¹¹⁶ Bass Coast Shire Council is the local government body responsible for Phillip Island. Bass Coast Shire Council was not consulted about the desalination plant and did not give approval for the project, as it did not go through the normal Council planning permit approval process (Bass Coast Shire Council, 2007a).

While the bridge has positive economic effects for the Island, it has negative environmental consequences stemming from a greater number of tourists and residents, and associated developments. The bridge also provides a link for pest animals to travel across from the mainland and it *does terrible things to shearwaters ... They're attracted by the lights and get hit by cars* (R1). However, Phillip Island retains some characteristics of islands that can prove beneficial for environmental management. For example, Baldacchino (2004e: 17-18) considers that it is easier to observe (particularly environmental) impacts on islands, which can provide a feedback system for managers:

The compacted social space, intense webbing and networking of social dynamics, and the manner in which the consequences of decisions are sudden, rapid, total and visible provide easy lessons in cause-effect relationships. The damage, typically to the natural environment, caused by the wrong decisions is therefore immediate and readily visible to one and all.

LG2 believes that environmental impacts are relatively easy to observe on Phillip Island: *there are opportunities for sustainability because you can show impacts. The beauty of Phillip Island is that it's small enough where people can actually see impacts of* [for example] *erosion*.

Development

In this section I explore the relationships between islandness and development – the attractiveness of Phillip Island to tourists and residents, and the impacts of resulting developments on the Island's environment and community. I use a case study of the Penguin Parade to explore tensions between tourism and conservation; and a second case study of the Summerland Estate buyback scheme (a case of 'undevelopment') to examine consequences of the removal of a housing estate (seemingly) for conservation reasons. I will use these case studies to demonstrate the respective impacts of tourism and residential land uses on Phillip Island's best-known species, the Little Penguin.

Considering its proximity to Melbourne, Phillip Island is well-placed to receive large numbers of day trippers, seasonal residents and new long-term residents, many of whom

are retirees. Lazaridis et al. (1999) examine the use of islands as retirement havens for ‘outsiders’ and found in Corfu a natural progression from being a tourist, to buying a second home, to then moving permanently to the island. Such exposure to tourists may well lead to later residence on other islands. Many of the key issues on Phillip Island concern the impacts of tourism and residential development on the natural environment, social fabric and infrastructure. Tourism and residential developments are significant agents of change and they encapsulate contestation over land use in limited spaces. I will first examine tourism on Phillip Island, and then turn to residential development.

Tourism

Recreation has been Phillip Island’s major land use for many decades. The Island attracts 3.2 million visitors annually: 1.8 million day trip visitors and 1.4 million overnight visitors (Ruzzene & Shipp, 2005). Many of these people visit in the peak summer period: *being seasonal, in winter time if you fired a cannon down the main street you wouldn’t hit anyone, whereas in peak times you can’t move* (T1). Tourism-related employment accounts for 8.2 per cent of total employment (compared to 5.1 per cent for Victoria as a whole) (Bass Coast Shire Council, 2006). Phillip Island’s two key, internationally-known tourist attractions are the Penguin Parade and the Grand Prix racing track¹¹⁷. The first Australian Grand Prix car race was held on the Island in 1928, and motorcycle and car racing events are now very popular¹¹⁸: *the motorcycle Grand Prix goes international so you’ll have Melbourne and Phillip Island flashing on the screen every three or four minutes* (LG2). Considering the Island’s inconsistent tourism image, with the Penguin Parade juxtaposed against the Grand Prix track, or eco-tourists versus ‘revheads’, is it difficult to develop an island brand? R1 believes there is a good mix of attractions: *You’ve got to be very careful that [islands] don’t turn into something precious ... [with] ecotourism it’s a risk that it becomes a museum*. This notion of islands becoming museums reflects a comment by Gillis (2004) that islands have become a prime repository of pastness. It also relates to a broader issue of whether

¹¹⁷ Sixty seven per cent of tourists visit the Penguin Parade and 19 per cent the Grand Prix Circuit (Ruzzene & Shipp, 2005).

¹¹⁸ 2006 figures show attendance of 93,531 people at the Australian Motor Cycle Grand Prix (Bass Coast Shire Council, 2006).

islands should have to be used to counter mistakes made by continental people in terms of losses of natural and cultural heritage.

In the 1920s access on Phillip Island was established to the penguin colony and tourism began via a ferry service to the main town of Cowes. The opening of the original bridge in 1940, combined with increased car ownership around that time, facilitated day trips from Melbourne, and Phillip Island is now Victoria's leading tourism destination. The Penguin Parade is managed by the Victorian Government through Phillip Island Nature Parks (a not for profit self-funding organisation) and is Australia's second most visited natural attraction, with over 500,000 visitors per year. It is estimated to generate \$96 million per year for the Victorian economy (KPMG Management Consulting, 1996). *The penguins are really our panacea. If we didn't have penguins it would be a very quiet little sleepy hollow* (T1).

Tourists tend to concentrate along the coastline due to its recreational appeal. As with many offshore islands, Phillip Island offers a variety of water activities through its combination of surf coast and safer bay beaches but the majority of participants discuss Phillip Island's tourist appeal in relation to its wildlife, particularly the penguins. Island attractions vary between tourists of different origins:

what's really put it on the map is the wildlife ... They're of particular interest to the international market and for the majority of the interstate market. For Victorians it's probably more of a beach destination; a family holiday spot ... A lot of Victorians still see it as a must do when you've got visitors ... and use it as a bit of a showcase (SG3).

Phillip Island is also home to Australia's largest colony of fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus*) estimated at more than 10,000, and is well-known for its mutton-birds (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) and koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*). In Seddon's (1975) opinion, the wildlife is important not because it is unique to the Island (as for example, with Rottnest's quokkas), but because it is accessible to the public and scientists, and human impacts can be identified, monitored and managed.

According to participants, the Island's relaxed atmosphere and rural character are also of great appeal, both to tourists and to residents, and provide a contrast to urban Melbourne (for example R1 mentioned the possibility of passing cattle whist walking along beaches). Significant growth in Melbourne's population and urban boundary has pushed its pleasure periphery¹¹⁹ further away from the urban core. The recreation 'wave' is spreading to traditional holiday places which are gradually transforming into suburbs: *For a resort or beach style family place, you'd probably check into Mornington Peninsula but it's at saturation point and we're expecting to get the predominant part of that overflow ... Mornington Peninsula is now becoming predominantly permanent residents* (T1).

T2 comments that Phillip Island is appealing both in its proximity to Melbourne and in its difference from a city lifestyle - *it's still quaint or small enough to enjoy a holiday atmosphere rather than the suburbs*. However, this is only one perspective. Other people may view Phillip Island as suburban. While SG3 recognises the *appealing factor to being an island rather than just a peninsula or another beach*, he suggests that Phillip Island's designation as an island may deter some potential visitors through perceived access difficulties: *an island conjures that it's a little bit hard to access which may mean that it's a bit more protected*. T1 is in no doubt that the island status assists tourism marketing and he points to the mystique commonly associated with islands.

Access to the Island has improved through duplication of the highway from Melbourne, which highlights the use of Phillip Island as a recreational backyard for city dwellers: *we've become closer to Melbourne ... The south-eastern corridor is now within about 30 minutes of Phillip Island, so potentially in the next five years we'll be half an hour away from 360,000 people who will use our area as a recreation facility* (LG2). While travel time to Phillip Island from Melbourne has halved in the past 30 years, from three hours to 90 minutes, during peak periods traffic bottlenecks occur near the bridge, which can add considerably to the journey time (as I experienced firsthand during a summer weekend). There are suggestions to further improve access by duplicating the bridge in case of emergency but *I don't think it's going to happen in the short term because of the*

¹¹⁹ Turner and Ash (1975) define the pleasure periphery geographically as the tourist belt which surrounds the great industrialised zones of the world.

prohibitive cost of it, but they see as the population expands on the Island that will become an issue (T1).

Although not a local government area, Phillip Island is a tourism marketing region in its own right. In 2004, the State Government tourism department, Tourism Victoria¹²⁰, developed the *Destination Phillip Island Tourism Development Plan 2004-2007* and set up the Island's own regional marketing group called Destination Phillip Island (DPI). Objectives of this tourism strategy include enhancing the nature-based experiences delivered by Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP); increasing international and national awareness of the Island by promoting the motorcycle grand prix; and encouraging a greater range of high quality accommodation developments on and near to the Island (Tourism Victoria, 2004). DPI comprises representatives from Tourism Victoria, Bass Coast Shire Council, Phillip Island Tourist Association (PITA), PINP, and the Grand Prix circuit. Interestingly, the Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment (the state's main conservation/public land management agency) is not included.

According to T1, *PINP probably spends 90 per cent of the money that is spent internationally marketing Phillip Island ... and is aggressive about wanting to market their side. We say hang on, there's more to the Island than just penguins ... [which often attract] just single day visits. PITA has around 120 members and represents tourism businesses to the Council and Tourism Victoria, and they are striving to ... present to the people overseas not just the Nature Park but the whole island (T2).* PITA encourages greater visitor numbers and extended visitor nights – the latter is problematic because the bridge facilitates day trip tourism. Hence, Phillip Island must rely on its attractions to prolong visitor stays rather than on the geographic island attribute of separation.

Other challenges facing the tourism industry include global, domestic and local factors, such as competition both with other destinations and for disposal income, and rising

¹²⁰ Under another State Government tourism strategy, Victoria's *Nature-Based Tourism Strategy 2007-2011* (Tourism Victoria, 2007), Phillip Island has been identified as one of five key priority nature-based tourism development areas in the state. Reflecting the Island's proximity to Melbourne, Phillip Island is incorporated in the *Melbourne Surrounds Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004-2007* (Tourism Victoria, 2004). This is a strategic document covering the future direction of tourism in the region through industry development, marketing and key infrastructure developments.

motor fuel costs. Proximity to Melbourne is both a blessing and a curse as growth in day-tripper numbers saturate services, which means that the Island may become less attractive to overnight visitors, particularly in peak periods. Day trippers burden local facilities without giving much financial return (to fund infrastructure and environmental protection work). Seddon (1975: 152) considers that “The day tripper goose lays what at best might be described as a copper egg; but Melbourne needs the goose, and the Island needs the egg”. Another limiting factor for overnight stays is the standard of accommodation: *international tourists with money don’t stay on Phillip Island because there’s no five star accommodation; probably in three year’s time there will be two or three options for five star* (SG1). There may have also been a rise in domestic expectations of accommodation over the past decade (similar to that reported on Rottnest Island) whereby camp sites and caravans are now not as socially acceptable as hotels and bed and breakfasts. Desire for modern conveniences may translate to greater demand for fixed accommodation and their associated environmental impacts.

With this background in place, I will now examine tensions between tourism and environmental management at the site of the Penguin Parade on the Summerland Peninsula (Figure 7.2). Penguin colonies were originally dotted around Phillip Island’s coastline but clearing for agricultural, pastoral, housing and recreational activities has contributed to their decline, to the point where only one remains (Harris, 2002). It is now protected within Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP).

A core issue facing tourism managers worldwide is how to balance tourism uses with conserving the resource base. Is tourism at the Phillip Island Penguin Parade harmful to the penguins or does tourism revenue allow PINP to protect penguins against other threats such as pest species? PINP (2006a: 73) acknowledges that “to a large degree, the future of the Nature Park depends on the ongoing success of the Penguin Parade for financial security”. Little Penguins are the Island’s main drawcard and the cornerstone of tourism: *if we had a major oil spill and it wiped out the penguin colony, this island ... would no longer be a high volume tourist resort. The impact would be absolutely mammoth, just unthinkable* (T1).

In 2004-05 the Penguin Parade attracted more than 460,000 visitors (PINP, 2006b). Does the viewing grandstand create a theme park atmosphere and an artificial wildlife viewing event? The grandstand has a seating capacity of approximately 3,000 people (Bulbeck, 2005); and as such represents a form of mass tourism. *The trouble with the grandstands is that they're awful but what would you put there instead, and think of the devastation if you tried to take them away* (R2). According to Harris (2002: 243) visitation to the Park has “become highly industrialized from a tourism industry perspective, with 50 per cent or more of visitors arriving on packaged tours”. The Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of a parade is ‘a show, assembly, or procession’, whereas the ‘event’ on Phillip Island is a natural part of penguin life. Is PINP exploiting Little Penguins for their entertainment value? The penguins certainly earn their keep: a 1996 study estimated that the Penguin Parade generated spending in Victoria of \$96 million and provided 1,000 jobs (PINP, 2006b).

Phillip Island Nature Parks’ main competitors are other attractions in Victoria, particularly zoos and wildlife sanctuaries but PINP claim that its operations are unique: *in the Western markets we market it as a wild destination ... We market it for the Eastern markets as somewhere safe* (SG2). More than half (55 per cent) of PINP’s visitors are from overseas, and a steady increase in visitor numbers is expected:

Forecasts say that international [numbers] will grow a lot faster than domestic ... China is our biggest market and the predictions for China are staggering ... if the other markets also grow or drop away, it starts to affect the brand of Phillip Island and the penguins if it's seen to be too Asian, and too many coaches and too many groups may deter some of the more independent Western markets ... so it's sort of a balance ... and that's why we've got specialised tours that go to separate beaches and it's limited numbers and more interactive (SG3).

Recently PINP has extended its product variety at the Parade to cater for smaller groups in viewing areas different from the grandstand. One of their objectives is to investigate long term opportunities for products and experiences which reduce the current emphasis on the Penguin Parade (PINP, 2006b). However, this strategy risks extending environmental impacts to other parts of the Park. Hence, such specialised tours may be viewed more as a form of ecotourism than mass tourism; they could also be seen as

spreading the tourism impact further in order to satisfy desired markets (Western, higher yield visitors). PINP perceives a continual need to provide new attractions in order to encourage repeat visitation and earn greater revenue: *we need to bring in new and exciting attractions ... we compete with some of the theme parks on the Gold Coast [in Queensland] for people's leisure time. If you have a \$100 to spend, do you drive to Phillip Island for the weekend or get on a plane and go to the Gold Coast?* (SG2). But surely if the focus is purely on ecotourism rather than on entertainment tourism, PINP would not need to compete with theme parks.

As part of my site investigations I visited the Parade and sat amongst the crowd in the grandstand. Although cameras are now not allowed (flash photography disturbs the penguins), I found the crowd noise level astonishing high throughout the experience. In my previous penguin viewing experiences, generally supervised by park rangers in various locations along the Tasmanian coast or on offshore islands, including Bruny, it was always a hushed experience as the small audiences tried not to disturb the penguins. But at the Penguin Parade there was constant talking, accompanied by intermittent shouts of delight at spotting penguins emerge from the sea. Compared to my previous experiences, I also observed some hesitation in several penguins in venturing onto the beach; they turned back a few times. I later questioned a PINP staff member about this behaviour and was told that it was normal. A participant from outside the PINP had advised me to stay back after the Parade, once the busloads of tourists had left. I did so and the remaining, quieter tourists were able to view from the boardwalks the penguins at closer range, finding their burrows. The overseas tourists only saw the Parade along the beach and missed the rest of the experience, which is fortunate for the penguins. Perhaps this deliberate strategy is on the part of PINP and tour operators in order to limit disturbance to the penguins. Yet SG3 does not believe the crowds disturb the penguins:

It's been carefully managed and monitored - probably for 30 years they've been actively researching the penguins. So things about where boardwalks are built, how the lights are turned on, crowd control and limiting photography and flashes, all that has been very carefully introduced. The

latest studies are saying that the health of the penguins hasn't deteriorated - if anything now they are a little bit healthier¹²¹.

Between 1985 and 2000 the penguin reserve's research department conducted the most extensive study of interactions between wildlife and ecotourism in Australia. This research showed that "breeding penguins are at least as successful at the Parade as for those breeding away from the tourism area, indicating that factors other than tourism are responsible for the fluctuations in numbers" (Dann, 2002: 9). Penguin numbers have returned to their estimated post-World War II numbers (28,000-30,000) (Harris, 2002). PINP has won state and national awards for environmental excellence and ecotourism. It has achieved the highest ecotourism rating, 'Advanced Ecotourism' for eleven products, as measured by the internationally acknowledged EcoCertification Program (PINP, 2005). PINP also conducts leading research on penguins: *we've got five full-time researchers; we spend over \$1 million a year just in research; and have twelve PhD students. We have 35 staff in our environmental area* (SG2). PINP invests Penguin Parade revenue into conservation work across the Park; in effect the penguins fund their own protection as well as propping up the rest of the Park. Nevertheless, Head (2000: 50) raises concern about management strategies linking penguin protection to the revenues generated by tourism; she argues that the rights of wildlife are dependent on them becoming an economic resource:

The rights of penguins, seals and mutton-birds to undisturbed habitat would never have been recognised in public policy had not the economic health of Phillip Island, and increasingly the tourist industry of the entire State, been dependent on them ... Unimaginable, of course, that they could need protection from the present and projected visitor numbers.

Similarly, Harris (2002: 239) argues that tourism "has been central in generating the resources and necessary political will to ensure the effective long-term management of this last remaining colony". However, he (2002: 249) notes that "in the presence of significant economies based around visitation, those engaged in conservation are likely to find their options constrained in the sense that there will be significant pressure to factor the maintenance and growth of visitation into their decision-making processes".

¹²¹ It should be noted that PINP cannot be wholly responsible for the management and health of the penguins, as their geographic range involves a feeding area external to the Island. This is an example of boundaries extending beyond an island and of vulnerability to events such as oil spills.

Residential development

Although traditionally within the rural periphery of Melbourne, Phillip Island is now within sight of residential expansion from the urban fringes and it offers the added bonus of lifestyle benefits. R2 cites significant changes to the Island in the 1960s when a number of holiday estates opened up, particularly along the south coast: *they should never have been allowed ... A lot of the problems we've had on the Island since have come because of all that rampant development.* In 1966 the Island's population was 1,407 and it rose to around 2,000 people by 1975¹²², at which time there were more than 1,000 holiday houses (Seddon, 1975). At that time, Seddon attributed a major cause of population growth to retirement and he described the Island as functioning as a retirement suburb. In 2006, Phillip Island's permanent resident population was 8,136 (ABS, 2007), up 13.1 per cent from 7,195 in 2001. The local region is one of the fastest growing areas of Australia and by 2031 the estimated population of Phillip Island is expected to have almost doubled to 15,131, of which the percentage of people aged over 65 years is predicted to increase from 23 to 32 per cent (Bass Coast Shire Council, 2006). Similar to Bruny Island, the median age of the resident population (46 years) is older than the Australian median (37 years). The urban core presents greater education and social opportunities than those provided on the Island and so lures many young islanders, which intensifies the ageing demographic profile, typical of many islands. This ageing effect is reinforced by the appeal of Phillip Island to retirees, as Seddon (1975) noted when pondering whether the Island would become a geriatric colony. Consequences of the ageing profile include greater pressure on health services, including the sole island hospital¹²³ (although the bridge extends Phillip Island's hinterland and hence islanders' accessibility to mainland health services). The median weekly individual income of Phillip Islanders (\$378) is lower than the Australian median (\$466) (ABS, 2007) and islanders have a higher than average unemployment rate (Bass Coast Shire Council, 2006). Recent trends have seen rising real estate investment from second

¹²² Seddon (1975) considers that these figures indicate the permanent population as few holiday houses are likely to be occupied on Census night, during winter.

¹²³ Addendum – the island hospital was closed in January 2008.

home buyers (63.7 per cent¹²⁴ of private dwellings are unoccupied on a permanent basis, ABS, 2007) and sea changers.

Phillip Island Nature Parks has identified rising road traffic levels and increased pressures on the Park's land as consequences of population growth (PINP, 2006b). SG2 believes there is conflict between community visions for the Island and tourism developments: *many in our community wish to see areas left in a wild state and we need to have adequate facilities for visitors so there needs to be some understanding and compromise*. The development of the racing circuit has also been a notable point of tension: *It's changed the social environment ... it puts tremendous stress on resources ... it doesn't matter where you are on the Island - depending which way the wind's blowing, you cop the noise ... We had to fight to get a certain number of noise-free weekends every year* (R2).

R3 describes social tensions between islanders and tourists, noting that it is mostly long-term residents who object to tourism: *a lot of the old locals grizzle about the tourism. They think everything on the Island is for the tourists. A local fellow at Rhyll had these beehives out at the racecourse and he was told to remove them because they were frightened they would sting the tourists, so they were brought out home where I am. It didn't matter if they stung me!* T1 considers that many new residents also oppose tourism, although he acknowledges that many of the wealthier newcomers value the services that come with tourism:

A lot of the locals converting holiday homes to permanent residences would like to put a boom gate at each end to keep all the tourists out and leave things as they were ... They can't park outside the bakery or the supermarket and get pretty angry. Well that's fine - if you quadruple your rates we'll keep them out, but they don't think that's a good idea. So there will certainly be conflicts about increased traffic volumes and visitor numbers ... a lot of them are pro-tourism, particularly the more comfortably-off ones that are saying the more visitor numbers, we will then have cafes and restaurants open seven days a week, 365 days a year.

¹²⁴ This figure concurs with that of Bass Coast Shire Council (2004) - approximately 60 per cent (5,400 of the 8,900 Phillip Island dwellings) are used as holiday homes.

This comment suggests that some wealthier new residents desire parity with mainlanders in the form of service facilities at standards equivalent to urban centres, which contrasts with a common perception of long-term islanders as resourceful, as, for example, described by Bruny Islanders. A new resident I interviewed notes the benefits of tourist facilities: *you can live in quite a small community and there are nice restaurants; we're about to get a second supermarket* (R1). In his comment above, T1 alludes to Bass Coast Shire Council's dependence on tourism revenue and this dependence is likely to be a factor in the Council resisting calls by islanders for a separate island council. SG1 also refers to conflict within the community regarding visions for tourism:

Many of the farmers want Phillip Island to remain rural land and are really opposed to large scale development that's changing the nature of the Island. On the other hand, the Shire and the community want development to create jobs.

A particular issue of concern to residents at the time of interviews was a proposed \$300 million resort development by the Linfox Property Group (owner of the Grand Prix track) on Phillip Island's south coast. In 2005 Linfox submitted a planning permit application for 506 villa-style units and a golf course adjacent to the Grand Prix site. Lindsay Fox can be considered a 'big player'¹²⁵, but the Bass Coast Shire Council is standing firm in resisting the development¹²⁶. Council's Planning and Environment Department recommended refusal of a planning permit for the development on environmental grounds and because it would "result in an inappropriately located, ad hoc tourist development ... The number of buildings is considered excessive and the creation of villages inappropriate for the highly visible location ... The design is considered more appropriate for an urban inner-city location" (Russell, 2006). LG2 describes the potential impact of the development:

On the south coast of Phillip Island you could walk, fish or surf and not see a building up until only five years ago but now the land is being sold and they're starting to build bigger and higher to get the sea views, but you're still only seeing patches of buildings ... if the Lindsay Fox one goes ahead

¹²⁵ Lindsay Fox is a Melbourne-based trucking magnate. As at December 2007, Linfox is Australia's largest privately-owned company.

¹²⁶ Perhaps Council's resistance to this significant development indicates that it is not as reliant on large developments as other offshore islands may be (due to the fact that Phillip Island is already a significant tourist attraction).

you'll be seeing that from everywhere ... big companies come in and just look for a big greenfield site and then just run the gamut of planning.

Councillors rejected the proposal, although on the issue of dealing with powerful players, a local government officer said: *we're used to dealing with big guns. Look, maybe at a political level - at a councillor level - that [powerful players] has an impact but ... there's just so many big developments floating around that it's irrelevant* (LG1). Subsequently, Linfox appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal¹²⁷ (VCAT) where, as of December 2007, the case is ongoing. Linfox had submitted downsized plans (reducing the number of units to 382) to VCAT but the local council decided these plans did not adequately address initial concerns over the proposal and remains opposed to the development (Bass Coast Shire Council, 2007b).

While the Linfox proposal is described as a resort development, some participants are concerned that *it's really sub-division by stealth* (R2); *People have a perception that it may become a residential village and they get concerned about that sort of development happening in that area of the Island* (T2). LG1 notes that *the risk is that you'd create a precedent where you started having out of town developments and then that starts to eat up the coastal places between townships*. Such concerns with the Linfox proposal reflect wider alarm about expanding development: The charm of the Island is the rural setting - the open space - and if we lose that we'll be one big suburb (R3). LG2 considers that the biggest challenge associated with islands is that land is finite yet *people tend to want to go on the Island because it's special*.

Islands are typically characterised as vulnerable places due to their limited resources. In this regard, in 1975 Seddon identified the key problem on Phillip Island as the inflated value of rural land and he noted that this is a critical problem within 100 miles (approximately 160km) of all Australian major cities. In relation to Phillip Island, he emphasised the importance of maintaining the rural landscape, as it is one of the factors giving the Island its recreational amenity. Concern about the loss of rural land is still evident 30 years later. The suburban landscape is increasingly dominant, and part of this is a result of Phillip Island being a sea change destination. As R1 observes, *the conflict*

¹²⁷ VCAT deals with a range of disputes, including those between people and government at state and local levels, over matters such as planning and environment.

between development and lifestyle is on full bore right now ... thousands of allotments are ready to hit the market. Several participants also raised the issue of loss of a relaxed island lifestyle due to development and the effects of the sea change phenomenon.

Both Phillip Island and the Mornington Peninsula have provided Melbourne residents with lifestyle and recreational opportunities but “these places have the potential to lose their appeal if Melbourne’s outward growth increases pressure for further subdivision and development” (Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, 2002: 56). SG3 considers that the key challenge facing the Island lies in planning and managing the interface between the built and natural environments, particularly *that balance of good complementary tourism development versus a lot of residential development and on or adjoining some very sensitive environmental areas. Obviously they want to be on the coast; next to wetlands; where the attraction is, so it’s not like they all want to be in Cowes.* SG2 agrees that the key issue is how to manage growth whilst retaining the Island’s natural assets and *not destroying what people have come to enjoy - that which differentiates Phillip Island as a natural attraction from all other venues that compete for leisure time ... There are tourism resorts, golf resorts, and residential estates being planned. This place will explode in the next five years.* Such a view underscores the importance for islanders to develop their competitive advantages rather than lose such distinct advantages and turn into ‘everywhere else’. One permanent resident is concerned about suburbanisation: *because there hasn’t been a character study done for Cowes we’re getting these wretched townhouses so if a stop isn’t put fairly quickly that will become the character, which of course in a way is very anti-tourism because people don’t want to come to a place to see a suburb* (R2). T1 has observed a dramatic increase in the number of island holiday home owners and the development of apartments and units¹²⁸. He also questions the ability of the small shire to handle such a large amount of development:

The population swells to about 65,000 - 70,000 a year. There are on the books at the moment some huge developments ... the Island is really going off ... [Bass Coast Shire Council is] having great difficulty handling development applications ... It’s a very small shire but it’s about the third-

¹²⁸ Although petrol prices, climate change and interest rates may affect development in the future.

fastest growing because we're 90 minutes from Melbourne and people are really into this sea change stuff.

The difficulties Council is experiencing may reflect not only the sheer number of development applications but also a possible lack of expertise, considering the rural nature of the Shire (i.e. a local council that is accustomed to dealing with rural issues rather than matters related to mass tourism or residential development) (Ruhanen, 2004). The Shire's perceived limited capacity in environmental management (also reported elsewhere in Australia by Pini et al. 2007), impacts on both the Nature Park and the community. When PINP objects to large developments, it puts additional pressure on the research team: *Bass Coast Shire Council [has] limited experience and resources in the environment and only [has] two staff for the whole of the shire [so] a lot of that weight comes on Friends Groups¹²⁹ and the Nature Park (SG1).* On this issue, T1 notes that *this Council, eight or nine years ago, had some very untrained councillors who were quite keen to see the dollar and some very inappropriate stuff was done.* However the Shire's operational structure now appears to facilitate the integration of environmental considerations into land-use decisions, as the Director of Planning is also the Director of Environment, and covers town planning, building control, management of council-controlled foreshores, support for Landcare and Coast Action Groups, and environmental education and awareness.

Like other participants, T1 considers that the major challenges facing the Island concern urban spread into rural land, and the capacity of the Island to deal with increased numbers of permanent and temporary residents:

Council is really aggressive about trying to put developments into pockets around the towns ... They're getting slaughtered by developers who release grandiose plans outside those boundaries ... it's becoming an absolute nightmare for Council ... But you've got to keep up the infrastructure – roads, services, water and power - and they're getting pretty aggressive about trying to introduce levies about saying, if you want to start doing developments, you've got to pay a surcharge.

¹²⁹ In parks across Victoria, Friends Groups work on projects to help conserve and protect the environment and to enhance visitor experiences of parks and reserves.

In response to such pressures, the *Phillip Island and San Remo Design Framework* (Hassell, 2003) was prepared for the Council as a guide to appropriate forms of development and land use:

The Design Framework establishes a vision, strategies and guidelines that will help shape the structure, function and appearance of Phillip Island and San Remo over the next twenty years ... [It] has been undertaken to address the significant development pressure experienced in the area in recent times, and to ensure that future development occurs in an appropriate manner ... and that the high-quality, defining characteristics of the place are protected (Hassell, 2003: 8).

The process of developing the design framework involved community consultation. The framework recognises the need to focus growth and development into existing townships rather than having it spill out along the coastline. While LG1 points to the benefits of consolidating development by using such a strategy, he also expresses concern over changes to the character of the main townships by fitting more development into them. The framework was adopted by Council in November 2003 and its implementation involves a review of “the existing strategic planning policy framework and statutory provisions within the Bass Coast Planning Scheme” (Hassell, 2003: 8). The Planning Scheme sets out the objectives, policies and requirements for the development and use of land within the Bass Coast Shire. It includes state-wide policies and requirements, as well as those that are relevant to the local area. Council applies an integrated approach to land use planning which takes into account economic, social and environmental perspectives in order to realise preferred future development and directions within the Shire. The five land use issues that have been identified as integral to future land use and development within Bass Coast accord with those contained in the State Planning Policy Framework. These are settlement, environment, housing, economic development, and infrastructure (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2007b).

Holiday home demand is subject to social and economic pressures external to the Island - for example, the economic climate dictates availability of finance, fuel prices, and preferences for a fixed holiday destination over a changing one (Seddon, 1975). Seddon (1975: 122) characterises holiday homes as socially transferring a suburban mode of living to a more relaxing environment and considers that they are “only capable of

accommodating a limited recreation-based population; they are expensive in terms of cost-use; they are as often as not an eyesore on the landscape; they do not contribute to the Island's income and public monies much needed to manage land-use". RI notes a *big percentage of people who own property here who only come down every alternate weekend and for a few weeks in summer*. However, Seddon (1975) recognises that the holiday home population distributes recreation more evenly over the year and so helps to sustain local services. While shack owners are rarely there long enough to take an active part in the Island's affairs, retirees do tend to contribute to community life.

In regard to social impacts of residential development, is the Phillip Island community becoming too large and subsequently having impact on the development of social capital? "Generally speaking, islands breed a unique kind of peacemaking and politeness. Rudeness tends to be ... the expedient of people who know they can disappear into the hinterland. But islands have little or no hinterland" (Theroux, 1992: 9). Phillip Island's bridge artificially extends the Island's hinterland and provides the opportunity for residents to effectively straddle both sides rather than fully commit to island life. One in five islanders do volunteer work (ABS, 2007), the lowest level of all the case islands. LG2 has noted a loosening of community bonds on Phillip Island over time which he relates to changing residential composition: *the whole community is developing quickly and you lose part of that close-knit type. When I was first here I'd have known most people on Phillip Island but now you wouldn't have a hope*. R2, however, believes there is still a strong sense of community *because it's 'my island' ... whether you've come in at 20 or whether you've come in at 70 and retired, you've come because you want to and that gives you a strong sense of ownership ... You've made a deliberate choice*. SG1 suggests that the Island retains relatively strong community bonds, which can be used as a tool for sustainable outcomes (alongside the strong environmental ethic of some newcomers):

The sense of community is much better on an island. Creating partnerships is definitely easier for an island ... There are some really passionate people ... who come to live here because we have the natural assets and they want to protect those. So that's an opportunity for sustainability and creating those networks (SG1).

