

Cultural Heritage and Regional Tourism in the Victorian Goldfields

Vicki Peel
Tourism Research Unit
National Centre for
Australian Studies
Monash University

Warwick Frost
Tourism Research Unit
Department of Management
Monash University

Vicki.Peel@arts.monash.edu.au

Warwick.Frost@buseco.monash.edu.au

Abstract

For rural and regional communities heritage tourism is increasingly promoted as an answer to economic and social problems. However, such a view takes little account of the long-term sustainability of heritage sites as tourist attractions. What the community values and wishes to preserve may not be of sufficient interest to potential tourists. Furthermore systemic problems may limit visitor numbers, yield and viability.

This paper reports on a project undertaken by the Sustainable Tourism Centre for Co-operative Research. Focussing on the Victorian Goldfields towns of Castlemaine and Maldon, this project seeks to identify the critical success factors for cultural heritage attractions. Three attractions are considered: a national park containing mining sites, an historic house and gardens and a restored steam railway. Related research examines the relationship between heritage and commercial activities such as shopping and cafes. It suggests that there is a major cross-subsidisation effect, with tourists attracted by heritage (which was often operated by community groups or government), but spending their money in private businesses.