On The Western Line: The Impact of Central Queensland’s Heritage Industry on Regional Identity

By

Elizabeth Lesley Hatfield Huf

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the ways in which regional communities appropriate their historic icons of the past, integrating these ‘markers of identity’ into the wider socio-economic context. It notes how nostalgia and the collective memory, together with a strong sense of place are reflected in celebrations which honour national and local historic characters and events, and observes the ways in which isolated rural towns reconcile their new tourist image with their pioneering past. It will be argued that the concepts of nation and national identity are increasingly being challenged by the need for a social and cultural identity which belongs to the local community. A range of diverse cultures and heritage sites has been studied in order to analyse the dilemmas facing local, outback, and Indigenous communities in reconstructing a regional identity today.

The Heritage Trail can be seen as a symbolic rite of passage, and this thesis is indeed a personal journey divided into two major components. First, it takes the form of documentary, a visual component consisting of three video films which capture the heritage tourism product along the Tropic of Capricorn. On the Western Line documents the author’s journey on ‘The Spirit of the Outback’ from the central coast to Winton and Kynuna, the home of Waltzing Matilda in far western Queensland. Two further historical productions The Legend of King O’Malley and The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills record local and national narratives, which both deliver a controversial picture of federation politics and pioneer settlement, colonial sport and frontier war, each focusing on a regional perspective within a wider national vision.

The second, written component reflects upon the role of the documentary maker in recording a social history of these diverse communities. It examines the auteur/director’s own perceptions of regional identity, and the oppositions and ambiguities of reality are juxtaposed with legend and myth. This essay explores the different layers of meaning inscribed within central images of cultural tourism such as: the Stockman’s Hall of Fame at Longreach; the Australian Worker’s Heritage Centre at Barcaldine; local museums at Mt. Morgan and Emu Park; the Dreamtime Cultural Centre; and the South Sea Islanders’ Sugar Trail. Following Bennett and Bourdieu’s work on museum visitors, the author’s preliminary survey of tourists seeking Capricornia’s increasingly popular heritage destinations is discussed. In conclusion, it can be argued that the rapid growth of Central Queensland’s cultural centres, local museums, and bicentennially funded outdoor art and ‘unusual’ monuments, has produced new sources of income in a community desperately seeking to survive. The cultural tourist has become a major producer of the heritage industry which impacts strongly on regional identity.
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DECLARATION

I certify that all of this thesis is an account of the research conducted by me, except where other sources are fully acknowledged by footnotes or referencing, and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any University.

Elizabeth Lesley Hatfield Huf

February 2006.
INTRODUCTION

The Heritage Industry in Central Queensland:

Desperately seeking Nostalgia - or Desperately seeking to Survive?
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Culturally, rural Australia provides an important identity and heritage that we are reluctant to forego. Rural Australia is as varied as the many different people, environments, cultures and economies across the nation. But what do we mean by ‘rural’ and how do we know ‘when we are standing in it?’

(Lockie and Bourke, *Rurality Bites* 2004)

Heritage tourism is today becoming a significant industry in the Central Queensland region, previously not seen as a prominent tourist destination - and certainly still seen by some historians and cultural analysts as ‘frontier country’. Although the majority of Australians live in cities and maintain an urban civilised lifestyle, it is the rural landscape with its remoteness and historic sense of place which still dominates the Australian imagination. This is despite the fact that, as social scientist Geoff Lawrence (1996) writes, the emerging pattern of rural Australia has been one of disadvantage - of lack of access to services and lifestyle choices - while at the same time city amenities have lifted. Because of global restructuring, there has been a movement from small to large scale production as farmers attempt to come to terms with fluctuating market prices and reductions in government subsidies. The effect of this change has been a decline in population, lower incomes within the remaining population, lower
standards of living, and according to Lawrence (1995) a drop in social participation and social integration.

The tourist gaze, John Urry (1995) claims, is directed to features of the rural landscape and rural townscape which separate them off from routine experiences. These places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation of a ‘unique experience’; and heritage tourism is based on unique experience, on ‘difference’, with the so-called culture industries - arts, tourism and leisure - ‘becoming crucial to the economic and cultural transformation of the rural as a market identity’ (1995:1-2). John Urry’s discerning study on the culture of tourism Consuming Places (1995), maintains that the countryside today is a commodified product encompassing authentic reality and the rural myth - in reality three countrysides - impacting on each other and competing for dominance. He notes that the rural or countryside is no longer simply centred on farming and agriculture but has a far more complex and shifting population (1995:1-2). Urry goes on to caution that places are literally being consumed by tourists, claiming that what people take to be significant about a place, its industry, history, buildings, literature and environment, ‘can be over time depleted, devoured or exhausted by use’ (1995:2). Certainly this is an issue which the heritage industry must seriously confront in the future.
The cultural transformation of place has been described as an ‘economy of signs’ by many writers, and has led to studies on the tourism and leisure industries which have become crucial to the economic and cultural transformation of different places. Jennifer Craik (1994) explores this ‘economy of signs’ further as she argues that in a postcolonial society, tourism focuses on exoticism, voyeurism, spectacle and commodification where the site, people and culture of the tourist destination are packaged and experienced as the Other, as different from home. Heritage tourism, she claims, can be likened to a living ethnographic museum organised around the visibility of colonial appropriation and territorial expansion with difference and otherness as a feature of all tourism regardless of site or history. This relative experience, I believe, gives tourists the opportunity to discover the people and their lifestyle, the initial character of the landscape, and a real sense of place and heritage, within this frontier land.

Frontiers too have been reframed, claims Richard Nile (1996), as cultural spaces, zones of interpretation in which specific cultural identities are made. Russell Ward (1958) has conceptualised Australia as the last frontier, the last large area to come under the influence of Europeans, while Donald Horne has constructed Australia’s frontier country as ‘a tourist frontier on the edge of the great industrialised zones of the world’ (Horne cited in Nile 1996:1). Henry Reynolds (1982) has argued that
frontiers are zones separating two or more societies engaged in conflict over resource management, ownership and political hegemony - 'notably settler societies involving offensive colonisers and resistant Indigenous peoples' (87). Perhaps this last definition fits Central Queensland's frontier best as historically the identity of European pioneer and Indigenous Australian in this region has always been understood against a stormy background of conflicting land rights, together with the growth of labour unions, the rapid expansion of grazing leases and regional wealth from wool, cattle and later gold, which finally led to the birth of the Great Northern Railway in 1865. This railroad has now become the Central Western Line, home to *The Spirit of the Outback* on which the author of this thesis journeyed to explore Capricornia's farthest tourist destinations.

Tourism can be seen as a symbolic rite of passage, as a pilgrimage, and this thesis is indeed a personal journey which takes the form of both visual component and written analysis. The visual component consists of a major video documentary capturing the heritage tourism product *On The Western Line*, together with two historical films exploring the lives of two controversial and political figures in *The Legend of King O'Malley* and *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills*. Each documentary seeks to present a strong relationship between national heritage and regional identity, between a broader colonial landscape and local sense of place. The second thesis component contains a written critique of the role of the
documentary maker in recording the collective memory and social history of these central images of the heritage tourism industry. This is followed by an analysis of the cultural centres, local museums and significant sites which have become an important political tool for rural, ethnic and Indigenous Australians, as tourism becomes a major producer of the heritage industry - 'a value added industry which converts locations into destinations and makes them economically viable as exhibitions of themselves' (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998:150).

The development of these regional ethnographic and interactive cultural centres which have become national icons, the upgrading of local museums and the emergence of a rash of bicentennially funded 'unusual monuments' (Bulbeck 1989) have produced new sources of income for rural communities desperately seeking to survive in a difficult economy. Traditional farming industries have seen a downturn in profitability during the last two decades, due to continuing droughts and floods and where a globalisation restructuring process has impacted significantly on population and lifestyle. However, detailed surveys by the bureau of Tourism Research and the Australian Tourist Commission show that Central Queensland is now favoured as a popular tourist destination by both domestic and international travellers (Lennon: 1995). Heritage tourism has become a major issue for these community museums and postmodern cultural centres, as they offer the visitor an authentic, informed quality
experience, a diversity of built heritage and natural environment, as well as the opportunity to mix and meet local people and learn about their lifestyle and culture (1995). Heritage tourism invites the regional and national visitor to attend cultural events and venues, to become individually involved, and to seek education as well as pleasure from this participation. These destinations, whether museum, mine or sacred bora ring, are according to social historian Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, becoming ‘nodes in a network of attractions that form the recreational geography of a region’ (1998:132) and an integral part of our natural, historical and cultural sites as the past informs the present, as the very trials and tribulations of travel to our remote places are becoming attractions in their own right.

As the author travelled west to make a documentary on the impact of tourism on regional identity, a major issue to be considered was how far the production of heritage centre, monument and museum has begun to remake the region culturally, socially and economically. It is important to articulate the difference between local and national constructions of place and identity and to study the controversies found when family history and memories of a significant past are explored. How do isolated rural towns reconcile their new tourist image with their pioneering past? Can it be shown that women’s stories were excluded from the masculine mythology of the bush? We are only now beginning to see Torres Strait, Aboriginal
and South Sea Islander people presenting their own reconciliation festivals and special events as heritage tourism empowers marginalised communities on the Capricorn Coast. These cultural issues and these frontier spaces, will be interpreted from a variety of viewpoints in the following chapters, as the author’s camera captures a broad cross section of Central Queensland’s heritage, mythology and cultural celebrations from ‘The Reef to the Outback’, as this region has been called by Queensland’s Travel and Tourism Corporation.

In my research I have looked at the way in which regional communities appropriate their heritage and construct their myths and legends, museums and monuments, as markers of regional identity, to be integrated effectively into the wider socio-economic context. The journey *On The Western Line* revisits the region along the Tropic of Capricorn which stretches from Emu Park on the Central Coast to Winton in the far western outback, and works as a coherent voice on regional tourism by documenting the local vernacular, by capturing the difference between regional and national identity. Small district museums, with their rich history of local memorabilia, are contrasted with national treasures and metaphors of power like Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre or Longreach’s Stockman’s Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre. The significance of the Australian landscape to a particular sense of place and space is examined and a study made of the many unusual monuments and
outdoor art objects which communities have built to satisfy a need for their own geographic identity. The challenges facing today’s multicultural and Indigenous heritage industry within this region are addressed while the importance of recording the various categories of remembering, the oral history and story telling of all communities is emphasised. As Ian Jupp reminds us, it is the right of all Australians ‘to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and their religion’ (Jupp 2001:264).

National Identity, Regionalism and the Local Voice.

It will be argued that the concept of nation and national identity is increasingly being challenged by the need for a social and cultural identity which belongs to the local community. The construction or branding of local places becomes most important in a range of cultural and economic contexts, as local communities actively differentiate themselves from the national in order to compete successfully with other communities and places for a share of this tourism commodity - which has endowed our history with its present sense of economic capital, according to Morris (cited in Mayes 2004). Morris maintains that nation as a primary frame of collective identity is today ‘eroded by a contemporary strengthening of smaller scale allegiances and local identities’ (2004:15). Tourism today is arguably seen as a significant element of the global, but in terms of the
cultural and economic reshaping of the local (2004). However, some academics suggest that in socio-economic and cultural discourses, the local is ‘being subsumed within a new global culture’ and local identities (as historically and culturally constructed) are giving way to a more ‘globalised citizenry’ (Trotter 2001:334). Robin Trotter argues that a relationship with regionalism offers a counterbalance to globalisation.

Tourist regions, often drawn up by state departments, to be defined in physiographic, biogeographic and economic terms, are nevertheless concepts of empowerment (335). Kate Ravenswood maintains that regionalism is a series of positions and strategies with no two regional areas alike:

There are economic differences, policy differences and locally inscribed political differences. They may have differing internal structures and they probably have to cater to different audiences.


Writing on the diversity of regional cultures, Trotter notes that heritage is a significant marker of local, national and regional identity with heritage tourism’s main belief stating, ‘that each heritage place has its own significance, value and requirements for conservation’ (340). Certainly in Central Queensland, as my thesis will emphasise, heritage tourism has become a major force in the ongoing transformation of the relationship frameworks within which regional identities are shaped. The sense of a
distinct community identity is therefore produced and circulated in and through the local discourse of ‘heritage’.