Residents have differing perspectives about development and an interesting issue to explore in future research would be whether sea changers from cities are shaping local communities by outnumbering or out-powering local residents. Fees (1996), for example, analyses the conflicts arising from the relocation of city dwellers to rural areas. Urban retirees or semi-retirees have more time and often more professional experience than locals, as T1 notes:

There's a residents group but it's like a lot of rural communities where there's a very vocal minority. Down on the foreshore, multi-million dollar properties, a whole range of retired QCs and people like that who ... want to exercise their brains in retirement and are very, very professional about the way they protest and challenge development. They're very aggressive about it ... Time is not an enemy so they can spend plenty of time researching.

I want now to drill down to elaborate on a case study of a development which illustrates tensions between residential development and environmental management. The Summerland Estate is near the site of the Penguin Parade on the Summerland Peninsula (see Figure 7.1). The Victorian Government first took over control of the Penguin Parade from the local (Island) government in 1981 and is now in the process of displacing the remaining residents of the peninsula. The Summerland Estate buyback scheme is an example of 'undevelopment' – the removal of an entire housing estate. The interesting question is whether this is a rare example of humans being displaced for animals, or whether residents are actually being displaced for tourists.

In 1975, Seddon recommended restricting further development of holiday homes to the subdivided land in the main towns of Cowes, Newhaven, Ventnor and Rhyll, reasoning that the Island's south coast is a major biological and scenic resource: "it serves millions of day trippers whereas the estates [on the south coast] serve a few thousand only. The Estates are ill-planned, very costly to service adequately, and of spectacularly low standard in design and layout". Seddon recommended allowing no further building and no improvements in services (roads, power, and water) which in effect were subsidising the estates. Seddon (1975: 145) recognised that compulsory land acquisition would involve "a hornet's nest of social, economic and political implications" in order to achieve environmental outcomes. In 1985, ten years after Seddon's recommendation, a program of voluntary land acquisition within the Summerland Estate (not the entire

south coast) was instigated by the Victorian Government. It appears that the Government had acted upon the advice of Penguin Reserve researcher Peter Dann, who warned that if remedial action was not taken to address the decline in penguin numbers¹³⁰, the Parade would cease to be a viable tourist attraction by 1998-99 (Dann, 1992; 2002), as the estate contains the last remaining viable penguin breeding habitat on the Island. Hence, it may have been due to the threat of imminent loss of tourism revenue, as well as for environmental purposes, that the buyback scheme proceeded: “Arguably such action would not have been taken without the presence of the significant tourism economy that had built up around the Little Penguin” (Harris, 2002: 244). The estate originally occupied about one third of the penguin colony:

There were 776 allotments developed in about 1927 and approximately 190 houses actually went in. Penguin numbers were going down through road-kill, foxes, dogs, cats, fire, trampling of burrows, and putting in house sites that destroyed burrows. In 1985 the [Victorian] Government said (well it was determined by Peter Dann, our research biologist) that there would be no more penguins if we kept going down that track. The Government, to their credit at the time, realised how important the site was and initiated a buyback program. It was hoped that by 2000 all the houses would be bought back [but] the funds weren't there ... We're lobbying the Government fairly hard to fasten the amount of money that's going into the buyback program, because it will significantly change the way we manage the Summerland Peninsula. At the moment we have ... garden escapes still coming out of those houses; effects of all the roads; our last two fires in the Summerland Peninsula were caused by power lines that could be gotten rid of once the houses go (SG1).

The buyback scheme “met with a mixed and at times hostile reception ... [and] resulted in the break up of a community” (Scrase, 1995: 25). The scheme was due to be completed by 2000 but as of February 2006 it was 94 per cent completed due to rising land values (as a result of a booming real estate market) which reduced the purchasing power of the available budget¹³¹ (Parliament of Victoria, 2006). The remaining property owners comprise *three or four full-time residents and the rest are holiday* [residents].

¹³⁰ The average number of penguins at the Parade declined by more than 50 per cent between 1977 and 1987 (Dann, 2002). Reasons for the decline in penguin numbers included “predation by foxes and dogs, mortality caused by cars and habitat destruction due to urban expansion, the spread of weeds and erosion” (Dann, 2002: 3).

¹³¹ Addendum – in late 2007 the Victorian Government announced that it will spend \$15 million to compulsorily acquire the remaining 42 properties to complete the buyback, and the program will be finalised within the next three years (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007b).

It's been voluntary ... it's just starting to come down now to [the fact] that people aren't wanting to leave. The Government is putting up around \$1 million dollars a year and ten years ago that bought ten houses. At the moment that's buying far fewer houses (SG1). However, in 2005 the Victorian Government was able to provide \$6.6 million to redevelop the Seal Rocks (visitor) Centre at the western tip of the Summerland Peninsula, the result of which will likely increase tourist numbers, traffic, and environmental damage. Head (2000) points out that the only permissible new buildings on the Peninsula are those associated with tourist infrastructure. While residents are being expelled, the Government is encouraging tourists to this part of the Island; effectively the Government is placing greater priority on tourism (i.e. greater revenue) than on the environment (by providing funding to complete the buyback scheme to restore penguin habitat). Hence, this case of reverse development, or 'undevelopment' appears not to be for conservation purposes in and of themselves, but also in the interests of providing greater tourist revenue to ensure that there is a viable penguin population.

The removal of residents from Summerland Peninsula also relates to sense of place. Head (2000: 52) examines the program of environmental restoration at Summerland Peninsula in regard to the place of people in contemporary constructions of naturalness:

Modern management strategies deal with and direct the changes in landscape by appealing to particular constructions of naturalness. These constructions feature several paradoxes in their application in Summerland ... People are encouraged as visitors, but removed as residents. Yet as the metaphor of remote nature collides with global capital and becomes commodified, it paradoxically attracts an increasing number of people.

Head's family house was to be removed from Summerland Peninsula, and the author described their pending experience of loss of attachment to place and juxtaposes it against the removal of Aboriginal history from that area: "A domestic landscape of settler Australian holidaymaking is in the process of being removed. Aboriginal cultural heritage may not have been peeled, but its absorption into the sphere of 'nature' removed it from history in a different way" (2000: 46). Head asks what makes Summerland Peninsula houses blights on the landscape rather than sites of significance, and to whom? Such issues of how to address the layers of time and place are important

(as with the issues described in the previous chapter about layers of history on Rottneest Island), but beyond the scope of this work.

Governance

Morris (2004: 2) defines development pressures as “circumstances where there are strong forces, economic and otherwise, for development, and also strong forces resisting development”. A former president of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Morris (2004) downplays the role of government in determining Victoria’s growth, arguing that the key drivers of growth are economic, social and environmental influences, and that these are also the key drivers in relation to tourism development. Next I examine the roles of local and state governments in managing the myriad economic, social and environmental pressures on Phillip Island, and explore the relationship between islandness and governance (in particular I consider the extent to which policy and planning initiatives take into account special island characteristics).

Local government

Phillip Island has experienced several changes in local governance arrangements. R3 told me about the history of local governance, beginning with the forerunner to the Council, the Roads Board, which was formed in 1871. It began with 318 ratepayers, but by 1874 only 54 ratepayers remained and the Island was added to Woolamai Shire on the mainland; the island minority consequently fared badly in competition for funds, services and utilities (Edgecombe, 1989). A separate Phillip Island Shire Council was formed in 1928 but, like Bruny Island’s local government body, was amalgamated with a mainland council in the 1990s. The Phillip Island Shire Council was amalgamated with two mainland municipalities in 1994 to become Bass Coast Shire Council, the administrative centre of which is based on the mainland at Wonthaggi. R3 perceives that the mainland council is *getting all the rates from Phillip Island but they’re not putting it back into the Island*. Amalgamation was supposed to reduce rates, but for Phillip

Islanders (after allowance for inflation) they are appreciably higher (Bass Coast Shire Council, 2004).

The 1994 amalgamation was part of a broader restructuring of Victorian local government: in total 210 councils were reduced to 78 municipalities in the early 1990s. As discussed in chapter four, local government amalgamations in Australia are primarily driven by economic considerations; they are intended to create economies of scale and more effective organisations. Vince (1997: 159) describes the Victorian experience of council amalgamations as an example of “the power of the political will of state government instituting a statewide program of privatisation and rationalisation of services based on the ‘economies of scale’ argument”. Mercer and Jotkowitz (2000, cited by Pini et al. 2007) highlight the Victorian amalgamations as being particularly problematic in disempowering local citizens and local government in terms of environmental progress. They argue that in order for local governments to achieve genuine progress in making sustainability work at the local level, they need more funding from state and Australian governments, and greater powers.

Municipal boundaries in Australia have been redefined partly as a result of technological improvements which reduce isolation:

In many areas municipal boundaries accorded with and were defined by readily recognisable geographic features. Many historical local government boundaries were based on rivers, coastlines, catchment areas and mountain ridges. With modern day bridges, road systems and transport there is decreasing necessity to use geographic features to define municipal boundaries (Vince, 1997: 154).

As such, the bridge connection to the mainland may make it more difficult for Phillip Islanders to argue for reinstatement of the local island government. Phillip Island is physically linked to the San Remo Peninsula rather than being a distinctly separate place but *there’s agitation on the Island that they should still be stand-alone ... they keep lobbying hard ... and argue that they’re the major economic driver and Council offices aren’t on the Island. Politically, it’s never going to happen* (T1). Phillip Island is of great economic importance to Bass Coast Shire Council: 94 per cent of visitors to the Shire visit Phillip Island and more than half (57 per cent) the visitors most closely

associate Bass Coast Shire with Phillip Island (Ruzzene & Shipp, 2005). R2 refers to the economic dominance of Phillip Island in the Shire: *the Shire is a funny shape with Phillip Island stuck out on one end, but Phillip Island provides 46 per cent of the rates. The whole thing is out of whack ... It's become a sort of 'them and us' situation.*

T1 discusses Council's view on tourism and the importance of Phillip Island to the Shire:

Whilst the councillors are a very mixed bunch about whether they support tourism or not, the Council at operational levels with the CEO and senior management is a very pro-tourism Shire ... Phillip Island is the predominant sector within Bass Coast Shire ... It's a stand-alone marketing region from Tourism Victoria's point of view, whereas the rest of the Bass Coast Shire works in a bigger region.

A long-term resident believes the Island should again have a separate council (due to its islandness), but considers that this is unlikely to happen since the mainland-based council benefits financially from the Island (as opposed to the common situation of offshore islands being economic drains on mainland governments):

A group that's been going for about four years is having a battle for the Shire to go alone and be a separate shire, which I think it should be. We should have fought for this in the very beginning because it's an island; it's separate. The council is digging its toes in ... The [Phillip Island Municipal] Review Committee have had petitions to Melbourne – they're trying to get a meeting with the [State] Government but councillors have got such a hold - the Government won't step in unless something really drastic happened. A large percentage of rates come from Phillip Island because there's so many houses, whereas a lot on the mainland is farmland ... I don't think we'll ever go back to being a separate shire. It's a shame isn't it? (R3).

In 2006 a request from Phillip Island residents for a review of the Bass Coast Shire (specifically regarding separating Phillip Island from the Bass Coast Shire to improve service delivery) was refused by the Victorian Government Minister for Local Government (ABC, 2006). SG3 believes that its island status allows Phillip Island greater autonomy (partly due to the human temptation to categorise based on visual characteristics):

With islands, because they're more self-contained, it's easier for government to say, 'you manage that'. Once you get onto the mainland you start getting into artificial borders. Phillip Island is part of the Bass Coast Shire Council but because it's an island it becomes a bit more self determining ... on the mainland you start drawing lines on the map almost and that gets difficult going through freehold land or across council boundaries or catchment areas, so islands are probably neater in some bureaucratic decision-making and resource allocation policies.

Hence, islandness may still confer governance advantages, despite the bridge and despite Phillip Island being part of a mainland jurisdiction. According to Watts (2000: 22), “The geographical character of islands accentuates their distinctiveness as communities. ‘Islandness’ has been a major factor in their cases in accentuating the pressures for significant autonomy, both substantively and symbolically”.

Another local governance issue of concern to permanent residents of Phillip Island is that of the election of local representatives by ‘outsiders’. T2 comments that while ratepayers vote for councillors, because many of these ratepayers live off-island there is concern that they may not be familiar with local issues. R3 recognises problems resulting from mainland councillors outnumbering islander councillors and considers that the municipal boundaries should be re-examined but *they say they can't because they work the boundaries out on population ... the four [mainland wards] gang up against the three on the Island, so when there's any voting issues half the time they get beaten ... There should be an extra councillor to even things, because the way it goes the local councillors are fighting to get an issue through.*

State government

The Penguin Reserve was managed by the Shire of Phillip Island from the mid-1950s to 1981 (Harris, 2002). In the late 1970s the question of management jurisdiction emerged, “with the Shire Council ‘ownership’ of the Penguin Parade under review in a climate where State level decision-making saw Phillip Island as a resource for all the people of Victoria” (Head, 2000: 44). In recognition of the Penguin Reserve’s wider public good values, management jurisdiction changed from the Shire to State Government and the Phillip Island Penguin Reserve Committee of Management was formed under the *Crown*

Land (Reserves) Act 1978. Economic reasons may also have prompted the change in governance arrangements, considering the significant tourism values of the Penguin Parade: *The Penguin Reserve was making a lot of money, so the State Government thought maybe we should make a unique park ... financed through the Penguin Parade* (SG1). Harris (2002: 242) argues that it is doubtless that “the significant economic benefits at both a local and state level flowing from visitation to the ‘Penguin Parade’, were instrumental in the decision by the Victorian Government to bring [it] under its control”.

In 1996 the Victorian Government announced the dedication of several parcels of crown land (2,750ha fragmented across the Island) as a nature park. The only nature park in Victoria, PINP manages approximately one-third of the Island, including most of the key sites – the visitor attractions at the Penguin Parade, Koala Conservation Centre, the Nobbies (at the tip of Summerland Peninsula) and Churchill Island (a small bridged island, the site of Victoria's first farming settlement) which, combined, attract more than 600,000 visitors annually (PINP, 2006b). PINP is managed by a Board of Management (comprising scientific, business and local community representatives) appointed by the Minister responsible for the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, and the CEO and staff are responsible for day-to-day management. PINP receives no recurrent operational funding from State Government, other than that provided to the ongoing costs of operating the Nobbies building near Seal Rocks, and for selected programs and capital works. PINP can apply for grants through the Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment and reports back to the Minister through that Department. The Nature Park is reserved for the conservation of areas of natural interest or beauty or of scientific, historic or archaeological interest (PINP, 2006b) (i.e. the purpose of the reserve is not for specifically for tourism interests as is the case with Rottnest Island). PINP’s Board is charged with “achieving a balance between the priorities of ensuring the highest standards of environmental and ecological management for the natural assets in its care, while ensuring continuing financial viability is maintained” (PINP, 2006b: 5). This latter point about financial viability seemingly provides justification for the emphasis on tourism.

PINP generates income from attractions, sponsors of research and education programs, donations to The Penguin Foundation¹³² and volunteer support. According to SG1, *A self-funded, not for profit organisation can work if you can generate the funds. We've got a relatively big budget; it works very well because we're not constrained to politics or to consolidated revenue as closely.* The Park has improved its financial position over recent years via increased operational efficiencies and commercial activity (PINP, 2006b). PINP is considered a leading organisation on the Island as it is the largest employer (almost 200 staff) and a major contributor to the local economy. Harris (2002) notes that the Park injects more than \$2.2 million into the local economy in salaries and purchases a significant amount of its business inputs from island businesses (or from nearby areas). SG3 refers to some advantages of the Park's governance arrangements for environmental outcomes:

A lot of other areas rely on government handouts and therefore can't manage the environment in a timely or appropriate way, so we're a lot more independent ... and can employ re-vegetation officers, fox control programs and biologists to study penguins, whereas other areas perhaps rely on the respective government department to do it for them. So we've probably got a lot more control over our own destiny (SG3).

PINP uses regulations, research and education to balance the issue of negative tourism impacts on the environment with funding environmental protection through tourism:

It's in the balance and the infrastructure and the education programs you have in place to protect the resources ... different to most parks, we have research linked to the management so there's really good information exchange ... adaptive management is extremely good. If you haven't got the funds, there's a push to compromise your natural resources to create the funds and that makes it even trickier for that balance ... Of course the Nature Park relies on tourism so it's a complex situation (SG1).

It appears that PINP was more conservation-oriented in the past and is now increasingly focused on tourism and on competing with other destinations:

¹³² The Penguin Foundation raises funds from the public and business and aims to provide a dedicated source of funding for penguin projects; as such penguin conservation is not solely dependent on visitor numbers and spending.

[PINP has] come from being a straightforward conservation organisation to being an organisation which recognises that there must be a balance between the tourism and the conservation initiatives. We don't receive any recurrent government funding ... so it's important for us to be financially independent and financially secure. That has occurred in the last few years and we've again started to make a profit which has allowed us to put more money back into essential conservation needs ... We want to use best practice in tourism and we've come quite substantially forward in the commercial side of our organisation because we have to; because we're competing not only Australia-wide but world-wide as a destination (SG2).

A new venture at PINP's Koala Conservation Centre is a Sustainability Centre - a demonstration project for excellence in environmental design. This centre permits PINP to, in the words of SG2, *get more bums on seats ... the balance between education, conservation and providing enough revenue to be able to pay for that*. PINP is working towards greater sustainability within the organisation and is trying to lead by example: *not only demonstrating that we're a world-leading organisation in conservation, but we want to demonstrate it to the general public that we're being environmentally-friendly or sustainable in our own practices (SG2)*. The Nature Park works with various community groups: *because we're a self-funding, not for profit organisation and we've got cute and cuddly animals, we have a lot of Friends Groups. They're a very important part of the park and assist us in many areas of land and wildlife management (SG1)*. Several other community groups have an interest in the Island, including the Phillip Island Conservation Society and Phillip Island Landcare Group.

Problems involved with leasing public land to private developers can be demonstrated with the Seal Rocks Sea Life Centre saga in the late 1990s. Seal Rocks is at the south-western tip of Phillip Island and is home to Australia's largest colony of fur seals. The State Government excised the site from PINP to permit a commercial lease to be established:

Seal Rocks Victoria Australia built a \$12-\$17 million [visitor centre] ... you have to traverse through the penguin colony to get to it so there were fairly tight restrictions on when people could access the site ... They lost money and took the government to court over the terms of their agreement because they weren't allowed to be there at night ... they won and were paid out ... It's a very important story for Phillip Island because it's such a prime site, such a beautiful location, and there's a lot of dissent in the community

because it was left closed for two years ... that site draws many hundreds of thousands of people each year (SG1).

After paying more than \$60 million compensation to the former restaurant owner who sued over breach of contract, the State Government decided in 2003 that PINP would once again be manager of the site and in 2005 announced funding of \$6.6m for its refurbishment; the Nobbies Centre, as it is now known, opened in 2007.

The fragmented pockets of land under PINP's control create boundary issues. SG1 notes that the Park abuts housing sites at a number of locations, which puts pressure on natural resources:

The park is very fragmented which poses lots of problems, lots of edge effects, very little buffer, so our significant wildlife such as short-tailed shearwaters live right up to people's backyards or in rural paddocks. Unfortunately, unlike other parks like Wilson's Promontory [a Victorian National Park] where's there's one entry point and you can really manage your users, it's very difficult for us to manage that, but the way we do it is through infrastructure and signage ... providing good access facilities in certain locations and trying to draw the tourists and residents to those locations and protect or close other areas off.

Having management control over an entire island, as with Rottnest Island, is no doubt simpler than managing separate pockets of land within an island. PINP is effectively managed like a mainland park where the fragments act as habitat islands with edge effects.

Phillip Island has broader regional links in terms of initiatives to advance sustainable development within the State. It is part of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (which includes Melbourne), one of ten regional Catchment Management Authorities which promote and coordinate land, water and biodiversity management throughout Victoria (Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, 2007). The Catchment Management Authority is responsible for developing the NRM plan for the Port Phillip and Westernport NRM region. Phillip Island is also part of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve¹³³ (Mornington Peninsula and Western Port,

¹³³ Biosphere reserves are sites recognised under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme. They demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development and share experiences

designated in 2002) which comprises 214,200ha of crown, public and private land. Biosphere reserves can be used as vehicles to advance regional sustainable development as they can “direct a holistic philosophy towards landscape scale human/environment interactions ... [and] provide a valuable tool to integrate multiple social, environmental and economic objectives at a local scale” (Matysek et al. 2006: 86). Sustainable development initiatives for the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve include strategies to encourage further ecotourism opportunities (Matysek et al. 2006). The idea to pursue the reserve designation was generated by community members on Phillip Island and the Mornington Peninsula (Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, 2002) and as such is an example of community involvement in a regional sustainability vision (Matysek et al. 2006). Although Bass Coast Shire Council was not a founding partner of the reserve, Phillip Island Nature Parks was; their management plan recommended establishment of the reserve in 2000 (Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, 2002).

Islandness and governance

To some extent, state and local government legislation in Victoria does take into account special island characteristics, or islandness. Certain policy and planning initiatives consider the Island as distinct from the rest of the Shire. However, the local government’s design framework also includes the adjacent mainland town of San Remo¹³⁴. A council officer argues that Phillip Island is treated differently from the rest of the Shire, as demonstrated by this island-specific planning provision: [the] *design framework for Phillip Island and San Remo ... tries to address some of the unique characteristics of that area and some of the aspirations of the community* (LG1).

Many participants consider that Phillip Island should be managed differently from its adjacent mainland as there are different environmental and social opportunities on islands compared to mainlands. Among them are the possibilities to control pest species

internationally through the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO, 2007). In Australia the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* has provisions for biosphere reserves under legislative protection.

¹³⁴ San Remo and Phillip Island are in some respects treated as two islands linked by a bridge, or alternatively, as one peninsula.

more easily – for example a *fox eradication program that we wouldn't be able to do if it was part of the mainland without fencing* [and an island] *helps with community education programs and community feel* (SG1). R1 believes islands provide the opportunity to create brand names: *people who are still carrying out agriculture here could try to build up a brand name like King Island ... That's the kind of thing you can do on a limited area if you can get everybody on side*. R2 considers that islands provide opportunities for more intense management than mainlands and for a range of research studies: *we've had many wonderful fights down here about all sorts of things ... Phillip Island is probably more documented than almost anywhere in Victoria ... This is a great place for public meetings. We do them very well!* As noted above, SG3 believes that islands tend to be more self-determining (than similar-sized areas on mainlands). As such, islandness may still confer governance advantages in the case of Phillip Island, despite its bridge and incorporation in a mainland jurisdiction.

Key learnings from this case

It is certainly hard to correct the mistakes of the past. But they are certainly gross mistakes. Phillip Island is no earthly paradise – much of it is an exceptionally ugly example of the worst kind of communal vandalism (Seddon, 1975: 144).

Reflecting on Seddon's comment, I consider that some of the typical mystique associated with islands is diminished in the case of Phillip Island, due to the amount of development and the ease of access to the Island. In short, Phillip Island seems too similar to the mainland. The Island displays the results of considerable homogenisation with the mainland; the bridge has contributed to the ongoing process of Phillip Island's transformation from an island into a seaside suburb of Melbourne. In the face of increasing residential development, in part related to the ongoing expansion of Melbourne's suburban boundaries, Phillip Island is losing its character as a traditional holiday destination, and its rural landscape. Although it is not new, the Island's grid road layout contributes to the suburban feel. Perhaps one of the greatest lessons Phillip Island can provide to other island decision-makers is what *not* to do to an island.

Considering the length of time that the Island has been bridged (nearly 70 years), it could be posited that a loss of historical continuity in its residents results in a diminished sense of islandness (as a form of sense of place). In the not too distant future, no one will have a lived experience of Phillip Island without its permanent connection to the mainland. As discussed in chapter three, Hache (1998: 47) considers that if the geographical characteristic is meaningful to an island resident, “they will precisely make use of it to assert their identity”. Personal identity depends in part on a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity (Erikson, 1970); the same may be true of island identity. The bridge disrupts the historical continuity of Phillip Island’s geographical separation from the mainland. The bridge may also have impacted upon social capital. As noted in chapter four, Selman (2001: 14) describes social capital as the “glue which holds communities together through mutual interdependence”. However, Phillip Islanders do not need to depend on each other to the same extent that islanders who have no permanent connection to a mainland must. Further, Selman (2001) claims that one of the solvents of social capital is lack of shared memories (historicity) – as may result from an influx of new residents.

Considering the Island’s inconsistent tourism image, with the Penguin Parade juxtaposed against the Grand Prix track, it is difficult to develop an island brand. Economies of place have been employed in the Penguin Parade but Grand Prix tracks do not need to be sited on islands. Some participants identified tensions between residents and tourists (particularly during peak periods) but also acknowledged the benefits of access to more services (typically urban services such as restaurants) that come from being a popular tourist destination. One participant considers that the bridge makes Phillip Island less of an exclusive residential address than neighbouring (unbridged) French Island. However, it could be argued that the greater self-sufficiency of French Island residents (for example, each landowner is responsible for providing water and electricity to their property) does not necessarily attract wealthy residents. Some of the residents interviewed are concerned about the proposed Linfox coastal development because it is perceived as a residential development; another ‘blot’ on the picturesque south coast. The Summerland Peninsula Estate clearly conflicts with environmental management objectives for the penguins (as it their prime breeding area on the Island). However,

tourism is not positioned quite as problematically; tourists are still encouraged to travel through the Summerland Peninsula to reach a new tourism development at The Nobbies.

Some participants indicated that they do not consider amalgamation with the mainland local government to have provided them with economic benefits. Islanders were led to believe that rates would be reduced following amalgamation but instead they have risen. Some islanders interviewed believe they are supporting the rest of the Shire, considering the residential density on the Island compared to the dominance of farmland on the adjacent mainland. However, it is difficult for islanders to argue the case for reinstatement of the former Phillip Island Shire, in part because they cannot as easily express an 'island condition' (Hache, 1998) (to assert, for example, lack of understanding by the central authorities) as islanders with no fixed link can.

Examining the metropole-island relationship in terms of core-periphery relations, Phillip Island has become 'closer' to Melbourne both due to the bridge and through improved highway access and it is a comfortable day trip destination (most day or weekend trips are within the two hour driving zone from a city centre (Mercer, 1971)). In 1975 the Island was three hours drive from Melbourne; now travel time has halved (although during peak periods a traffic bottleneck increases travel time as there is only one way off the Island). Melbournians have a direct connection to Phillip Island on sealed road from the CBD through to Seal Rocks at the western end of the Island; no change in mode of transport is necessary to cross the water. Melbourne is a key source of local visitors and a gateway for interstate and international visitors, and so provides islanders with a valuable source of income, particularly considering the decline in agriculture. Conversely, Phillip Island is of immense economic benefit to Melbourne and to the state of Victoria. Perhaps the bridge has benefited the mainland (particularly the state and local mainland-based governments) more than the Island. Currently Bass Coast Shire Council receives a significant and growing financial windfall from Islander rates due to increasing residential development, as opposed to the common situation of an offshore island being an economic drain on a mainland government. Meanwhile, the environmental and social values of the Island have been diminished through bridge access.

Over the course of several decades, Phillip Island's fixed link seems to have increasingly integrated the Island with the mainland. Nevertheless, it still possesses some island characteristics, as distinct from its mainland; for example, retaining the typical appeal of islands in terms of offering a variety of coastal environments in a contained space. Like Bruny and Rottnest islands, its wildlife is an important part of Phillip Island's appeal. Environmentally, Phillip Island still has some typical advantages of islandness, such as the ability to keep out many pest species without using fencing. Phillip Island has one main entry point; it is only joined to the mainland at its eastern end. Bridges reduce access difficulties and costs but in the process they may also diminish many appealing island features, including the journey to the island (Baum, 1997; Watson, I 1998). Further research would need to be conducted in order to indicate whether or not tourists are attracted to the place because it is an island, but tourism operators do market the psychological appeal of being an island (combined with ease of access granted by the bridge). Phillip Island has access comparable to a mainland region the same travel distance from Melbourne, but it retains the marketing advantage associated with being an island.

Phillip Island also faces many sustainability challenges and the Island is not protected from change as much as other offshore islands due to the bridge. An important challenge is to retain (what is left of) islandness in spite of the bridge - for example through community bonds, maintaining unique environments, capitalising on the Island's distinctive features (including the bridge) and demonstrating that Phillip Island can still provide a strong sense of place for people despite its physical connection to the mainland. It is important to maintain naturalness and diversity and avoid turning the Island into an outdoor zoo, geriatric colony, wealthy enclave, or Melbourne suburb. Phillip Islanders can construct a different form of islandness – a unique sense of islandness that differs both from traditional, unlinked islands, and from mainlands.

CHAPTER EIGHT

KANGAROO ISLAND: ROOM TO MOVE?



Figure 8.1: Seal Bay, Kangaroo Island (source: the author)

KANGAROO ISLAND: ROOM TO MOVE?

[Kangaroo Island is] vulnerable both ecologically and socially and the 'sense of place' sought by the broader and global visitor market is potentially at risk, depending upon management actions and developments pursued ... The people of Kangaroo Island see prosperity in tourism, but know that what they have is a unique resource that must be managed carefully if it is not to be destroyed. They are working hard to find the delicate balance between development and conservation (Duka & Jack, 2005: 201-2).

Kangaroo Island, or KI, to use the local vernacular, is Australia's third largest island after Tasmania and the Northern Territory's Melville Island; it is seven times the size of Singapore. As discussed in chapter three, insularity, and its concurrent problems, is commonly claimed to be more pronounced on smaller islands. Considering that Kangaroo Island is the largest of the case islands (440,000ha), in this chapter I will explore the implications of size on the research themes - in particular concerning islandness and governance. In contrast to Bruny and Phillip islands, Kangaroo Island has its own local government. In order to demonstrate the opportunities islands can present for improving local sustainability, and to also demonstrate how islandness can be used as a tool for sustainable tourism management, I make a case study of the Tourism Optimisation Management Model, or TOMM. Developed on and for Kangaroo Island, TOMM is a community-initiated program responsible for monitoring the long-term condition of the Island as a sustainable tourism destination and I will draw on some TOMM data throughout this chapter¹³⁵. As with the other three case islands, resident and tourism developments present as key issues impacting on the island environment and community. Concerning Kangaroo Island's relationship with the metropole (Adelaide), I will address the sidelining of the local government through a second case study, that of the Southern Ocean Lodge development currently being constructed on the Island's south coast.

¹³⁵ I refer to selected TOMM statistics, both from Resident Surveys and Visitor Exit Surveys throughout this chapter, as they provide a valuable source of information to integrate with my interview data. Under TOMM a telephone survey of 400 islanders (approximately 10 per cent of the population) is conducted annually; since 2000 this survey has been undertaken by a market research company.

Kangaroo Island (Figure 8.2) is located 120km southwest of Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia. The Island is separated from the mainland by a 15km stretch of water called Backstairs Passage; it is exposed to the Southern Ocean along its south coast. Kangaroo Island is accessible by a 45-minute ferry journey from Cape Jervis¹³⁶ on the Fleurieu Peninsula (a 90-minute drive from Adelaide) or by a 30-minute commercial flight from Adelaide. The Island is 155 kilometres long and up to 55 kilometres wide, and its highest point is 320m. Kangaroo Island has a temperate mild climate.