We can conclude, according to Mayes (2004), that as central ways of producing and consuming collective identities, both heritage and tourism practices and discourses are increasingly deployed by local communities in the process of configuring viable local community icons. Heritage sites therefore, not only foreground these local icons (such as sporting hero Tommy Wills, federation politician King O’Malley or Waltzing Matilda’s Banjo Paterson), but they also ground them in valorised locations and events. This localised identity is highlighted on camera in such significant celebrations as the miners’ annual ‘Running the Cutter’ at Mt Morgan; in the Capricorn Coast Players’ presentation of Boddy and Ellis’ musical comedy *The Legend of King O’Malley* which commemorated Federation in 2001; in ATSIC’s 1998 Reconciliation celebrations at Rockhampton, and Longreach and Winton’s 1998 Easter Festival of the Outback. As ATC chairman John Morse reiterated on behalf of the Australia Council, the local community is vitally involved in heritage tourism. He noted:

The way to the heart of a tourist is through the locals, tourists want to experience the real thing and by appearing to be only for the locals, you can increase your general appeal.

(Morse, Australia Council, 1998, cited in Craik 2001)
Heritage and Nostalgia: An Intimate Connection.

So how do we define heritage and the present nostalgia to revisit our past? In its original sense, claims Graeme Davison (1991), heritage was the property which parents handed on to their children. Only in recent times and especially since the 1970s, has heritage acquired its present specialised usage as 'the name we give to those valuable features of our environment which we seek to conserve from the ravages of development and decay' (Davison, McConville 1991:5). Davison suggests that in the present decade, heritage has come to refer to things both more tangible and more fragile than the imperishable ideals of our ancestors. In the 1970s, the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted the term heritage as a shorthand for both the built and natural remnants of the past. Tony Bennett argues that heritage is a product of the need of Australia’s new nationalism for the production of a more clearly and more completely autonomised national past (Davison, McConville 1991:5). Academics and historians agree that heritage endorses the region’s own materialism, and at the same time reinforces an underlying distaste for a culture of mass production and obsolescence:
The modern impulse towards preservation is partly a reaction to the increasing evanescence of things and of the speed with which we pass them by. In the face of massive change we cling to the remaining familiar vestiges. We compensate for what is gone with an interest in its history.

(Lowenthal 1985 cited in Davison, McConville 1991:176)

Robert Hewison (1987) maintains that heritage is something we must preserve or save rather than something to be created or built, a political concept which asserts a public or national interest in things traditionally regarded as private. Jane Lennon (1995) argues that our heritage is with us in a multitude of forms including our natural surroundings, and in the customs and creative endeavours of all Australians. It can be intangible - experienced rather than seen and touched - or tangible, ‘as seen in bark paintings and works of art, manuscripts, natural history specimens, historic sites and the built environment’ (1995: appendix J):

Our Cultural heritage offers rich encounters with reality, with the past, with what exists now and with what is possible. It acquaints us with the unfamiliar, coaxing us beyond the safety of what we already know.

John Wood, like Lennon and Hewison, sees the countryside as a rural mythical space, a place of mystery - a virtual or 'imagined community', as immortalised by Benedict Anderson (1983), peopled with bush myths and bush heroes, for the tourists desperately seeking their heritage through nostalgia for the past. Wood (cited in Schwartz 1990) suggests nostalgia symbolises vanished youth, simpler times, providing us with an idealistic view of the past. He maintains there are two layers of nostalgia with the first layer centring on the long-vanished past beyond the reach of living collective memory - a long-vanished Dreamtime, perhaps. The second layer is rooted in the recent past, a time within reach of living memory. Here we can see nostalgia for the colonial west, the home of the shearers and ringers, Waltzing Matilda, or the birth of Qantas and the Royal Flying Doctor. Chris Rojek, author of *Decentring Leisure* (1995), has a different point of view, maintaining that the nostalgia industry refers to the embellishment or recreational use of the past merely for commercial purposes, with the need for heritage sites to succeed 'through their claims to reproduce the sights, sounds and smells of the past' (1995:118-120). This last position has of course been taken up by many of our cultural centres with their highly interactive displays and panoramas to attract today's tourist.

But finally, I would agree with Robin Trotter (1999:26) nostalgia is a point of intersection for cultural heritage and the past, it is a valid mode of
remembering as it stimulates legitimacy to individual and group memory. This emphasis on nostalgia, heritage and the collective memory, is reflected in celebrations which honour local identities, in rituals and festivals which re-enact historic events, and is an underlying theme of both visual and written thesis components.

The Collective Memory: Orality and Indigenous Narratives.

The collective memory is a vital element in the conservation of our heritage sites. As Kate Darian Smith and Paula Hamilton (1994) write, these collective memories are both reflected and reinforced culturally in specific activities and commemorative rituals, such as festivals of the outback, while the oral stories of past events have an important role in the conservation of historical sites. They are a valuable record which can be kept alive by continuous reworking and transmission, as the narrative of one's life becomes part of an 'interconnecting set of narratives from which individuals derive their identity' (19):

Memories link us to place, to time and to nation: they enable us to inhabit our own country. Through these collective memories we structure our world and understand our past.

(Darian Smith & Hamilton 1994:1)
Darian Smith suggests that group memory is passed on to other generations providing a living link between them. She notes that tourist sites, memorials, local history museums, archives and records are all part of this public memory, containing the accumulated material substance of our past. They are the 'wellspring of nationalism', 'constantly mobilised to serve differing ideological and political interests' (1994:19). Raphael Samuel also maintains memory has an active, dynamic, shaping force of historical thought, but far from being handed down merely as tradition, it is altered from generation to generation (Samuel 1996:197). Popular memory is indeed the very antithesis of written history, seizing on omens, portents and signs to deliver its story, and with the gathering of memories, Samuel claims there is now a focus on rhetoric, on the way in which the stories are told as much as on the content, and of course, on the story teller.

Oral story telling was and is vitally important to Aboriginal people, describing Aboriginal life and legends in Australia long before the white invasion. According to Mudururoo Narogn (1996:8) in *Writing from the Fringe*, this oral literature often detailed the early wanderings of the creative ancestors, or ancestral beings in lines of long songs, now referred to as tribal song lines. He argues that the routes of these beings are early migratory trails along which the different communities travelled to spread all over the continent. Portions of these song lines which are still treasured show that Australia was never a trackless wilderness.
Narogin maintains if all these records had been collected and these memories recorded, ‘a detailed road map might have been constructed’ (1996:8). Certainly, the surviving fragments are important to Aborigines (and to regional identity) as they serve as an aesthetic basis for the story of their heritage. The notion of song lines is an important element of this thesis and strongly relates to the journey *On The Western Line* as it examines Rockhampton’s Reconciliation celebration, the sandstone stories of Dreamtime Cultural Centre, the Yumba Burin Keeping Place at Springsure and the participation of the Kalkadoon community at Lark Quarry and Winton in the Easter Festival of the Outback.

Stephen Muecke (1996) writes that the uniqueness of Aboriginal oral communication and the aesthetic use of language and narrative discourse in telling of a historic heritage thousands of years old has only recently been discovered. Certainly, Australians are finally coming to realise that Aboriginal knowledges and ways of living are a core part of national (and local) identity. Muecke points out that since the 1992 Mabo decision there has been a radical change in how the country and the original settlers are now perceived in Australia. In a region endowed with a rich Aboriginal heritage, it is important to study these knowledges in the context of heritage tourism today:
As imperial histories fade away, postcolonial Indigenous histories will come to occupy a dignified place in regional Australia as issues of Aboriginal history, both oral and written, continue to be sources of tremendous interest for both researchers and traders.

(Muecke 1996:16)

Throughout this thesis, the author will argue that a strong relationship exists between memories of place and identity, whether Aboriginal, European or Pacific Islander. We can no longer assume that geography is simply the ground on which events took place. Dr Elizabeth Sinn of Hong Kong University researching the hidden pre-colonial heritage of her city affirms that ‘people and place’ can be linked on many levels. On the national level, the level at which heritage is most real in policy and operational terms, (and she claims most intense in emotional terms), people are linked to place by the emphasis on relics of the past as symbols of the continuity of the nation’s cultural tradition and as tangible elements of its cultural identity. But, she claims, and I would agree, that it is on the local level where people can relate most intimately to place through ‘an appreciation and understanding of local historical artefacts and local folklore’ (Sinn 1998:x).

From a summary of thesis chapters below, it will be noted that in the process of documenting the heritage trail through Central Queensland and by analysing our local traditions and relics of the past as markers of
identity, a range of diverse cultures has been examined in an attempt to interpret the ways in which local community groups are taking charge of their regional identity in a new era of globalisation.

A Brief Summary of Thesis Chapters.

The audience is introduced to the documentary and the train journey in Chapter One. The author's own heritage trail is the underlying theme of three documentary films which make up the visual component of this thesis. The relevance of each production and its positioning within the thesis are discussed in detail in the first two chapters. *On The Western Line* works on many levels; as an expedition on *The Spirit of the Outback*, tracing the Capricorn line from Rockhampton and Emu Park on the coast, to Winton in the isolated landscape of far western Queensland discovering its history through the collective story telling of its inhabitants; and on another level, recording on camera, the regional tourism product of Capricornia and the producers of these heritage locations and events as markers of regional identity. The video production mirrors the excitement of the journey west by train, as regional narratives, local identities and categories of unofficial knowledge are captured on video. *On The Western Line* moves from museum to reconciliation event to outback festival and explores the spectacular ethnographic heritage centres which have become our national icons. The author claims that the 'Auteur/Director' is virtually
empowered to describe aspects of the real world from the point of view of camera or participant. The editing and the selection of footage play a significant part in the visual production and imposes an authorial perspective on content. Thus the Stockman’s Hall of Fame and Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre are juxtaposed by glimpses of forgotten destinations, isolated and struggling tourist identities - once historic - now dismissed by the railway line and the traveller’s map. Banjo Paterson’s Waltzing Matilda is seen as a powerful adjunct to the Anzac myth, Lark Quarry is viewed as the home of dinosaurs and much ‘bulldust’, Dreamtime Cultural Centre is captured as a thriving if ‘hybrid’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project, and the Great Northern Railway is positioned as the vital link which devastated the Shearers’ War but was responsible for developing the western outback towns of Central Queensland.

The author and film narrator comments: ‘Our brief was to reconstruct a sense of community identity from the images and texts captured on camera and to feature those voices from the past including those ignored or forgotten’ (On The Western Line 1998). She invites the audience ‘to re-interpret these images of our heritage sites in order to obtain a provocative picture of Capricornia’ (On The Western Line 1998). Finally, as the sun sets over Matilda’s Combo Waterhole in the west, the narrator asks again, in retrospect: ‘Will we see these new tourist ventures of the heritage
industry bringing new riches to the rural economy, now in crisis - or will we see the countryside changed and commodified by the influx of newcomers with their new view of the past?’ (1998) This thesis will show that the documentary is always political, ‘with context inseparable from reason’, as Lyotard (1986:106) wrote, so it is therefore essential that the written component of the thesis analyses the different layers of meaning inscribed within the narrative, the look and the ideology of the journey and the two historical documentaries initiated within this project.

Chapter Two studies the heritage trail from the perspective of two historical films also produced and shot by the author. These two productions *The Legend of King O’Malley*, and *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills*, mix archival footage with interviews of political activists, historians and authors, museum curators, pioneering families and Aboriginal elders from Darambal and Wealwandangi clans to present a thought-provoking confrontation between local and national narratives concerning colonial and Indigenous issues, federation politics and frontier war. Tensions bring into question the contemporary privileging of the ‘eyewitness’ to events of the past. Do we tell about these colonial heroes from a position deployed by the concerns of today, manipulating the past to fit the present, or do we really try to reproduce the past to make it live again? John Corner (1996) argues that the historical documentary’s combination of interview testimony with read documents (such as letters
and diary extracts) and archival images has made a serious contribution to historical research. It is becoming an important political tool in examining issues of public culture and heritage. Questions not usually addressed by conventional scholarship, using sources and images with originality and critical force, have opened up quite disturbing historic legacies.

The author maintains that the treatment of the video script in both these documentaries presents voices and images which carry compelling messages for the local and the national audience. As the oppositions and ambiguities of reality are balanced with legend and myth, viewers are invited to make judgements about the historic truth surrounding two iconic characters whose identity has been appropriated by regional museums, by national sports galleries, from a nostalgic colonial past - an era of great political and racial upheaval - in the early European settlement of Queensland. What is important here is the impact these mythologies have made on the community’s sense of heritage, and the continuity of their nostalgic celebration in the region’s tourism industry today.

The first legend tells of a dying American salesman, King O’Malley, who arrives at Port Alma on the central coast with his coffin, is found stranded on Zilzie Beach by an Aboriginal fisherman, rescued and fed back to health on local oysters and Burdekin plums before walking to Melbourne, and a life of federal politics. The national narrative is the history of
Canberra, the Commonwealth Bank, and O'Malley's fight (as Minister for Home Affairs in Fisher's Labor Government) against conscription and Billy Hughes. But it is through the celebration of the musical play by Boddy and Ellis, performed locally, and through the collective memory of the small coastal town of Emu Park, that the video production draws its strength.

Thomas Wentworth Wills' national story is the history of Australia's W.G.Grace of cricket, who invents the first code for Australian Rules Football and coaches and captains the very first Australian Aboriginal Cricket Team in 1866-67. The team toured England in 1868. But the local legend considers the tragic and ironic twist of a young colonial grazier who endured the murder of his father on the Nogoa River near Springsure in Central Queensland in October, 1861, then stays on to build the 200 000 square mile Cullin-la-Ringo Station before returning to Melbourne and the sporting world. Here, the camera focuses on descendant Tom H.S.Wills today, at the gravesite at Murdering Gap, and in the family museum at Minerva Creek Station, as he reads the historic letters telling of the massacre and Tommy Wills' ongoing struggle with family and trustees. From a lonely Central Queensland sheep and cattle station, the film cuts to the Melbourne Cricket Club and the story of a popular sporting hero who finally commits suicide as a result of alcohol abuse and the trauma of frontier war and the murder of his father.
In researching the first Aboriginal Cricket Team and captain Tommy Wills, the author was able to observe that the same underlying issues of exclusion and marginalisation were active in Indigenous state policies in both Queensland and Victoria in 1860s-1880s. As these local mythologies were documented on camera, it was important to be aware that every story, every archival letter and old photograph functioned for the auteur/director as a symbol of a pervasive and political identity. Again the tensions between local and national, European and Indigenous are evident beneath the surface of this documentary.

The local historical museum has been widely perceived as an important anchor for developing a regional cultural tourism industry, and in Chapter Three, the role of the local museum and its collection of historic memorabilia, outdoor art objects and unusual and vernacular monuments are all examined - again as markers of regional identity. Visiting these museums is an integral part of the documentary *On The Western Line*, while valuable research on King O’Malley and Thomas Wentworth Wills has been undertaken in the Emu Park local museum, the Wills family Minerva Creek museum and the Melbourne Cricket Club Museum of Sport. Museums have long served as surrogates for travel (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett:1998), and the increasing popularity of visiting museums, historic homes and heritage listed sacred sites illustrates the importance of
the past to tourist agendas. These sites are being drawn into a network of newly constructed tourist spaces by discourses around issues of civic responsibility, access, sponsorship and funding, participation and competition for audiences. The author’s survey of visitors to eight local heritage museums is discussed in relation to social historian Bennett and Bourdieu’s research in *The Reluctant Museum Visitor* (Bennett 1994). The survey found that 80 per cent of the total market for tourism in the Central Queensland region were Australian visitors (Huf and Schirato 1995). Foo and Rossetto’s 1998 study of the characteristics and motivations of cultural tourists calculated that indeed 60 per cent of international tourists sampled a cultural attraction such as an historic building, site or monument on their Australian journey (1998:18). The results of these surveys are addressed in Chapter Three.

The business of identifying and conserving buildings and whole areas of special quality as landmarks, and as museum spaces for our cultural past, present and future, is of major regional concern. Heritage it seems, can work as a political concept which is able to assert a public or national interest in things traditionally regarded as private. For example, the author notes that Kylie Winkworth (1991) has severely criticised the decontextualisation that occurs when artefacts from the private sphere (significantly in family collections) are removed from the local museum to be placed in a central collection base such as a national history museum,
where a wider reading and the significance of the family’s history may be available, but in whose austere environment the relevance of these stories may be lost to the original community and the ordinary tourist.

The involvement of Aboriginal people in heritage centres and local Indigenous ‘keeping places’ is also an important element of this thesis, as local clans remake historic connections through the dynamic process of remembering their culture and their history. Chris Healy writes that the process of possessing Aboriginal people as objects and later as image and text has become a major concern with the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples - ‘only now beginning to be acknowledged in the historical sensibilities of non-Aboriginal Australians’ (1994:43-44). Winton’s Qantilda Museum and its voyeuristic pre-history exhibits of the Kalkadoon people are examples of this process of dispossession which has been documented in the video production *On The Western Line* and discussed in later thesis chapters.

Museum critics have also queried the invisibility of women in the celebration of our region’s history. The focus on much recent sociology research has been on making rural women’s contributions to agriculture and rural communities ‘visible’, according to Andrew Davidson (2004:204) who has challenged the long-standing assumption that farming is men’s work and women’s contribution to Australian agriculture (and I
would argue to the whole grazing industry) has been ignored or
categorised as ‘helpmates’, or ‘offsiders’. In some cases dairying or the
making of butter has been seen or categorised as ‘home duties’ (Vergo
1991:204-206). The significance of oral history as a tool of the ‘new
museology’, together with the role of volunteers in the presentation and
on-going processes of maintaining these rural museums as important links
to the past are explored further in Chapter Three.

Chilla Bulbeck has pointed out that since the national bicentennial
celebrations of 1988, small communities everywhere have built on a need
to develop an identity which they feel is truly Australian and which relates
to their past (Bulbeck 1989:25). The influx of unusual monuments and
outdoor objects of art have mostly taken the form of fountains and
barbecues, large bulls, dinosaurs and giant sapphires, and of course,
shearers and stockmen. Documented on camera and addressed by the
author as a very visual element celebrating the region’s cultural identity,
they confront the tourist in each town on the Capricorn Line - sometimes
comical, sometimes confronting, and usually designed by local artists.
Central Queensland has at many times been described as tawdry and
vulgar, the land of the giant cow, the big sapphire, the home of the ringer
and the swaggie. But this brand of local magic can be contested politically
as difference and otherness, which it can be argued, feature in all tourism
discourses regardless of site or history. These monuments are an important
part of our culture, as they challenge national values and national dignity. Together with local history museums, libraries and archives, they are part of a public strategy which links the collective remembering of our rural communities to the preservation of the accumulated material substance of our past.

The postmodern pilgrim’s quest for authenticity, within Central Queensland’s spectacular ethnographic and highly technological cultural centres, is the main theme of Chapter Four. According to social critic Donald Horne (1984), the tourist’s demand is to discover ‘metaphors of power’ in an enlightened world of culture, true meanings in learning and art, within the contemporary museum. Horne, however, suggests that ‘an air conditioned, postmodern dreamland has been created for the tourists to see only staged events’ (10). But Horne has become disillusioned, believing that original meanings have been lost or superimposed by a desire to experience the virtual thrills of high technology, and to purchase souvenirs (1984:10-11). This question of authenticity will be debated further, as the chapter addresses the presentation of heritage and history in line with the policies of these heritage centres, including Longreach’s Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Centre, and Barcaldine Workers’ Heritage Centre. Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Cultural Centre presentation strategies are defined in contrast with Bambruk Living Cultural Centre (northern Victoria), and discussed in relation to
Dreamtime’s close neighbour, council-funded and operated Rockhampton Pioneer Heritage Village, in Chapter Five. It can be seen that each of these ‘metaphors of power’ exerts a major impact on regional heritage and regional identity as noted in *On The Western Line*.

The Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre, opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1988, has become a significant outback tourist site, a national shrine and ‘a living resource centre where bush lore and inventiveness are preserved’ (*Stockman’s Hall of Fame Newsletter* 11, 1). Described as a memorial to the early pioneers, it is a museum, a cultural repository and an historical data bank, with its authentic representation of the past tending to turn its bush characters into heroes. Many academics argue that contributions of Aborigines, women and non-Anglo ethnic groups to the pastoral industry have been ignored or taken for granted. Judith Kapferer (1998) suggests that The Hall of Fame could be accused of going against the line of ‘egalitarian mateship’, thought to characterise rural people and rural workers. However, management maintains it strongly supports the importance of ‘individualism’ in Australian rural mythologies (226). The Hall of Fame highlights the Australian pioneering spirit, but political questions must be asked about their interpretation of the Aboriginal ‘dreaming’ depicted as pre-history rather than as part of early settlement (1998:226). A rose garden has recently been established in memory of women pioneers, and photographic
murals of Elizabeth MacArthur, woman aviator Nancy Bird, and a bust of famous Australian writer and board member, Mary Durack supplement the masculine portraits of ringers, bushworkers and famous initiators of the Hall of Fame, patron Ted Egan, artist Hugh Sawry, and the late R.M. Williams. These images highlight the shifts in interpretation which are occurring today in these centres of history and public art.

There is another face to this national institution however, as the Stockman’s Hall of Fame becomes an ‘ideological core’ for western Queensland, and as a series of regional cultural centres ‘operating within a discursive framework of the pioneer mythology’ (Trotter 2001:346) expand those legendary meanings. Robin Trotter argues that a whole range of disparate and far-flung isolated historic pasts are linked physically by the Matilda Highway and the Capricorn Highway ‘to produce the notion of The Outback’ (2001:346-348). So we see oppositional perspectives commemorating the 1891 Shearers’ Strike at Barcaldine’s spectacular Workers’ Cultural Centre (with a further perspective of the shearers’ war and the birth of Qantas) at Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre, all providing enjoyment, employment, revitalising the hometown, and always negotiating a national heritage trail towards Longreach.

In Chapter Five, the author studies the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ Dreamtime Cultural Centre at Rockhampton and its proposed
heritage trail to the city’s Pioneer Heritage Village. A comparison is also made with Victoria’s Bambruk Living Cultural Centre’s policies which differ in management’s various strategies of presenting an Indigenous past to a mass tourist market. Dreamtime Centre is a most impressive tourist destination with its sandstone people’s art gallery, theatre, convention centre and general self-sufficiency of management. It was the vision of the late Dr Nola James of the Darambal people, supported always by the tribal elders. But there is some tension between the desire to maintain cultural authenticity and integrity on the one hand and the need to attract visitors and tourists on the other. In their provocative paper ‘Dreamtime in a Cowtown’, Griffin and Shelley ask ‘Has the Dreamtime Centre become just another tourist attraction to peddle pseudo-authentic primitivism catering for tourists’ expectations’ and ‘Is Dreamtime ‘a sell-out to dominant white perceptions of what compliant and respectable Aborigines should be doing?’ (1994:170). MacCannell (1992:179) argues that any deviation from the touristic cultural ideal can be read as a political gesture that will produce conflict.

Central Queensland Aboriginal Corporation for Cultural Activities’ policy, in the context of tourism, education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural traditions, is an important issue. Will this cultural centre display and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, artefacts, myths and legends in order to stand shoulder to shoulder with the
pioneer ethos of Rockhampton and Central Queensland? Dreamtime’s role in defining Aboriginal values and regional identity will also be reconciled in relation to a neighbouring attraction, Rockhampton Heritage Pioneer Village. The Village’s opening celebrations were featured on the author’s video production *On The Western Line*. The Queensland Government’s conservation and preservation policy to sponsor cultural planning and development throughout regional centres is providing a major impetus for change in the cultural and local identity of the whole area (Craik 2001). These important initiatives, including heritage in education and the conservation of Indigenous heritage, are discussed further in conjunction with these ‘postmodern’ icons of the heritage tourism industry in Chapter Five.

In Chapter six, the author walks the final ‘sugar trail’ - *The Trail of Endurance* - with the South Sea Islanders of Central Queensland. The South Sea Islander community today is empowered in this state as a black migrant people reaching back five or six generations, on whose shoulders the Queensland sugar industry commenced. In all, 62500 immigrants were brought here from the Pacific Islands between 1883 and 1901, and hundreds were indentured to the Yeppoon Sugar Company to clear the land and work at the Farnborough sugar plantation. (Many were also employed on Central Western grazing properties). Following the demise of the mill and the government’s decision to repatriate all Islanders in 1906-
1908, families up and down the coast chose to stay in Queensland. They fiercely argued their case to remain and became immigrants of their own free will, settling in communities at Joskeleigh, and Keppel Sands near the mouth of the Fitzroy River, and at Kanaka Town in North Rockhampton (Gistitin 1995, Panochni 2002).

After a hundred years of exclusion there is some disagreement between academics and historians with SS Islanders, who strongly believe their ancestors were taken by force from their home islands, kidnapped or ‘blackbired’ to work as slaves and ‘indentured labourers’ in Queensland. According to historians Clive Moore and Carol Gistitin (1984; 1995), there was much deception and coercion used by labourer recruiters, and there is universal acknowledgement that the Pacific labour trade was brutal and atrocities against Islanders common. In the larger story of colonialism and labour migration in the Asia Pacific, a high level of voluntarism is revealed as, according to Steve Mullins, thousands of young men from Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands went willingly to work abroad while their communities were content to see them go (2002). Society’s view of these Islanders is ‘as immigrants who enlisted for a three year term of labour under contract in Queensland, but chose to stay’ (Gistitin 1995:3). Islanders themselves do not share this view of their ancestors as free and autonomous people. They maintain a belief, to this
very day, that their ancestors were kidnapped and became slaves (1995:2, interviews with D.Leo and J.Landers, 2002).