Bowdler (1995) notes that Kangaroo Island has been a subject of archaeological interest and speculation: the oldest archaeological date for human occupation is 16,000 years ago, when Kangaroo Island was part of mainland Australia. Separation occurred at about 9,500 years ago but occupation of the Island continued until at least 4,300 years ago. It was not occupied nor visited by Aborigines at the time of European contact. According to Bowdler (1995) there has been considerable debate as to whether the population had died off or migrated to the mainland.

¹³⁶ Alternatively, a new ferry service began operating in 2007 from Wirrina Cove (further north than Cape Jervis on the Fleurieu Peninsula).



Figure 8.2: Location of Kangaroo Island

Kangaroo Island features prominently in the early European history of Australia, particularly free settlement in South Australia. European explorers found the Island uninhabited and in 1802 British explorer Matthew Flinders named the Island (Kangaroo Island), but Nicholas Baudin mapped much of the south and west coasts, which hence bear French names. The first European settlers in the early 1800s were sealers and escaped convicts and sailors *so it was a rogue sort of place* (T1¹³⁷). Some of the early settlers forcibly brought Tasmanian¹³⁸ and mainland Aborigines as their ‘wives’ to help with the work of trading salt and seal, kangaroo and wallaby skins. While Kangaroo Island offered a comparative sense of freedom for the men (Taylor, 2002), it represented a prison for the women. Taylor (2002) notes that on Kangaroo Island convictism merged with Aboriginality, the two fears of colonists in the ‘civilised centres’ (South Australia was not a British convict colony). The skin trade reached its peak in the early 1820s; the sealer population was estimated at more than 200 in 1826 (Taylor, 2002).

Following the passing of the *South Australian Colonisation Act* in 1834, which made Kangaroo Island part of a new colony, the South Australian Company¹³⁹ selected Kangaroo Island as the site of Australia’s first free European settled colony in 1836: *Islanders proudly claim it as the first settlement in South Australia* (MH1). Reeves Point, the site of this settlement, is on the South Australian Heritage Register (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2007a). However, shortages of building timber and water forced a premature end to the formal settlement and later that year Adelaide was settled at Glenelg. Along with Royle’s (1989) example of Vancouver Island being established earlier than its adjoining mainland, Kangaroo Island was founded earlier than Adelaide (also similar to the fact that Melbourne was settled from Tasmania). Although the formal settlement lasted less than four years, some pioneers stayed on, forming a community with a strong sense of independence (South Australian Tourism

¹³⁷ While some speaking positions are identified, some participants had multiple roles at the time of interview and are thus labeled MH (multiple hats) or their position does not fit into the categories of tourism (T) or local government (LG) and so are identified as OI (other institution).

¹³⁸ There is a link with Bruny Island here as three Aboriginal women taken to Kangaroo Island were from the Nuennone band of Bruny Island; they were sisters of Trugannini (Taylor, 2002). Other Aboriginal women were taken from the mainland opposite Kangaroo Island and, like those in the Aboriginal prison on Rottnest Island, their home was visible across the water.

¹³⁹ The South Australian Company was established by an Act of Parliament in England and its charter was to establish the first colony somewhere along the coast between the Great Australian Bight and Port Phillip Bay.

Commission, 2007a). The Island population grew slowly and its economy was largely based on farming. Significant changes did not occur until the soldier land settlement scheme¹⁴⁰ following the Second World War: the population trebled from 1,113 in 1947 to 3,375 in 1966 (Barker & McCaskill, 2004).

The local economy is now more or less evenly divided between tourism and primary production (including grazing, crops, commercial fishing, aquaculture, viticulture and forestry). The plantation forestry industry consists of an 8,200ha estate comprising Radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*), Tasmanian blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and Shining gum (*E. nitens*). The industry is aiming to develop a 20,000-30,000ha estate (Kangaroo Island Development Board, 2006a) and a multi-million dollar timber mill has recently been established in the centre of the Island. OI1 cites competing economic interests as a barrier to development: *if you say, put in a dam, viticulture, olives and forestry, some people have a concern that that changes the landscape and changes the reason why a lot of tourists come in the first place. Manufacturing is limited: it's difficult to bring other types of businesses onto the Island because there are large costs in operating on the Island* (LG2). T2 regards economic viability as a major problem and he considers that Kangaroo Island should use its comparative advantages and market its uniqueness: *maybe the whole Island should be an organic island ... Because of the isolation and the cost of freight the Island needs to value-add ... Kangaroo Island needs to be a brand.* Hence, islanders should employ islandness for economic outcomes (i.e. economies of place). Several participants anticipate further business opportunities in aquaculture and the wine and food industry – for example, Kangaroo Island is well-known for its honey¹⁴¹.

The Island's main townships are Kingscote, Penneshaw, Parndana and American River. Kingscote, on the north coast, is the principal town and a tourist, administrative and commercial centre. It is the departure point for a new ferry service, while Penneshaw is where the longer-running SeaLink ferry docks. Penneshaw is the service and community

¹⁴⁰ Under the government's war service land settlement scheme, 174 ex-soldiers and their families were each allocated 1,200 acres of undeveloped land on the Island's central plateau and were required to clear and develop 800 acres for pasture (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2007b).

¹⁴¹ Ligurian bees were imported from the Italian province of Liguria in the early 1880s and, aided by its island status, Kangaroo Island now has the only pure strain in the world (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2007b).

centre for the eastern end of the Island and is experiencing growth through its appeal to retirees and as a holiday house area (Kangaroo Island Council, 2006), likely facilitated by its proximity to the mainland. American River is a tourist, retirement and fishing centre, while Parndana is the only non-coastal town and is a service centre for the centre of the Island.

Island values

Underlying the Island's economy are its natural values. These values also inform Kangaroo Island's appeal to residents and tourists. The Island retains 47 per cent of its native vegetation, mostly at its western end (Masters et al. 2004). Ecosystems range from mallee woodlands to karst ecosystem, coastal cliffs and sand dune systems (Department for Environment and Heritage, 2005). There is an array of native wildlife including Australian sea lions (*Neophoca cinerea*), Kangaroo Island kangaroos¹⁴² (*Macropus fuliginosus fuliginosus*), echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), wallabies, Little Penguins and abundant bird life. Protected areas are managed by National Parks and Wildlife South Australia (part of the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage or DEH) and cover 116,000ha or 26 per cent of the Island, including the 32,600ha Flinders Chase National Park¹⁴³, 21 conservation parks, five wilderness protection areas and one conservation reserve (Department for Environment and Heritage, 2007). The National Park was declared in 1919 and it came to be seen as a sanctuary for threatened fauna from the mainland; several species, including koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) and platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*), were released in the park, which reflects the use of islands as repositories or natural museums for continents. As I will explain below, koalas now present as a significant pest species and symbolise the preservation of a mainland species at the expense of several island species. Along the southern shoreline of Flinders Chase is a large colony of New Zealand fur seals

¹⁴² Like many island species, some animals have evolved differently from those on the mainland, such as the Kangaroo Island kangaroo, a subspecies of the Western Grey kangaroo which is smaller, darker and has longer fur than its mainland counterpart (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2007c).

¹⁴³ Flinders Chase National Park is managed under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act (1972)* and the *Wilderness Protection Act (1992)* for the preservation of wildlife, protection of Indigenous and European cultural heritage sites, features of geographical significance, and the encouragement of public use and enjoyment.

(*Arctocephalus forsteri*) at Admirals Arch, a rock formation popular with tourists. Remarkable Rocks, large granite rock formations sculpted by the natural elements, is also a popular tourist attraction. Flinders-Baudin Research Centre, opened in 2004, is based within the National Park¹⁴⁴: “free from foxes and rabbits, and with most of the native vegetation intact, the park is an ideal place to research natural resource management” (Parker, 2004: n.p.). Research opportunities range from conserving biodiversity to managing fire, improving water quality, and agricultural and other niche markets that could be developed (Parker, 2004).

Other major tourist attractions are the limestone caves of Kelly Hill Conservation Park, Seal Bay Conservation Park where visitors can take guided tours among the third largest and only accessible colony of Australian sea lions, and Cape Willoughby Conservation Park, home to the first lighthouse in South Australia (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2007d). The Island’s marine environment is of great value for biodiversity conservation, aquaculture, fishing, and other recreational uses. Marine Protected Areas include The Pages Conservation Park and Seal Bay Aquatic Reserve.

In 2003 the Australian Government identified Kangaroo Island as one of Australia’s 15 National Biodiversity Hotspots (areas with many endemic species where the levels of stress or future threat are considered to be high). Kangaroo Island has proportionally the greatest area of remnant native vegetation in South Australia's agricultural region and has four animals that are nationally listed as threatened¹⁴⁵. Although Kangaroo Island is one of the largest areas in Australia free of rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), mammals are threatened by domestic animals, changed fire patterns and habitat fragmentation (Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 2007a). Kangaroo Island has 14 nationally threatened plants which face threats such as weed

¹⁴⁴ The centre was established by the University of Adelaide; water companies and the State Government also contributed. The Research Centre’s aims are to support research and teaching of the natural sciences and international exchanges; facilitate collaboration between universities, governments and industry; train future generations of natural resource managers and scientists; and help local communities and industries solve environmental problems and enhance their sustainability (South Australian Tourism Commission & Department for Environment and Heritage, 2003: 52).

¹⁴⁵ These are the Glossy Black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*), Kangaroo Island dunnart (*Sminthopsis aitkeni*), Southern Brown bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*) and the Heath rat (*Pseudomys shortridgei*).

invasion, dryland salinity, changed fire patterns, root rot fungus, and grazing pressure (Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 2007a).

Kangaroo Island's strong environmental values also contributed to it being declared a Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) site in 2004. Kangaroo Island LTER is a joint project between the University of Adelaide and other institutional and government partners¹⁴⁶. It is Australia's fifth LTER and has formal links with a world-wide network¹⁴⁷. It was established to facilitate understanding of ecological processes in a unique environment in the Australian context: Kangaroo Island has had a long period of isolation and has not experienced vegetation clearance to the same extent as the mainland (The University of Adelaide, 2004). OI3 explains the reasons why Kangaroo Island was selected as an LTER site, and some of the challenges facing the Island:

It's a defined area; it has a long history of research; there are some endemic flora and fauna; and it hasn't suffered some of the impacts that have taken place on the mainland ... environmental values include lack of Aboriginal burning for maybe 4,000-5,000 years, lack of feral pests such as rabbits and foxes ... challenges are lack of water resources; pest management; fire management; and Phytophthora¹⁴⁸ management.

Development

In part due to its environmental values, Kangaroo Island is attracting a significant number of tourist and residential developments, largely in the form of holiday homes. However, these developments potentially threaten the environment and the Island's character. Following a general discussion on tourism, I focus on two case studies in order to illustrate various research themes in more detail. The first concerns the Tourism

¹⁴⁶ The other LTER partners are the Department for Environment and Heritage, the South Australian Museum, the Royal Society of South Australia, South Australian Research and Development Corporation, Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, and the Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Board. The LTER encompasses all of Kangaroo Island and nearby islands and seaways (University of Adelaide, 2004).

¹⁴⁷ The International LTER's objectives include enhancing the understanding of long-term ecological phenomena; facilitating interaction among scientists across disciplines and sites; and contributing to the scientific basis for ecosystem management (The University of Adelaide, 2004).

¹⁴⁸ Phytophthora root rot is a disease that affects many native plants, ecosystems and crops. Its global spread has been the consequence of trade and human migration (Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 2007b).

Optimisation Management Model, a form of island-wide tourism management that illustrates community engagement and use of social capital. The second case study concerns a tourism development, that of the Southern Ocean Lodge, which I use to illustrate periphery/core relations (specifically the local island government being sidelined by the State Government, in effect for the good of South Australia rather than the Island). I then explore residential development and various social issues, before considering the relationship between community visions and tourism.

Tourism

The tourism industry on Kangaroo Island developed slowly over the past 60 years. According to Harris and Leiper (1995: 35) tourists have been visiting the Island since 1892, “initially for low-key holidays in rural isolation, staying in private homes and guesthouses on the north coast”. Nevertheless, Kangaroo Island had been largely reliant on a pastoral economy until the farm debt crisis¹⁴⁹ in the early to mid-1990s: *a lot of farmers lost their properties ... there's a history of bureaucratic bungling here so the locals are pretty intolerant of government ... they were quick to blame the government for failure of the wool price* (MH1). The farm sector’s economic influence has declined with the growth of Kangaroo Island’s international reputation as an “environmental tourism haven” (Argent, 1997: 3). Further, Argent (1997: 3) notes that,

the extent to which Island non-farm businesses were able to quarantine themselves from the worst effects of the local farm debt crisis depended upon their ability to exploit this reputation [as an environmental tourism haven]. In this sense, the Island possesses a great advantage over other South Australian remote rural regions which are experiencing a protracted process of demographic and economic decline.

Hence, in comparison to rural mainland regions, islandness has created a natural environment that is of appeal to tourists (featuring abundant coastline and well-preserved flora and fauna in particular); consequently tourism has prevented economic decline on Kangaroo Island. In the 2006-07 financial year 163,588 people visited the

¹⁴⁹ Argent (1997: 6) notes that the farm crisis was “triggered by a complex sequence of local, regional, national, and global factors, including: a phase of local farm property turnover and farm expansion in the mid- to late-1980s, the deregulation of the Australian financial system, high real interest rates, increasing farm debt and, finally, the collapse of the Australian wool market in early 1991”.

Island (KI TOMM, 2007a), an increase of 11.2 per cent over the previous year. Visitors outnumber residents at a ratio of 38 to 1, which has created a range of social tensions that I will discuss below. OI2 refers to the difficulty of the small population managing relatively large visitor numbers: *it's like Adelaide with a population of 1 million receiving 35 million visitors ... a lot of our infrastructure needs are not driven by the community but by the tourism industry*. A report on the impact of tourism (Syneca Consulting Pty Ltd, 2005) estimates that visitors spend \$38 million per year on Kangaroo Island and provide the stimulus for 340 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs, corresponding to about 20 per cent of the Island's total FTE jobs. However, the local multiplier consequences of tourism expenditure are likely to be small because of the leakages of income received to pay for inputs purchased off-island (Thomson & Thomson, 1994). The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC), based in Adelaide, is responsible for the State's sustainable tourism growth. Tourism on Kangaroo Island is also managed by the local council, Kangaroo Island Development Board (KIDB)¹⁵⁰ and Tourism Kangaroo Island¹⁵¹.

Wildlife viewing is a significant tourist attraction; indeed, Kangaroo Island is the key nature-based and ecotourism destination in South Australia and is well-promoted as an iconic nature-based tourism region by the SATC (SATC & DEH, 2003). The majority of participants cite wildlife as the number one attraction: *it's developed a reputation as one of the premier wildlife destinations in Australia, if not the world* (T2); *It's not seeing them in an animal park ... it's the whole Island* (T1). Other drawcards are the fact that it is an island: *people have an emotional response to the word 'island'; that it's going to be something different from lots of populated areas* (T1); *there is a natural attraction with islands ... they seem to have that exotic nature about them* (T3).

Kangaroo Island is also known as a relatively 'untouched' destination and several participants frame the Island's appeal in contrast with more developed areas: *a lot of Australia now - anywhere near the coast has had massive development. Our*

¹⁵⁰ KIDB is one of 14 regional development boards in South Australia that aim to foster regional economic growth.

¹⁵¹ Tourism Kangaroo Island is an incorporated, non-profit body responsible for promoting the region to target markets (Tourism Kangaroo Island, 2007). Its Board members comprise tourism representatives, SATC, Council, Department for Environment and Heritage and KIDB.

development has been more in shacks or holiday homes - there are no high-rise buildings ... There's not even a marina ... it's a quieter location so people can come to their holiday homes and get away from the hustle and bustle (LG2); It's relatively undeveloped and underpopulated so that brings this big adventure aspect (OI1). T3 refers to the diversity of tourism experiences on offer: [with] some of the other well-known islands, there's either the resort experience or they're completely natural where you camp ... Kangaroo Island allows you to be in-between. It has an appeal to the family market and also to the explorer market. MH3 agrees that the Island is appealing because of its diversity:

A lot of people don't realise when they book a holiday to the Island a) how big it is, and b) how much there is to offer and how much time they're going to need to experience that ... People would come [in the] morning and ask if they could hire a bike to ride around the Island and be back in time for lunch. Now at 155km long that's going to be a problem! ... It's not just about sitting on a beach - you've got wildlife; amazing natural formations like Remarkable Rocks and Admiral's Arch; Flinders Chase is absolutely spectacular; the cultural aspect.

T1 also cites the Island's culture and social values as drawcards and his comments indicate that the Island's sense of place is increasingly being marketed for tourism: *on an island you have an expectation to have an interaction with people ... every time you pass someone you get wave. Everyone knows everyone. That sort of thing is going to be part of our brand in future, as having a personal connection to the place.* Participants involved with tourism marketing believe the name 'Kangaroo' helps to attract international tourists, which means that the Island has an immediate comparative advantage over other, less aptly named islands such as Phillip Island: *Flinders was very clever when he named it. It's the greatest marketing of all time ... Kangaroo Island is a pretty good brand because kangaroo says definitely 'Australia' and it says something about wildlife (T1).*

T1 considers Kangaroo Island to be in the third tier of Australian destinations for international visitors and lists its key competitors as Cairns, the Great Ocean Road, Sydney, Melbourne, and Uluru. In its report on developing TOMM, Manidis Roberts Consultants (1997: 16, cited in Duka & Jack, 2005: 202) largely correspond with

participant comments in describing the Island's key competitive advantages as the "intrinsic appeal of a large island where the impact of human activity is relatively low, the large proportion of island reserved as protected areas, the name "Kangaroo Island" for the international market, and the relative proximity to Adelaide". Although Kangaroo Island is the furthest of the case islands from its capital city, as part of a collaborative approach to marketing, one of the SATC's (2002) strategies is to package and brand an 'Adelaide Region' extending to Kangaroo Island.

There are also opportunities at the local level to create a distinct island product or brand by combining tourism and agricultural activities. Many islanders work in both industries; for example some farmers supplement their income by renting holiday accommodation. OI2 observes that farmers are diversifying their income base through becoming involved in tourism, *either through investment in tourism infrastructure such as beach shacks, or their partner works in the industry part-time.*

The Island's tourism industry is increasingly catering for the international market. At the time of writing, the latest TOMM Visitor Exit Survey¹⁵² results (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006) show that the proportion of international visitors increased from 26 per cent in 2002-03 to 39 per cent in 2005-06, while over the same period the proportion of intrastate visitors decreased from 43 to 34 per cent. Numbers of interstate visitors have also fallen during this period, from 31 per cent to 27 per cent of total visitors. The highest proportions of international visitors were from the United States (24 per cent) and the United Kingdom (21 per cent). The most important attributes for visitors are to see native wildlife, the natural environment, general sightseeing and relaxation; these factors also rated highest in satisfaction. Common drivers of dissatisfaction are road infrastructure, limited trading hours, unavailability of local food and wine, and inability to buy locally produced art and craft. The island tourism industry is susceptible to a range of domestic factors including competition from capital cities offering cheap airfares; loss of air services (Emu Air in December 2004 and QantasLink in June 2006); and the decline in visitation to South Australia from interstate and intrastate markets (KI TOMM, 2007b).

¹⁵² The methodology for the TOMM Visitor Exit Survey involves a self-completion survey that visitors collect at airport and ferry departure points.

Economic challenges facing the tourism industry involve the cost and perceived difficulties in accessing the Island: *there's a real perception in people's heads about the trouble of getting here. The fact that we're an island is good in terms of promotion but it also puts barriers in people's minds in terms of ease of getting to the place* (LG1). This dilemma contrasts with the case of Phillip Island which has the appeal of being called an island, combined with ease of access via its bridge. As with many islands, the transport industry has considerable control over the tourism industry and, in the case of Kangaroo Island, this includes control not only by the ferry and airlines (in terms of capacity and timetabling) but also by hire car companies as there are often vehicle shortages in peak periods (hence my decision to travel to the Island in-between the busy summer and Easter periods). MH2 reflects on this issue of 'outsider' control and considers that much of Kangaroo Island's branding comes from the SeaLink ferry campaigns *which are very much about koalas and things like that; whereas there's a lot more that we should be promoting [including] the fact that it's a rural island*. T2 is concerned that new tourism accommodation complexes are being built without an understanding of the critical mass of ferry and airline transfer arrangements. Referring to the significant activity in holiday home development, T2 also voices concern about the impacts of seasonal residents on infrastructure and transport capacity:

Up to 40 per cent of ratepayers don't live on the Island so that's a bit disconcerting because it doesn't encourage infrastructure and from a tourism operator perspective, during peak holiday seasons it puts more pressure on transfer services ... I'd like feasibility studies done on potential tourism development before it goes too far because I'm concerned about the saturation point in terms of the number of beds available ... I don't think they even take into account privately-owned holiday homes. They're still tourists and they're still coming to the Island during peak holiday season and affecting the capacity of the ferries and airlines.

Duka and Jack (2005) describe Kangaroo Island's tourism product as based around small-scale, unimposing accommodation and experiences that showcase the Australian wildlife in its natural habitat. However, some islanders would prefer larger developments. MH1 discusses two opposing philosophies about tourism: *most people on the Tourism Board don't understand the high yield, low impact, sustainable eco-tourism model. They're about volume and dollars*. In contrast, the general view amongst

participants is that most islanders resist mass tourism and prefer more environmentally-aware visitors: *island people don't want mass tourism ... They want to maintain the ethos of what they moved to the Island for, which is always a difficult balance and a lot of that has to do with the marketing of it* (T3).

Concern about tourist impacts at Seal Bay Conservation Park¹⁵³ led to the adoption of a more controlled visitor access strategy. The park is located on the Island's south coast, 45 minutes drive from Kingscote; its primary attraction is a colony of Australian sea lions. Visitor numbers to Seal Bay had begun to rise rapidly in the mid-1980s with the commencement of a fast vehicular ferry service from the mainland (Harris & Leiper, 1995) (hence it is not only bridges that facilitate increased tourism). A 'user pays' guided tour system was consequently adopted in 1987 (Harris & Leiper, 1995). Access to part of the park is prohibited to protect their breeding areas but DEH provides the guided tours at set times along the beach where visitors can walk amongst the animals (at a distance of at least ten metres). This strategy limits the impact of over 100,000 visitors annually on the sea-lions. Changes to Seal Bay in the past decade have included provisions for commercial tour operators to become accredited tour guides, redevelopment of the visitor centre and construction of a boardwalk *so if you miss a tour you can pay less money and walk along the boardwalk which will take you through the dunes where you see seals resting ... a different experience but to a degree that was part of managing that pressure* (LG1). LG1 does not anticipate that the wildlife viewing experience on Kangaroo Island will ever reach the level of the Phillip Island Penguin Parade. She compares Seal Bay (where guided tours are limited to 25 people) to the Penguin Parade:

We're not that close to a major city. Phillip Island is known for its penguins; Kangaroo Island is known for nature and wildlife, so not a species in particular ... Phillip Island links to an event ... Seal Bay is spectacular but you don't have all the sea lions coming up at a particular time ... We don't have as much pressure in such a short period of time.

The average number of visitor nights stayed on Kangaroo Island was 3.9 in 2005-06 (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006), a likely function of the Island's accessibility

¹⁵³ Seal Bay Conservation Park was proclaimed in 1972 under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* to aid protection of sea-lions and their natural habitat.

and size. Recent tourism campaigns have aimed to extend visitor stays to four or five days rather than encourage day trippers. Like Phillip and Bruny islands, many of Kangaroo Island's key attractions are concentrated on the side of the Island furthest from the entry point. A subtle example of homogenising islands with mainlands is through sealing roads, which can have far-reaching consequences. Since the main circular road was sealed, the far reaches of the Island (home to some of the major tourist attractions) are now more accessible to a greater number of visitors who *feel that they can see more in less time ... that really compromises the Island experience because you can't see Kangaroo Island in one day* (T3).

T2 was attracted to the Island because he saw untapped tourist potential, and observed that many hospitality businesses were rundown. Over recent years, *we've gone from a very basic tourism model of having great national parks and pretty immature tourism attractions ... towards much more professionalism* (T1). Participants identify several opportunities for tourism – for example *it's emerging as a wine and food site because of its clean green image ... The Galapagos Islands are held up as an icon of nature - the only way you can interact with that as a tourist is by being involved in a conservation-type activity ... Kangaroo Island should offer some components of that* (T3). T3's comment reflects the potential value in developing links between islands and in sharing ideas for more sustainable forms of tourism. T1 anticipates more environmentally-sensitive developments in the future:

It might be three-day treks with more environmentally-attuned cabin accommodation, so just trying to meet more the image of the Island. The standard motel doesn't cut it outside of the major town ... we're looking for the right type of tourism, so the appreciative traveller; someone who is prepared to spend the time to enjoy a nature-based experience ... more educated people.

Considering ways to achieve more sustainable forms of tourism, MH1 emphasises the need for an island tourism vision: *we need to determine and adhere to a model for tourism that has big spin offs in terms of the environment, infrastructure, economic development, the future for our kids ... we need to redevelop our vision ... Are we going to have a Rottneest Island-type model or a more sustainable model?* The Kangaroo Island

Strategic Tourism Plan¹⁵⁴ was prepared to provide a vision and directions for tourism growth over the next 20 years and it aims for an integrated approach to meeting economic, environmental and social goals (Urban & Regional Planning Solutions, 2006). It includes strategies to increase the economic contribution of tourism by 5-8 per cent and the number of jobs in tourism related businesses by 5 per cent in the next five years. This is to be achieved by:

clearly identifying the types of visitor markets that align with the experiences Kangaroo Island offers and the values that underpin those experiences. This will enable Kangaroo Island to increase total visitor numbers by 1-2% per annum, increase the average length of stay for domestic travellers to 6 nights and international visitors to 3 nights and increase average daily expenditure by \$10 per person (Urban & Regional Planning Solutions, 2006: ii)

The Strategic Plan also proposes a Kangaroo Island brand with the following attributes: accessible wildlife; spectacular scenery and natural landscapes; and high quality local produce, some of it unique to Kangaroo Island (Urban & Regional Planning Solutions, 2006). In order to protect ecological assets, the Strategic Plan has developed an Environmental Management Framework to guide future tourism developments and activities within specific conservation zones. The Strategic Plan also identifies statutory planning policy as a tool for protecting conservation assets and landscape values: “The review of the Kangaroo Island Development Plan¹⁵⁵ undertaken for this project has highlighted the need for additional detail in policies to guide location, siting and design and for Desired Character Statements to establish a community vision for how the zone will look and function in the future” (Urban & Regional Planning Solutions, 2006: iv). Such incorporation of Desired Character Statements into the Development Plan would mirror the intent of the Kingborough Council. LG1 hopes that the Strategic Plan will *bring some rigour that will then allow the people that administer that legislation - our planners and building officers - to have a document that backs them up and that means our Council as well, who approve or don't approve development applications - they cop*

¹⁵⁴ The Strategic Tourism Plan is a partnership between the Kangaroo Island Development Board, Kangaroo Island Council, Tourism Kangaroo Island, Department for Environment and Heritage, Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Board, and the South Australian Tourism Commission.

¹⁵⁵ A Development Plan is the equivalent of a planning scheme in Tasmania and Victoria.

most of the brunt directly. The SATC has provided funding to support TOMM as the body that will report on the implementation of the Strategic Tourism Plan.

The most recent TOMM resident survey (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006) found that 30 per cent of residents do not agree that there is a balance between tourism's economic gains and environmental protection, and 42 per cent are unwilling to accept environmental cost for economic and population growth. Thomson and Thomson (1994) also recognise conflict in preserving the 'untouched' nature of the Island and in developing tourism. TOMM results indicate that residents increasingly perceive overdevelopment to be the main environmental issue facing Kangaroo Island (23 per cent total response compared to 14 per cent total response in 2005-06), followed by tourism management and water quality. LG1 regards inappropriate developments as the major environmental impact on the Island, but notes it is not merely an issue of scale, as poorly designed small developments can have greater impacts than large-scale ones. Invasive species are also problematic and tourists can introduce weeds. Although tourists are encouraged to visit managed sites, private land is also being accessed: *we're seeing tour operators change their itinerary so that they don't encounter masses of other visitors ... searching for the next pristine picnic spot* (OI2). OI3 anticipates further pressures from tourism and associated developments but considers that environmental impacts are confined to relatively small areas of the Island; instead *the biggest threats are those associated with agriculture and the increasing areas of vineyards and forestry*. MH2 agrees that environmental impacts of tourism tend to be site-specific degradations and cites habitat destruction and waste management as major issues. MH2 believes the budgets for environment management from the South Australian and Australian Governments are inadequate: *they don't factor tourists into the funding ratio ... so in some areas of the Island we've got really poor infrastructure, mostly off Parks*. T3 recognises a problem with holiday homes now being rented out (due to rising demand for accommodation), as opposed to being infrequently occupied: *often they were built in the era when environmental sustainability wasn't paramount ... and the effluent treatment was never built*. MH2 has observed much more tourism-related traffic on back roads and T3 has concerns about the impacts of such increased traffic flow on wildlife: *we can educate tourists to travel slowly by marketing that it's not a one-day trip ... but*

people who live on the Island have normal lives, so they zoom back and forwards to Parents and Friends meetings at 9.00pm.

An example of potential environmental management impacts on tourism is evident in the case of Kangaroo Island's koalas. Koalas were introduced to the Island in the 1920s because of concerns for their survival on the mainland, but they are now a threat to the Island ecosystem through over-browsing (the population was an estimated 27,000 in 2001, Masters et al. 2004): "in less than a century the ecological profile of the koala on Kangaroo Island has shifted from that of a species introduced for conservation purposes to one of pest status" (Masters et al. 2004: 267). The South Australian Government introduced a koala control program in 1997 which involved sterilisation and translocation to mainland South Australia. Culling, widely considered a more effective management option, is a politically sensitive issue due to its potential impacts on international tourism:

They'd cull tomorrow if it wasn't for political pressure ... it's mostly issues with overseas countries ... But it's the only way to manage the population and to stop them destroying the vegetation, because many other species are suffering and may become endangered ... The Government is pouring in large amounts of money to manage the population and that's not making much difference, according to some people in the know (MH2).

In 2004 there were calls for 20,000 koalas to be culled but the State Environment Minister claimed that this would place South Australia's international reputation at stake: "Japan in particular, the media there goes absolutely berko every time this issue is raised and we rely a lot on the international market for our tourists, so this issue has to be resolved in a sensitive way" (ABC, 2004). Concern over international tourists boycotting the Island if culling occurred thus takes precedence over environmental conservation. Stratford et al. (2000: 617) argue the need for research that explores cultures in which the problems of conservation are manifest:

the proposal to cull koalas on Kangaroo Island in 1996 ... put scientific common sense in direct conflict with political and economic rationalism. Although considered more humane than leaving large numbers to eat out their habitats and to starve, culling was unacceptable because of the anticipated political and economic fallout both in Australia and overseas.

Case study: Tourism Optimisation Management Model

The Tourism Optimisation Management Model (TOMM) is a process to improve decision-making about tourism. It involves monitoring both the positive and negative aspects of tourism's environmental, social, experiential and economic outcomes, and communicating these results, quantitatively and qualitatively, to community, industry and management agencies. In relation to my research themes, TOMM can demonstrate the opportunities islands have for improving local sustainability through combined formal and community governance and visioning; and specifically how islandness can be used as a tool for sustainable tourism management.

TOMM works on attitudinal and cultural change within the tourism industry and its stakeholder base, as well as generating tangible evidence that the viability of the industry is dependent upon the quality of the visitor experience it generates, and the condition of the natural, cultural and social resources upon which it relies (KI TOMM, 2006a: n.p).