This final chapter examines the outcome of the SSI Cultural Mapping Project to geographically site the original Kanaka Sugar Trail, to compile the oral histories of the indentured labourers’ descendants and to ensure records dating back to Tanna and the other Pacific Islands are preserved in the Joskeleigh Museum. *The Trail of Endurance: Journey from Paradise*, edited by Peter Panochni & Jilly Landers was launched in December 2002 as a positive step in recording the survival of island culture and heritage in this country for future generations and the South Sea Island Capricorn Coast community received government grants of $90 000 to develop this project. The author explores the trail linking the historic site to the village of Joskeleigh. In July 2001 I attended the Grand Opening of Joskeleigh Museum’s historic national sugar exhibition ‘Refined White’. The following year I witnessed the emotive re-enactment of the ‘Journey to Paradise’ within the old Joskeleigh school grounds, as part of a strong and vigorous community celebrating the conservation of its heritage, and interviewed curator Doris Leo and research assistant Jilly Landers.

Kevin Moore (1997) argues the power of the real place, that is, a geographical site that has a historic connection, seems to have the strength and the ability to carry the past into the present by virtue of its real
relationship to past events. This particular landscape, with its unspoiled environment, and conserved heritage are all part of a package dealing with the production of the SSI culture. Here the author personally experienced this ‘triple notion of the real’ (1997:135) - real people taking part in reliving their past in the real place, where their ancestors first settled in this country. While this migrant Pacific Islander community continues to utilise its collective memory and takes charge of its destination, the group will surely survive.

Research shows that the heritage industry has indeed become an important political tool today for all Australians including marginalised and Indigenous groups, who will use cultural tourism to their advantage to assert their own destiny. It is this sense of place and isolation, a sense of nostalgia for the past which motivates communities in their quest to discover their ancestors and their ‘storylines’. We can perhaps witness this notion of the real as a major bonus, throughout Capricornia, attracting travellers to experience specific heritage events, as community memories are reflected and reinforced through cultural tourism. Throughout this thesis, the author argues that if heritage is to become an important way of making claims to a place, communities must create their own instruments of remembering, their own style of nostalgia, and their own infrastructure in order to use the industry to strengthen their cultural identity.
By documenting regional stories and regional history within the context of the heritage tourism industry we can hypothesise that the social construction of our local community museums, our heritage icons, monuments, myths and memorabilia, can all play a vital part in the production of a regional cultural identity.
CHAPTER ONE

On The Western Line: The documentary and the train journey

Discovering the Meaning of Place
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Discovering the Meaning of Place

The impulse to preserve the past - is part of the impulse to preserve the self - but what kind of past do we want to preserve and how is it changing the present?

(R. Hewison 1987:10)

Do we see symbols of the past such as Stockman’s Hall of Fame and the Ringer, or Barcaldine Workers Centre and the Tree of Knowledge becoming significant symbols of the future - as our heritage sites are turned into tourist destinations?

(L. Huf On The Western Line, 1998)

With these words above, narrated on camera, the author commences the documentary On The Western Line which has attempted to capture the heritage tourism product on the Tropic of Capricorn in Central Queensland, Australia. The video production reflects on the meaning of place and the importance of the survival of heritage sites as tourist destinations, as it documents the community’s various levels of involvement with its nationally oriented cultural centres, local small museums, its heroic icons and bi-centennial funded monuments. It examines the often-conflicting roles of culture, nostalgia and heritage within the tourist industry in this region today. Special events which commemorate the Australian Pioneer Legend or Aboriginal Reconciliation all collaborate to form a cultural tourist industry, ‘a value added industry’, as exhibition endows heritage with a second life,
through a process of knowledge, through performance, through museum display, and through film. ‘Heritage is a new mode of cultural production which gives a new way of life to regional places and spaces’ (Kirschenblatt Gimblett 1998:149). It ensures that practices and places, in danger of disappearing because they are no longer functioning, will survive by adding this value of pastness, of difference and indigenuity (149).

Both Chapter One and Two involve the analysis of three video documentaries made during 1997-2004, which analyse these ‘practices and places’ surviving because of their difference, along the Western Line. A brief summary of each film follows, together with a discussion on the role of the documentary maker and the relativity of this mode of presentation to the thesis itself. The reader can reflect on the images and narratives of each documentary as they link important issues about heritage tourism, historical representation, local and national mythology to a real and contemporary world today - as these symbols of the past are turned into tourist destinations, becoming significant symbols of the future.

The Making of Three Documentaries: The Author’s Brief and the Director’s Role.

The visual component of this thesis, studied in Chapter One, involves the author's personal journey on The Spirit of the Outback, travelling as tourist
by train from east to west, seeking out heritage spaces, sacred sites and festivals, interviewing the artists, the visitors, the industry entrepreneurs, local townsfolk and country dwellers. This component, as noted above, also includes two historical documentaries juxtaposing iconic local and national narratives introduced briefly in the first video production. These later productions explore important Australian mythology which is incorporated in the author’s interviews on camera, together with contemporary regional footage and archival film to deliver a thought-provoking picture of our heritage in federation politics, colonial sport, pioneer settlement and frontier war. Positioned within a heritage discourse as both myth and history, but focusing on a regional perspective within a much wider national debate, *The Legend of King O’Malley* and *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills* will be analysed in depth in Chapter Two.

The author maintains that the role of the documentary maker in recording the social history of different cultural groups and exposing the ambiguity and contradictions of real life situations within the context of our regional society is a complex one. The empowerment of camera, script and voice, sometimes nostalgic, sometimes ideologically opposed, is viewed on many different levels within the documentaries. On one level there is the personal journey from coast to outback capturing the tourism product of Capricornia and documenting the producers of these heritage locations, museums and cultural centres, as markers of regional identity. But on another level the
documentary opens up an entirely different landscape as text, with the problematic debate on cultural heritage and land ownership. At the end of the journey, after visiting a wide variety of destinations, the audience may decide, as English historian Simon Schama (1996) has pointed out, that the landscape 'is a tradition built from a rich deposit of myths, memories and obsessions' and is a shared culture (18). With its traditional, migrant and local population, its heritage industry and its national and international visitors, the Central Queensland landscape is very much a shared culture.

It can be argued that the director has the dual role of directing the camera and its presence, and of telling the real story of the protagonists projected on film. Certainly, much of the work of narrative and rhetorical construction of the story is completed by the author prior to editing, as these images are shot and questions asked, which determine the character of the final documentary. The many interviews with local respondents of different cultures each project their own identity and their own historical environment. Together with the voice of the narrator, this creates a challenge in fusing the rhetoric with these alternate voices for a sense of unity. The editing of the film itself, the restructuring and rewriting, should strengthen the text's meaning, although some may argue this process can take it further away from the language of the real people. Dai Vaughan (1984) argues that the editor is empowered to make cuts which eliminate long scenes and repetitions, may clarify points of confusion in the script,
which finally allows the documentary to take on the form to which it seems to aspire in the way ‘a slice of life takes on the quality of being about something’ (134). However, tight and efficient editing may also mean that a particular segment of the script or narration is deleted, so that the final production can become more complex than the author originally intended. Script, theoretical perspectives, sequences of events concerning historical representation and questions about myth and reality must all be seen as part of a coherent narrative flow.

The heritage discourse constructs particular pasts which are vital to today’s new forms of cultural tourism, drawing on nostalgia as a valid mode of remembering and accessing a longing for the past. This discourse facilitates ‘a coping with the present’ by offering refuge and respite in the form of historical reflection. Hewison argues that a nostalgic impulse becomes a ‘social emollient’ which reinforces national identity when confidence is weakened or threatened (1987:118). Nostalgia, he claims, becomes a vehicle of commodification with ‘commerce reinforcing the longing for authenticity in order to exploit it’ (118). Lowenthal, cited in Robin Trotter’s work ‘Nostalgia and the Construction of an Australian Dreaming’ (1999:20-21), maintains nostalgia is a natural ally for tourism as both offer a means of escape, one to another time, the other to another place. ‘It is integral to a sense of identity at both individual and group level as it offers guidance, enrichment and escape’ (1999:23). Nostalgia, as noted in the introduction to
this thesis, works as a connection to our heritage, to national and regional events, to public figures and people far beyond our personal experiences.

An important feature of the documentary then as emphasised above is this dialogue between the past and the present which connects the viewer with cultural traditions and rituals, community festivals and commemorations. In the public arena, nostalgic images appear in living history representations as demonstrated by the documentary, *On The Western Line*. Because nostalgia accords legitimacy to individual and group memory and to local mythology, it has been a key term in shaping the whole heritage/culture debate, as it links the dislocated, the dispossessed and those distanced from their origins to a strong sense of regional identity (Trotter 1999). With its positive implications for personal identity, nostalgia therefore plays an integral part in *recording* and *uniting* these images and stories throughout the documentaries presented as a major element of this thesis.

It is *The Spirit of the Outback* the train journey itself, which links the three major sections of this documentary together and underpins the narrative structure. Commencing with a graphic area map pre-viewing each stage of the adventure, the journey from east to west uses the colourful history of the construction of the Great Northern Railway (today’s Central Western Line) to preview each cultural tourism event. It is interesting to note that the maps visualised within the documentary offer particular framing images which
centralise *Capricornia* as the location for each celebration. With this structural image in mind, the journey connects with one simple thread those sacred sites and heritage destinations, local cultural centres and ‘metaphors of power’ positioned along the Tropic of Capricorn. A strong sense of place is endemic therefore to the whole logic of the documentary. As the sun rises over the Pacific Ocean in the east, the director and camera crew begin filming the extraordinary legend of Yankee federation politician King O’Malley (an important national theme developed further in the second documentary). The journey inland continues by train from the central coast to the far west, where the sun sets finally over Hoffmeister’s ghost to the music of Paterson’s nostalgic anthem *Waltzing Matilda*, at historic Combo waterhole 50 kilometres from Kynuna on the Matilda Highway.

The documentary *On The Western Line* will take the audience back in time to reclaim the past with the first European settlers arriving on the Fitzroy River. Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Cultural Centre and ATSIC Reconciliation celebrations are captured on camera together with Mt Morgan’s Running the Cutter Festival and Queensland British Food Corporation Reunion at Capella in the Central Highlands. The author’s interviews uncover tensions between local and national narratives at Barcaldine Workers Heritage Centre and Longreach Stockman’s Hall of Fame while at Winton in the far west the camera crew takes part in the opening of the town’s own Cultural Centre in 1998 which coincides with the
fortieth anniversary of Russell Ward’s seminal work *The Australian Legend* (1958) this nation’s best known frontier thesis. The viewer is invited to critically study colonial outback society, to balance the oppositions and ideological ambiguities of historic legends with a postcolonial reality. Of course, these are just some of the socially-constructed heritage tourism ventures (European-pioneer and Indigenous) documented on camera, and recording a region still promoted as frontier country and depicted brashly on tourist posters as *Where the Outback meets the Reef* (ATC 2000). The relationship between cultural heritage, tourism, regional identity, landscape and memory of this ‘frontier’ country is examined further through an analysis of each special event documented on the author’s camera.

As director and producer of a documentary on national and local narratives, I had to decide how to capture that sense of community, identity and Australianness on camera and how to integrate and interpret these images of regional heritage and significant sites within a broad cultural context. A theme or message would be conveyed within the different layers of text inscribed in the narrative, vision and sound tracts - the ‘look’ and the ‘ideology’. Interviews with local museum curators, historians and ‘authentic’ living identities would be interspersed with archival film and actuality shots from heritage events. The viewer would be able to re-interpret these images to obtain a provocative picture of cultural tourism in this region. The video’s target audience needed to be defined and the
broader market for this heritage tourism package considered carefully. The Central Queensland University Rural, Social and Economic Research Centre would be approached for funds. Research for the project began in 1997 and the script, video treatment and all pre-production strategies planned during the first months of 1998. Just prior to Easter, 1998, I booked accommodation at Longreach’s Outback Safari Motel and Winton’s Tent City; packed the necessary microphones, camcorders, tapes and akubras, and set off with camera man/sound operator on The Spirit of the Outback to frontier country. Filming the sequences on the Capricorn Coast and on the train journey - at reconciliation and outback festivals, museums and cultural centres - continued over three months, after which post production and final editing was completed at the C.Q.University.

Before voyaging west by train in order to document and interpret these cultural tourism celebrations, the following questions were addressed: *Are Heritage and tourism indeed collaborative industries converting locations into viable exhibitions of themselves?* The author/director must decide what the subject’s underlying significance is to the overall theme of regional identity, and how the camera is to capture this sense of place, in terms of cultural and historical determinations, within the parameters of the documentary. *How do we incorporate the stories of everyday people and document the processes of collective remembering within this journey?* It must be taken into account that the social production of memory is a
collective production in which everyone participates. As stated in the introduction, memories of events and places link us to other Australians, enable us to ‘inhabit our own country’ (Darian Smith 1996:1-3) and to celebrate our communal heritage.

*How do we record the local and national contradictions of our regional stories and myths in tourist festivals and commemorations?* The local story of Yankee insurance salesman King O’Malley has been overshadowed by the national narrative of the Federation Minister for Home Affairs, while in the far west, local historian Richard Magoffin’s account of the birth of A.B.Paterson's *Waltzing Matilda* conflicts strongly with the national mythology. *Were the women excluded from the voices of the bush in our colonial history?* According to Dame Mary Durack (Stockman’s Hall of Fame founding board member), and Dr Nola James (founder, Dreamtime Cultural Centre), the role of women in the bush is still barely visible today. South Sea Islander artist and community leader Mabel Edmund, historian Dr Lorna MacDonald, and Longreach HOF photographer and author Sue Coatham do voice their opinions on camera, however, regarding land rights, history and the future of heritage tourism.

*Where does the Aboriginal ‘sense of place’ fit with the Australian pioneer myth?* As elders Lindsay Black and Fred Conway commit the lost cylinders
of their deceased Wealwandangie ancestors to the burial crypt at Springsure, they are at last defining their past history in their own terms. This is a defiant statement in retaliation for the massacres and frontier war waged on the Nogoa and Dawson Rivers during 1850s and 60s. Richard Nile (1996) has argued that the past is still hotly contested territory in Australia. Aboriginal nationalism’s refusal to concede ‘that political hegemony has been achieved’, with the Mabo decision ‘confirming the premise that settler sovereignty has not extinguished traditional Aboriginal hegemonies’ (1996:1-2) is evidence that the frontier remains open.

*On The Western Line*: The Journey Begins.

In the first section of the documentary, the director and narrator takes on the role of history seeker, exploring the Central Coast and Rockhampton, the site of the region’s original railway of the 1870s (which carried local inhabitants to Emu Park, first health resort of Capricornia). In this section, the underlying issues of Aboriginality and multiculturalism have been positioned in the heritage tourism dialogue together with the celebration of the early pioneers. As the sun rises over Keppel Bay, the documentary *On The Western Line* revisits the legend of King O’Malley as this larger than life character emerges from the sea, apparently dying of consumption and desperately seeking refuge in a strange land at Rocky Point on the Capricorn Coast. In a brief re-enactment from Boddy and Ellis’ musical play (1970),
Aboriginal fisherman Coowonga rescues the insurance man on the sand
below historic O’Malley’s Cave with ‘She’ll be right mate!’ The tensions
found between national and local mythology are immediately noted by the
narrator who sardonically tells the viewers:

History may record O’Malley as a larrikin politician who put
lavatories on trains and split the Labor party on conscription, but
the community of Emu Park remember that it was the oysters and
Burdekin plums offered by Coowonga which saved his life.

(On the Western Line
Documentary: 1998)

Despite the much disputed truth of the legend by historians and academics
alike, O'Malley’s story has been appropriated by the small local museum
and commemorated with a bicentennial memorial plaque. The audience is
told that following the opening ceremony in 1992, the local newspaper announced:

Now the history of this great man will be remembered and his
monument will make it even more worth a visit by tourists
heading north or south.

(Capricorn Coast Mirror, April
24,1992)
The exploitation of myth is a useful filmic tool as it engages the audience sympathetically, while expressing particular conflicts that society finds enduringly insoluble. Each generation regenerates its myths for its own use and the Legend of King O’Malley has become the social capital of the whole community - and appropriated proudly by Emu Park Historic Museum. The museum’s role in presenting and displaying the community’s heritage will be studied in more detail in the following chapters. On camera, the story is supported by two local oral accounts - museum librarian Kath Austin’s reminiscence of her father’s tale of sighting the American stranger in the cave, and the narrative from Indigenous ranger Bob Muir, who, like Coowonga, is a descendant of the Great Keppel Island Woppaburra tribe. In an interview that heralds the widely differing responses to reading country from Aboriginal Australian to white European settler throughout the documentary, Bob tells us that his ancestors were taken by cattle trains to Fraser Island and Cherbourg Aboriginal Reserves and so all evidence of O’Malley’s stay with his people was lost. He alludes to O’Malley as a friend of the tribe, but cautions the viewer ‘that Aboriginal history is not in books, it’s in the land and Keppel Island and the Keppel coast are living museums’ (Narration: On the Western Line). The narrator reminds her audience in Raphael Samuel’s words ‘while myth and memory are inevitable in any conceptualisation of history, a sense of geographical pastness lies at the real core of identity’ (1994: xii). (The life of our last surviving Federation politician and Minister for Home Affairs, together with
the myth’s appropriation by the local community is the central narrative of a second video component, in Chapter Two).

The documentary action cuts to another cultural landscape as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Festival (July 1998), celebrates the anniversary of the Mabo High Court Decision on Native Title at Rockhampton's Sound Bowl. The Kulgoodah Spirit Dancers from Woorabinda Aboriginal Reserve have hypnotised the audience in an atmosphere of renewal. An elder informs the audience that these talented and inspired performers teach the district children traditional culture and how to combat drugs and alcohol in their daily lives. A powerful didgeridoo solo is presented by tribal Elder Peter Costello. Peter is one of the stolen generation from Cape York and he speaks emotionally about love and reconciliation, but as the narrator observes, he speaks only to his own people as few members of the European Australian community are visible. The camera pans across the Sea of Hands to a group of respected local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, across to small clusters of local Aboriginal and South Sea Island men and women. However, the townspeople, young and old, arrive in force for the evening concert given by popular Indigenous pop stars (again from Woorabinda).

The narrator and author, speaking to her audience on camera from today’s present time, reminds them that ‘although the majority of Australians live in
cities and conduct an urban civilised lifestyle, it is the rural landscape with its isolation, its droughts and floods, which still dominates the Australian imagination’ (1998). She continues, inviting the audience to step back in time, and notes within that remote landscape, it’s the Indigenous, the ethnic and the Aussie bush worker who have been mythologised as ‘the other’. This first section of the documentary makes an important statement on heritage tourism as it confronts its audience with both the past and the present, at Rockhampton’s biggest and newest tourist drawcards, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dreamtime Cultural Centre and later at the Pioneer Heritage Village - both destinations seeking to present another much older world, and another dreaming. At Dreamtime, the narrator sets the scene by reading from the tourist brochure:

For many children it is the first time they’ve heard the didgeridoo or listened to Aboriginal story telling. By learning the secrets of a past culture, they may be able to better confront Australian multicultural society today and tomorrow.

*(On The Western Line*

Documentary 1998)*

But we are left pondering whether this observation presents the viewpoint of our camera and director, or the Darambal people themselves. The camera pans across the magnificently landscaped 10.5 acre grounds, the Bora Ring, and the Torres Strait Islander dwelling in the form of a dugong, where Mrs Mabo is weaving baskets from bladdy grass. It captures a group of school
children listening to a young didgeridoo player and learning to throw a boomerang. The sandstone art of the Carnarvon Gorge people is impressive as is the huge poster of famous actor Gulpilil who welcomes the tourists to Dreamtime. The venture’s managing director Bob Blair maintains the Dreamtime Centre is part of a successful heritage industry where young Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders work in administration, in marketing, and as guides run their own tourism business. The documentary narration however, appears to question whether this is *the present looking at the past, or the past looking at the present.*

Some social historians have queried whether the Dreamtime Cultural Centre, the brainchild of a great Darambal woman Dr Nola James (and a member of the Gangalu tribe), has become ‘just another popular attraction to pedal pseudo-authentic primitivism and catering for tourists with stereotypes of Aboriginality’ (Shelley & Griffin 1995: Witcomb 1997). Is Dreamtime today (as we have been told), merely a social construct focused on cultural tourism? Certainly the Dreamtime Centre has a smart, commercial image, it has a new theatre and convention centre and recently Mr Blair has incorporated several luxury motel units. The contemporary concepts behind Dreamtime Cultural Centre’s management and performance today are debated further within the context of Indigenous heritage tourism strategies in Chapter Five. The documentary does step back into a strange and mystical landscape at the foot of the Carnarvon Ranges,
into *Dreamtime* itself with ranger Fred Conway and elder Lindsay Black from the Springsure Wealwindangie Aboriginal community who are re-siting the burial cylinders of their Kairi Kairi ancestors (hidden in southern anthropological archives for nearly a century) in a tiny crypt or keeping place ‘Yumba Burin’ near the Springsure cemetery. The narrator points out to viewers that Aboriginal history and its representation has strongly influenced current debates on land rights and, on *who* are the appropriate custodians of Aboriginal remains. Perhaps here, the camera is at last filming *Indigenous* people using their own voice to retrieve their own sacred history and reclaim their own sacred sites.

In a later sequence on the journey west, the director and camera crew visits Rainworth Fort at Springsure which was built in a colonial era to resist Aboriginal attacks on the Nogoa River following one of the worst ‘payback’ massacres in Australian history. The forbidding fortress reminds the viewer that there was a major frontier war between blacks and white settlers in Central Queensland, during the 1850s-80s. The massacre at Garden Creek and the history of the Wills Family of Cullin-la-Ringo is the theme for the third documentary component which focuses on the tensions between local and national narratives and the underlying race relations driving those tensions. Built of solid sandstone, Rainworth Fort, a part of old Rainworth Station is now owned and managed by Lorna Smith. The dark history of our pioneers is challenged by Lorna on camera as she shares her heritage...
tourism dream for a future regional bus tour of global visitors to Springsure and Rainworth - now a popular tourist destination which has also featured strongly in 2004 *Back to Springsure Celebrations* because of its authenticity as a real fort dating back to frontier violence.

One important cultural group who have made their home on the Central Coast, who weren’t original Australians, nor Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, are the Pacific Islanders - the ‘Kanakas’ as they have been called. These people were enticed or ‘blackbirded’ from their homes in Tanna, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands, to work on Queensland sugar plantations and outback stations between 1867 and early 1900s. They were called ‘Six Pound a Year’ indentured labourers. (The South Sea Islanders’ *Trail of Endurance* is the subject of the final Chapter of this thesis and of a documentary in progress regarding their impact on the Central Coast’s cultural identity). The narrator informs the video audience that the SS Islanders became ‘dinkum Aussies and refused to go home’ when the Government legislated and insisted on their return to their Pacific islands by 1906. Devout Christians, they built their homes around small Anglican churches in North Rockhampton or settled among the sand hills of Joskeleigh at the mouth of the Fitzroy River. Petitions supported by the clergy were successful in over-ruling the new Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, and by refusing to go home, the community revolted against the
White Australia Policy (Gistitin 1996), (Huf, McDonald and Myers 1993:53).

The camera cuts from a nostalgic and colourful SS Islander celebration of elders and community at Emu Park, to a short interview with Mabel Edmund AM, respected writer and artist, and former commissioner on the Aboriginal Loans Commission. Mabel, despite her recent poor health, has worked with a small committee of volunteers to rescue and repair the S.S Islanders Sandhill’s Cemetery at Joskeleigh - a significant heritage site, and the resting place of the community’s ancestors. This is a very brief segment, but it does help to illustrate the determination of multicultural communities in this region to portray a significant voice in determining their own ‘instruments of meaning’ in regards to sacred memorial sites. The historic and political survival of this group, and their official acceptance by the Queensland government are debated more fully in Chapter Six through the empowered voices of the Pacific Islander community and their heritage tourism strategies, today.

Archival film of early Mt Morgan and the richest gold mine in Australia (circa 1882), Fred Christmas and his historic museum, all pull the viewer back to study white European settlement, the gold rush (which was responsible for the stately heritage listed buildings of Rockhampton), and the Norwegian pioneer family, brothers Charles, David and Colin Archer,
who settled at Gracemere Station in 1845. Descendant of Rockhampton’s first grazing family, the late Jim Archer speaks on camera with historian Dr Lorna McDonald about the settlement of Rockhampton and the Central Highlands. The Archers were also renowned for their support of local Aboriginal tribes. While Jim discusses his rare collection of native tools and flint stones, he reminds the interviewer of the words of his ancestor David Archer who, according to the family had a ‘rare understanding of the Aboriginal relationship to the land’. Off camera, Jim produces Charles Archer’s letter to William Archer, dated April 29, 1845, when he writes ‘Davie considers the Black as the hereditary owner of the soil and that it is an act of injustice to drive him from his hunting grounds’ (Huf, McDonald & Myers 1993:53).