TOMM is guided by a management committee of key stakeholders comprising representatives of the project partners from South Australian and local governments (DEH, SATC, Tourism Kangaroo Island, KIDB, Kangaroo Island Council, Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board), and of community-based environment groups and the tourism industry. The administrative component is managed by the Council. Development of TOMM in 1996 was prompted by external changes which raised concerns about the Island's future sustainability. In 1995, visitation increased to over 150,000 people and day trips appeared to be rising following introduction of a fast ferry service from Glenelg, an Adelaide suburb (Duka & Jack, 2005). Hence, the consequences of closer links to the metropole presented as a threat to the Island. *Residents were concerned that that growth would continue and the ultimate fear of Kangaroo Island residents is that we'll have an island that's like a Gold Coast tourism development* (LG1).

TOMM involves islanders in envisioning optimal and sustainable outcomes (Duka & Jack, 2005). LG1 notes that community values, established from stakeholder and community workshops, corresponded well with what visitors appreciate about the

Island. These characteristics include rural and natural landscapes, relative solitude through a small and sparsely spread population, an unpretentious and relaxed lifestyle, and a strong sense of community and common bond with the land and its heritage (Duka & Jack, 2005). Optimal conditions were set to reflect these core values and indicators were developed to measure those. The two main monitoring systems are a visitor exit survey and an annual resident survey, which have been undertaken by external research agencies. Kangaroo Island's island status has facilitated tourist monitoring as there are two key 'capture' points – the airport and the ferry terminal. Additional data have been gathered from existing research conducted by agency partners, particularly environmental monitoring by DEH.

Following monitoring, a management response system alerts key stakeholders to indicators that do not perform within their identified acceptable range. For example, in the 2006-07 financial year there was an increase in visitor numbers of 11.2 per cent over the previous year which is outside the TOMM acceptable or optimal range of 0 to 7 per cent annual growth in number of visits (KI TOMM, 2007a). Outcomes of the response system have included initiation of a 'stay another day' program, research into the relationship between seal and visitor behaviour, and sealing of key roads (Duka & Jack, 2005). TOMM results are being used not only by local and state government agencies, but also by some island businesses in their strategic plans. However, effective implementation of management responses has been slow, leading to some criticism from the community (Duka & Jack, 2005). Participants generally regard TOMM as a good model but express concern over inadequate funding: *there is a groundswell of community support for TOMM ... a lot of people are passionate about making sure that we hang on ... they know it's the main provider of information on this island* (LG1). TOMM relies on core funding from partner agencies. MH2 explains that since TOMM does not fall into any specific block of funding it is difficult to attract Australian Government funding, while T1 believes the funding difficulties arise because *it is hard to equate the money spent on the project to an economic outcome. It is more about an environmental and community responsibility*. In order to reduce TOMM's reliance on support from stakeholders and grants, sustainable funding options are being considered, including a visitor levy, a foundation or environmental charity, a corporate sponsorship program, or provision of consultancy services (KI TOMM, 2006b). TOMM is already

being exported and applied elsewhere in Australia and internationally as a tool relevant both to other islands and to continental tourism destinations. TOMM has been identified as providing leadership in best practice tourism management (Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005; World Tourism Organisation, 2004). The SATC encourages other regions in South Australia to initiate such destination management processes (SATC, 2002).

TOMM is a sustainability model which involves a community managing its own change process and it also represents an example of collaboration between the community and governing agencies. Duka and Jack (2005) highlight the importance of such a collaborative approach based on a shared vision and an agreed set of values that help guide the community towards a shared understanding of its sense of place and its future direction. This sense of place can extend beyond the Island community and also be experienced by visitors. Gillis (2004) recognises that tourists can have strong place attachments to islands. Duka and Jack (2005: 226) point out that TOMM is relevant to a range of communities, including the resident community, government agencies on and off island, the tourism industry, and the global visitor: “As international visitation increases, the potential for visitors to generate an attachment to the Island increases, as does their desire to know more about the sustainable development of the destination”.

TOMM data are integrated with information from health and education sectors, and these data “tell a variety of stories regarding the relationships, social bonds and daily challenges that help or hinder people working together” (Duka & Jack, 2005: 226). Further, Duka and Jack (2005: 226) argue that such knowledge strengthens social capital: “long-term, responsible tourism management requires the presence of strong social and community capital, which in turn sustains the core values of trust, integrity, reliability and honesty”. TOMM can be a useful vehicle to improve local sustainability; Duka and Jack (2005: 230) note that

With the increasing pressure for short-term outcomes, driven by short-term funding programmes, it is often the community members themselves that have the stamina and long-term vested interest in seeing the process succeed ... Those involved with the Kangaroo Island TOMM are proactive about developing the model as it is their community, livelihoods and local environment that is at stake from the increasing tourism interest in the destination.

In Duka and Jack's (2005: 231) opinion, Kangaroo Island has succeeded with TOMM "not because it is an island; rather it is due to the shared commitment to achieving a vision and the ability of those involved to be flexible and ensure open communication amongst key stakeholders". However, I would argue that shared commitment to achieving a vision and open communication amongst stakeholders is facilitated by its islandness. A model such as TOMM is more likely to succeed on islands due to their typically strong sense of place and shared common boundaries which can strengthen social bonds and concern for intergenerational sustainability. Living in a small community, islanders already have close networks, and continuity of individuals maintains institutional memory. Based on participant comments, it appears easier for governments to work together when island-specific agencies are involved, as I will discuss in the governance section below.

Duka and Jack (2005) describe TOMM as a process integral to the governance and management of Kangaroo Island, and note that TOMM has contributed to the theoretical approach to sustainable tourism management at a destination level by focusing on integrating the social, environmental and economic values of the Island as a whole rather than only considering site-specific impacts. By linking with broader strategic planning and management processes, TOMM has the potential to integrate with other island industries, similar to the whole-of-island process applied to the Isle of Wight (Grant, 2004) which recognised that the essential asset that attracts visitors to the island is the island itself. Recognising the reciprocal connection between the tourism sector and other organisations and businesses influenced by and influencing that sector's sustainability, the aim was to develop a tourism vision that the whole island could subscribe to (Grant, 2004). TOMM has wider spatial applicability, although Duka and Jack (2005: 231) argue that to succeed elsewhere, "The shifts in organizational attitude and culture that have taken place within government agencies and community groups on Kangaroo Island ultimately have to be replicated on a much broader scale". However, such changes may be easier at smaller scales in contained spaces because community and government representatives share a responsibility for place based on their shared sense of place. Such shared sense of place between local government representatives and (part

of) the Island community can be demonstrated in the case of opposition to the Southern Ocean Lodge tourism development.

Case study: Southern Ocean Lodge

As with Phillip and Rottnest islands, it is commonly perceived that accommodation standards need to be lifted on Kangaroo Island. This case study is used to illustrate relations between the core, Adelaide, and the Island, and to elucidate community concerns about certain styles of tourism development. Baillie Lodges, a company run by Australian entrepreneur Dick Smith's daughter and son-in-law, are building a \$12 million tourism development called Southern Ocean Lodge (SOL). The company already owns island properties¹⁵⁶ and, in seeking to provide further accommodation on Australian islands¹⁵⁷, appears to have found a pristine niche tourism market. The lodge site is at Hanson Bay (see Figure 8.1), adjacent to protected areas on Kangaroo Island's south-west coast. Like the Linfox proposal for Phillip Island, Kangaroo Island's south coast is a spectacular site but one that is environmentally vulnerable. Baillie Lodges' vision is for the six-star accommodation to be "Australia's leading example of premium nature based tourism" (Parsons Brinckerhoff Australia Pty Limited, 2006: 3). The development, set to open in early 2008, comprises 25 contiguous accommodation suites and associated facilities including a main lodge, spa retreat and staff village. The development site area will occupy approximately one hectare near the coast within a 102ha parcel of private land¹⁵⁸ which is part of a 3,485ha site known as the Hanson Bay Sanctuary (it falls within the 'Coastal Landscape Zone' of the Kangaroo Island Council Development Plan). This sanctuary is situated between Flinders Chase National Park to the west and Kelly Hill Caves Conservation Park and Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area to the east.

¹⁵⁶ Capella Lodge on Lord Howe Island was the first property in the company's portfolio.

¹⁵⁷ In 2007 Baillie Lodges submitted a development proposal to a local council in south-east Tasmania. This proposal for a \$12 million eco-tourism lodge was rejected by the local council and Baillie described the Tasman Council's decision (based on issues such as non-compliance with the *State Coastal Policy* and the *Tasman Planning Scheme*) to refuse a permit as "small-minded" and "embarrassing" (*Sunday Tasmanian*, 12 August 2007: 13)). Unlike the SOL development, this proposal was not declared a major development or 'Project of State Significance' by the Tasmanian Government, which meant that Baillie Lodges had to deal with local government.

¹⁵⁸ This land "includes a kilometre of coastal frontage, cliffs, beaches and largely undisturbed native vegetation" (Planning SA, 2005).

Dick Smith's son-in-law popped up ... and proposed this Southern Ocean Lodge right here on the coast ... a full view of the pristine Southern Ocean, in the middle of pristine vegetation which has threatened native species, between two parks ... so the shit's hit the fan ... they cut across a whole of a lot of local processes ... They have to take account of the [Kangaroo Island] Development Plan ... but don't actually have to abide by it (MH1).

The planning process for the development is of concern as it bypassed local processes and decision-makers and went against the Kangaroo Island Development Plan, as I will illustrate by briefly tracing the development approval process. Following lodgement of their development application in February 2005, the developer wrote to the Adelaide-based State Government Minister for Urban Development and Planning, requesting a Major Development declaration¹⁵⁹ (Planning SA, 2006a). Under the *Development Act 1993*, the Planning Minister declared SOL a Major Development (MD)¹⁶⁰ in June 2005. The proposal was then referred to the Major Developments Panel, an independent statutory authority appointed by the Minister. According to Planning South Australia¹⁶¹ (SA), the development was declared a MD for environmental and community considerations - because the site and its environs contain largely undisturbed native vegetation of a relatively intact nature (which is a rich habitat for a variety of birds and animals), because of fire management considerations, and because it ensures a high level of community consultation (Planning SA, 2005). However, many participants report that the common perception on Kangaroo Island is that it was declared a MD due to the amount of money involved, or because of Dick Smith's high profile.

The MD Panel identified the key social, environmental and economic issues relevant to the assessment of the development; these were incorporated into an Issues Paper,

18 "Baillie Lodges opted to seek Major Development status rather than make an application to Kangaroo Island Council due to the lack of integration between the *Development Act 1993* and the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* and *Regulations 1993* with respect to tourism development" (Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 2006). The proponent contended that the only avenue to allow the proposed vegetation clearance would be if a development authorisation was given under the Major Developments provisions of the *Development Act*, providing it resulted in adequate compensation for the clearance - i.e. a Significant Environmental Benefit (SEB) under the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* (the issue of the SEB would need to be negotiated with the Native Vegetation Council, after the approval decision) (Planning SA, 2006a).

¹⁶⁰ The Minister for Urban Development and Planning can declare a proposed development a Major Development if they consider such a declaration is necessary for proper assessment of the proposal, and where the development is considered to be of major economic, social or environmental importance.

¹⁶¹ Planning SA is the State Government's advisory agency on land use planning, development policy and strategy, the building code, and urban design and open space policy.

released for public comment in September 2005. The Australian Government declared its interest in the proposal under the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* (because there are threatened species and migratory birds in the area)¹⁶² but accredited the impact assessment process of the South Australian Government. The Panel's final role in the assessment process was to consider public and agency comments and determine the level of further detailed assessment required. Accordingly, guidelines were given to the proponent in January 2006 and they prepared a Public Environmental Report (PER)¹⁶³ which was released for public comment over a six week period in April 2006.

In response to the PER, 223 submissions were received from the public, local government and state government agencies (Planning SA, 2006a). After the proponent responded to these comments, Planning SA collated the information and wrote an Assessment Report¹⁶⁴ on behalf of the Minister. The Governor, technically the final decision-maker (but in reality just rubber-stamping), approved the proposal on the advice of the Minister and Cabinet, and this approval was advertised in the Government Gazette on 19 October 2006. The Australian Government Environment Minister subsequently made an independent decision and the proposal was approved in December 2006 (Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 2006). The South Australian Planning Minister commented on the approval: "I acknowledge that the proposed development will have an environmental impact, however on balance this impact is acceptable because of the significant tourism and employment benefits likely

¹⁶² Actions that have or are likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance require approval from the Australian Government Environment Minister under the *EPBC Act*. In the SOL case, there are two matters of national environmental significance: threatened species and ecological communities; and migratory species (Parsons Brinckerhoff Australia Pty Limited, 2006).

¹⁶³ An Environmental Impact Statement is the most comprehensive and stringent level of assessment; a Public Environmental Report is an intermediate level of assessment where the issues are relatively well known or there is existing information available; and a Development Report is the least complex level of assessment.

¹⁶⁴ The Assessment Report concluded that the SOL proposal will have a detrimental environmental impact but acknowledged that this impact could be considered acceptable for three reasons:

1. the *Native Vegetation Act* mandates a Significant Environmental Benefit contribution which compensates for the environmental impact
2. the environmental impacts can be minimised through appropriate management-and compliance with conditions, and
3. there are economic and social benefits from the project, which are balanced against the environmental impact

The report recommended that should the Governor grant a provisional development authorisation, several conditions should be attached (Planning SA, 2006a).

to be generated by the resort” (Planning SA, 2006b). For this State Government, economic benefits outweighed environmental and community concerns. However, sustainability is not a matter of weighing up and balancing different categories – negative environmental impacts cannot be negated by positive economic impacts.

Development approval was granted after I had conducted interviews and the following participant comments should be read in the context of this timing (during the PER public comment period, when some participants expressed disappointment that only a PER was required, rather than a more comprehensive Environment Impact Statement). According to OI1, the development is *tearing the community apart. There’s a split view and a bit of emotiveness ... [and while it] will have economic benefit, part of the community doesn't want to see this on what they see as pristine land and leaving a footprint.* Although T3 identifies unrestrained coastal development as a problem for the Island, she excludes SOL from this generalisation because she says it will be small and low impact, visually and environmentally: *when you say it's a major project, it's not a Hilton. It's only 25 units so it sends the wrong message.*

Brown (2006) uses Kangaroo Island to demonstrate his method for measuring and analysing tourism and residential development options using survey research techniques to determine the strength of mapped public (Kangaroo Island residents) landscape values as predictors of place-specific development preferences. Brown (2006: 112) predicted from his findings that, “virtually any coastal development proposal outside of the major island townships, or located within existing conservation parks, will probably meet considerable resident opposition”. The key issues associated with the siting of the SOL are its location in the coastal zone and its proximity to conservation reserves. However, T3 considers that such developments can take the pressure off to develop in protected areas:

It would offer a higher level of tourism experience to a different clientele that can drive more yield for the Island ... There’s a lot of demand for nature-based tourism accommodation like that and a lot of push for that to be located within our protected areas. The SATC is very supportive of it being adjacent to protected areas ... [which] gives access to them and that experience but doesn't compromise the protected area.

MH2 raises concern about coastal developments being exclusive¹⁶⁵, and notes that many islanders are opposed to parts of the coastline being made inaccessible to the public because they *enjoy the fact that our island has wild coastline and that there isn't infrastructure dotted right around the coastline ... We don't want it to be the millionaires' playground; we want it to be accessible to everybody and not to have these exclusive, fly in by helicopter type things, because that's not actually bringing any economy to the Island*. According to T2, it would have been difficult for the State Government to resist the development:

[The developer] needs to be in a certain location. He needs that 'wow' factor and has to be on the ocean to do it ... It's like me going to my neighbour and saying 'I want to put a \$30,000 swimming pool in your backyard. Is that all right?' That's what they're doing to the State Government ... any State would be crazy to say no. It just depends on whether they want to set a precedent ... It wouldn't happen if it was up to the local community.

While the Adelaide-based Tourism Commission supports the development, Kangaroo Island Council openly opposed the project. It considered the PER at a meeting in May 2006 and resolved not to support the development in its proposed location (Planning SA, 2006a). Also opposed are the Conservation Council of South Australia and two island community lobby groups. T3 talks of *resistance within some sectors of the tourism community to other more professional players coming in*, and MH1 reflects on community resistance to change:

The community doesn't like outsiders coming in and changing the Island so a lot of people are opposed to new developments just because they don't like change and a lot are genuinely opposed to it because it's going to change the character of the Island and have a negative impact on the culture, environment, economics, and visitor experience, which will have a long-term impact on tourism.

¹⁶⁵ SOL rates will range from \$900 to \$2700 per person per night (Baillie Lodges, 2007).

In discussing community opinions of the development, MH3 reflects on the use of the local newspaper¹⁶⁶ as a medium for islanders to convey their views, and explains why he supports the project:

In my conversations with people, [opinion on SOL] probably is split 50-50, whereas if you look at the letters [in the newspaper] you'd say it's 90 per cent against and only 10 per cent for ... There is a very pro-active group of conservationists that don't want this ... [who] are generating public awareness ... I personally believe that the Southern Ocean Lodge is the right development in the right place ... I consider myself to be a bit of a greenie; I've lived here all my life; I like to go to beaches and go fishing and not have a huge development behind me, and this isn't that ... we're quite happy to take his rates off him to help pay for our roads and rubbish collection but we don't want him to build on that place. I just don't think that's fair.

In contrast, MH1 considers that SOL is *the right development in the wrong place!* ... *I don't think it's a goer - it's facing the Southern Ocean in howling gales ... it's going to have a high impact on the environment. You're going to have diesel generators; diesel fuel leaking all over the place. We've got a petition happening.* This petition to the South Australian Government was circulated at a public meeting concerning the proposal held in Kingscote by Planning SA on 19 April 2006, during the PER consultation period. Considering that public submissions were to close on 17 May, the purposes of the meeting were to outline the facts about the project and the decision-making process, and provide the opportunity for questions from the public. The developers were in attendance. There are no formal minutes from the hearing; the following observations are from my own detailed notes. Approximately 220 members of the public (across a range of ages) attended the meeting (Planning SA, 2006a) and I noted both project support and protest signs.

In their opening statement, the developers said that they are “not trying to create Hamilton Island [a Queensland resort island] at Hanson Bay”. They purchased land within the Hanson Bay nature reserve because the “high end of the market” will not pay to stay in a cleared area. Site selection was also based on proximity to the Island’s

¹⁶⁶ The latest TOMM Resident Survey (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2007) shows that the *Islander* newspaper is the most preferred method of communication, with approximately nine out of ten residents indicating that this is an effective method of communication about community issues.

natural attractions, available land, and the “wow factor” for marketing. The proponents observed that Kangaroo Island is a growing international destination but that it needs to develop domestically and is lacking a premium nature-based lodge. They are using sustainable design including a wastewater treatment plan and as there is limited electricity on the western end of the Island, they will generate their own power until the South Australian Government invests in mains power. As an aside, it seems paradoxical that the developers want to profit from the remote location but then expect assistance from the State Government to fund infrastructure - in May 2007 Baillie Lodges received a \$375,000 regional grant for electricity infrastructure.

In terms of economic benefits, the proponents stated that SOL will be one of the largest investments in Kangaroo Island over the past decade, and will provide employment and lift awareness of both the Island and the state. In terms of South Australian Government strategic objectives, it is in line with the SA Tourism Plan (SATC, 2002) and the Responsible Nature-based Tourism Strategy (SATC & DEH, 2003). While the proponents have the support of State Government it seems irrelevant to them that they do not have the support of the Local Government.

The developers answered most of the questions from the public (although often not directly) and it was interesting to gauge broad community support for certain statements or questions according to the level of applause that accompanied them - for example, regarding wildlife impacts and the “irreversible desecration of place”. Other issues raised by the public included the likely level of islander employment, fire management (considering the limited water supply), and increased traffic. When asked about a helicopter pad, it was clarified that the helipad will largely be for emergency use rather than for guest access (which to locals would represent a form of exclusivity). Asked whether SOL would set a precedent and make it easier for other coastal developments to receive approval, the proponents responded that Kangaroo Island is “flavour of the month internationally”; that they cannot develop the rest of the site; and development is limited on adjoining sites. Widespread applause greeted the astute comment that “Kangaroo Island is flavour of the month *because* there are not such developments”. Conversely, applause followed the remark by an Island-born resident that other residents have come to the meeting with closed minds, and that he welcomes the opportunity to

share Kangaroo Island with people who care. These comments, and the audience responses to them, demonstrate divided community opinions (reflecting divided views on broader tourism visions for the Island).

Another question from the public concerned incumbencies on the adjoining properties (which cover all land between the protected areas) and whether they were put in place in order to protect the SOL development – “would a string of development along the coastline not be wanted by guests, as it is not wanted by islanders?” (this question was applauded). The proponent responded that the development would not be economically sustainable and would not be a special lodge if there were several, and that they had sought incumbencies to safeguard the product. This answer did not reflect any concern about environmental or social impacts on the Island; rather it was about economic viability. The proponents added that there was no payment for the incumbencies as the neighbours are “supportive of the development”. A later comment that the development is “easy to pass, especially with heavy government backing, but hard to undo and it means the end of Kangaroo Island as a unique place for people to escape to” was greeted with applause, and no response from the developers. Someone else commented that “aspects of the development rub the wrong way with Kangaroo Islanders” and another added that no one on the Major Developments Panel is an islander (although it was then noted that one member formerly served the Kingscote Council). Another audience member commented that by declaring SOL a Major Development it was denying local decision-making, to which Planning SA responded that the MD process is more rigorous than that of local council’s. There was concern about a lack of information provided to islanders and when asked whether the consultation period could be extended for another month (which was greeted with applause), the reply was that this was not likely to happen. A response from the audience was “we’ve been railroaded”.

When questioned about the likely effects of the development on other tour operators, the response was that since it will be a notch or two above other Kangaroo Island accommodation, it will boost the market overall rather than being competition. The developers noted that some potential visitors are bypassing the Island because there is no such accommodation and that SOL therefore presents a new market for Kangaroo Island comprising longer-term visitors rather than day-trippers. Kangaroo Island is a special

place, the proponents stated, and they are adding a long-awaited product level. The final comment of note from the public was that there is a broader issue at stake than just the south coast of Kangaroo Island – it concerns “which direction we want to go in”. This comment reflects potential effects on the whole island and concern for the Island as a contained, coherent place rather than a collection of places. It also underscores the need for a future community vision, as I will discuss below, following a general discussion on residential development and social issues.

Residential development and social issues

In recent years Kangaroo Island’s residential growth rate has been relatively slow (in contrast to that of Phillip Island’s, which may be due to differences in accessibility and because Adelaide’s population is smaller than Melbourne’s). In 2001 the Island’s population was 4,259, up 2.5 per cent from 4,157 from 2001 (ABS, 2007). The population is ageing: its median age was 43 years in 2006 (ABS, 2007), higher than that for Australia as a whole and up from 39 years in 2001, 36 years in 1996 and 34 years in 1991. Unoccupied private dwellings comprise nearly one-third (32 per cent) of the total private dwellings. This figure indicates the number of seasonal residents and is significantly less than on Bruny and Phillip islands and is likely to be a function of accessibility and size of the Island.

Commensurate with sea change motivators, lifestyle reasons appear to be the main driver for living on Kangaroo Island. The TOMM 2006-07 Resident Survey (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006) shows that ‘lifestyle choice’ was the reason given by the highest proportion (34 per cent) of residents for living on Kangaroo Island. MH3 acknowledges the lifestyle benefits of living on an island, including the relatively safe environment for children, although in the last five years *things have changed in terms of people now locking up their cars*. Of those residents surveyed by TOMM, 78 per cent have moved to Kangaroo Island from elsewhere (up from 73 per cent in 2001-02). The majority are from South Australia, with 41 per cent from metropolitan Adelaide. Many of these people are new residents: the proportion of residents living on Kangaroo Island for less than five years increased significantly from 15 per cent in 2005-06 to 24 per cent in 2006-07. Such recent migration is in line with Gurran et al.’s (2007) observation that

in South Australia sea change has largely occurred within the past decade. While 25 per cent of residents would never contemplate leaving the Island, 23 per cent would consider leaving for employment reasons, and 20 per cent for health problems or if there was no health support. Residents show a high level of personal responsibility in the Island's future.

The majority of residents (73 per cent) desire population growth. Although Kangaroo Island is a retirement destination, OI1 believes an older demographic would be problematic from an economic perspective *because they're not necessarily economically productive and therefore they become more of a liability for the Island*. However, older residents may be socially productive and can make a significant contribution to social capital (particularly as they have more time) through volunteer work, for example. Nearly one-third (31 per cent) of the population are volunteers (ABS, 2007). As reported on Bruny Island, seasonal residents tend not to contribute to the community. Many landowners are absent for most of the year as they own holiday homes: *about 40 per cent of our ratepayers live off the Island ... Because we're a reasonably small population base, a lot of our professional people now live off-island* (LG2). Similar to Bruny Islanders, residents are relatively self-sufficient¹⁶⁷ which, MH3 believes, stems both from islandness and from the Island's history of resourceful soldier settlers: *Islanders are extremely resourceful and community-minded. They look after their own ... it comes out of remoteness - you have to be more united than other communities ... there's an enormous [number] of community groups which are very active*. However, as Kangaroo Island is such a large island, these groups tend to be separated into regions, such as resident associations in each township, rather than an island-wide community association as found on Bruny Island. MH1 describes two categories of long-term residents: *Islanders are the people that were born here, several generations. Locals are not born here but have been here for a long time*. One Kangaroo Islander (whom I did not interview) told me about some social challenges that come with living on the Island – for example, newcomers are welcomed with open arms but if they make a mistake they will be on the outer. Similarly, on St Helena, Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop

¹⁶⁷ However, islanders still call on resources beyond the island boundary – for example, fires caused by lightning strikes in December 2007 burned one-fifth of the Island (90,000ha) and fire fighters from South Australia and interstate assisted in controlling the fires.

(2005: 101) report that “Mistakes made in the past are rarely forgiven and almost never forgotten by the community”.

Many of the challenges associated with living on Kangaroo Island relate to economic issues arising from islandness: *isolation and remoteness place an extra financial burden on the community* (OI2). Participants cite disadvantages of living on an island largely in terms of additional transport costs and limited access to services. According to OI1, the greatest challenges with operating a business on Kangaroo Island and, to some extent, with residing there, are the ‘sea gap’ and the expenses related to crossing it, whether by air or water: *bridging that gap adds significant cost to exporting produce, ... living costs, and general transport costs for tourists and residents*. MH3 agrees that *the added expense impacts on everything, whether it be building a house, price of fuel or groceries*. T2 notes that *any services tend to be more expensive because of the isolation and the demand on those limited services*. While MH3 considers health services to be sound, *there are certain operations or specialists you can’t get on the Island*. Post-school education is also limited although TAFE (Technical and Further Education) offers courses through a Learning Centre at Kingscote.

Air and ferry services to Kangaroo Island have had a chequered history. Currently two companies (Regional Express and since January 2007, Air South) operate the 30-minute route from Adelaide to Kingscote Airport. QantasLink briefly ran air services from Adelaide and Melbourne from late 2005 but withdrew six months later, citing low passenger numbers (The Islander, 2006). The majority of travel to and from the Island is by ferry, and although the exact sea/air breakdown is not published as it is commercially sensitive, 2001 estimates are that 75 per cent of passengers travelled by ferry (Kangaroo Island Development Board, 2003). At the time of interviews, SeaLink, which commenced services in 1994 and runs two ferries from Cape Jarvis to Penneshaw, was the only operator¹⁶⁸. Several participants commented on the downsides to this monopoly situation, including high fares¹⁶⁹. SeaLink has benefited from South Australian Government subsidies in order to operate all freight services to Kangaroo Island, and has

¹⁶⁸ In August 2007 a second operator, Kangaroo Island Ferries SA, began its commercial passenger service from Wirrina Cove (closer to Adelaide than Cape Jervis) to Kingscote. This company had operated for a short time from September 2004 until February 2005 but rough weather affected the service's reliability.

¹⁶⁹ For passengers the full return fare is \$80 and for vehicles it is \$162 (Kangaroo Island SeaLink, 2007).

held a virtual monopoly on sea transport, largely due to its long term-lease of the Cape Jervis berth on the mainland. Sealink's 25-year agreement with the South Australian Government effectively prevents other operators from using the Cape Jervis wharf for one hour before, and one hour after any scheduled SeaLink service. Islanders are concerned that this arrangement is anti-competitive (ABC, 2002b), as elucidated by LG1: *SeaLink is a major player in our tourism industry and some people feel they don't contribute enough to the Island and they're a monopoly*; and MH3:

People argue that SeaLink makes a big profit out of the Island ... It's probably a bit much to expect a private company to subsidise a small remote community ... If anyone else starts up a ferry service to the Island, they have to go from a different port which makes the sea journey longer ... and more expensive ... We benefit from having ... two fantastic \$40 million, three-deck ferries ... but we're channelling our freight through a very professional, well-run tourism operation.

OI1 discusses how these high transport and freight costs impact not only on development but also on social equity. Kangaroo Islanders consider their degree of remoteness to be a significant social cost (Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services, 2003). Islanders' median weekly individual income is \$414 (ABS, 2007) which is lower than the Australian median, and the cost of living on the Island is 25 to 30 per cent higher than in a comparable rural mainland community in South Australia (Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services, 2003). T2 believes Kangaroo Island has the most expensive ferry fare per kilometre in Australia because it is not subsidised by either the State or Australian Government. There are no passenger and freight equalisation schemes to reduce the additional cost burden of the sea link with the mainland. If Backstairs Passage were to be recognised as part of the national road system then *subsidies will flow on ... for the sake of a 16 kilometre gap we're paying 20 cents a litre more for fuel* (OI1). Kangaroo Island Council (Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services, 2003) has argued that crossing Backstairs Passage is no different from crossing the River Murray¹⁷⁰ on a bridge or punt, which is free of charge to users. Although residents receive a discounted islander rate from SeaLink, MH3 argues that access expenses should be reduced: *for anyone else going out of their*

¹⁷⁰ The River Murray is Australia's second-longest river. It forms much of the border between New South Wales and Victoria, before flowing into South Australia.

district they would drive down the main road but for us that's the ferry crossing ... Essentially I'm driving through a toll gate. KIDB (2003) and some participants make comparisons with the cost of travelling to Tasmania by ferry (which is subsidised by the Australian Government); however it is difficult to compare an offshore island with an entire State.

KIDB (Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services, 2003) has argued for the Australian Government to provide or support services to islanders as part of a community service obligation. Such arguments for islanders to have access to the same level of service that metropolitan communities receive relates to Ian Watson's (1998) discussion on parity with mainlanders. Although access is a key constraint impacting on many aspects of island life, a bridge is not feasible, nor desirable to residents: *it would mean so many visitors ... and it's a shipping lane so it would be dream stuff* (T1). OI1 considers that a tunnel or bridge would significantly change the Island for the worse: *right now there's a default sorting mechanism. A lot of people talk in these terms, that the 'riff raff' that are \$5 a day travellers are discouraged from Kangaroo Island simply because of the cost of getting across and that helps to preserve the Island to some extent.*

Limited natural resources and infrastructure constraints are also cited as difficulties of island life. TOMM Resident Survey results (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006) show that islanders consider the transportation of waste to Adelaide, and the cost associated with this transportation, as key issues. LG2 refers to the tension between self-sufficiency and dependence on the mainland as reflected in the fact that waste is shipped there and power comes to the Island via cable across Backstairs Passage, which

doesn't make us self-sufficient ... if we want to project the image that we're clean and green, we need to start looking at our own power generation ... because of our low population base we're never really going to have the quantities that make recycling a profitable business ... Council, this financial year, [is] proposing to spend \$1 or \$2 million (a quarter of their main revenue) on waste management ... It's cheaper for us to transport our waste to the mainland than to put it into landfill on the Island.

Unlike Phillip Island, Kangaroo Island cannot rely on water resources from the mainland:

We don't have a pipeline going to the River Murray so provision of water is a major challenge ... desalination plants will come more to the fore¹⁷¹ ... There are opportunities in terms of harvesting energy, if only people were forward-thinking enough ... Kangaroo Island can be like most islands, a little bit inward, and perhaps we should be looking at establishing wind farms or tidal power generation stations ... Most of the changes we need are infrastructure-related, big ticket items ... like power generation and self reliance because we're tied with an umbilical cord to the mainland ... every time there are outages on the mainland or deterioration in the submarine cable, we pay the price (OI1).

Reflecting on OI1's comments, islands are well-positioned to capitalise on renewable energy sources such as winds and tides; another example of potential economies of place and of how islanders can lead by example.

Another challenge for island residents, according to LG1, is that islands tend to be the subject of a great deal of research, which can have negative consequences for the community: *people love doing studies on us ... [which leads to] consultation burnout ... we employ consultants ... [but] they often do a poor job. We know what should be done to get the best out of the community ... when [consultants] leave they take all that information with them.* In considering the community members constituting the stock of social capital for sustainability action, Selman (2001: 22) cautions that “over-reliance on a small nucleus may impose an intolerable personal burden on those individuals who do volunteer. The growth in quantity of participants is important ... to ensure that key players do not burn out and overdraw their ‘emotional bank accounts’”. Since the same players tend to be consulted in various research projects on Kangaroo Island, it may be possible that these consistent information sources sway findings, as a consequence of only articulate and successful islanders having a public voice. In regard to my own research, I have considered the problem of such influential stakeholders swaying my research findings but, as noted in the methodology, my explicit aim from the outset was to interview key players because it those people in powerful or influential positions that make decisions. Nevertheless, I have also drawn on TOMM resident surveys (which samples ten per cent of the population) in order to gain a more representative indication of islander views.

¹⁷¹ A desalination plant established in 1999 supplies fresh water to Penneshaw township.

Community visions and tourism

Many participants perceive the need for an agreed direction or vision for Kangaroo Island. However it is difficult to establish consensus from residents (sharing common ground literally does not lead to sharing common views; rather it is often a source of conflict). Nevertheless, in considering different sectors of the community and their attitudes to change, it appears that island-born residents and sea changers do share some common views:

There are those people that have lived there all their life that are very parochial ... and perhaps don't want to share [the Island] ... Then in the last ten years there's people who are looking for a sea change - we've had a lot of people move to the Island who are retired or semi-retired and have been attracted to the wonderful lifestyle, but now that they've been here for a while, also don't want to share it so they're a bit parochial as well (MH3).

T3 speaks of some residents' resistance to change and how this conflicts with economic sustainable development:

There's always a sector of the community that wants [the Island] to stay the way it was when they moved there. That's always a challenge for people who are trying to make a sustainable life link for their next generation. The people who have gone to Kangaroo Island 20 years ago because of what it offered then tend to not want to move it on. So within the community there's resistance to change.

As with most tourist destinations, tourism on Kangaroo Island has presented an array of opportunities and challenges for islanders. Kangaroo Island's tourism industry only really began to develop as a response to a downturn in agriculture, triggered particularly by the wool price crash in the late 1980s. MH3 believes tourism has had a significant impact on the Island in the past 15 years and has benefited residents directly and indirectly: *tourism has been ... the saving grace for many farmers ... As a result of the tourism industry starting to boom we're fortunate to have a very good ferry service ... an enormous amount of money was spent on the Island as a result of the tourist industry.* In 2006-07, 18 per cent of residents derived their primary income from tourism services and products aimed at tourists and 27 per cent of residents derived all or some of their

income from tourism (up from 16 per cent in 2000-01) (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2007). Islanders' growing economic reliance on tourism appears to have lessened community concerns about the industry: *in the next 10-15 years, more people are going to turn to tourism for an income so the potential for conflict is reducing as more people become involved in the industry and begin to acknowledge what the Island has gained - infrastructure like roads, airlines and ferries* (MH3). Hence, tourism benefits include improved physical integration with the mainland. The tourism industry has sustained adequate air services for residents (Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services, 2003). The majority of resident flights to Adelaide are for personal travel (70 per cent) rather than business purposes (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2007).

However, T2 claims that locals do not take tourism seriously: *there are plenty of kids growing up on farms who want to take over the farm and they've got no interest in tourism. The local schools don't tend to support tourism by encouraging tourism-related studies as much as agriculture-related studies*. As with Bruny Islanders, some participants are concerned that the increasing popularity of holiday homes inflates real estate prices and *the dynamics of our community are changing because more people are going into holiday accommodation ... A lot of people enjoy their holiday so much that they - especially the well-off people - then buy a holiday house* (MH2). This comment reflects a pattern of tourism acting as a stepping stone to holiday home purchase (which often leads to permanent residency) reported by Gurran et al. (2007) and Lazaridis et al. (1999).

Participants discuss tensions between tourism development and community visions; such reports are supported by results from the most recent TOMM residential survey (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006): since the survey's inception in 2000-01 there has been a decreasing trend in agreement that tourism development is occurring in line with community values for the Island (2006-07 results show that 38 per cent of residents surveyed do not believe decisions regarding tourism development are occurring in line with community values). A key issue is how to manage development without changing the essential character of the Island. Duka and Jack (2005: 201-2) note that while

tourism aids economic diversification, the industry's growth has imposed new external demands on the Island:

[Kangaroo Island is] vulnerable both ecologically and socially and the 'sense of place' sought by the broader and global visitor market is potentially at risk, depending upon management actions and developments pursued. Tourism developments to date have generated both internal pressures as well as opportunities for the local community. The people of Kangaroo Island see prosperity in tourism, but know that what they have is a unique resource that must be managed carefully if it is not to be destroyed. They are working hard to find the delicate balance between development and conservation.

T2 recognises that tourism is the main growth industry for the Island but cautions that:

The Island needs to tread carefully and go forward very slowly so that it doesn't kill itself ... I don't think anyone wants any developments too large but I don't think anyone is totally against it as long as it's done in context and supports the direction the Island wants to go as an eco-tourist destination ... There's a very large green contingent dedicated to protecting the Island so not much is going to change too quickly [although] there seems to be different rules for people with money or the means to bypass local planning guidelines.

OI1 anticipates further tourism growth with a greater focus on nature-based tourism but considers that change on islands is slower than in other places for a range of reasons - *entrenched ideas, small communities so you get insulated processes, winning people over to facilitate change, and a lot of vested interests between industry groups where their ideals aren't compatible with each other.* In MH2's view, islanders have had little success in developing a whole community vision concerning tourism and she describes three broad community opinions about the future of tourism - stop, manage or encourage growth:

Some people would like to see everything just stop now and keep the Island how it is because the reason why people visit is because it's a rural setting; a small community; that sense of getting away from a busy life ... for some people their vision would be to keep Kangaroo Island as natural as we can and then manage the number of tourists that come over. But then there are people that are making money out of tourism and want to see the infrastructure; more employment for local people; bigger shops, better roads ... it's a big conflict in vision and I don't know whether we're ever going to resolve that.

In effect, such diverse views represent the spectrum from conserving place (and sense of place) to transforming Kangaroo Island into the type of place that many residents and tourists alike seek to escape from. OI2 argues that

It's the type of development that is of concern to people, rather than development per se ... I don't think anybody would like to see a Gold Coast [Queensland mass tourism precinct] type development ... they prefer the type of tourist that appreciates the Island's environmental features and the fact that we're a small community ... We'd like to see development occur around key settlement areas and keep it in those zones rather than changing our landscape too much.

This last comment correlates with the desire of many Phillip Islanders to consolidate growth in existing settlements. The latest TOMM survey (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006) shows that the proportion of residents that feel they can influence tourism-related decisions has decreased since 2003-04, from 56 per cent to 46 per cent, which is well below the acceptable TOMM range of 70-100 per cent of residents. Considering the timing of this survey, I wonder whether this perception of decreased influence over tourism decisions reflects the perception by some residents of the railroading of the community and the bypassing of the local government regarding the Southern Ocean Lodge development.

Considering the changes that tourism and residential development have wrought on Kangaroo Island and its people, it is important to examine how governments and the community can manage such change.

Governance

In addition to examining formal and community governance, I will also explore the relationship between islandness and governance, in terms of how islandness (specifically separation) and physical size have allowed some jurisdictional autonomy.

Unlike Bruny and Phillip islands, Kangaroo Island retained its own local government body during state-wide amalgamations of local governments last decade. Kangaroo Island Council was formed in 1996 as a result of the amalgamation of two councils, Dudley and Kingscote District Councils. Unlike the situation with Bruny and Phillip islands of amalgamation with mainland councils, this was an internal amalgamation: Dudley and Kingscote District Councils were both island councils¹⁷²:

it seems quite ridiculous [having two councils] when you look back now but it comes back to the shape of the Island ... it was quite hard to get from one place to another when those councils were first formed ... it was extremely traumatic for a lot of people when it got amalgamated and it's much like the situation when an island becomes part of a mainland council ... fear that they will not get the same level of service or understanding (MH3).

OI1 considers that amalgamation of Kangaroo Island with a mainland council can never be discounted, particularly if economies of scale are likely, but he would be concerned about potential *conflict in priorities, for example in how much effort and how much money ... is expended in which region*. LG1 foresees negative aspects of any amalgamation with a mainland council: *we have a very strong sense of identity on the Island and a lot of agencies have fought for a very long time to maintain our identity as a region ... [if merged] with a mainland council the community would be very upset because they'd get forgotten and there's not a good understanding of the issues that face islanders*. This view reflects Hache's (1998) discussion about how islanders may assert their islander identity in order to express lack of understanding by central authorities

Many participants recognise benefits in having an island council, among them *getting a level of service that's sympathetic to what life on an island is about and all our elected members and staff are local people (MH3)*. In small communities there are generally opportunities for residents to have considerable input into local government consultation processes as councillors are more accessible, although such accessibility could result in less formal consultation (Pini et al. 2007). According to T1, the close-knit community facilitates consultation between agencies. OI2 considers that island-wide management

¹⁷² Dudley District Council covered the Dudley Peninsula at the eastern end of the Island, including Penneshaw, and Kingscote District Council represented the remainder of the Island. The amalgamated council is based in Kingscote.

structures such as Council and the Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management (KINRM) Board present opportunities for internal efficiencies and economic benefits. However, a key issue identified by most participants is the difficulty for Council to fund and maintain tourism infrastructure from a limited ratepayer base (around 2,500 people). For example, of the Island's 1,460km of roads (of which only 200km have been sealed), 1,359km are the Council's responsibility (Kangaroo Island Council, 2005). OI1 is concerned about the consequences of tourism infrastructure cost demands on Council:

It's the main headache for Council ... Kangaroo Island is at risk of economic and social decline as a result of deficiencies in the quality and availability of affordable infrastructure ... Council is bordering on being unsustainable ... we can't target funds from other than residents and the odd grant ... the Island needs to look at an imposition (that will require legislative changes) that would support the tourist infrastructure ... every tourist that comes over has \$10, let's say, added to their bill.

While most tourists appear willing to support a levy for environmental management¹⁷³, would they wish to contribute to an infrastructure levy? Several participants argue for such a levy, although T1 notes that the idea may be *unpopular because if you allow a levy to be introduced and it's not done elsewhere across the state then it's seen as unfair to anyone visiting Kangaroo Island*. Council has approached the South Australian Government over a number of years about placing a levy on tourists but *it would need to be state legislation to enable us to charge it and they've made it quite clear that they won't entertain that idea* (LG2). The legislative barrier in this case highlights an advantage of Rottnest Island being managed by a statutory authority with its own Act of Parliament which allows it to charge a landing fee. MH1 has strong views on the need for greater autonomy:

We need to move more towards autonomy. I'm not talking about secession or any rubbish like that - more autonomy in the way we do business and it's time Kangaroo Island had an Act of Parliament for the management of Kangaroo Island. That would give us one piece of legislation ... to manage the whole island and provide objectives into the future. [Then] we wouldn't have debates [such as] 'is charging a levy on ferry passengers legal?'

¹⁷³ The TOMM Visitor Exit Survey (Colmar Brunton Research Services, 2006) shows that 65 per cent of visitors would be prepared to contribute to sustainable environmental management through a levy system.

Council's economic problems are exacerbated by geographical isolation, which limits resource sharing with other local governments: *because you have that body of water you can't physically resource things like plant and equipment ... a lot of the seminars and conferences that are good for our staff to attend are on the mainland ... it's dearer for a council to purchase goods on an island purely because of ... the cost of getting them across the water* (LG2). One option is to share resources between agencies on the Island but LG1 points out that this would be difficult between different levels of government: *about 18 months ago they looked at amalgamating the Development Board, Council and the NRM Board ... looking at governance and compliance issues, it could be perceived that a lot of money has been spent unnecessarily*. This point highlights the governance and economic advantages of the Rottneest Island Authority in terms of reducing duplication between agencies.

Economic sustainability is a major issue for Council. An 'Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of Local Government' (Local Government Association of South Australia, 2005) found that Kangaroo Island is:

one of 26 of about 75 councils that are unsustainable in the long term ... whether that's 30, 40, 50 years down the track, who knows, and we don't know what assistance we can get, although other forms of government aren't rushing to our aid ... there are 75 councils in the state and one island council ... The island councils [in Australia] are very much a minority and they do have unique issues (LG2).

This last comment suggests the need for stronger links between interstate island councils in order to collaborate on island-specific issues and to lobby other levels of governments as a group – the success of such a strategy is demonstrated by the power in numbers of Irish offshore islands, which led to the establishment of a government committee to oversee their common affairs (Royle, 1986).

Thomson and Thomson (1994: 60) comment that “the state government has a vested interest in the success or otherwise of tourism on the Island as many of the tourists to Kangaroo Island spend money in other parts of the state, or at least stay overnight in Adelaide going to or coming from the Island”. Tourism benefits beyond the island boundary also extend to the Australian Government, which profits in terms of foreign

visitors. These “‘spillover’ or external consequences of tourism on Kangaroo Island which impact on the other two tiers of government are one justification for external funding of local government through intergovernment grants” (Thomson & Thomson, 1994: 60). Hence, it is not only the isolation of the Island that can be used in calls for economic assistance; its connectedness with the wider world can also be employed. Tourism does have significant benefits for the local council: Thomson and Thomson (1994) highlight an area of benefits often overlooked by local government. While direct revenue from tourism activity is largely from fees and other user-charges, they claim it is indirect revenue through the property tax or rate that offers the greatest potential for gains for local government. Anything which increases the value of the tax base (real estate property) also increases the scope for local government to raise rate revenue.

Development plans (also known as planning schemes) are the key on-ground development assessment documents in South Australia and they may set out the desired character for different parts of the area they cover. There is a separate development plan for each of the state’s 68 local council areas (Planning SA, 2007). *The tourism industry has been involved with other agencies in shaping the development plan for Kangaroo Island, which is the document the developers have to comply to* (T1).

In addition to its local government, Kangaroo Island also has a Development Board, a Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board, and the Island is a separate region of the South Australian Government’s Department of Environment and Heritage (they manage a number of tourist sites within park reserves). KIDB¹⁷⁴ is one of 14 regional development boards in South Australia that aim to foster regional economic growth. It has roles in business development and growth, investment attraction and employment programs in partnership with island and mainland agencies, and provides links between local businesses, community groups and South Australian and Australian Government programs designed to assist local business and regional communities (KIDB, 2007). KIDB has a Sustainable Development Strategy Vision (KIDB, 2006: 5): “Kangaroo Island will be one of the world’s pre-eminent, nature-based tourist destinations with a

¹⁷⁴ KIDB was formed in 1993 and, although funded by the state and local governments, is an independent and autonomous body operating as an incorporated association (KIDB, 2007).

strong rural industry selling its products to tourists, mainland and overseas markets, a high quality of life for residents, and well managed natural resources”.

Under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*, South Australia was divided into eight NRM regions and one of these was Kangaroo Island. NRM Boards were established for each region and their key functions are to undertake an active role in the management of natural resources; prepare and implement a regional NRM plan; and promote public awareness of the importance of integrated and sustainable NRM (South Australian Natural Resources Management Boards, 2006). In MH1’s view, Kangaroo Island was designated as an NRM region due to its isolation and significant size: *an island’s too hard to put with anything else ... it’s in isolation so it’s best managed as its own viable region ... It’s not a small island so it justifies being managed that way*. In comparison, the other (smaller) case islands are each part of the same NRM region as their capital city. While the relationships of NRM Boards with local councils can be difficult and impede sustainability (Pini et al. 2007¹⁷⁵), this is less likely on Kangaroo Island because the two organisations have corresponding boundaries.

Kangaroo Island is one of seven regions in South Australia through which operational services are delivered by the Department for Environment and Heritage. National Parks and Wildlife South Australia is part of DEH and they manage the Island’s 28 protected areas. In the past decade Parks has improved tourism infrastructure, notably the Seal Bay redevelopment in 2001 and Flinders Chase redevelopment which opened in early 2002. In comparison to Council, MH1 considers that Parks is well-funded through a user-pays system: *apart from government funding, they’ve got a bit over \$2 million business turnover ... they can increase their user pay income year by year so that they keep ahead of costs*. In contrast, T3 considers that *lack of resources for managing the national parks is a huge problem, given that they underpin a lot of tourism experiences ... There is potential for a range of other high yield tourism products to be developed within the protected areas but the current resources don’t allow that to happen*.

¹⁷⁵ Pini et al. (2007) note that over the last two decades NRM issues in Australia have increasingly been viewed on a regional or catchment scale because natural resources are not bound by an artificial line that delineates one local government authority from another, and they claim that a significant barrier to sustainability in rural Australia surrounds these new institutions and their relationship with local governments.

OI1 describes a collaborative approach between key island stakeholders in terms of promoting the Island from an integrated perspective and notes that in recent times there has also been a more collaborative approach by industry sectors: *primary producers are getting together ... it's not so much an isolationist parochial view now*. LG1 views the advantages of having island-only agencies in relation to maintaining networks. She compares island management with that of continental regions where the boundaries of, for example councils and NRM boards, do not necessarily coincide, which:

creates anomalies and challenges in your day-to-day management ... Islands have definitive boundaries and even if you don't have agencies that view that island as a region in its own right, they probably, in terms of their day-to-day functionality, still view the island as an island ... so that sort of mindset is already there.

Hence, islandness, particularly the quality of boundedness, confers some advantages in terms of governance, whether or not the Island is recognised as a distinct region.

Participants show mixed views on whether Kangaroo Island should be managed any differently from the mainland. Some considers that since Kangaroo Island is a relatively large island it can be treated much like any other area on the mainland with the exception of isolation issues, although OI1 also recognises the impact of islandness on social equity:

The principles of good management ... environmental management, economic management or welfare management ... would apply everywhere. However, there's a perception amongst island communities in general that their circumstances are unique, primarily because of that water gap and the issue of comparative isolation. You might only be 120km from Adelaide but that water gap might as well make us 5,000km away ... remoteness and social equity need to be considered ... Mind you, you could be in the middle of South Australia and have the same isolation issues, except that it's not a water gap. It's just isolation by distance. This is isolation by geography.

T3 cites benefits of islandness in suggesting that islands can be easier to manage than mainlands due to their limited access points *which you can monitor, market via, do research on, control in lots of ways that bigger areas within a mainland don't have the*

ability to do ... there are lots of islands of unique nature-based value in the mainland area that don't have the fortuitousness to have a lot of water around it. The Kangaroo Island NRM Board (2007) recognises that a key advantage in managing the Island is the opportunity to prevent new arrivals and reintroductions of pests including weeds, feral animals, diseases, problem native animals and marine pests (Backstairs Passage is a major route for shipping freight and so poses the threat of introduction of marine pests from ballast water). MH2 considers that islands need to be managed differently as they often have special characteristics such as no foxes and rabbits and different species to the mainland, and she makes an insightful comment that *the things that make islands special are the things that we've got to protect* (hence it is important to maintain islandness). OI2 also believes that islands need special management consideration because *they have different issues and where they have similar issues to other areas they're often magnified due to remoteness and access*. MH3 points to a beneficiary rather than a user-pays system:

If you were designing the perfect state you definitely wouldn't put an island in there because of the cost of managing it. People on Kangaroo Island expect the State Government to spend more money upgrading our roads or power supply ... per head of population we receive more funding than other regional areas and that's because we have to because we're an island; we're isolated; we need jetties, breakwaters, a good quality airport, a desalination plant ... We're not just demanding these extra things; they're essential services ... to say that you can manage an island like you can manage any other district in South Australia or anywhere else is completely wrong.

MH3 refers to parity with mainlanders in respect to essential services, rather than special treatment. However, it could be argued that for many sea changers, moving to an island is a lifestyle choice and it should be implicit in this move that an island does not have infrastructure and service standards equivalent to an urban area.

Key learnings from this case

Kangaroo Island has environmental, social, economic and political distinctions from its mainland. Like Bruny Island, it has a narrow economic base; this economic fragility was demonstrated in the farm debt crisis. The tourism industry has aided the Island's recovery and has now become a cornerstone of the economy. Tourists are attracted to Kangaroo Island's environmental values, including its conservation reserves and various wildlife viewing opportunities. The involvement of many islanders in the tourism industry has facilitated community acceptance of the industry and of visitors; residents have also benefited from tourism infrastructure. However, there seems to be less acceptance of the involvement of 'outsiders' in the industry, particularly if development proposals concern what are perceived as pristine sites and exclusive markets, as with the Southern Ocean Lodge development. Interviews revealed a dominant perception of social inequality due to increased access costs associated with islandness, and desire for parity with mainlanders is evident in calls for transport subsidies. The Island has its own local government but it also experiences economic difficulties in terms of funding tourism infrastructure from a small rates base. Of all the case islands, Kangaroo Island is located furthest from its capital city. However, the distance from Adelaide has no doubt made feasible commercial air services to the Island; such services ease access problems to some extent.

The case of Kangaroo Island demonstrates the influences of both islandness and size on political sustainability; both afford it some special treatment in governance matters. During state-wide amalgamations during the 1990s, Kangaroo Island was not forced to amalgamate with a mainland council. Instead, the two internal island councils amalgamated. The Island also has its own Development Board, regional office for DEH, and Natural Resources Management Board. The island advantage of having clearly defined boundaries has likely contributed to the consistency between this spatial boundary and administrative boundary. Islanders have shown their concern and interest in local sustainability - for example through their support of TOMM and (some) opposition to the Southern Ocean Lodge development, largely on environmental and social grounds. Nevertheless, the considerable public support for the SOL development

demonstrates that the island community is diverse, and corresponds with residents' divisive views on tourism in general, as reported by participants. Such diverse viewpoints makes it difficult to develop an agreed community vision for the Island, although the TOMM process involved some community visioning and it has merits in being used as a model for tourism sustainability. The Strategic Tourism Plan is a partnership between key island organisations but preparation of the recommended Desired Character Statements (to be adopted in the Development Plan) should involve widespread community visioning, rather than only the usual players from these organisations.

While Kangaroo Island experiences typical island challenges in its economic, environmental and social conditions, it has opportunity for local autonomy due to its considerable size and islandness, as demonstrated by having several island agencies and an island council. As noted in chapter three, there is a common assumption in nissology that smaller islands experience more significant problems than those of larger proportions: there is a “common assumption that the smaller the island, the more intense the experience of islandness” (McMahon, 2005: 3). Despite its larger size, Kangaroo Island possesses greater island characteristics, or islandness, than Phillip Island. Many of these characteristics are presented by participants as challenges in terms of access constraints and additional costs relating to transporting goods and people over the ‘sea gap’, but also as appealing factors such as being an ‘escape’ destination. Fixed links appear to be a more important factor than size in terms of diminishing islandness. Many of the economic and social issues facing Kangaroo Island are due to its island status. The Kangaroo Island Development Board recognises that the Island’s large size contributes to its insularity and its sustainability opportunities and weaknesses: “the Island’s economic, environmental and social strengths and weaknesses are defined by three factors: relative isolation, large size, small population” (Kangaroo Island Development Board, 2006b: 2). The smaller community contributes to a sense of identity compared to the often impersonal suburbs of large cities. Its large size means it is difficult to maintain infrastructure such as almost 1,500km of roads, funded by a small population. Nevertheless, being a large island does have its advantages: Kangaroo Island is of sufficient size to maintain its own local government and other island agencies (including separate regions of state government departments), and the larger island instigates the

overnight stay for tourists. For residents, isolation can provide a sense of greater independence and self-sufficiency, given the illusion of living in a separate, contained world (particularly as it is out of sight of the capital city). However, Kangaroo Island is still susceptible to the metropole in terms of governance, as was seen in the case of the State Government overriding local decision-making for the Southern Ocean Lodge development. Islanders' reliance on tourism is a form of dependency on the mainland and the wider world: "The Island economy's nexus with the South Australian mainland is evident in its strong reliance upon mainland firms for the majority of its business inputs" (Argent, 1997: 11).

Despite Kangaroo Island's challenges associated with islandness, there is room to move. The Island is more protected environmentally than Phillip Island because it is separated from the mainland and because its access difficulties limit tourism and residential development. Kangaroo Island also presents many opportunities for holistic management and research as an island (for example, as a contained Long Term Ecological Research site) rather than part of wider region, as with Phillip Island's inclusion in an urban biosphere reserve. The Tourism Optimisation Management Model is an example of island innovation (prompted by an external threat – tourism growth) and a tool for improving sustainable management of a whole destination. Kangaroo Island has opportunities to benefit from economies of place through maintaining a strong sense of place for both residents and tourists, and through combining its two key industries, tourism and agriculture, in further rural tourism ventures. To conclude, in terms of degree of islandness, the tensions between connectedness and separation appear to play a more important role than size. I will examine islandness further in chapter nine, where I discuss the four case islands in a comparative context.

PART III

CHAPTER NINE

COMPARISONS AND INTEGRATION

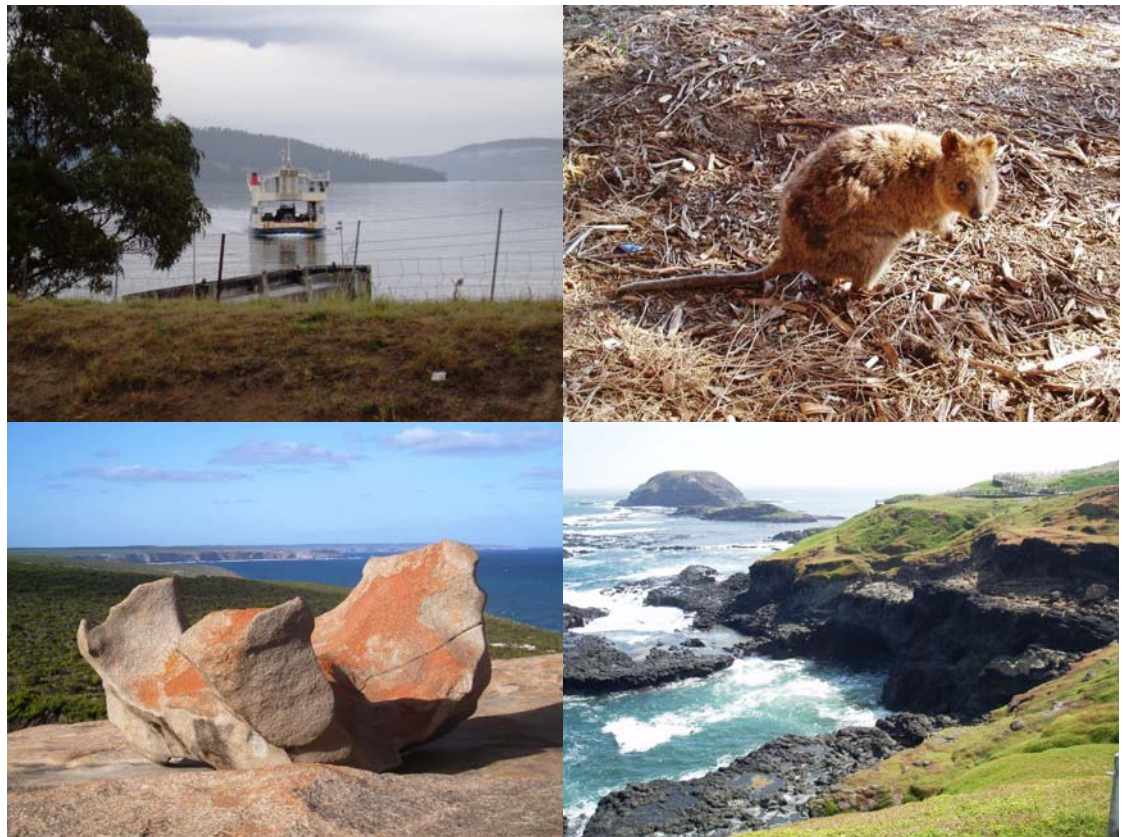


Figure 9.1: clockwise from top left – Bruny Island ferry; Rottneest Island quokka; The Nobbies and Seal Rocks, Phillip Island; Remarkable Rocks, Kangaroo Island.

COMPARISONS AND INTEGRATION

There is disagreement about the extent to which islandness can survive the dynamism of rapid population change in the wake of globalization, with island identities intrinsic to long-standing community ties displaced by the coming of wealthy recreational, tourist, or otherwise transitory populations, as well as part-time holiday home or twilight-of-life retirement residents. Similar unresolved issues of island identity stem from the linking of islands to mainlands by bridges and causeways (Hay, 2006: 20).

In the last four chapters I presented work on four intrinsic island case studies, elucidating their key issues using descriptive and analytic material. In this chapter I build on that material by comparing and contrasting the key research themes across the case islands, and relate findings to the broader literature. I first re-examine fixed links and their effects on islandness, and then consider island-metropole relations. Next I revisit islandness by reflecting on the insights gained from the empirical material in relation to positions established in the literature in chapters three and four. I move away from the structured format of the preceding chapters and unpack my key research arguments within a discussion on islandness. Islandness provides both a useful point of comparison across the four case islands and a vehicle for an integrated summary of findings across the other research themes of tourism and residential developments, and governance for sustainability.

Fixed links

The contemporary status of Rottnest, Kangaroo and Bruny as islands is not contested, but Phillip Island's status as a 'true island' is sometimes questioned because of its bridge connection to the mainland. Traditionally maritime barriers have repelled permanent geographic connection of offshore islands to nearby mainlands but technology can overcome this natural barrier and reduce the "tyranny of insularity" (Royle, 1999: 242). Historically maritime barriers have protected offshore islands from over-development,

but what of the future? If Phillip Island is any case to go by, then bridging islands may well ultimately result in ‘islocide’¹⁷⁶.

Attempts to lessen geographic peripherality (i.e. improve access) are instrumental for the wider goal of reducing economic peripherality (Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998), but improved access may harm tourism revenue if remoteness is perceived as an attractive feature by tourists; alternatively improved access may attract mass tourism which could threaten the environment and hence the resource base of tourism. Ease of access affects not only the level of tourism but also the types of tourists – for example one participant’s comment that difficult access to Kangaroo Island restricts the ‘riff-raff’ from entering. While I do not have data concerning any changes in visitor type following bridge access to Phillip Island, the Penguin Parade attracts mass tourism as opposed to the smaller groups who visit penguin viewing locations on Bruny and Kangaroo Islands, where it takes more effort to reach the destination (as opposed to a day-trip by bus from Melbourne). It would be interesting to conduct further research on bridged islands and to specifically question tourists about whether they perceive bridged islands to have reduced peripherality (and islandness) due to their permanent link to the mainland.