As McDonald and Archer discuss the exploration of the Central Highlands and the acquisition of Peak Downs, through the advice of family friend Leichhardt, the documentary audience acquires a sense of the magnitude of the country opened up by the early settlers, the effort that many pioneer families took to exist with the hereditary owners and the land itself.

The past does become the present, however, at the brand new Heritage Pioneer Village, a truly authentic replica of the past, according to inaugural manager Drew Wickerson (Wickerson interview: 1998). The camera focuses on a crowd of school children, period dressed volunteers, woodchop
champions, together with the Queensland Light Horse Brigade, while the author interviews Drew at the highly successful Village opening. Regional tourists are browsing through attractive replicas of saddlery shops, grocers’ stores, country town cottages, while the collection of old clocks, old district school buildings, an old church and windmill from a local farm, vie for the public’s attention with rides on camels or in vintage cars. Everything on view is the production of a nostalgic settlers’ past. But is it real? Drew tells us there are plans to transport the old Mt Morgan Hospital down the Old Rack Highway to become a medical museum, an authentic copy of our early country hospitals. A Poets’ Breakfast is being held in another authentic but contemporary shearing shed. Again, the politics of presentation of this Heritage Pioneer Village and the power to attract tourists to destinations which must re-invent the past are discussed further in Chapter Four and Five of this thesis when cultural centres as Metaphors of Power are confronted with issues of ‘land-marking’ and ‘virtual and historic recreation’.

The camera crew spent a brief moment with the Queensland Rail Heritage volunteers at the Borough Chambers studying the history of the Great Northern Railway (later renamed Central Western Railway) in the early 1860s which was apparently ‘aimed westward’ with demand for a rail service growing as it went, expanding until it reached Longreach in 1865, and finally making its way to Winton and Clermont in the north, and Springsure in the south. Historian Isabel Hoch (1994) notes that small towns
like Alpha, Jericho and Bogantungan flourished on the way, sporting several hotels and a population of about 6000 people in 1881. The building of the railroad west was the real pioneering of Central Queensland employing hundreds of men along the track. Small history museums at Bogantungan, Emerald, Mt Morgan, Barcaldine, Ilfracombe and Winton which grew up along the railway or at the mine, are all popular heritage tourism destinations today in their own right - all part of a network of attractions which help to form the recreational geography of the region according to Kirschenblatt Gimblett (1998). The important role of these small history museums will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

The documentary’s voice over, again speaking from the present, informs the audience that as the railway ended, gold was also running out, and unemployment and unrest probably culminated in *The Great Shearers Strike* of 1891, when the rebel shearers were themselves ‘railroaded’. Historian Geoffrey Bolton has pointed out that as the railway line travelled west it ironically made the crucial difference in ‘winning the war’ by enabling the Queensland government and its well-armed forces to overpower the striking shearers. The suppression of the shearers' strike in 1891 - 1894 can be seen as another example of the power of the railway. The shearers were not bent on civil war but the government controlled the railways. According to Professor Bolton, if the strike had taken place six years earlier, it would have been impossible for the employers to mobilise non-union labour to fill
the shearers’ places and it would have been equally impossible for the government ‘to bring police, troops and volunteers to centres such as Clermont and Barcaldine and later to Dagworth Station at Winton’ (G. Bolton, cited in Huf, Myers and McDonald 1993:192)

*On The Western Line*: The Train Journey and Regional Identity.

Commencing the train journey to the Central Highlands, the narrator reminds the audience: *The train is waiting to depart... and the western line will take us past famous cattle and sheep properties which tell of a past thick with droughts, massacres, shearers’ strikes and the good times too.* Entertained by a whiskered swaggy singing *Waltzing Matilda*, the *Spirit of the Outback* takes its passengers to Duaringa and the Mad Hatter’s Races in aid of the Royal Flying Doctor; to Emerald and the Queensland British Foods Corporation anniversary at Capella, past Bogantungan and on to Barcaldine. Here, a contemporary tourist icon, The Big Tent, (reminiscent of the rebel shearers’ quarters) houses the Worker’s Heritage Centre in the centre of town, while at the railway station the Bach Creek Windmill supports a historic and rather tragic Tree of Knowledge - an old ghost gum bearing a plaque to commemorate the Shearers’ War and the following birth of the Labor Party in 1895.
Certainly the story of the Shearers War of 1891-94 and the birth of a powerful wool industry and grazing squattocracy in the Central Highlands highlights the importance of the expansion of the railroad. The strike, which ranged throughout the state but particularly from Gordon Downs and Peak Downs near Clermont to Aberfoyle, Dagworth and Ellerslie Stations at Winton in the Central West, did become the platform for a nascent Australian Labor Party. But most importantly to the community today, the Shearers’ War has both politicised and promoted Barcaldine’s Workers Heritage Centre, Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Centre and the heritage tourism industry on the Matilda and Capricorn Highways of outback Queensland. These historical links with the past are commodified and presented to the tourist at every destination on the Western Line, as will be seen on this documentary. Both mythology and the collective memory are involved in this conceptualisation of history, as the documentary highlights a contemporary protest song beneath ‘The Tree’:

Beneath the tree of knowledge, that first seed was sown  
Bearing workers’ hopes of justice, a party of their own  
Born of shearers’ struggles, strike camps in the bush  
A party that would challenge the squatters and their push.  
If none will stop to listen, if that's the way it's going to be  
You can keep the Labor party; just give us back our tree.

(Mark Pryor, Capital Hill Protest Camp, 25 March 1992)
Banjo Paterson’s unofficial national anthem *Waltzing Matilda* is again heard over the train’s progress west (its continuity pervades the entire western segment) followed by the shearers’ own protest song, *Blood on the Wattle*, to again highlight the history of European land settlement and the pioneering bush workers’ struggle for freedom and justice. The workers’ Tree of Knowledge with its historic plaque stands adjacent to the railroad - a true symbol of national power. Critics have suggested a new and separate documentary should be made to record this colonial war as it underpins the frontier story of Australian masculine nationalism. The bush worker, the shearer, ringer, drover and itinerant ‘swaggie’ of 1890s could be compared with today’s dogger, mechanic, miner and cotton farmer - all could be identified in today’s frontier stories in order to attract tourists of the future to our cultural and heritage centres.

There is another ideological shift in the documentary’s voice as a collage of extraordinary images flashes across the screen - giant sapphires, massive cement bulls, dinosaurs, crystal walls like anthills, singing ships, ringers, murals, windmills and miners and a piano precariously perched in a gumtree mourning the 60 local people drowned in the great 1916 flood at Clermont. Exotic icons of the past and present, all celebrate the ‘everyday’ people of the region. These outdoor works of art have sought to define and prescribe a distinctive Australian culture, a sense of place, a creative voice and a national history. On the one hand, a windmill celebrates the miraculous
discovery of Artesian water at Bach Creek in 1886; while at Alpha and Jericho, once prosperous towns which flourished along the railway track, a new cultural tourism agenda has seen giant murals painted on railway sheds depicting local stories, and a significant sandstone sculpture, The Crystal Trumpeters designed by local artist Peggy Westmoreland (who also designed Emu Park’s Singing Ship, a tribute to Captain Cook) are installed on the main highway. At Ilfracombe, the train passes a unique open-air farm machinery museum - outdoor objects of a different kind, but still depicting the land, the colonisation of Western Queensland.

Here again, can be seen a preoccupation with regional identity and with reclaiming the past, but at the same time highlighting the dilemma of these central west towns who are desperately seeking an image which will attract the tourist. According to Chilla Bulbeck (1991), there have been several hundred ‘unusual’ monuments established by local groups with limited resources in the friendly surrounds of parks, gardens and railway stations. Although truly Australian they do not challenge the nation builders of orthodox history with their variety and uniqueness, according to Bulbeck (1991) and Gibson and Besley (2004), who have done much research on these cultural outdoor objects. Those monuments built prior to 1970, mostly reflect Australian frontier history, pioneer exploration and a struggle with nature. However in the last few decades the emergence of other perspectives including the increasing recognition for Indigenous people’s land rights, and
a postmodern emphasis on 'big things' such as bulls, pineapples and dinosaurs, has widened the scope of outdoor art along the western railway line. A more detailed discussion on public art objects and their relevance to regional heritage tourism is studied in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Traversing the Outback - National Rhetoric Re-Interpreted.

Finally, a third map superimposed over the speeding train heralds the arrival of the far west as the 'Spirit of the Outback' deposits its travellers at Longreach, the historic centre of the region's pastoral industry. The first stop at this Easter Festival is Australia's national icon, the Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre. As the narrator informs the audience, it's a perfect example of heritage converting a location in the isolated far west into a brilliantly viable destination, an outback cultural centre celebrating its 10th anniversary at this festival. Conceived by artist Hugh Sawrey and business man and bush identity R.M. Williams in the early 1980s, the Hall of Fame builds its appeal on one of the country's most enduring mythologies - that of the rural worker. Opened by Queen Elizabeth, in the company of a great many national celebrities in 1988, it has become an ideological core for outback Queensland, and the regional heritage tourism industry. Originally conceived in a location where a declining grazing economy, unemployment and decreased services were a matter of vital concern, it has indeed offered a second life to Longreach and
the west, its main mission being to preserve the national heritage of the past and to recreate a national culture for the future (Kapferer, 1998: Trotter, 1992). The narrator informs the viewer the HOF was funded by the Australian Bicentennial Authority to rekindle national pride and bridge the gap in understanding between urban and rural Australians.

_The Ringer_, the huge bronze stockman positioned at the entrance to the Hall of Fame, appears on camera, as the archetypical image of the outback, itself. The 2.75 metre statue, sculptured by Eddie Hackman, depicts both the culture of the Queensland shearing shed’s gun shearer, as well as the most able and skilled stockman from the mustering camp. The use of traditional outback building materials of stone and corrugated iron are symbols signifying the toughness and durability of the bush (Trotter: 1992). The whole complex projects a particular version of the bush legend, as the stories of outback settlers, telegraph operators, Afghan drivers, and explorers are projected on the wall, on video tape, and through the voice of the hologram drover, seated at his campfire.

There has been some criticism in the way in which women pioneers have been remembered, ‘or ignored’ according to the narrator of the documentary. _Where are the women of the bush_, asks the interviewer, as the camera focuses on a bust of Dame Mary Durack, AC.DBE, behind closed doors in the storage department at Stockman’s Hall of Fame. Dame Mary, trustee
and member of the HOF board fiercely criticised the collection with its absence of women pioneers and overwhelmingly masculine atmosphere of male graziers, stockmen, telegraph engineers and Afghan hawkers. Manager Brian Osborn assures viewers in a brief documentary interview that the HOF trustees decided not to celebrate women pioneers individually, but did plant a rose garden in their honour. Instead, we are informed that the unsung heroes, the Aboriginal women drovers, the white women of the west and early women pilots, are celebrated together with the pioneers, the bush workers and the whole gamut of the colonial community. The camera pans over a neat, freshly planted rose garden as one female tourist is heard to ask: *how many pioneer women gardeners were able to grow roses?* The role of this cultural centre as a ‘metaphor of power’ within the heritage tourism discourse will be discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

Within five minutes walk from the Stockman’s Hall of Fame, is the Qantas Museum celebrating Australia’s first commercial planes and Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service. Established at Winton in 1920 it is the oldest airline in the English-speaking world, and the second oldest airline operating in the world today. We are told by the local establishment that Qantas was born at Winton, nurtured at Cloncurry but serviced the isolated grazing communities initially from Longreach (Osborn 1998). The antique and much-loved Tiger Moth monoplane and its original pilot are captured briefly on the documentary as they represent Qantas and the Royal Flying
Doctor, at the newest heritage centre of the outback. The story of John Flynn and his talented disciple Alfred Traeger who was supplying high-voltage generators to power Flynn's experimental flying doctor's radio as early as 1925, is linked to Cloncurry's memorial cultural centre and to a very special heritage event - the Duaringa Mad Hatters' Races, (Featured earlier on the documentary). The train journey was again used to transport the colourfully attired race goers to their destination and race meeting held annually in aid of the RFD. The filmmaker was able to juxtapose shots of the RFD exhibition at Qantas, with the race meeting, in order to connect a sense of heritage and pastness with the local race festivities.