Factors likely to be considered in the feasibility of establishing fixed links include the economic importance of the island, its population size, and its distance from the mainland. Shorter water crossings, such as Phillip Island’s (less than 1km) are more likely to be viewed as an inconvenience or annoyance. Simmel (1994: 6) claims that “The people who first built a path between two places performed one of the greatest human achievements ... this achievement reaches its zenith in the construction of a bridge ... The bridge gives to the eye the same support for connecting the sides of the landscape as it does to the body for practical reality”. A bridge means that there is no

¹⁷⁶ It is not only bridges that can threaten islandness. Faster ferry access brings islands closer in time to mainlands and hence impacts on the journey to the island, which is a key physical and psychological element of separating the two places. For example, participants consider that the faster trip to Rottnest is now less of a journey to a separate place. Similarly, when I travelled to Kangaroo Island by plane on my second journey to the Island, it did not feel like I was travelling anywhere special, although perhaps this may have been different had I been able to see the coastline. Faster ferry access also increases the feasibility of island living for those who work in cities. Other forms of technological change facilitate integration of islands with the wider world. Islanders are exposed to information flows through mass communications which, according to Villamil (1977), do not reinforce local values and strengths. However, in the case islands local newspapers can be a medium for articulating local values.

longer a visual distinction of the island; no space between island and mainland. A bridge “... ensures the unbreakable continuation of a road or a path across a body of water ... the bridge is, above all, a part of the road” (Lehari, 2002: 51). The island is no longer a whole but a part of a larger land mass. Considering size differentials, an offshore island linked to a continent is not an equal relationship, compared with two banks of a river. Linking an island with a continent, particularly if the island is proximate to a city, represents a deeply imbalanced relationship. Cowley (2000: 1) claims that “building bridges, both real and metaphorical, is one of the most commanding of all human fascinations”. However, in the case of bridges linking islands to mainlands, it damages another powerful human fascination, that of islands. Much of the protest against bridging the Scottish island of Skye was centred on “the rather romantic notion of the purity of the island being in some way violated by making it an appendage of the mainland ... Skye is now functionally just a peninsular” (Royle, 1999: 244).

Royle (2007a: 45) comments on the case of Cape Breton Island in Canada in explaining that identity is an important factor to consider when deciding what is or remains an island:

Few inhabitants [of Cape Breton] regard themselves as Nova Scotian; Cape Breton has had for many decades a troubled economy and its inhabitants have often resented the Nova Scotian government’s role in dealing with the island’s problems, emanating from the different world of the city of Halifax.

In the case of Phillip Island I have demonstrated that it is reasonable to conclude that the bridge has increased tourism and residential development over that which would have occurred with only ferry access. In addition to economic, environmental and social consequences, bridging islands may also influence political sustainability through reducing island autonomy. It seems unlikely in the near future that Phillip Islanders will again realise jurisdictional autonomy at the local level, not least because of the significant revenue the Island provides to the mainland-based local government. Common challenges facing the three unbridged case islands are access difficulties and cost, and their flow-on socio-economic effects. Participants were somewhat vocal about these challenges but such concerns were not raised by Phillip Island residents and stakeholders.

Cowley (2000) believes that the way the word bridge is used as a signifier of hope (a bridge to x, building bridges) and of defeat (a bridge too far, burning bridges) captures some of the problematic ambiguity of the actual physical structures themselves. According to de Certeau (1984: 128) any bridge “welds together and opposes insularities. It distinguishes between them and threatens them. It liberates from enclosure and destroys autonomy”. Therefore the bridge can be seen as a physical expression of the tensions inherent in islandness. According to Baldacchino (2007d: 323), “Bridges impact on the subtle balance between the characteristic ‘local-global’ nature of an island identity”. In regard to the Channel Tunnel, Peckham (2003: 504) characterises Britain as an island rapidly losing its identity under the impact of social and technological change: “The anxieties that surrounded the prospect of a Channel tunnel centred on an undermining of the nation’s island integrity and its isolation”, whereas Gillis (2004: 145) identifies the ambiguous consequences of the Chunnel:

Although the postwar era made physical distance even more irrelevant, the cultural and political appeal of islandness remained undiminished. The building of the Chunnel in 1994 did not so much diminish as enhance insularity among the English living closest to the continent. As physical proximity increased, psychological and cognitive distance expanded. The idea of the island grew stronger even as its reality eroded.

In the case of community opposition to the fixed link to Prince Edward Island (PEI)¹⁷⁷ in Canada, did islanders object to the bridge because it threatened islandness, in both a geographic and a social sense (i.e. their identity as islanders)? If islandness relates to the effect of an island’s physical status on its inhabitants, and if bridges alter this physical status, then do bridges impact on islanders? Royle (2007a: 44) comments that “functionally at least, islands with fixed links of any sort lose their individual status” and he considers the impact of the fixed link upon Prince Edward Islanders’ identity: “PEI residents have not started to describe themselves as anything but ‘Islanders’, always with a capital letter, a people who certainly had and still have ‘permanent consciousness of being on an island’” (Royle, 2007a: 47). But what of generations to come who have never known the Island to be physically disconnected to the mainland – will they have a

¹⁷⁷ Prince Edward Island was connected to New Brunswick by the Confederation Bridge in May 1997.

permanent consciousness of being on an island? The issue of bridging PEI was, according to Baldacchino and Spears (2007), perhaps the most keenly debated and traumatic event in the Island's modern history, yet now the bridge is a local cultural icon. While Baldacchino and Spears (2007) conclude that, to date, the bridge to PEI has not had a significant impact on measurable indicators such as tourism, property and commerce, they raise some intangible issues, particularly sense of island identity, and political sustainability (whether the bridge may make the Island more vulnerable to amalgamation with its abutting mainland neighbour). Bridge tolls can also impact on island economies. The removal of bridge tolls on the Isle of Skye is expected to benefit tourism and commerce, while residents of nearby unconnected islands must still pay ferry fares and are experiencing depopulation.

It is not only islanders who may be concerned about the impacts of bridges. The bridge linking Sweden (Malmo) and Denmark (Copenhagen) was completed in 2000 after more than a century of tentative discussion (Cowley, 2000). Why did it take so long? Was the bridge perceived as a threat to nationhood (as opposed to islandhood)? According to Cowley (2000) some Swedish people "are fearful of losing their distinct local cultures and identities; there is a concern that Malmo will just become a suburb of Copenhagen".

What is the difference between a narrow neck of land (barely wide enough for a road – i.e. a land bridge) leading to a peninsula, and a bridge to an island? While one may argue that the only difference is that there is water flowing underneath a bridge, it is the *weight of history* that means an island is still an island. In terms of natural history, a bridged island's flora and fauna may differ from that of its adjacent mainland (for example fewer pest species and the consequences of this difference on other species) and in terms of human history, islanders and mainlanders have recognised and interacted with the place as an island, and there is tangible and intangible evidence of these relationships with place. In the case of future bridge proposals, it would be interesting to compare the views of long-term islanders, new residents, seasonal residents and also of mainlanders (Gillis (2004) contends that continental dwellers are generally keener than islanders about the creation of fixed links). While many island newcomers demand infrastructure to match that of the place they have moved from, it is understandable that some may oppose the construction of fixed links (a major form of infrastructure) if they have

deliberately moved to a place that is separated from the mainland in order to 'get away from it all'. In comparison, many long-term islanders may welcome bridge construction as a liberation from enclosure (de Certeau, 1984) and as an avenue for greater economic opportunities (no longer being subject to limitations imposed by water barriers) such as lower business costs, greater price parity with the mainland, and better access to services. However, construction of a fixed link may result in the closure of health services and schools if such services are available within an acceptable driving distance on the mainland. Phillip Island's only hospital was closed in January 2008; it is unlikely that this would happen to a hospital serving an equivalent population on an unlinked island. It would be interesting to examine whether islander sense of community is diminished by fixed links, and results in less reliance on the immediate community. Of the case islands, the percentage of the population that undertake volunteer activities is lowest on Phillip Island. When restrictions associated with living on an island are lifted and the self-containment of islands is made redundant, islanders may ultimately become less independent from the mainland, as their hinterland is extended.

Hache (1998) outlines a wide spectrum of situations to measure an island's level of insularity: from islands with a high level of insularity to islands that are conscious of their insular geography and of its implications but assertion of social insularity is limited, to islands where social insularity is residual or non-existent. The latter comprises three categories – because they live in total or relative isolation in respect to the outside world; because they occupy a central position in terms of power and influence; or because they are inshore islanders who are so close to the mainland that they are eager to be integrated with it – they look landwards and strive to obtain a fixed link to end their geographical insularity (Hache, 1998). Phillip Islanders have residual social insularity as a result of both the island's economically powerful position and its fixed link, although I would point out that desire to end geographical insularity does not necessarily translate to desire to relinquish distinct islander identity. For example, loss of island status seems not to have been considered by Phillip Island farmers in their requests for a bridge.

Much literature tends to overstate the influence of size on islandness, yet with little reference to empirical data (Briguglio, 2004; McMahon, 2005). The dominant

assumption is that the effects of insularity are less on larger islands. Conversely, the literature on impacts of bridges on islands tends to downplay their impacts, again with little ‘hard’ evidence, particularly regarding social impacts. I argued in chapter eight that fixed links seem to impact more than size on island appeal and islandness. Royle (2007a: 52) refers to debates on both size and fixed links:

There is not only no accepted wisdom at what size islands have to give way to a lesser category ... there is also discourse on whether large islands should be seen as true islands regarding their inhabitants’ sense of identity, with a construct to understand, if not to measure, this - Péron’s ‘permanent consciousness’ of insularity. The self-referred identity of people living on the spaces no longer surrounded by water needs also to be taken into account. Some think an island once it becomes attached to a mainland loses its insularity; others would hotly dispute this.

My research indicates that Kangaroo Islanders, although not being able to view their entire island from a single vantage point, are permanently conscious of their insularity. Phillip Islanders, on the other hand, would be forgiven for not articulating island-related challenges in interview (likewise, tourists can perhaps be excused for not even being conscious that they have arrived on an island, because the bridge so resembles the mainland road). There is no need for Phillip Island residents to plan their schedules around a ferry timetable or to pay additional access costs; they can come and go as they please. As noted in chapter three, I do not consider that possessing islandness is a simple case of either/or. My view on Phillip Island’s islandness is that it is diminished, but not lost. Tourism operators are using Phillip Island’s comparative advantage of being an island (and hence having some island characteristics) whilst having the access advantages that come with a bridge. Phillip Islanders have constructed (and can further build) a unique sense of islandness – a place that differs both from traditional, unlinked islands and from mainlands – and this is an economy of place. Sense of place is not necessarily diminished by closer integration with the mainland either - as Norberg-Schulz (1980: 18) claims: “To protect and conserve the genius loci in fact means to concretize its essence in ever new historical contexts”.

Island-metropole relations

The four case islands are proximate not only to continental land masses, but also to centres of power, and they have complex and ambivalent relationships with their capital cities. While Tasmania comprises hundreds of islands, Bruny Island is regarded as Hobart's island and some tourism boat trips now depart for the Island from Hobart's waterfront, alongside cruise ships and Antarctic vessels. Many Hobartians have shacks on Bruny, and the Island is generally perceived as a laidback place. It would be interesting to examine the motivations of people from more distant mainlands (international permanent or seasonal residents) in purchasing land on an island off an island at the 'bottom of the world'.

Perth in Western Australia is the world's most isolated city and Rottnest Island was developed as a tourist resort partly to stem the tide of metropolitan residents holidaying on the east coast of Australia (Joske et al. 1995). Despite the appeal of Perth's many beaches, Rottnest remains popular. Rottnest Island is visible from Perth's wealthy western coastal suburbs and is accessible by ferry from the capital city. The combination of its location on the metropolitan horizon and its status as a public island (held in affection by many mainlanders), means that Rottnest is constantly in the spotlight and even relatively minor issues about it are reported in the leading metropolitan newspaper.

Kangaroo Island is known as *the* island in South Australia for international tourists; it provides a snapshot of some iconic Australian wildlife in one contained destination. The Island is significantly larger than Adelaide and was settled by Europeans before the capital city. Kangaroo Islanders have historically had a strong sense of independence from the mainland; this is reinforced by having their own local government.

Phillip Island goes against the typical scenario of offshore islands being dependent on their mainlands. It is Victoria's premier island and is important to both State and regional economies. Phillip Island's Penguin Parade is regarded as a 'must do' activity for international visitors to Melbourne and day trips from the capital city are feasible as the island has become 'closer' through the bridge and improved highway access. The

mainland local and state governments have benefited from assimilation in Phillip Island's governance structures¹⁷⁸, reaping profits through tourism (directly, and also indirectly for the local government through increases in property rates from tourism and residential developments).

Islands may be incorporated into mainland local governments based purely on their adjacent geographical position. Political alignment with a mainland governing body may decrease marginalisation of islands through providing opportunities (particularly economic) that would otherwise be unavailable. On the other hand, such integration may enhance marginalisation of islands through neglect of specific island affairs. What is the effect of distance from the mainland on the island-metropole relationship? It would be interesting to conduct further research concerning the impacts on islandness of distance from continents, orientation to mainland, and island shape. In terms of the visibility of islands from mainlands, historically Rottnest Island was a source of anguish both for Aboriginal prisoners and their families on the mainland; it was a similar situation for some of the Aboriginal wives on Kangaroo Island whose homes across the water were visible (Taylor, 2002). Rottnest Island hardly needs much tourism marketing in Perth as the island is a permanent fixture on the horizon, particularly for wealthy coastal dwellers. Clearly the closer an island to a mainland, the increased likelihood of bridging and, in the case of Phillip Island, it was feasible to bridge 640 metres in 1940.

Offshore islands are subject to the external gaze of continental dwellers; this perspective often contrasts with the internal view of islanders. However, in the case of Kangaroo Island, these two perspectives are fairly consistent in terms of what each group values about the Island: TOMM data show that visitor values correspond well with resident values. Many mainlanders consider it unnecessary to subsidise islanders, as it is often an individual's choice to live on an island. Considering the economic position of islanders (statistics show that Bruny, Kangaroo and Phillip islanders have lower incomes than Australia as a whole), development proposals are typically externally-generated. Many developers are from metropolises, where profits from tourism ventures usually return

¹⁷⁸ In terms of local governance, from the Phillip Island Shire Council to the Bass Coast Shire Council, and in relation to state government, control of the Penguin Parade shifted from the island council to the Victorian Government.

(representing leakage from the island system). Local-state tensions may be evident if developments are considered to be significant to the state and bypass local island decision-making mechanisms, to be considered instead by a state government (as with the Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island). Developers may choose to go to an appeals tribunal in the metropole if their proposal is rejected by a local council (as with the Linfox proposal on Phillip Island). In both these cases, the decision-makers may not necessarily be familiar with local issues. Villamil (1977) notes that decisions which affect societies are often made outside of the island boundaries so it is important to internalise decision-making. Nunn (2007: 132) warns that “most professionals who are managing island environments have also been trained in continental environments and assume - often with disastrous consequences - that islands are merely continents in miniature”.

Considering the interconnected nature of islandness, islands cannot be considered separate entities. They are connected to their mainlands and to the wider world. Particularly with the encroachment of globalisation, small islands “are, by their very insular nature, ‘cross-roads’ or territories open to tourists, investment, trade, expatriate visitors and other international flows and exchanges” (Baldacchino, 2004, n.p.). Casey (2001: 690) considers that “It is rare, if not impossible, to experience an entirely isolated place: a place without relation to any other place, without imbrication in a region ... only in a coherent and continuous landscape can we go from place to place, whether this be on land or sea or even in the air”. The case islands are part of wider regions – for instance Phillip Island is part of the Mornington Western Port Biosphere Reserve. For more isolated islands, they are part of a marine region and oceans are places too. Casey (2001: 690) considers that “Without landscape, we would be altogether confined to the peculiarities of a particular place, its insistent idiolocalism”. Hence for islanders not only are seascapes vital, but so are the intangible links with other lands and people, domestic and global.

Case islands and islandness

Parallel to the definition of islands in relation to continents, islandness relates to the distinctive characteristics and sense of identity in place of islands as compared to those of continents. The commonalities of many natural and social values among the four cases and their distinctions to their mainlands are a function of islandness. In the previous four chapters I have described the distinctive qualities which comprise each case study's islandness in broad economic, environmental and social categories, but it has become apparent that political sustainability is also a key variable. I originally aimed to examine the influences of governance on island sustainability, but through my empirical research found that islandness also has a considerable influence on political sustainability. The psychological dimension of islandness has also proved noteworthy. Thus, in framing islandness as a resource to facilitate sustainability in the following pages I organise the discussion around key components of sustainability – economic, environmental, social (and psychological) and political sustainability.

Economic sustainability

Participants across the case islands cite *economic sustainability* as a major problem (although less so for Phillip Island, which I correlate with its fixed link, as discussed above). Compared to continents, islands have a limited amount of land; thus land use deserves but has in fact received very little special attention. Villamil (1977), for example, emphasises that short-term gains reduce options for the future and that optimisation of land resources requires commitment from governments to values which are more in tune with long-term goals. Islanders know they cannot extend land boundaries (apart from the costly process of reclamation); they must make wise choices about how to use finite spaces.

Early European settlements on the case islands began with agriculture and met with varying success because of local, domestic and global factors (such as Phillip Island's drought, Rottneest Island's soils, Kangaroo Island's farm debt crisis, and a general change to methods and capital intensification in primary production). In the case of

Kangaroo Island, failure of the initial settlement (due to shortage of water and building timber) led to founding of the current metropole of Adelaide instead. Hence, a typical island characteristic of limited natural resources contributed to Kangaroo's Island marginal status.

Tourism has conveniently filled the economic and employment voids left by the localised downturn in agriculture, and this industry is ideally suited to islands as it can overcome the water barrier that limits many other industries, such as manufacturing. Tourism is a key economic activity in all four case islands and it is challenging traditional agricultural industries for dominance on Bruny, Phillip and Kangaroo Islands. While a major problem on Kangaroo Island is the ability of its local government to fund tourism infrastructure from a relatively small ratepayer base, tourism has been an economic saviour for islanders following the agricultural downturn.

On Rottnest Island, where agricultural ventures did not meet with any great success, tourism replaced the use of the island as a prison, and that transition of land use to tourism has arguably been the most difficult on Rottnest Island. Indeed, an insensitive transition from Aboriginal prison to tourist paradise has been visibly demonstrated in the discovery of Aboriginal graves below 'Tentland', the Island's camping ground, as strikingly depicted by artist Sally Morgan (1988). Dixon (1990) has also expressed the starkly different senses of place Rottnest can evoke in his poem 'Holocaust island'.

On Bruny, Phillip and Kangaroo islands, residents are taking advantage of proximity to their capital cities and tourism is now taking over from agriculture as the dominant industry, although Bruny and Kangaroo residents in particular have recently shown initiative in combining the two industries through niche activities such as produce sales to tourists and farm stays. All four islands have comparative advantages over their mainlands in their inherent appeal as islands and their strong natural values, as their environments have traditionally been protected from suburban development by water barriers. However, these values are now diminishing on Phillip Island as a consequence of its bridge. Differentiation of islands from continents has been used extensively in tourism marketing and branding worldwide. The tourism appeal of the four case islands is enhanced by their wildlife viewing opportunities (which are, to some extent, also a

function of islandness) and so tourism operators have scope to engage in ecotourism, although this is not to the outcomes are necessarily sustainable). On Bruny, Kangaroo and Phillip islands, the shift from agriculture to tourism has been accompanied by changes from rural production to rural residential land use, including second home residences. Contentious land use decisions have been made regarding development and these decisions are commonly seen as being at the expense of farmers¹⁷⁹, environmentalists, and lower income people (the latter played out as a form of gentrification that is evident in other offshore islands around the world (Clark et al. 2007)).

Island economies are constrained not only by access difficulties but also by the narrow range of industries possible within their finite spaces; this is where tourism has proven a successful industry but one that also brings economic challenges such as the infrastructural funding problems faced by Kangaroo Island Council (exacerbated because the Council cannot share resources with neighbouring local governments as easily as mainland councils can). Islands typically have monopoly businesses and such a lack of competition keeps prices high. Economic leakages are also a problem as access costs limit manufacturing industries so many tourism products must be imported from the mainland. Conversely, Phillip Island's bridge has no doubt contributed to its economic successes and position as a treasure island, as the bridge allows a greater number of tourists than do ferries, and permits residents to commute to the mainland and so provides an additional source of employment, thereby extending their economic resources beyond the island boundary.

With their limited natural resources, island economies are often characterised as having 'all their eggs in one basket' and of being particularly vulnerable to global and domestic economic influences. For some offshore islands, tourism is considered the only viable industry and this dependency upon domestic and international mainlands in exporting tourists increases their economic vulnerability. Tourism may provide residents with the only viable way to remain on-island; for example, expanding my focal lens for a

¹⁷⁹ However, it should be noted that there is a tension here as many farmers use subdivision as superannuation given the downturn in agriculture and the rise in land prices. Hence, many farmers hope to sell their land.

moment, take the case of Tap Mun, a Hong Kong offshore island. Fishing and farming industries have declined and the island's economy is now reliant on a small tourism industry to provide residents with the economic rationale to remain on-island, and hence to retain their social networks and sense of place (McKercher & Fu, 2005). For Tap Mun's residents, tourism therefore provides the economic means to achieve their social ends (primarily retaining their connection to place and their traditional lifestyles).

Economic diversification, development of niche industries, and collaboration across industry sectors can be important avenues to reduce economic vulnerability, as realised by Kangaroo Islanders in the wake of the farm debt crisis. If not for tourism, some residents may have been forced to leave the Island for economic reasons; hence a knock on effect was avoided. Ratter (2007: 523) argues that because islands are unique entities, their residents can strive for economies of place ("economies which capitalize on a geographical uniqueness that adds value to their goods", such as wines from certain regions). Ratter (2007: 523) describes the uniqueness of place as a cultural phenomenon and remarks that:

Even the sheer remoteness of an island could be its unique quality, which adds value to its real estate or tourism services ... smallness can facilitate administrative measures, which help to present the place to the world as a unique spot: on the German island of Langeoog in the North Sea, there are very strict environmental rules in place (for instance, no cars are allowed), and this provides an asset in the sustainable tourism market. Far from being necessarily bound to clichés like sun, water and sand ... every island has some unique traits, which could be discovered and should be reinforced. These could then be seen as resources in order to strive for a unique *economy of place*.

Clearly Rottneest Island can be compared with Langeoog in having the rare attribute of no tourist vehicles, which provides a point of difference from other tourism destinations (not merely the visual, safety and environmental benefits but also the effect on the island's ambience). Obviously such a strategy is related to island size and would not be as feasible on larger islands. The Rottneest Island Authority could leverage the strengths of having its own Act of Parliament and control of the entire island to aim for best-practice management and sustainability. Other unique features of Rottneest Island are its heritage buildings in distinct colours (Rottneest ochre), quokkas and pedestrian-scale.

Kangaroo Islanders are striving to make economies of place from their agricultural produce; for example from the pure strains of Ligurian honey which is unique in the world. Bruny Islanders could emphasise the uniqueness of their island in terms of its remoteness from European and American tourism markets (being an island off an island off an isolated continent); more effectively market its strong Aboriginal and European cultural heritage; or promote an island of creativity, considering its many artistic residents. On Phillip Island it appears that individual attractions (such as the Penguin Parade and the Grand Prix circuit) are perceived and marketed as the main assets that attract visitors, as opposed to the island itself being the essential asset that attracts tourists (as Grant (2004) found was the case on the Isle of Wight). Phillip Islanders may wish to emphasise that they live on a different type of island, a bridged island, and indeed tourism operators already market the ease of access to the island, while emphasising its island appeal. Particularly for international visitors, the actual name of an island can be a drawback: for example Kangaroo Island and, less directly, Rottnest Island, are named after wildlife; whereas Bruny and Phillip Islands are named after explorers. Of course the challenge is not to market its economy of place *too* well in case the outcomes destroy the underlying resource, the place, but herein lies the importance of effective and enforced planning and management. The overall aim should be for an economy that is compatible with local needs and desires, and with given natural resources. For example, while clearly needing some form of economic development, a common reference point across the case islands was that residents do not want ‘their’ places to become over-developed.

Kilpatrick and Falk (2003: 511) also emphasise opportunities for using unique island resources:

Distinctive identity resources are likely to be pronounced on islands which provide strategic advantages for economic consolidation and development, such as niche marketing of specialty produce and tourism. They have particular histories, events, geographies, issues and stories that can be used in the development of strategic socioeconomic responses.

Rimoldi (2006: 117) considers that economic movements that “emerge from and contribute to island identity potentially share a direction towards greater equality,

independence and flexibility in relation to economic exchange. Innovation and flexibility is [sic] almost certainly the only way that small island cultures will be able to survive and generate some form of economy of scale”. For example, tourism activities that have emerged from long-standing activities (such as agriculture or fishing) may be more likely to be accepted by islanders than those which could be seen to be exploiting local resources. In this light, Rimoldi (2006: 118) argues that “The position of small island cultures in a globalising world is inevitably subaltern and the strategies they use to survive may well depend on finding a unique, creative way to protect as well as to generate treasures that it values, and has value – generating cultural and material energy against the force of entropy”.

Despite widespread perceptions that population and tourism growth are beneficial to local economies, Gurran et al.’s (2007) study¹⁸⁰ of mainland Australian sea change communities found that economic outcomes are often below expectations: employment growth is primarily in retail and tourism sectors at the expense of resource based or productive industries such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Similarly all three residential case islands have lower than average (Australian) incomes. Apart from those on Phillip Island, participants highlighted the impacts of access costs across island economies, and the follow-on effects on social equity between islanders and mainlanders (and in the case of Rottnest Island, between tourists with different income levels). The difficult balance between maintaining island qualities that are distinct from those of continents, and increasing their homogeneity with mainlands (and socioeconomic parity with mainlanders) is encapsulated in the access debate. While the costs of transporting goods and people across sea gaps are high, classifying sea crossings as part of national highways would, to a large extent, represent an invisible bridging of islands. It is partly the access costs that limit further tourism and residential development (and thus the risk of a Phillip Island-type outcome, where an offshore island begins to resemble a suburb). Nevertheless, I recognise the undesirability of high access costs resulting in exclusive islands. It is for this reason that islanders need to focus on the economic opportunities

¹⁸⁰ Gurran and Blakely (2007: 122) analysed socio-economic data from 55 coastal local government areas, concluding that: “poor economic performance in coastal areas is often explained by their transition from productive sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing to more service- and consumption-based industries like tourism, retail, and personal services, which are characterised by low wages and seasonal employment”.

afforded by islandness and leverage these comparative advantages (such as niche ecotourism and produce). Strategies that link islandness to economic development should help to maintain islandness, as any diminishment in these island qualities would likely impact on, for example, the tourism product. Ideally, in determining future tourism developments, homogenisation with ‘a’ mainland should be resisted. Instead, the focus might more sensibly be on small-scale developments compatible with island landscapes. In modernising some of the traditional strengths of rural communities, offshore islands can provide a point of distinction from mainlands, and particularly, from cities. For example, islands typically foster a strong sense of community within the common space. It was reported that Kangaroo Island’s cultural and social values are drawcards for tourists, and that having a personal connection to the place will be part of their brand in the future.

The dominance of transport industries, whether air or ferry services, over movement to and from islands is evident through their control over fare pricing and timetabling. Islands commonly have monopoly transport services (in addition to monopoly businesses within the island) and relevant governments should play a role in monitoring fares, encouraging multiple operators where feasible, and ensuring that residents and tourists have some mechanism for input into transport service decisions. In the case of Phillip Island, many of the challenges cited by participants relate to it being *too* accessible through its bridge, in that the Island is beginning to resemble built up areas of the mainland in terms of (over)development and loss of rural land. Kangaroo Island experiences problems as a result of its larger size, particularly in terms of the local government being unable to adequately fund infrastructure. On Rottnest Island, access costs may exclude lower-income tourists: one of Rottnest’s first tourists was the Governor who regularly visited his summer house there, and the Island has long been the domain of Perth’s wealthy western suburb residents.

Hache (1998: 51) argues that the expression of an ‘island condition’ can serve two distinct purposes. First, it can assert a distinct identity – “recognition between people having the feeling of belonging to the same community, that feeling being strengthened by the relatively clear boundaries provided by geography”. This sense of a distinct identity was articulated by several participants, and also used in defence against outside

threats. The second purpose served by the expression of an island condition is the “assertion of political, economic, or social problems: lack of understanding by the central authorities, cost of living, under-development of the economy, etc. The island condition will be playing a major role in the justification of these difficulties” (Hache, 1998: 52). Again participants in my own study referred to such island conditions in the justification of difficulties (particularly cost of living) and in calls for assistance. For example in the case of Kangaroo Island, there are calls for parity with mainlanders in putting forward the case for the sea journey to be classified as part of the national road system in order to ease economic barriers. Islanders would have the best of both worlds if governments were effectively to ignore the water crossing, which would be to deny the Island’s separation from the mainland; yet Kangaroo Islanders would (and do) simultaneously benefit from this separation through tourism (participants expressed part of Kangaroo Island’s appeal as relating to the fact that it is an island).

Environmental sustainability

The island literature I read early on in my research led me to assume that island environments are likely to be more vulnerable than those of mainlands. However, each case island has several advantages in environmental management over mainlands (even Phillip Island as it has only one point of land entry from the mainland). As noted in chapter four, Whittaker (1998: 253) considers that “ecological management goals are the easiest part of the equation to specify, while managing the societal, economic, and political issues is very difficult”. It was widely reported by participants that of economic, environmental and social sustainability, *environmental sustainability* is the easiest to manage, but this is not to say that it is necessarily well-managed. Through their physical separation from continents, islands present significant opportunities to monitor tourists and conduct related research which can facilitate sustainable development (as with the Tourism Optimisation Management Model on Kangaroo Island). With their typically small resident populations it may also be easier to conduct research relating to islanders as well (as demonstrated by the TOMM also). Offshore islands tend to have only one or two main entry points (although the permeability of Rottneest Island’s boundary to tourism is evident in the dotting of private boat moorings around its coastline). Nevertheless, with the increasing popularity of islands with residents and tourists (due to

their islandness), their environments will come under increasing pressure – for example, relating to water resources and waste infrastructure.

Norberg-Schulz (1980) argues that islands are distinctive natural places. The case islands' natural values were articulated by several stakeholders. The environmental values of Kangaroo Island have been recognised in its declaration as a Long Term Ecological Research site, while Phillip Island is part of an urban Biosphere Reserve. Bruny and Kangaroo islands have national parks managed by their state governments, while Phillip Island has a Nature Park which is unique to the State and managed by the Victorian Government, and Rottnest Island has a terrestrial reserve (possibly soon to be named the Wadjemup Conservation Reserve) managed by the Western Australian Government. All four islands focus on wildlife tourism. While Rottnest Island has its iconic quokkas, Phillip Island is known for its penguins, Kangaroo Island for its sea lions in particular, and Bruny Island for a range of species. Bruny, Kangaroo and Phillip islands have scenic rural landscapes. On all four islands, tourism activities are concentrated along fragile coastal landscapes. Rural tourism offers the potential to draw tourists to island hinterlands, although this would then spread impacts over a greater spatial scale.

The environmental values of offshore islands are a point of difference from mainland environments, and key to attracting residents and tourists. Environmental impacts of residential growth are evident; there are also concerns about ecotourism on the case islands – for example the underlying principle of Phillip Island Nature Parks involves the penguins funding their own protection by parading in the view of thousands of tourists. Rottnest Island's environmental management is funded by the thousands of tourists who descend on the Island each year but, to some extent, the terrestrial reserve is protected from mass tourism because many visitors want a resort-style holiday and do not venture outside the built settlement. The Rottnest Island Authority has limited consultation with other state and interstate environmental agencies (in part due to its insular management style). On Kangaroo Island, koala control for environmental purposes is restricted as a result of the Island's importance for international tourism for the South Australian Government; hence it is a form of control by the metropole. Islands commonly function as conservation reserves or refuges. However, there are risks

involved in using islands as museums of natural history. For example, koalas were introduced to Kangaroo Island in the 1920s due to fears of the species' extinction on the mainland, but now koalas have reached pest status on the Island and are a threat to local ecosystems. Global warming was cited by only one participant as a possible threat but is likely to loom as a larger perceived (and real) threat in the future.