A quite disturbing interview with Sue Cotham, official HOF photographer, author and former cattle station 'jillaroo', speaks of her concerns about outback tourism. Perhaps she has not yet heard of the Queensland Government's commitment to the Heritage Trails Network which is to promote the Matilda Highway's destinations in Queensland's far west. The camera crew does, however, catch up with a band of enthusiastic tourists who are attending the Easter Festival of the Outback at both Longreach and Winton and it seems these Australian travellers will always be eager to experience a unique rural landscape which still dominates the Australian imagination with its pioneer and frontier discourses of the past. Although the bush is as alien as a foreign country for many, and rather less easily accessible, according to Jan Kapferer (1998), it does provide a spur for the
patriotic tourism which has been developed in Longreach and the surrounding districts such as Barcaldine, and Winton - our next port of call on the heritage journey, where the tourist is greeted with another national icon, the recently completed Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre.

At the Winton Cultural Centre, the only cultural centre named after a song, according to the brochure (1998), the national myth of Waltzing Matilda is presented as a magical re-enactment with a panorama and sound and light show hologram portraying the historic story at Combo Waterhole, featuring shearer Hoffmeister's ghost, the troopers, the squatters and a cluster of sheep. The story of Banjo Paterson and Christina McPherson's first performance of the famous song at the North Gregory Hotel in 1894 is proudly related in magnificent interactive style. Even the lidded and rusty billies, all captured on camera, have a vocal part to play! However this official account is refuted by local historian and researcher Richard Magoffin who insists Waltzing Matilda was first composed and sung at Dagworth Station, the home of the McPhersons, north of Winton at Kynuna. The documentary crew visit Magoffin's own particular 'hall of fame' at Kynuna to be told the song is a political allegory, not a myth and not 'all the fault of the bore water' as A.B Paterson himself wrote many years later at his Sydney club (Paterson 'Golden Waters' Collected Works vol 2 1935, cited in Magoffin 1998). In Chapter Four, the author debates the song lines of Waltzing Matilda which was 'conceived by a lawyer poet and a squatter's
daughter’, according to Magoffin (interview with author 1998), following the sacrificial burning of the station woolshed and suicide of shearer Hoffmeister. It remains this country’s most popular national song linking the bush and the Shearers’ Strike of 1891-94 to the city; from the elite grazing fraternity to the birth of the Labor Party and a complex Australian identity today. The audience is reminded of the Australia-wide emphasis on this deeply rooted colonial narrative which today takes precedence over the local story telling.

The region’s political identity - and its importance to a vigorous tourism industry - is captured on camera at this celebration and opening of the $3.3 million Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre by the then premier of Queensland Bob Borbidge on Easter Saturday, April 11, 1998. It is a major feature of the Outback Festival. As state National Party leaders and government incumbents mingle with local grazing identities and famous country music stars arrive in town, we note another national icon, Dick Smith, flies into Winton in his personal jet to join the festive street parade and attend the festival ball, which is of course held at the Winton Club, the birthplace of Qantas. A huge bronze statue of poet and legend Banjo Paterson dominates the whole commemoration scene outside the cultural centre as depicted on the video together with the authentic windmill, again positioning the outback, the pioneer and the myth as the centre of Winton’s heritage.
The author maintains throughout this thesis, that history is commodified as sites and events such as the commemoration of the Waltzing Matilda legend, the Shearers' Strike of 1891, or the birth of Qantas are repackaged through tourist enterprise. Here we see the visitors and tourists personally interacting with a commercialised version of the past, as they view monuments and memorabilia, carefully prepared tableaux, holograms and dramatic historic representations of their heritage. This air of celebratory excitement continues to reverberate through the outback-western towns of Winton and Longreach, as the festival unfolds and the camera continues to record the interacting tourists, locals, politicians and performers. We picture them boarding the old steam train, cheering the street processions, joining in all-day bouts of bush poetry, attending the silent movies in the old cinema, barracking the local jumbuck riders at the rodeo and betting on the local champion at the country race meeting - all images of our regional heritage and popular culture which can be reinterpreted by the viewer (and the tourist) to obtain a provocative picture of this region of outback Queensland.

Discovering the Meaning of Place.

This chapter is sub-titled 'Discovering the Meaning of Place'. One major theme which does underwrite the whole documentary is the dominance of an untamed landscape over the built environment. At Lark Quarry situated
on the outback dirt road between Winton and Old Cork Station, the video camera comes face to face with a vast desert panorama focusing on a natural amphitheatre, bordered by jump-ups, spinifex and bulldust. The author has already noted that ‘landscape and geographical pastness’ are all intrinsically important to our sense of history, our identity, and our cultural industry but also to our survival. Schama (1996) argues that the healing wilderness is as much the product of culture’s craving and culture’s framing as any other imagined garden:

Founding fathers of modern environmentalism, Thoreau and Muir, said: In the wilderness is the preservation of the world - out there in the outback, waiting discovery, is the antidote for the poisons of industrial society.

(Schama 1996:7)

The very act of identifying the place presupposes our presence and along with us - in this case, white European Australians with ‘all the heavy cultural backpacks that we lug with us on the trail’ (1996:7). However, Schama suggests contemporary Australia may be appropriating a new set of nature myths and devising ecological barriers which could destroy the ideal of a shared landscape built on natural and traditional Indigenous myths and memories. Here, the interviewer discovers further local and national contradictions. This immense national park and natural museum of dinosaur antiquity has been appropriated and managed by the Queensland State
Museum (in accordance with other national anthropological heritage sites including Muttaburra and Richmond in North Queensland). A young ranger goes to great lengths to explain the work of the Environment Protection Authority in protecting hundreds of ancient fossilised dinosaur footprints. This is an important issue within the national land conservation program, but the author discovers there is a terse information barrier between the local Winton historical society, the EPA and the state authority. No signs of a ‘shared landscape culture’ are evident here.

It can be argued that our new national parks and native reserves are in danger of becoming typical exclusion zones. Aboriginal people too are worried about the effects of too much tourism and an influx of even more ‘unknowing people’ on their country, and their sacred sites. Western Australian activist David Mowaljarlai is quoted as saying:

This has been of great concern to us - Wunambul, Ngarinyin and Woorarra people - as the Government wants to control that country and promote it for tourism and what they call conservation. But what about us traditional Aboriginal owners? We don't want to lose that country forever - we don't want Government to take over our country and our sacred places.

Queensland traditional landowners are also worried about the long-term ownership of their country - and who holds rites of passage over their territory. Fitzroy Basin Elders’ chairman, Lindsay Black, when interviewed at Springsure for the documentary on T.W.Wills and Cullin-la-Ringo Massacre, emphasised that ‘Every site is sacred, we want to look after all of our land’ (see interviews with author, 1998 and 2002).

Lark Quarry as depicted on camera, however, is today the nexus of a bush festival. It is the scene of an outdoor country music concert and the desert is swarming with happy tourists singing along with two self-styled ‘old dinosaurs’ John Williamson and Tommy Emmanuel, who entertain the festival crowd with their own fossilised brand of outback bush ballads. These Kalkadoon dancers, a young Indigenous group, imported from Cloncurry, also entertain the crowd. As the camera captures the group relaxing beneath the backdrop of the sponsor’s alcohol poster, an alternative voice could remind the audience that this ‘untouched’ desert landscape belonged to the Kalkadoon people in another age. Certainly, the controversial role of cultural heritage interacting with the Environment Protection Authority, National Parks Authority, state museums and local tourism bodies, makes ownership and conservation of our sacred sites a very complex issue. This issue will be addressed in more detail when the role of the local museum and cultural centre is examined in later Chapters, as the author looks at contemporary challenges facing the regional heritage tourist
industry as the Queensland Government writes new cultural policies to be activated by the Queensland Heritage Trails Network.

One brief but compelling video segment which does question the ownership of our local museum collections is the scene filmed in the original Christina McPherson Cottage at the old Qantilda Museum in Winton where the audience is invited to study the collection of 19th Century pioneer memorabilia, an old telephone exchange, station bric-a-brac, kitchen utensils and old farm vehicles and implements. Next to these European items is a stark collection of Kalkadoon artefacts, weapons, flints, tools and a series of subjective photographs of Kalkadoon ‘lubras’ taken by white male photographers at the beginning of British colonial settlement in Kalkadoon country. On camera, the author expresses her disgust at the way in which the original Australians (and their way of life) have been remembered and appropriated as the other, and as a commodity, a tourism product, for the voyeuristic traveller. ‘The 19th Century processes of possessing Aboriginal people as objects and later as image and text have been a contentious part of the dispossession of the Aboriginal people’, writes Cilla Bulbeck (1991: 179). Of course, Bulbeck and other social historians maintain that Aboriginal people, in attempting to define themselves in their own terms, must also deal with white values and interests. They may not always control their own representations, but they
need to speak through film and text about their place in society, about Aboriginal land rights and Aboriginal culture. The documentary states:

Although local historical societies have made attempts to retrieve Aboriginal history, often the story has been confined to pre-history - a time before white settlers came. This strategy allows the incorporation of Aboriginal history into what Tony Bennett calls the ‘never ending story of the nation’, appearing to side step the difficulties of 1788 and what lay ahead.


The swagman’s spirit continues to imbue the far west with magic as the whiskered musician invites train travellers *once more to* sing the bush anthem on the return journey. As Samuel (1994) writes, myth and memory are inevitably present in all histories. By taking memory seriously the documentary maker must encounter fantasy and fantasy-making with myth and myth-making as creative social activities which sometimes forces a reappraisal of historical truth and truth making, a redefining not just of history but of history-making as an imaginative process, as history calls on real life experiences, on memory and myth, fantasy and desire (1994). As the sun finally sets over shearer Hoffmeister's ghost on the original Combo Waterhole, in the closing segment of the documentary, to the strains of Richard Magoffin’s piano accordion, echoed by grazier and bush poet Lee Taylor’s interpretation of *Matilda*, it would seem that a sense of geographical pastness really does lie at the core of our regional identity.
In this chapter documenting the heritage tourism industry in Central Queensland, through the video maker’s personal pilgrimage, the author has endeavoured to explore the underlying relationship between white European settlement, Indigenous and ethnic cultures, regional identity and the land itself, within the production *On the Western Line*. Glimpses of reconciliation, races and rodeos, cattle musters, bush poetry and bush festivals have been intersected with segments examining local museums and cultural centres - all ‘metaphors of power’ within a shared landscape. There has been an attempt to open up Central Queensland’s portrayal of a multicultural region of the future, but a more critical debate on cultural tourism issues will be discussed in relation to Aboriginality, *Dreamtime in a Cowtown* and the South Sea Islanders’ *Trail of Endurance* in the following chapters.

Does Documentary Mirror Its Author’s Perceptions?

A close examination of the forms, circumstances and historical development of *documentary* as a genre, is of central importance here to an understanding of both the representational conventions of media imagery and language, and the relationship of public communication systems to our social formations, within which these messages are circulated. As John Corner (1986) maintains, it would be hard to find a category of media
output where the technological, the aesthetic, the social and the political have impinged so directly on one another as in the various forms of documentary account. The documentary provides one level of organised consciousness, ‘a central mode of social control to the entire heritage narrative’ (Corner 1986: x-xi). Decisions in filming, when to stop, when to edit and selection of footage can play a significant part in the production’s direction and does impose an authorial perspective on content. There is no single position from which all significant action can be observed and recorded. Ultimately I would agree with Chaney and Pickering that the train journey and the cultural heritage production mirror not only its own process but also its author’s thought, perceptions and self-examination:

Documentation is inescapably an expression of the social relationships of its production and reception, involving questions about those who are empowered to describe aspects of the real world and about the consequences of the descriptive categories and conventions employed.