Significant environmental threats to the case islands currently stem not directly from their island status, but from increasing demand for tourism and residential land uses within limited spaces. Water barriers can protect island environments, and so the bridge to Phillip Island has made environmental management more difficult, since it has facilitated residential and tourism development and accompanying environmental impacts (particularly on favoured coastal spaces). Rural subdivisions contribute to island suburbanisation. Lifestyle change and coastal retirement are important drivers of sea change to Phillip, Bruny and Kangaroo islands. Sea change causes significant environmental changes, including impacts on hydrological systems, coastal waters, fragmentation and loss of coastal habitat, and exposure to coastal hazards (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). However, sea change can also have positive outcomes: urban residents may wish to preserve the environment and heritage of the place they have moved to, as can be seen in a shift from urban to rural (Fees, 1996). A strong environmental ethic is particularly evident with some newcomers on Bruny Island, in part because natural values were what originally attracted them to the Island.

Wild River (2005) argues that critical to the success of a local government environmental sustainability agenda is the presence of passionate individuals with a long-term connection to the local area. Island residents and island-based councils commonly have a strong connection to place which may translate to commitment to sustainability, as demonstrated with the case of TOMM on Kangaroo Island. Sense of place "shows most clearly in the way the community feels about and uses the landscape"¹⁸¹ (Seddon, 1972: 262), implying that if residents have a strong sense of place then they will be careful in their use of that place, in order to preserve its placeness. However, small populations and the typically conservative values of rural

¹⁸¹ Casey (2001: 683) defines landscape as "the presented layout of a set of places, not their mere accumulation but their sensuous self-presentation as a whole".

communities may result in fewer natural resource management champions and these people may be ostracised for their views (Pini et al. 2007), as was reported on Bruny Island, where some participants reported tensions between ‘rednecks’ and ‘greenies’. Kangaroo Island is the only case island that is a single NRM region, and it appears that this difference is based on its size and, compared to mainland areas of South Australia, because of its geographic separation (i.e. Kangaroo Island’s catchments do not overlap with those on the mainland). The other case islands are incorporated in the same NRM regions as their capital cities, and so available resources may not reach to island-specific issues or islands may be neglected in the focus on the regional.

Social sustainability

Social sustainability on islands is a complex topic. With their limited resources and diversity of inhabitants, island communities can be highly divisive, as opposed to an idyllic assumption that everyone gets along well and shares the same views. Newcomers are often long-viewed as outsiders. Baldacchino (2005: 37) refers to Massey’s progressive sense of place and the need to “assess the extent to which an island people are an articulated, island people. Islandness seamlessly replaces, or takes upon itself, the attributes of ethnicity.” Islandness can represent the distinctive sense of place found on islands, or in terms of spirit of place, it may represent a form of *genius loci* (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). Hache (1998) considers that the expression of an ‘island condition’ can assert a distinct identity. Islands typically present a strong sense of place, which can confer a clear sense of identity on its residents, and a valuable source of collective identity and community (according to Gillis, 2004, community seems to have survived only on islands in the post-modern world). Personal identity¹⁸² requires an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity (Erikson, 1970); similarly place identity requires place continuity and, in the case of islands, this implies retaining some sense of islandness in order to preserve their features as specific geographical spaces.

Permanent residents are not alone in connecting with the sense of place provided by islands. Temporary residents can also have strong place attachment, as demonstrated

¹⁸² According to Casey (2001: 689) “personal identity entails body (not just consciousness) *and* a body-in-place (rather than an unimplaced self)”.

both by the forced removal of Rottneet Island staff in the 1990s, and the Victorian Government's acquisition of privately-owned land on Phillip Island over the past 22 years. Tourists can also feel a strong a sense of place¹⁸³ on islands, which over time may translate into holiday home ownership for wealthier tourists, and perhaps ultimately, to permanent residency. Gurran et al. (2007) recognise that many migration decisions represent a culmination of a process starting with frequent holidays to a specific place, followed by acquisition of a second home and finally, permanent settlement. Affection of many mainlanders for Rottneet Island is likely due in part to the fact that Rottneet is a public island and there are no permanent residents, which allows mainlanders jointly to feel a sense of ownership. Island communities are not only land-based; Rottneet also has a relatively stable maritime community (due to mooring lease arrangements). Sense of place may even be stronger for outsiders than for residents, according to Gillis (2004: 140):

In the nineteenth century, residence and sense of place were already becoming two different things. Being resident in a place for a long time did not automatically produce a sense of being at home. On the contrary, it was often exiles and people "from away" who developed the strongest attachments to a place ... It was not among resident islanders, but among exiles and visitors that islands first took on a mythical aura of the ultimate homeplace, more honored in its absence than presence.

Mirroring the connectedness-separation tensions of island boundaries, islanders exhibit tensions between dependence on and independence from their mainlands, and indeed, these tensions form part of islander identity. With reference to Estonian islands, Lehari (2003: 98) postulates that islander identity is shaped both by boundedness and through connectivity with the outside world, in that outsiders may help islanders to:

acknowledge their island aesthetically, notice the peculiarity of their environment and see it through the eyes of a stranger. Becoming aware of the environment's aesthetic aspects has certainly strengthened the place identity on both the personal and social level. The island-consciousness of its inhabitants is the result of the joint effect of isolation and 'permeability' of the borders.

¹⁸³ Although in the case of islands as adventure tourism destinations, the appeal may be more about developing sense of self rather than sense of place.

Hence, Péron's (2004: 328) "permanent consciousness of being on an island" is not only an internally-generated construct. Islanders tend to know their place and position in the world; islanders are typically proud of their island yet 'through the eyes of a stranger', tourism can foster a renewed sense of pride and environmental awareness. Lehari (2003: 98) considers that strong place identity enables greater openness: "The others are respected because of their otherness; numerous visitors and owners of summer cottages are willingly helped and generously treated". On Bruny Island, there appears to be less concern amongst permanent residents about tourists than about new residents (for example, as indicated by the questions posed in the vision survey).

Warrington and Milne (2007: 380-1) offer their views on islandness and identity:

the intense reaction of islanders confronted with the prospect of terminating their 'isolation' through a fixed link to a mainland testifies to the power of island landscapes to identify communities ... Clearly, islandness may constitute a peculiarly salient, powerful example of landscape identity attachment, and of geography in the service of polity-building ... [or in some cases] 'islandness' may constitute a weaker pole of attraction compared to the pull of mainland motherlands.

In relation to this 'pull of mainland motherlands', in offshore islands that are experiencing depopulation it is often younger people who leave for education and employment opportunities offered on mainlands. Peripheral regions are typically dependent on primary industries and they tend to experience out-migration of young people resulting in distortion of social structures (Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998). In some places, this demographic distortion is exaggerated by the influx of retirees. For those islands that experience population growth, it may in part be due to landscape identity attachment. Gurran et al. (2007) note that although traditional migration theories claim that economic factors underpin most migration decisions, many people are moving to coastal places which have limited employment prospects. Regional coastal Australians have lower income levels than the Australian population overall, and evidence suggests that personal choices of place, particularly lifestyle choices, largely account for recent coastal development trends (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). However, Gurran et al. (2007) point to a gap in the literature on empirical data on the reasons for migration to coastal areas of Australia. For islands, the results from my study, although partly anecdotal,

indicate that lifestyle reasons are a prominent pull factor for urban migrants. Islanders on Bruny, Phillip and Kangaroo islands have lower income levels than the Australian population overall, which indicates that the impetus for some people to relocate comes from lifestyle rather than economic factors. It follows then that the strong sense of place typically associated with islands may be sufficient to lure people away from the economic advantages of city life, and may also foster social capital for sustainability action. Where residents are able to commute to work in cities, such places may be considered suburban islands. Improved access, such as faster ferries, introduction of vehicular ferries, or construction of bridges or tunnels can create more opportunities for secondary residences on islands. Such closer physical integration with mainlands may also boost permanent populations (Royle, 2007b) and maintain the viability of islands as residential places.

Social impacts of sea change are varied. Many Australian coastal communities are concerned that the low-key character of their towns will be overwhelmed by new high-density residential, tourism and commercial developments (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). As many high-amenity communities have a relatively small or dispersed population base, even slight increases can have a much greater impact on population characteristics than in metropolitan settings (Gurran & Blakely, 2007). A social issue that is expected to be particularly problematic in the future is affordability of island property. The coastline is one of the primary attractions of islands and, considering the rising value of waterfront properties, it is conceivable that islands offshore from cities will become exclusive places. If so, the balance between bonding and bridging ties (in terms of social capital) may be disrupted and social sustainability diminished. Lower income residents are already being displaced by wealthier; the next generation of island-born may not be able to afford to continue being islanders. Low income people often migrate to rural areas where housing has been less expensive than in cities (Cook & Phillips, 2005). Many lower income families had moved to Bruny Island, where housing was cheaper than in Hobart, but they have since largely been displaced by the housing boom associated with sea change. Such displacement is a form of gentrification, which has been linked to sea change by Gurran et al. (2007) who report on gentrification in coastal getaway and coastal lifestyle communities. Pitt (1980) uses the analogy of succession in describing

the process of more passive, lower-ranked socio-economic groups being driven out by more powerful, wealthy groups.

Gentrification is not only about physical displacement; it also concerns the displacement of island identities (Hay, 2006) and thereby threatens the social bonds of communities. Gurran et al. (2007) report that residents of coastal sea change communities can experience a loss of sense of community or connection to social networks due to the influx of new residents and visitors, and this seemed to be particularly evident on Phillip Island where there has been a significant influx of new residents and tourists. As Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop (2005) note, spatial identities at different spatial scales may influence each other – hence increased interaction of islanders with the outside world may impact on their spatial identities. As a result of impacts on the physical character of communities, many coastal communities in Gurran et al's (2007) study reported a loss of sense of place, particularly when new residential, tourism and commercial developments are of a scale and appearance discordant with local design. Such concerns were evident in the case islands - views that new developments, such as Rottneest's Mt Herschel hotel, are at odds with the physical and social character of the Island. Gurran and Blakely (2007: 120) note that lack of urban infrastructure and other services can form part of the appeal of some places, with developers commodifying their remote and scenic qualities as a 'marketable product'. In relation to the Southern Ocean Lodge development on Kangaroo Island, the developers are seeking to capitalise on this isolated and scenic destination. Wealthy visitors may increasingly be the target tourism market, particularly for state governments, and be catered for by new developments such as the Southern Ocean Lodge, the Linfox development on Phillip Island (if approved) and the Mt Herschel development on Rottneest Island (despite the *RIA Act* stating that the Island must remain affordable for families).

Social impacts of residential and tourism developments are often intangible (for example some effects are not evident in statistics) and so are difficult to identify and to manage. While the populations of Bruny and Kangaroo islands have not grown significantly in recent years, the composition of residents is changing, which may threaten community bonds. Seasonal residents tend not to be involved in community activities, and with change in composition of islanders there is concern that shared histories and shared

memories of place will disappear and hence threaten sense of place. Many islanders have a history of independence and resourcefulness (due to their geographically isolated position); yet socioeconomic problems of islandness can lead to calls for greater parity with mainlanders. For example, some newcomers demand infrastructure and services of a standard comparable to that of their former address (which in many cases are cities), and retirees want adequate health services. Bruny, Kangaroo and Phillip islands all have median populations older than the Australian population overall and such populations are likely to place increasing burdens on island health services. Subsequently, some older residents may migrate to mainlands for health-related reasons (as indicated in TOMM results on Kangaroo Island). Negative outcomes of resident displacement have been experienced both on Phillip and Rottnest islands, with the removal of permanent and seasonal residents from the Summerland Peninsula, and the relocation of residential staff from Rottnest Island.

On the case islands, common outcomes of new residential developments include demand for improved infrastructure and services, rising real estate prices, and conflicts between existing residents and newcomers. Bruny Islanders value their relaxed lifestyle, sense of community (reported as close-knit because islanders rely on each other), and independence (perceived as diminished in recent years because of the loss of their own local government). Rather than posing a threat to their traditional way of life, newcomers can reinvigorate the social fabric with their creative endeavours and their appreciation of place may be reflected in a strong environmental ethic. While some of its ‘shack culture’ is fading, Bruny Island appears to retain a strong sense of community – enough to create the Bruny Island Advisory Group.

Kangaroo Islanders also have a strong sense of community but due to the island’s significant size, community groups are more localised (reinforced in the past by there being two island councils), and island-wide integration is facilitated through island agencies and the island council. Kangaroo Islanders can take advantage of size as their Island is endowed with greater resources than smaller islands, and considerable travelling distances between key tourism attractions allows it to be more than just a day-tripper destination. Despite the Island’s size, however, residents experience problems associated with geographic separation (but also the positives – for example a history of

resourcefulness). Islandness impacts on social equity: the cost of basic commodities is higher on Kangaroo Island due to the additional costs of shipping freight. High access costs have led to calls for subsidies and recognition of the sea gap as part of the national highway (i.e. calls for parity with mainlanders through an invisible bridge which may diminish islandness). On the other hand, because Kangaroo Island is a relatively expensive destination to access, there is potential for residential gentrification and tourism limited to wealthier visitors. The arguments of several Kangaroo Island participants for improved access contrast with one Bruny Island resident's view that many islanders resist closer integration with the mainland through further access improvements: *As soon as you put big ferries on, you've got every other bit of infrastructure and then you haven't got an island anymore* (RR2).

Rottnest Island's distinctiveness is enhanced by the whole island being reserved as a public island rather than parts of it being in private ownership. Rottnest Island provokes an emotional response from many visitors and is also an 'island of the mind' (Gillis, 2004). However, the Island is losing its self-sufficiency due to accommodation upgrades. Previously visitors were required to bring their own linen and other essentials. Now televisions are part of the furnishings; the outside world has permeated the island boundary. The new Wellness Centre provides an alternative to experiences of the natural environment. It is really necessary to upgrade the island and its facilities in line with mainland destinations (both people's homes and other tourist locations)? In the long-term, surely Rottnest would attract visitors (particularly more environmentally-appreciative tourists) if it retained its unique comparative advantages and capitalised on its economies of place. For example, the RIA could have retained the sense of escape from the mainland by not introducing televisions in the villas. The RIA's strategy of trying to lift accommodation standards in line with other tourist destinations and with people's domestic standards is effectively homogenising the island with the mainland, and decreasing island distinction or islandness. An important social issue is that of maintaining the Rottnest ethos (which contributes to its place identity for regular tourists). Much of this ethos revolves around Rottnest being a relaxed and egalitarian place but there are fears that it will become an exclusive destination through the process of tourism gentrification - for example, through upgrades to existing accommodation and also development of the new four-star private hotel. Social conflicts also arise as a

result of Rottnest being both a ‘rite of passage’ destination for young adults and a traditional family resort; and from continued resident staff perceptions of ‘ownership’ of the island which may conflict with serving the needs of tourists.

On Phillip Island the bridge creates an unnatural boundary which assimilates the Island with the mainland; it acts as a permanent catheter and accelerates change in the form of inputs to and losses from the island system (Villamil, 1977). It appears that the fixed link has diminished the cohesiveness of the island community¹⁸⁴ as the bridge extends the community to the hinterland (as demonstrated by Phillip Island’s regular incorporation with San Remo, from the local newspaper to the local government’s planning design framework).

In chapter four I focussed on two elements of good governance: sustainability and civic engagement. According to Selman (2001: 14) “diminution of civicness in a stressed, over-committed, atomized and morally privatized society has serious implications for the pursuit of sustainable development, which requires a high degree of trust, collaboration, sense of personal agency, propensity to individual lifestyle change, and even altruism”. Some of these qualities reflect the interactions which produce social capital. Participation in community activities may foster shared values and build social capital, as networks are formed and maintained through interaction (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2003). Bruny and Kangaroo islands in particular have high levels of community participation in volunteer activities, which may be one way of building social capital. However, Kilpatrick and Falk (2003: 511) caution that:

Close attention must be paid to the balance between the bonding and bridging ties, since an excess of bonding ties can result in over-insularity, while an excess of bridging ties can result in a homogenisation of distinctive socio-cultural features, undermining the impact on some industries (such as tourism).

This potential risk of financial losses due to homogenisation highlights the economic importance of islandness. The balance between over-insularity and homogenisation is

¹⁸⁴ While it may be argued that the diminution of its cohesive community could simply be a factor of time, as many communities have weaker social bonds in the contemporary world, this was not reported on the other case islands, and so may be more of a mainland phenomenon.

also important in Ian Watson's (1998) view. He argues that an excess of bridging ties can lead to loss of distinctiveness, and hence a diminished sense of islandness. In the case of literal bridging ties for islands physically linked to the mainland, such an overload of bridging ties and homogenisation with adjacent mainlands could greatly diminish their islandness.

And what of the psychological dimension of islandness? Is there such a thing as the island psyche? Whittaker (1998: 254) refers to the "island condition of the human societies that occupy them"; sometimes this is used in a negative sense as in the way the management style of the Rottneest Island Authority was described as 'insular' by one participant, in terms of acting as if disconnected from the rest of the world. It was also used to describe the mentality of staff on Rottneest – their insular attitude and perceived ownership of the Island. Bruny Island was described by some participants as a haven away from things; ideal for reclusive-type people. In comparison, bridges may represent psychologically easier access as water barriers can deter some tourists. The psychological dimension of island appeal for tourists was discussed in chapter four: "clear physical borders also constitute psychological borders, which aid the imagination of being isolated, and are thus attractions for visitors seeking to escape routines, stress and responsibility" (Gössling & Wall, 2007: 429).

In Dahl's (2008, pers. comm., 6 January) opinion, living in an island community where everyone knows everyone else and where opportunities for escape or avoidance are limited, creates a kind of psychological hot house that produces a specific island mentality. The result can sometimes be highly divisive, as noted in the case islands. However, Dahl (2008, pers. comm., 6 January) also considers that islanders have developed various mechanisms for the accommodation of differences - for example through processes of consultation and consensus-building. There is scope for further research on the psychological dimensions of islandness. For example, what motivates people to relocate to such isolated places? Do such people have a pre-existing inclination towards islandness in a psychological sense? Why do people leave islands? McCall (1994: 2) is "not convinced that there is such a direct relationship between the geography of a place and the personality of the inhabitants" as Moles (1982) argues, but he considers that the impact of geography on consciousness warrants further study.

Political sustainability

How to manage such economic, environmental and social complexities associated with islandness, particularly when the very governing agencies and structures are sometimes part of the problem? Islandness has important consequences for the *political sustainability* of islands; simultaneously governance shapes islandness. Warrington and Milne (2007: 384) argue that “It is *political agency*, the ability to act in a changing environment, that determines how peripherality, so often cited as a limitation inherent in islandness ... is experienced and whether it is treated as constraint or opportunity”. Ian Watson (1998) discusses the challenges of integrating islands into mainland life, noting that many countries try to integrate small offshore islands into mainland institutions, thereby reducing their sense of categoriality and separateness. Three typical strategies are subsidisation, bridge-building, and depopulation. Phillip and Bruny islands are integrated into mainland governance institutions. A forced depopulation occurred on Rottnest when the Western Australian Government relocated much of the working population to the mainland, partly in order to reduce their sense of community, islander identity and sense of ownership of the island, characteristics which were at odds with serving the tourist population. Kangaroo Islanders can employ the ‘island condition’ (Hache, 1998) or islandness to justify maintaining their local autonomy, as noted in chapter eight by the comment by LG1: *we have a very strong sense of identity on the Island and a lot of agencies have fought for a very long time to maintain our identity as a region ... [if merged] with a mainland council the community would be very upset because they’d get forgotten and there’s not a good understanding of the issues that face islanders*. There are similar arguments by Bruny Islanders for the reinstatement of the island council; lack of understanding by mainland local authorities was also asserted by Phillip Island stakeholders.

Islandness influences demand for autonomy. For example, the Portuguese Constitution recognises insularity¹⁸⁵ as a special geographic characteristic (and the economic and social disadvantages derived from it); hence the Azores and Madeira were granted

¹⁸⁵ The Portuguese Constitution recognises insular territories as a result of both emerged lands and the waters that connect them (Suarez de Vivero, 1995).

autonomous regions based on insularity (Suarez de Vivero, 1995). While many offshore islanders desire some form of autonomy, they are also dependent on their adjacent mainlands.

Island politics gravitates around the tension between autonomy and dependence, whether jurisdictional or economic; between indigenous and expatriate or immigrant elites; and between centre and periphery. Island policies reflect the three-way pull of islander interests: engagement with the outside world, subordination to an ‘imperial’ power or defiant withdrawal” (Warrington & Milne, 2007: 383).

For the case islands, engagement with the outside, wider world is important but it should not be solely controlled by the dominant local or state government, which could represent a form of island subordination. Island engagement with the wider world should also be on islanders’ own terms – for example, in exporting produce, and encouraging appropriate forms of tourism.

Should there be consistency between the spatial and administrative boundaries of offshore islands? Considering the increasingly important roles of local governments in Australia, the amalgamation of an island council with a mainland local government is a significant form of political integration and one that has far-reaching consequences for islanders (including social perceptions of islandness). In the case chapters I have explored some effects of amalgamating island governments with mainland governments, and also some downsides to island local autonomy: in small communities, power and influence tends to be concentrated amongst an elite few. Autonomy at the local level, as demonstrated in the case of the Bruny Island Council, brings problems of diseconomies of scale (considering the typically small rates bases of islands, many of which also have to fund tourism infrastructure) and the risk of corruption by local elites (again due to smaller communities). Desire for autonomy reflects not only geographic difference from mainlands, but also common perceptions that island life entails a laidback lifestyle where rules and regulations should be more relaxed than those on the mainland (possibly contra good environmental management outcomes).

Political integration with a mainland authority, primarily under the control of mainlanders, can result in homogeneity with that mainland if distinct island

characteristics, such as sense of place, are not explicitly recognised and protected in policies and planning strategies. Brunckhorst and Reeve (2006: 148) argue that regional boundaries should “best capture the representation of ‘place identity’ of local areas of most interest to community residents”. Since local councils often represent the focal point of small communities and enhance people’s sense of place and identity, amalgamations can have significant social costs. Changing governance institutions may close off future options and make it impossible to rebuild present social and economic structures (Dollery & Crase, 2004b).

Both Bruny and Phillip islands have experienced local government amalgamations in the past 15 years that have deprived islanders of local self-governance and of island-specific planning schemes. Residents on both islands have called for reinstatement of the island councils without success, although recently the Bruny Island Advisory Group was formed to provide a voice for islanders to the mainland council (albeit via another committee of council). While the *Bruny Island Planning Scheme* was abandoned and replaced with the *Kingborough Planning Scheme*, Desired Future Character Statements specific to Bruny Island will provide a basis for place-based planning. The Bass Coast Shire Council in Victoria has adopted a specific design framework for Phillip Island but this is in conjunction with the mainland town of San Remo. In contrast, Kangaroo Island has retained its own island council (through a merging of two intra-island local governments) and Development Plan (planning scheme), and a range of South Australian Government agencies have regional offices on Kangaroo Island. Kangaroo Island also has its own Natural Resource Management Board, whereas the other islands are incorporated in mainland NRM boards along with their capital cities. However, Kangaroo Island Council is still susceptible to higher levels of government: Southern Ocean Lodge represents the imposition of South Australian Government tourism policies and planning processes over and above island-based strategies. In this vein, Villamil (1977: 3) describes how a progressive alienation of decision-making can occur on islands, as the decision-making process is externally linked and internally segregated, and this process can be demonstrated in the case of the Southern Ocean Lodge.

More generally, Vince (1997) notes that the ‘bigger is better’ principle has driven the amalgamation process in Australia and that decisions have been made which ignore

long-standing cultures of local communities. Dollery and Crase (2004b: 297) note the direct costs involved in council consolidations, and comment on the indirect economic and social costs imposed on the communities concerned:

Councils often represent the focal point of small communities and enhance people's 'sense of place' and identity ... Effective participatory democracy is facilitated through small councils where citizens often feel that they can influence local outcomes. It also captures the benefits of detailed local knowledge and thus may improve the quality of decisions taken at the local level. It typically involves people in their local communities and seems to encourage socially beneficial behaviour such as volunteering.

Considering such social costs, if amalgamations must proceed, they should ideally provide for some form of island representation – this may be in the form of a fixed level of councillor representation from the island or a special council group, such as the Bruny Island Advisory Group. But of course, the derisive attitude of some mainlanders towards islanders – why should they get special treatment and/or funding - must be overcome¹⁸⁶. Phillip Island, due to its economic successes, is recognised as a tourism jewel for the region and the state, rather than a costly burden.

Governance and management of Rottnest Island presents as an unusual form of island autonomy. However, its temporary residents have no say in governance matters. Rottnest Island is part of a mainland local government body only in name; the Western Australian Government has control over the island through its statutory authority with its own Act of Parliament. This location-specific integrated management body has limited consultation with other agencies (particularly with the Western Australian Government environment department) – insular management indeed. Part of the problem stems from the RIA being linked to a certain minister and department (tourism), despite its broader responsibilities. Island representation on State environmental committees is important. Otherwise, it is almost a form of 'defiant withdrawal' (Warrington & Milne, 2007) as opposed to engagement with the outside world. While the Rottnest Island Authority

¹⁸⁶ It is understandable that islanders perceive the need for their islands to be managed differently from mainlands, but what benefit would mainland jurisdictions have in considering the needs or distinctiveness of islands within their jurisdictions? Mainland managers may argue that island residents are a resource burden to government and a drain on other residents in their jurisdictions, as access constraints raise costs (not just transportation but across a range of services, such as health). Is there any benefit for mainland governing authorities in maintaining the island boundary (other than in the case of island prisons)?

Board comprises, by legislation, members with a range of skills, proposed changes to its membership are likely to focus attention on economic management at the expense of environmental and heritage management (at least in the short-term). The RIA faces considerable funding constraints which are compounded by its island status: it must provide basic utilities which tourism managers on the mainland do not have to. Also, the island's environmental funding is linked to tourism – the island has to 'pay for itself' – so there is a risk that accommodation tariffs and the landing fee will be increased to achieve greater financial sustainability, and so threaten the affordable nature of the Island. Despite the apparent simplicity of having only one industry (tourism), no landowners or permanent community, and management by only one authority, the governance of Rottnest is still very complicated and the key issue is balancing tourism and conservation. I recognise the difficulties that the RIA faces in making the island financially sustainable (which in the long-term can more adequately protect its environment and heritage) but in the meantime environmental and heritage values may be sacrificed for financial gain (through strategies to boost tourism numbers, and also revenue, through the Mt Herschel development, for example). While the 'user pays' principle¹⁸⁷ is generally reasonable for tourist destinations, under the administrative structure of the RIA, the use of this funding mechanism alone may lead to degradation of the island's natural and heritage resources (the basis of tourism), and hence loss of financial sustainability in the long-term. Environment and heritage funding should not be tied exclusively to visitor numbers. Instead such values should also be funded and protected through a community service obligation, in recognition of common good values.

The RIA may also wish to look to Phillip Island Nature Parks' funding model as it generates income not only from attractions but also from sponsors of research and education programs. PINP, managed by the Victorian Government, is in a much better financial situation than the RIA, is not as constrained by island status (due to the bridge), and does not need to fund a tourism resort, nor basic utilities. Yet still there is a key

¹⁸⁷ While the 'user pays' or 'polluter pays' principle seems reasonable, Rottnest Island has common good values - these values should not only be protected for the tourists. Hence, the argument for separate allocated funding rather than the situation of funding being dependent only on the number of tourists.

conservation-tourism tension in that penguins must ‘pay for their protection’ through tourism.

Various governance structures have been examined in this research, yet there appears to be no ideal governance model for offshore islands. However, it is important that island managers have bridging ties (links with people external to the island) and that mainland governments have some form of island representation (i.e. balance the openness/closure dynamics of the island boundary). Tensions between local and non-local may be evident in islanders’ aspirations for self-determinism, set against their dependence upon non-local (regional, national and international interests) in order to preserve local values, such as nature conservation values. While many offshore islands face similar issues, it is likely necessary that management approaches vary on account of each island’s unique features; for example, Hanson and Lamson (1990: 343) argue that while islands in the three ocean basins bordering Canada face similar development issues, “unique island situations and histories call for individual approaches to development and environmental management”.

In regard to local sustainability action, residents are likely to have particular impetus to encourage sustainable island development if their descendants remain on-island. One community participation method is to develop a future vision encompassing all aspects of sustainable development. Involvement in decision-making can foster community responsibility; responsibility can foster pride in successful outcomes; and proud communities, in their strength, can enhance islandness. Opportunities for community input on the case islands include through planning scheme reviews, the Bruny Island Advisory Group, resident associations, Landcare groups; friends groups, Kangaroo Island’s TOMM, the Rottneest Society, the Rottneest Island Foundation and voluntary guides.

Brown (2006) uses Kangaroo Island to demonstrate his method for measuring and analysing tourism and residential development options using survey research techniques to determine the strength of mapped public landscape values as predictors of place-specific development preferences. Considering the importance of community consultation in development planning, Brown (2006) considers that such survey research

can provide a valuable tool to measure community attitudes and preferences toward future tourism and residential development options. Survey research techniques may lend a greater sense of representativeness to researching values (compared to qualitative research, which is less accepted in policy-making circles). Brown's (2006: 102) method has potential "to bridge the chasm between expert-driven land-use planning processes on the one hand, and community-driven, collaborative tourism planning on the other" but traditional planning surveys often lack measures of place-specific development preferences. In my view, it seems easier to conduct such map-based surveys on islands because their residents are more likely to know where specific places are, using the Island's boundary as a guide, compared to the more difficult task of distinguishing places within mainlands. Brown's research could be extended to other islands in Australia and elsewhere, and he makes some interesting comments about making decisions based on viewing the Island as one place rather than considering places within the Island:

place matters. Without the spatial mapping results, the general survey responses indicate that Kangaroo Island residents are supportive of slow growth (42%) or fast growth (15%) in tourism visitation ... The local council would surely be inclined to approve most tourism development proposals given the favourable disposition of the resident population toward growth based on survey responses. And yet, favourable attitudes toward tourism growth do not translate into place-specific public assent to development (2006: 111).

The clustering of values at specific places indicates broad residential consensus as opposed to the common dismissal of many development objectors as 'greenies'. Brown (2006: 112-3) concludes that the "the spatial mapping method provides legitimacy to land-use decisions that are grounded in true public consultation because it accesses the 'silent majority' rather than the often narrow set of development interests that may or may not approximate the public interest". Such methods may also mitigate against the frequent input of the same people in consultation activities and in answering calls for public comment.

As noted in chapter four, the sea change phenomenon can have significant impacts on governments and infrastructure. A common problem amongst the four case islands, and

one that is congruent with Gurran et al.'s (2007) findings concerning mainland coasts, is demand for additional infrastructure and services (particularly health, transport and retail) from former urban residents, and the difficulties for local governments to meet these demands (particularly when coupled with the additional pressure of visitor influxes). Gurran et al. (2007) discuss inadequate planning and management responses to sea change issues, noting that many local authorities have difficulty translating state coastal policy for local implementation and integrating this with other NRM, conservation and land use planning processes. Island agencies may more easily facilitate such integration as the regional area in effect is only the island. Geographically, islands have no overlapping land jurisdictions beyond the island, although amalgamation with mainland governments does create an unnatural overlapping jurisdiction. Gurran and Blakely (2007: 128) argue that sea change represents a strong and enduring trend in Australia, even as capital cities continue to grow and "It demands specific policy responses from all levels of governments and these responses must be targeted to the particular, and divergent, needs of coastal environments and communities, or else the places we seek to escape to will transform into the very places we sought to leave". This comment highlights the need to also manage islands differently from mainland coasts, as islands and islanders have particular needs. Although Kingborough and Bass Coast councils are members of the National Sea Change Taskforce, Bruny and Phillip islands encompass only parts of their respective jurisdictions. Hence, island issues are not necessarily prevalent, nor are islands considered special sea change cases. Strength in numbers may be needed – for example a specific islands sub-group of the Sea Change Taskforce; or a broader offshore islands committee or lobby group to deal with a range of island-specific issues.

Considering the commonalities of challenges that stem from islandness, there is likely to be value in sharing sustainability strategies between offshore islands. Island networks are an important way of fostering links between islands (or acting as a representative body for several islands); these may be local such as the Irish Islands Federation (www.oileain.ie), regional such as the European Small Islands Network (www.europeansmallislands.net), or global, such as the Global Islands Network (www.globalislands.net). It could be beneficial to establish an Australian islands association or network, considering similar constraints surrounding transport, additional

living costs and access to services, and common sustainability and development issues. Such a network or lobby group is also important in light of the typically marginal position of offshore islands in relation to continental (particularly metropolitan) governments. Such a network could be internet-based - technology can overcome the significant distances between Australian offshore islands and represent an example of harnessing the openness of island boundaries in order to maintain islandness. Offshore islands also have similar opportunities that can be realised by employing islandness as a positive force (i.e. rather than focusing on what they do not have compared to mainlands, focus on what they *do* have).

As noted in chapter three, islands are subject to the impact of a common range of challenges associated with their island status (Royle, 2001), and so many of the sustainability challenges identified here are likely to apply to other offshore islands around the world. By identifying the economic, environmental and social values of islands, it should be easier to identify the specific challenges and opportunities for sustainability and ultimately, for sustaining islandness.

Island sustainability

Islandness is characterised by the tension within and without the boundary. For offshore islands, such tensions are manifest in economic, environmental, social and political conditions. Economic tensions include desire for cost parity with mainlanders and infrastructure equivalent to mainland standards. Tension arises because achieving such parity with mainlands may diminish island values. For the case islands, environmental issues centre largely on high natural values and contrast with urban environments, which makes them an attractive destination for tourists and new residents. However, subsequent tourism and residential developments then impact upon these values. Similarly, social conditions revolve around the appealing ethos or character of offshore islands to tourists and new residents, in part because of their contrast to the social environments of cities, but again, subsequent developments and gentrification can damage this island character. Finally, political issues concern the tension between self-determination (the autonomy of island local governance) and the benefits of economy of scale and expertise that come with mainland governments. In order to preserve local

values, islanders are to a large extent dependent upon non-local governance mechanisms. Island values are also important in regional, national and international contexts. As such, there is tension between self-determination and legitimate issues of wider representation related to conservation management of environmental values.

Decline of island qualities renders island places more similar to continents. Islandness can be diminished by increasing accessibility (a form of greater boundary openness), such as bridges or faster ferries, or by developments that do not pay due heed to principles of sustainability or specificities of island context. However, boundaries that are too closed can also be problematic: many offshore islands need to be open to tourism to sustain economic viability. A key issue then is how to balance further development (and possible homogenisation with mainlands) with maintaining distinct island qualities. Strategies suggested in this chapter include striving for economies of place (capitalising on a geographical uniqueness that adds value to goods); preserving unique island features such as sense of place, character, and environmental values; and ensuring that relevant governments (if mainland-based) provide for some form of island representation. State and local government policy and planning strategies may also need to consider distinct island characteristics. Consistency between spatial and administrative boundaries is important from environmental and social perspectives (islands can foster sense of community and social capital), but such governance arrangements are often constrained economically.

Islandness is an important resource for island and other peoples as they grapple with the challenges of sustainable development. Island communities have capacity to advance sustainability by harnessing the social values of place. Islands are distinct social places and if people connect to a sense of place then they are more likely to care about sustaining the physical and social elements of place. Islands can have distinct advantages in employing social capital, which entails the resourcefulness of a people to respond collectively to challenges, and can improve community capacity to manage change. Hence, by employing some of the social products of islandness (namely a strong sense of community, place attachment and social capital), local communities can develop capacity to address sustainability challenges.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

the journey had the right shape ... it had a beginning and an end; and what better way was there to see an island than circumambulating its coast?
(Theroux, 1983: 5).

This research has examined tourism and residential developments as contemporary agents of change on four Australian offshore islands. In particular, I have explored development impacts through a sustainable development framework that encompasses economic, environmental and social values, and governance by formal institutions and communities. In relation to the hypotheses that this research is based on, I have explored the concept of islandness, its relations to the openness/closure characteristics of the island boundary, and its expression in the geographical, environmental, economic, political, and social conditions of islands. Considering the integrated nature of islands, islandness can be linked to sustainability and so is an important resource for island and other peoples as they attempt to grapple with the challenges of (sustainable) development. Through the empirical work in chapters five to eight, I have shown how residential and tourist developments (especially where these do not pay due heed either to the principles of sustainability or the specificities of island context) may diminish various components of islandness. Governments and local communities have important roles to play in preventing developments adversely impacting on the natural and social values that are constitutive of islandness.

When I first began my foray into the realm of island studies, I had a limited understanding of islands, informed largely by their use as research vehicles (particularly for biogeographical studies) and their widespread appeal to tourists. Because of their small(er) size and apparent bounded containment, I considered that islands were a subject matter that I could grasp; neatly reducible to a PhD study, as illustrated by my initial selection of ten case islands in Australia and New Zealand. As my research proceeded, I began to realise the complexities of island life and reduced the number of

case studies, initially to six islands in Australia, and then to the final four. I was initially interested largely in the environmental management of offshore islands and the impacts of tourism, but along the way my focus shifted somewhat to the social impacts of developments and the social advantages that island can offer.

These island places, and their people, have opened my mind to an entire 'World of Islands' as Baldacchino (2007a) has aptly named his island studies reader, and I am eager to explore many more islands. I am undoubtedly an islophile. Despite their variety (which, in part, makes them so interesting), some things can be generalised across offshore islands in different spaces and of different sizes, from tropical to cold water to temperate islands, isles and islets. As discussed in chapter two, the value of comparative case studies in part relates to what can be applied to other cases (bearing in mind certain limitations, which I will discuss below). Such generalisations are not based solely on the case studies but are also apparent from wider island literature. The appeal of an island for people residing on continents often begins before even stepping foot on an island. It may start in childhood with adventure narratives set on islands. Islands contrast with the seemingly endless expanse of continents and present the opportunity to mentally draw a line around their concurrent physical boundary (or a little seawards if one is a water-loving tourist or has an interest in marine life). Islands occupy the minds of many city dwellers, whether in memory, image, narrative, or perhaps in sight: "Islands in particular are attributed with 'mythical' drawing powers and generate positive images for tourists" (Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998: 323). As discussed in chapters three and four, island appeal lies in not only their physical separation from mainland places (in my research context, cities in particular), but also in their psychological separation from the routine of everyday life.

Island appeal tends to heighten once the journey in the mind converts to the real journey to an island. Mainland ferry terminals represent gateways to island getaways. Journeys across water symbolise a cleansing of the mind, a transitional time between the old and the renewed. For most people, ferries represent a different type of journey to the everyday train, bus or car, and a journey that differs to aeroplanes which also link landlocked destinations. For some tourists, travel to the destination is instrumental in the creation of perceptions of peripherality (Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998). As discussed in

chapter four, several researchers emphasise the importance of travel to an island as part of its appeal and that the transport mode can in itself constitute part of the attraction (Baum, 1997; Blomgren & Sorensen, 1998), but there is little empirical research to support these statements. Further research is necessary to ascertain whether ferry travel for tourists is an important component of the process of physical removal from everyday life. According to Gillis (2004: 153),

a sense of remoteness is the product of a certain mode of movement ... starting, stopping, and waiting are all part of the construction of remoteness. Getting there must be something of an adventure, a test, amounting often to a trial that transports the traveler mentally as well as physically to a different world ... The feeling of remoteness is enhanced when the journey is compounded of several different modes of transportation.

With bridged offshore islands, the journey may be perceived as too fast; not signifying adequate separation. Bridges represent a dependent relationship with mainlands; umbilical cords. The unfortunate consequence of bridges is that they bring mainlands too close to islands, and allow continental masses to immediately dominate the island. There is scope for further research into the environmental, economic, and political consequences of bridging, but particularly the social impacts including on islander identity, place attachment and sense of community.

Norberg-Schulz (1980) describes islands as distinctive natural places; they are also distinctive social places. Upon reaching an island, what are some of their common attractions – what are their natural and social values? For tourists the defined space can allow the perception of being in control of a place. The typical diversity of island landscapes is a significant element of island charm; this variety of landforms, combined with interspersed small towns may present as microcosms of continents. Offshore islands are usually subject to strong continental influences and do not typically have Galapagos-type species variation from continents, but they are protected from over-development to some extent. As a result, many offshore islands are valued for their natural environments and for harbouring some species that have not fared well on mainlands.

Tourists, temporary and seasonal residents, and islanders can connect with the sense of place provided by islands. For residents, islands can offer a sense of community that may be lacking in city suburbs. Illustrating the ambiguity of islandness, alternatively residents may wish to be at one remove from continental life because they are reclusive. For island-born residents the entire island is home, and may remain ‘home’ even when living on continents. For sea change residents, lifestyle decisions may play a role in relocation to islands. It is perhaps a desire to maintain a distinct ‘way of life’ that compels some residents to object to new developments that are out of character with ‘their’ island. Islandness can foster social capital, which can in turn be employed to maintain islandness.

Islands provide limited spatial options, yet open space (whether land or water) is usually visible as opposed to the diminished sightlines presented by built environments. How might islanders cope with living in contained spaces? According to Péron (2004: 330), in present times “traditional island folk still use all manner of detours and short-cuts, round about ways of getting to and from places, and secret routes to protect their privacy and avoid feeling imprisoned in a confined space”. McMahon (2001: 72) cites Colless’ (1994) analysis of mazes, noting that “mazes are only ever a series of thresholds, and as such, deny the very concept of boundaries, of inside and outside”. Perhaps islanders subconsciously create mazes or secret routes in order to deny the boundary of the island and to thereby create a psychologically larger space. In terms of the social contacts, islanders typically need to depend on each other to a greater extent than people in mainland communities; to that end, they have to set aside differences and get on with each other. Lehari (2003: 100) has linked contained spaces with creativity and innovation: “In order to compensate for the limited physical movement, mental ‘travelling’ by way of memory and imagination becomes more active. Isolation provides the predisposition for intellectual, including creative, activities”. Many islands harbour innovative¹⁸⁸ and creative professionals (for example, Bruny Island), but is this *because* of isolation or are some creative people *drawn* to isolated places? It would be interesting to examine this question in further research, alongside the reasons why people choose to

¹⁸⁸For example, Tasmanian-based Sam Warren Carey is regarded as an innovator in the field of Earth surface behaviour and he acknowledges a link between living in Tasmania and his innovative skills in describing Australia’s island state as “remote from the conceptual pollution of orthodox establishment” (Carey, 1976: 23, cited by Nunn, 2004: 319).

move to small islands (and why they decide to leave). Is it purely due to lifestyle reasons? Do they want to be 'big fish in a small sea'? Do they seek a stronger sense of community? Are they recluses?

Offshore islands are typically subordinate in their relationship with mainlands, and in relation to cities in particular. The case islands are not greatly isolated from their respective cores but they are peripheral to them and subject to their influences. These include political influences and the influences of people from the core in terms of their position as tourists and new residents, and associated developments. Such exposure to metropolises may heighten tensions between island life and desire for parity with mainlanders (particularly in terms of infrastructure, services and costs), and residents may employ islandness to assert a distinct identity and to justify specific economic, social and political demands.

Phillip Islanders are highly integrated into mainland life. The Island's increased accessibility over several decades (not only through its bridge but also through improvements to the highway to Melbourne) and suburban-style residential and infrastructure developments are decreasing its island distinctiveness. Modern developments can also diminish islandness if they impinge on traditional island character. Island 'character' represents an intangible distinction to mainlands. In the case of Rottnest Island, this island character is commonly referred to as the Rottnest ethos. Bruny Island, although well-known to Hobartians, is now being discovered by the wider world. Hence, its islandness is becoming exposed to greater outside influences. Due in part to technological advances (such as faster and cheaper air travel and the internet) Bruny Island can no longer hide unnoticed as an island offshore from another island at the 'bottom of the world'. Bruny Island's decision-makers can and should look at the experiences of other more developed islands when considering future development options. Herein lies the value in having ready access to experiences and strategies from other islands around the world (such as the Global Islands Network) and of developing island networks.

Many of the similarities between the case islands are a function of islandness (as many of the dissimilarities with Phillip Island are a function of its physical connection to the

mainland). There are opportunities, despite their proximity to continents, for offshore islanders to resist integration with mainlands, and these lie in maintaining or enhancing distinct island qualities or islandness. As with people, it is important that islands maintain their individual identity, yet maintain connections with the wider world. “The implications of [small islands’] struggles for some sort of self-determination are basic lessons in the relation between self and society” (Rimoldi, 2006: 117). Islands are important to humans and other species, and it our duty to maintain these special places for future generations (the sustainability principle). The key to maintaining islandness lies in finding an appropriate balance between closure and openness; similar to how social capital relies on a balance between bonding and bridging ties.

Governance for sustainability depends upon formal institutions and local communities. As noted in chapter nine, economic and social sustainability are more challenging than environmental sustainability on the case islands at present (although in the future, issues such as climate change are likely to pose a significant threat to many islands). Political issues are also difficult, whether an island has its own local government, is amalgamated with a mainland local government, or has its own statutory authority with the benefits of integrated management – they are still challenged by the water barrier and its economic and social consequences. It is not only governments that can influence islandness. Island communities can employ islandness as a resource for local sustainability. Such communities include not only islanders, but also seasonal residents and regular visitors. For example, the mainland-based Rottneest Society aims to preserve Rottneest’s special character and has had some success in their objections to large developments. While internal bonds are a vital component of social capital, so are bridging ties with people of continental places. Again, it is a matter finding the balance, of maintaining an island boundary (and island identity) but one that is open to ideas from continents, to new migrants, to tourists (but preferably not mass tourism). This two-way boundary allows islands to export sustainability successes to the world of islands and to the world of continents, which after all, are one in the earth island (Gillis, 2004). Gillis (2004: 167-8) concludes that

no island is any longer really an island. It is equally true that continents have lost their distinctiveness ... the earth itself is one great island in a sea of

space ... the recovery of the ancient notion of earth island puts us in touch with the positive aspects of our shared insularity. We need to remind ourselves that before the nineteenth century insularity was understood as liberating and energizing, creating a vital sense of common purpose and direction ... were it [the island metaphor] to be focused on our precious earth island, and not just on particular islands, it could make an enormous difference in the struggle to save the planet.

I consider that insularity, or islandness, can again be energising as a source of common purpose and direction and that it should be employed by islanders as a resource for sustainable development. However, the importance of the particular, of individual islands, should not be neglected in favour of the 'bigger picture'. Many offshore islands are of a human scale and provide a sense of identity and community within the larger world.

Islands face many economic, environmental and social constraints and governing bodies could more effectively manage islands for sustainable outcomes. Management recommendations for islands need to be articulated in light of their existing level of islandness, and islanders' desired future level of islandness, which can be one goal of community visioning. Maintaining islandness is akin to sustainability for islands, and so islands have an important opportunity to demonstrate local sustainability. Rather than managing tourism in a silo, it should be considered part of a wider island sustainability plan, focusing on all economic sectors, and considering the social and environmental values of place. Islands are highly integrated systems, as all their components tend to be closely interrelated due to reduced scale, "thus making impossible a piece meal or atomistic approach to their problems" (Villamil, 1977: 2). Environmental impacts of tourism on islands are similar to those in continental places, although it is important that managers pay particular attention to coastal management, as these are inherently vulnerable zones; islands naturally have a greater coast-area ratio; and tourists are commonly attracted to the land-sea interface.

I have examined residential development largely in the context of sea change, as this is the source of much recent residential migration to the case islands (even some resident staff of Rottneest Island are characterised as sea changers). Of my case islands, only Phillip Island can be included in Gurran and Blakely's (2007) coastal sea change

typology, as it is possible to drive to the Island and requires no alternative mode of transport. Considering that Gurran and Blakely provide input to the National Sea Change Taskforce, there is concern that islands are excluded from special consideration in this Taskforce, despite their obvious coastal primacy. Considering the environmental and social pressures associated with lifestyle migration, it is important to include a sixth coastal typology, islands, and to identify their special policy and management needs and advocate place-based planning approaches.

Whittaker (1998: 254) emphasises the importance of insular resource planning and management in providing solutions tailored to local circumstances and carrying with them the support of island communities. Péron (2004: 328) advocates the need for island planning to maintain the distinctiveness of islands in the modern world (an era characterised by flows of information and people across boundaries):

Faced with the evidence of an increasing rootlessness and mobility of people as a whole and the widespread availability of information and culture, one is obliged to ask what should and can be done to ensure that, both as physical spaces and as communities, islands can continue to exist in the heart of the modern world in all their difference and their uniqueness. In other words, is there scope today for *island planning*?

I consider that offshore island planning is vital, but it largely depends on mainland jurisdictions. Rather than embracing large-scale developments for short-term gain, in order to maintain islandness it is important to encourage island-scale tourism and residential developments that are compatible not only with the natural environment, but also with the social character of an island. Hence the importance of economies of place, and of place-sensitive developments.

Limitations of findings

Case studies are often said to suffer from the issue of generalisability. Herccock (2003) recommends further comparative research on Australian islands¹⁸⁹ to aid generalisation and the understanding of the commonalities between different islands. This research has revealed some commonalities across the economies, environments and societies of the case islands. However, it focuses on only a snapshot in time; was undertaken with limited time and resources; is based on the views and knowledge of a limited range of stakeholders; and is mediated by my own world-view. On the issue of stakeholders, there are limitations arising from my choice of informants. In regard to islander participants, one issue is the extent to which I have captured newcomer and non-local interests. My methodology was based on selection of people from key stakeholder groups and it is generally the longer-term islanders who occupy leading positions within community groups (although there were a few exceptions in my research).

From a conservation management perspective, Whittaker (1998: 251) warns that it is not wise to make generalisations about islands because they are so variable across their climatic, geographic, economic, social, political, and cultural conditions. However, Royle (1989: 106) recognises the validity of generalisations in regard to political and economic conditions:

It may seem inappropriate to try and generalise about such variety, yet there is a commonality with regard to certain aspects of the political and economic geography of the world's islands: no island has had unbroken political independence; and islands everywhere, more so than continental areas, have to provide for their populations from restricted ranges of resources and economic opportunities.

The offshore islands in this study showed some commonalities in their social conditions, and other offshore islands are also likely to induce place attachment and foster social capital.

¹⁸⁹ As noted in chapter one, there is little qualitative research on Australian offshore islands – perhaps they appear too similar to their mainlands and not as appealing as more exotic islands for Australian researchers; and too distant for international researchers.

In their study on natural resource management by rural local governments in Australia, Pini et al. (2007) defend the case study approach, noting that the rationale for their methodology was not quantification but rather description and critique, and that case studies provide rich insights and empirical emphasis to the particular problems experienced by local governments. While I am not attempting to generalise my findings to offshore islands across the world, some of the empirical insights from my case studies may apply to other islands, primarily because of their island qualities or islandness.

In relation to political studies of islands, Watts (2000) cautions against assuming that there is a single universal best model for all islands but points out the benefit of comparative studies, which can “draw attention to the variety of possible options worth considering in a given situation”. Sharing management options between offshore islands can give island managers and other stakeholders the necessary information so that they can choose a suitable alternative to apply to their particular situation.

Significance of research

The significance of this research relates to its theoretical critique and empirical contribution to the growing field of island studies, particularly in terms of addressing the lack of comparative case studies and research on offshore islands. In relation to existing island literature, I augment theoretical understandings of the concept of islandness, and link this concept to that of sustainable development. As noted in the introduction, McCall (1994) proposed that the concept of nissology should include inquiry into islandness. Islandness is a contested concept and one that is variously defined in nissological literature. At its broadest level, islandness relates to the distinctive characteristics of islands as compared to those of continents. Islandness is dependent on the openness/closure characteristics of the island boundary and is expressed in the geographical, environmental, economic, political, and social conditions of individual islands. Considering the integrated nature of islands, islandness can be linked to sustainability; maintaining islandness can, to a large extent, equate to sustainable development. For example, in relation to tourism, Gössling and Wall (2007: 436)

describe sustainable tourism as “a situation where the uniqueness of destinations in terms of their environments, economies and socio-cultural structures is considered in development processes, not disrupting these in any detrimental senses”. Such unique qualities of island destinations are the essence of islandness; hence sustainable tourism can contribute to the maintenance of islandness. This research also acknowledges the importance of place attachment in nissological research (see Hay, 2006). To understand the social importance of islands it is important to engage islanders in qualitative research, and the interview method can provide valuable insights. I have highlighted the natural and social values of four offshore islands and the importance of maintaining their distinct island qualities (and suggested some strategies for doing so).

This is an original study of four case islands in different Australian states. I have demonstrated that these islands have similarities across economic, political, environmental and social spheres. In comparison to island nations, academics and institutions have directed limited attention to the study of offshore islands on their own terms. Offshore islands are not merely microcosms or appendages of continents; they have specific issues (resulting from their islandness) that need to be considered in order to advance sustainability. There is much scope for similar qualitative studies, particular of offshore islands near metropolises – places that are likely to be under greater development pressures than islands more remote from metropolitan influences. Just as islands have been overlooked in relation to continents, so offshore islands are neglected in the realm of island studies; overlooked for island states, which is ironically also a function of power and size. Perhaps offshore islands are just not ‘pure’ enough for nissologists; not far enough removed from mainlands. There is much scope for further (empirical) research on offshore islands, and exploration of subtle cultural and social differences from their mainlands.

Pini and Haslam McKenzie (2007) discuss the transformative potential of research participation, noting that their research seemed to facilitate greater engagement in sustainability and reflection on the need for change. Similarly, comments from some of the stakeholders in my research indicate that interview participation triggered deeper thinking about islands and the possibilities of developing links with other islands. Considering that many of the challenges facing islands stem from islandness, it would be

useful to share management strategies between offshore islands. It is vital to ensure the input of islanders, tourists and island decision-makers in more research, not least because islands are real entities, and nissology is not just about theoretical research; it is to do with “the stuff of *real* geographical entities” (Hay, 2006: 21). Hay (2006: 34) proposes place phenomenology as a theoretical framing for island studies, which can “demonstrate that the faith of many isolophiles in nissological possibility is not misplaced”. Place theory also provides a strong position for islanders to contribute to island studies, and it is not surprising that this theoretical framing was proposed by an islander rather than a continental dweller. However, this proposition does not exclude continental researchers: with islands it not vital that one has spent considerable time on one to form place attachment; rather, islands present the opportunity for love at first sight. Nevertheless, the experiences, knowledge and words of islanders are necessary in order to reinvigorate island studies.

Protection of islands offshore from urban areas will become increasingly important as they are likely to face greater pressures in the future: “Within the next twenty years, more than half the world’s population will live in cities, and by the end of the century, more than 85 per cent will be classed as urban. In the developed countries, the end of agricultural society is in sight whilst most of the demands on the countryside are now urban in origin” (Batty, 2001: 286). In addition, if urban sprawl continues in Australia, many more offshore islands will be drawn ‘closer’ to metropolitan regions; no longer protected by distance.

Studies of offshore islands can reveal insights into various disciplines beyond nissology, including tourism and environmental studies; indeed, offshore islands can be fertile grounds for such research (for example, their boundaries allow easier monitoring of people and animals). Applying island-based sustainability lessons to continents¹⁹⁰ would represent a reversal of the typical transformation of ideas and technologies (some of which can diminish islandness) from continents to islands. Warrington and Milne (2007: 416) consider that “individual islands offer numerous lessons of good governance that

¹⁹⁰ Hess (1990) notes that although small islands may not be considered continents in microcosm, island futures might be likened to global futures in microcosm: small islands may experience resource limitations before continents and so can provide lessons for larger areas.

may be transposed to other islands and mainland states in matters such as ... development strategy; community welfare; heritage protection; the management of diversity; mechanisms of social change and the transmission of social capital; the efficacy of policy and administrative instruments.” Islanders can have certain advantages over mainlanders in terms of advancing sustainable development. They can, to some extent, have control over what crosses their borders, to pick and choose what is suitable for the island. But much of this flexibility depends upon governments (including those from metropolises) and policies that recognise the distinct qualities of islands. Depraetere and Dahl (2007: 103, emphasis added) elucidate the importance of islands in our world, or rather, of the world of islands, and the balance of independence and integration:

While islands may be at the small end of those geographic entities on our planet of human significance, they do help us to understand our problems and challenges at many other scales. Islands do symbolize that *balance of isolated independence and integration into larger systems* that are essential characteristics of all physical existence, whether geographically or metaphorically. Our planet too is an island in space, and we may have yet to learn to live within its limits.

The distinct natural and social values of islands (which are functions of geographic separation) are difficult to replicate on mainlands. Many islanders accept (particularly economic) challenges with the understanding that they are a compromise necessary to benefit from the environmental and social values islands offer; values that are fast disappearing in the rest of the increasingly homogenised world. Although Villamil (1977: 4) refers to Caribbean islands, the following comment applies also to offshore islands, which have more subtle differences to their mainlands:

The survival of our islands goes beyond the mere preservation of our environment. What is at stake is really a culture, a way of life ... the survival of small island systems depends on the adoption of development paths which are responsive to their characteristics and aspirations. These must emphasize what is unique in our islands, rather than continue to utilize imported criteria and models for our development.

Many islands on the edge of continents, particularly those close to metropolitan regions, are on the ‘edge’ in terms of sustainability, susceptible to diminishing islandness as a result of tourism and residential developments. The physical edge, the island boundary,

is two-way: islands are characterised by isolation and connectedness; closure and openness. Historically, the development of greatest influence amongst the four case islands has been the bridge to Phillip Island but its residents retain residual islandness. Similarities in the appeal and challenges of island life (as distinct from those of mainland life) between the other three case islands are a function of islandness. However, each faces challenges in maintaining islandness, even Kangaroo Island, despite its larger size; and Bruny Island, despite its relative lack of development. Although unburdened by the problems that arise from having landowners, a range of industries, and fractured governance arrangements, Rottnest Island still experiences environmental, social, economic and political issues in common with the other case islands. Although generally ignored in the academic literature, offshore islands are subject to sea change and gentrification, as well as to the more commonly reported impacts of tourism development. However, island communities have the capacity to advance local sustainability through using their unique resource of islandness.

The intensity of the island experience depends on the certain knowledge that one must leave
(Gillis, 2004: 164).

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APPENDIX A – Interview schedule

- How long have you been associated with _____ Island and in what role(s)?
- What is the role of _____ (relevant organisation)?
- What changes have you seen on _____ Island and what changes do you anticipate in the next ten years?
- How is _____ Island marketed to visitors? Why do you think it is an appealing destination for visitors?
- What do you predict in terms of future visitor numbers to the island?
- Does the island experience any environmental impacts due to tourism or residents? If so, how are these impacts managed?
- Is there any conflict between community visions for _____ Island and tourism developments?
- In your opinion, what is the key issue facing _____ Island?
- In your opinion, are there any challenges or opportunities for sustainability on _____ Island? If so, what are they?
- Do islands need to be managed any differently from mainlands?
- Can any management lessons learnt on this island be applied to the mainland, or to other islands?
- Does _____ Island have any links with other islands in Australia or internationally? Would there be any benefit in developing such links?

APPENDIX B – Information sheet



SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Date

Address fields

Dear [name]

Information Sheet

Managing tourism and environmental values of Australian offshore islands: compatible or conflicting goals?

We would like to invite your participation in a research project being undertaken to fulfill the requirements for a PhD degree in the discipline of Environmental Studies. The research concerns various islands offshore from capital cities in Australia, including *[insert relevant island]*. Recognising the importance of such islands, the major aim of the research is to examine island management issues, focusing on tourism and environmental management. By using various islands as case studies, common management problems and solutions may emerge, and facilitate understanding of sustainability issues on islands.

The Chief Investigator and supervisor, Dr Elaine Stratford, is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania, and the PhD candidate and researcher, Ms Rebecca Jackson, will have direct involvement with research participants. An important part of the study will involve interviews with island tourism operators, representatives from community organisations, and government officers involved in island management. Through your role as/with [], you have been identified from publicly available information as a potential participant in the study.

Participation in the study would involve *[an interview/a telephone interview/a conversation by email]* of approximately 30 minutes duration, exploring some questions related to the key research themes of island management, tourism, environment, and sustainability. We will arrange the interview at a time *[and location]* convenient to you. We will seek your permission to audiotape the conversation, and detailed notes from the interview will be provided to you to review and edit if necessary. Attached is a consent form, to be signed at the time of conducting the interview *[or to be returned using the reply paid envelope if conducting a telephone or email interview]*.

It is important to note that the process of interviewing can involve discomfort for some participants, such as embarrassment or mild anxiety. It may also include the risk of social harm if information of commercial or legal consequences was disclosed. In order

to mitigate these potential risks, and to maintain the confidentiality of research data, the following steps will be taken:

- we will note and hold in confidence any commercial or legal sensitivities that you draw to our attention;
- as noted earlier, you will have the opportunity to edit the notes of your interview;
- following the interview, the tape will be stored in a locked cabinet in the University's School of Geography and Environmental Studies;
- the interview notes will be de-identified to protect any confidential information that may have emerged in the interview, and will also be securely stored in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, along with any electronic copies of the notes;
- in accordance with University requirements, data will be kept for a minimum period of five years; and
- data will be used in the production of a doctoral thesis for examination, as well as conference papers and publications, but information provided by you will either remain de-identified or your permission sought in advance of public release of documents, should the insights you provide be identifiable.

Please note that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you may nonetheless withdraw at any time without effect or explanation, and, if you wish, can withdraw any data you have supplied to date.

We hope that participation in the study will be of interest to you, in sharing your knowledge of [name] Island. At the conclusion of the research in 2007, we will provide a summary report of the overall findings from the study that you can access on the School's website (<http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/scieng/geog/pagedetails.asp?lpersonId=3292>), and hope that the work will be useful to you.

The project has received ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network (HREC). Inquiries about that project can be directed to the Chief Investigator, Elaine Stratford (03 6226 2462 or by email Elaine.Stratford@utas.edu.au), or to Rebecca Jackson (03 6226 2832, mobile 0423 107 677 or by email rjackson@utas.edu.au). If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about the manner in which the project is conducted, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC, Ms Amanda McAully on 03 6226 2763 or Amanda.McAully@utas.edu.au. She can then direct you to the relevant committee Chair who reviewed the research.

We would greatly appreciate your involvement in the study, and will shortly be in contact with you by telephone or email to determine your willingness to participate in an interview.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Elaine Stratford
Chief Investigator

Rebecca Jackson
Researcher

APPENDIX C – Consent form

Managing tourism and environmental values of Australian offshore islands: compatible or conflicting goals?

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1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
 2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
 3. I understand that the study involves the following procedures:
 - a 30 minute [*taped/telephone/email*] interview with Ms Rebecca Jackson to discuss management/tourism/environmental/sustainability issues on [*name*] Island; and
 - an opportunity to review the notes from that interview and edit if necessary.
 4. I understand that the following risks may be involved (and that the researcher will take steps to reduce these risks, as outlined in the information sheet):
 - personal discomfort, such as embarrassment or mild anxiety;
 - risk of social harm if information was disclosed; or
 - commercial or legal consequences.
 5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored in locked cabinets on the University of Tasmania premises for a minimum period of 5 years, or until no longer required.
 6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
 7. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published (provided that I cannot be identified as a participant without my prior written permission).
 8. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.
 9. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and if I so wish may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.

Name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Statement by investigator:

10. I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____