(Chaney & Pickering 1986:31)

It would follow therefore that the most useful way of attempting to understand the type of picture of the world a documentary provides is to ask how it is constructed as an account rather than whether or not it is accurate. In other words, it is the quality of the sense it creates of what authorises the selected facts as appropriate to the reality represented that is important. The legitimate reporting of the facts is important, but we need to focus on the
rhetoric, the way in which facts are given meaning, significance and express the truth. This ideological concept surely underpins the overall production of documentaries, because, as Chaney and Pickering maintain ‘Our expectation of documentary is that a degree of certainty and truth can be assumed within those meanings and the account is legitimated by its reporting of the facts’ (1986:29-30). The process of writing and, by extension, any form of textual production, is increasingly recognised as integral to any research on the construction of knowledge. It is widely accepted that knowledge has become the principle form of production over the last few decades and the relationships of the suppliers and users of knowledge - to the knowledge they supply and which will be consumed by their audience - is integral to the whole meaning and ideology of the documentary.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, documentaries are political, and ‘the how of documentary construction is inseparable from the why’ (Silverstone 1986:85). For Silverston and Lyotard narratives are produced and embedded in the culture of every day but, however closely locked to the folklore of the contemporary world, it is the persistence of these claims for attention, legitimation and for an audience, that the documentary displays itself as rhetoric. Not only the gathering of memories, but the way in which the stories are told. Both the television and film documentary utilise a specific kind of language in dealing with the relationships between
narratives of everyday life and narratives of national importance. We see culture itself as a multiplicity of competing language games, each bidding for legitimation, for power and authority in the affairs of men and women; each bidding for the dominant position as the definer of the nature of reality (Lyotard cited in Silverstone 1986: 81). In an increasingly fragmented and postmodern culture people find their identity and community through these categories of knowledge. These ‘language games’ assist in recovering the dynamics between a local story and a national dialogue. We find that the documentary uses these language games to relate stories across time and space and provide its audience with a distinctive type of picture of the world - the predominant sense of the real world being 'the material and social world in which people live' and not one which has only an imagined reality. What is signified within the documentary account has to be accepted as realistic (1986:84). Its legitimacy derives from a fidelity to actually existing situations and circumstances which they represent. It is precisely because this quality is so highly relative that it needs to be understood as rhetorical. Our expectation of documentary is that a degree of certainty and truth can be assumed. As Silverstone notes:

Television narratives speak of and for the everyday and in so doing must come to terms with the knowledge that they are always political, - the product of social and cultural struggle - the product of a competition between the voices, interests, discourses for legitimation and the right to speak.

(Silverstone 1986:83-84).
In Chapter Two, the historical documentaries on King O'Malley (1884-1953) and Thomas Wentworth Wills (1835-1880), again look at the differences between the local, sometimes ‘mythic’, narrative, and national, presumably ‘historic’, discourse. But what remains uncontested about the three documentaries is that they have explored actual people and actual situations, in all the richness and ambiguity of life. They have exposed us to information and evidence that is quite contradictory and provocative, subjective and socially critical. There have been tensions in competing and equally valid points of view, such as the conflict between local and national stories and oral versus written accounts. But as Rabiger (1998) writes, history has always been about point of view. Today, we can use the documentary to bear witness and to reinterpret history for a universal audience. Michael Rabiger maintains that in the past the recording of history has always been privileged and has emphasised the leaders of society (or the criminals), but future historians will have as their resource documentaries that are ‘grass roots’ narratives, stories which tell of ordinary families and their place in society, which will pose questions concerning how our generation felt about the past:

Ordinary people know virtually nothing about the lives and minds of their progenitors, especially if poor and illiterate. The great mass of humanity has left nothing save what can be glimpsed in the records of their time, their folk music and cautionary sayings,
their legends - in the marks they made on the landscape. Of humble human beings one learns nothing unless they tangled with the law or did something remarkable. Their collective history was written for them, if recorded at all, by their masters.

(Rabiger 1998:14)

The Audience and the Contract.

This documentary has mediated between the producer, director and the audience, producing different discourses, different arguments, different reasoning. With its mimetic appeal to reason (the rhetoric, the look, the image, the voice) the video documentary text has become ‘a fulcrum in an essentially contested and fluid contemporary culture’ (Lyotard cited in Silverstone 1986:82) and again we note the tensions between myth and mimetic presentation of story and argument. It could be argued that this video text has invited a triple reading from the viewer - as a narrative employment, as a referent situated in history and finally as a dimension of myth, spectacle and image (1986:82). As the documentary examined the role of the Barcaldine Workers’ Heritage Centre - The Big Tent and the historic Tree of Knowledge within the context of the Great Shearers’ Strike of 1891-95 - the audience experienced confrontation between national politics and local mythology; at Mt Morgan’s Golden Festival and the Running of the Cutter we saw a tourist spectacle versus local history; with
Winton's Banjo Paterson and the writing of Waltzing Matilda, again local myth and storytelling confronts a national icon and national politics. The pioneering history of the Great Northern Railway, as presented by the rail volunteers and Rockhampton Historical Society, is in sharp contrast to the story related by Kairi Kairi elders Lindsay Black and Fred Conway at the Springsure Keeping Place, or Mabel Edmund of the South Sea Islander community at Joskeleigh cemetery.

Consciously or otherwise, every documentary signals how it means to treat its audience. We find there are different levels of respect, and which ever level is used becomes part of an implied contract between communicator and audience (Rabiger 1998:14-16). According to Rabiger (1998) a good narrative engages the audience actively and never patronises or manipulates its subjects or its audience. It should invite its audience to make difficult judgements about motive and responsibility and draw its viewers in to expand their mind and their emotions through a series of events. It is hoped that these documentaries have made the audience an accomplice during the author's quest for the truth about regional identity and the heritage industry.

Mythic Narratives as the 'Wellspring' of Nationalism.

The collective memory is a record kept alive by continuous reworking; as the narrative of one's life becomes part of an interconnected set of
narratives from which individuals derive their identity. Tourist sites, memorials, local history museums, archives and records are all part of this public memory, containing the accumulated material substance of our past. It is therefore a vital element in documenting the heritage of this region to record these mythic narratives and mobilise this ‘wellspring of nationalism’ in order to serve the region’s differing ideological and political interests (Darian-Smith and Hamilton 1994:2-4). In the conservation of our heritage we can think of linking people and place on many levels. On the national level - the level at which heritage is most real in policy and operational terms and most intense - people are linked to place by the emphasis on relics of the past as symbols of the continuity of the nation’s cultural tradition and tangible elements of its cultural identity. But, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, place can also be defined on the local level and it is on this level that people can relate most intimately to place through an appreciation and understanding of local historical artefacts and local folklore.

The original documentary, *On the Western Line*, has examined the way in which regions employ ‘collective remembering' to erect memorials, celebrate their history with special events, appropriate their heroes as local and national icons - all acts signifying Australianness. Through its own particular enterprise each small community reconstructs the myths of yesterday. Here, the interviews with pioneers, activists, historians and folk
museum curators tell their own accounts of the heritage industry. One school of thought suggests we tell about our heroes from a position informed by the concerns of today, 'manipulating the past to fit the present'; another stipulates that 'ties to the past are cultivated by means of periodic commemoration rites' which do not bend the past to the service of the present but reproduce the past to make it live again (Durkheim cited in Schwartz: 1990:81). On one level, memory is seen as an individual act, personal, private, spontaneous, but once shared, as Darian-Smith writes 'these memories enter the realm of social or collective remembering' (1996:34). We can observe these group memories passed on to other generations, providing a living link between them, providing social cohesion, but in the documentary we note they can also be a source of great conflict. These collective memories are both reflected and reinforced culturally in specific activities and commemorative events such as the Festival of the Outback, the Golden Mount Festival, Running the Cutter, the Dunny Derby, the Mad Hatter’s Race Meeting, and Qantas Founders’ Exhibition - hence our choice of venues for On The Western Line.

Historically, as noted in the beginning of this thesis, the regional identity of the Central Queensland pioneer has been depicted through the expansion of grazing leases and pastoral wealth from wool, cattle and gold or the growth of labour unions (which led to the birth of the Shearers’ War and the vital Northern and Central Railroads upon which our journey is situated). But it
must also be seen in proximity with Chinese miners, with Aboriginal Australians and South Sea Islander indentured sugar workers against a stormy background of conflicting land rights, racial abuse and the White Australia Policy officially active until 1960s but unofficially, still present in some places, today.

The strength of links between human culture and nature is often hidden beneath layers of the commonplace. Simon Schama, like Samuel, notes the richness, antiquity and complexity of landscape traditions. According to Schama (1996) landscape and memory are constructed as an excavation below our conventional sight-level to recover the veins of myth and memory that lie beneath the surface. Both Samuel (1994) and Schama (1996) argue that inherited landscape myths and memories share two common characteristics - their surprising endurance through the centuries and their power to shape institutions that we still live with. The debate here suggests that landscapes are self-consciously designed to express the virtues of a particular political or social community. (This debate can be argued throughout the thesis as each culture within its region lays claim to specific land rights and specific rites of passage). Schama argues that national identity would lose much of its enchantment without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition. I would suggest that the documentary viewer perceives the narrative from the context of his or her own knowledge of landscape. By studying our particular past in oral and written text and from
our specific place in time we can as Central Queenslanders observe how we have become what we are today and discover what we want to be in the future:

The study of specific local places puts things more on the scale of everyday living, while *place* as a category displaces other dominant meanings which have been elevated by social ideologies to privileged positions.

(Muecke 1996:17)

We know that the documentary film communicates between the subject - history, heritage, environment, politics, science - and the everyday. Rabiger, in his discussion on aesthetics and authorship, argues that a review of documentary language demonstrates that the genre is becoming less monological and more dialogical. A new generation of filmmakers is dragging the documentary away from ‘corporate bureaucrats and embracing the audience’s eager longing for films that provoke an active inner dialogue’ (Rabiger 1998:14). The documentary genre is acquiring the complexities of language, thought and purpose once confined to literature and the theatre. This is particularly noticeable in *The Legend of King O'Malley*, as the director and camera interact with actors and audience at *The Play* and later become involved in the negotiated deconstruction of O'Malley in interviews with playwright Bob Ellis and newspaper editor Peter Dunn. Very different, is the close relationship formed between interviewer and narrator of the Wills saga where the author participates in the retrieval of family history -
both oral and written - at Minerva Creek Station, Springsure, at Rainworth
Fort and at Murdering Gap in the making of *The Triumph and Tragedy of
Tommy Wills*. These documentaries are studied in detail in the following
chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

Two Historical Documentaries:

Local Identity challenges the Nation

(i) *The Legend of King O’Malley: Revisiting Politics of Federation*
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Two Historical Documentaries:

Local Identity challenges the Nation

(i) The Legend of King O’Malley: Revisiting Politics of Federation

One of the unsolved mysteries of O'Malley's life is why in 1887 or 1888 he suddenly decided to leave America and migrate to Queensland. He said he came in the last hope of being cured of tuberculosis which he had picked up from Rosy, his wife. One day, sitting despondently in a San Francisco Park he met a sailor who told him he should go to a place called Rockhampton in Australia where the climate would cure him. Taking the sailor's advice, he found a ship leaving for Queensland and after much argument sailed, accompanied by his coffin, for Port Alma. It's been suggested it was because of a financial scandal that O'Malley abruptly left USA for the distant shores of Rockhampton and Emu Park.


As debated in Chapter One, documentaries are authored constructs in which the director is empowered to use the work in progress to ‘bear witness’ (Rabiger 1998), to observe and report on significant events, on landmarks in history, both national and local. In the previous chapter, the author took the audience on a broad, all-encompassing journey along the Tropic of Capricorn to document the region’s contemporary, cultural and social approach to its heritage. In this chapter, which analyses two historical documentaries impacting on regional identity, I have again explored actual situations and actual people, and critically researched both local community
resources and national archives in an attempt to balance the oppositions and ambiguities of history, and bear witness to the regional legends of two historic figures, Federation parliamentarian King O’Malley and Australian visionary sportsman Tommy Wills.

In both accounts of O’Malley and Wills the video director invites the audience to make judgements about motive and responsibility, about truth, and the appropriation by local community museums and tourist institutions, of these icons of colonial history. The documentary treatment centres on the significance of two real life stories in a time of extraordinary change, both political and social. In each case, the auteur/director has endeavoured to represent O’Malley (1854-1953) and Wills (1835-1880) in a historical context, within their own century but reaching from the past into present time. The O’Malley documentary satirises our early Australian federal politicians through Boddy and Ellis’ musical comedy (1974) as the film encapsulates the national legend of the ‘Yankee bounder’ who put lavatories on trains, founded the capital city of Canberra and confronted the ‘Little Digger’ (future Prime Minister, Billy Hughes), on the issue of war conscription. This is juxtaposed with the local fisherman’s tale of the insurance salesman, arriving on Emu Park’s shore, destitute and dying of consumption (Hoyle 1981). The Wills legend is a very different story historically and politically. It is the account of a great Victorian cricketer, the founder of Australian Rules Football, who is linked by fate with the
Cullin-la-Ringo Massacre, 1861, and frontier war on the Nogoa River in Central Queensland. Both are important national and ideological narratives positioned in opposition to the local story grounded within a local space.

It has been argued that many contemporary documentaries which use a string of interviews to reconstruct 'suppressed fragments of history' lose their own voice in deference to the witnesses recruited on film. According to Bill Nicholls (1986:111), they become a 'heterogeneous mix of authorised voices' which informs the documentary but 'destabilises the impression of unified fictive space' (1986:111). Nicholls maintains a sense of contradiction is suppressed beneath the unity of collective memory, but, as author and director of these documentaries, I would suggest that the narrative conflict between this unity of collective memory and the film maker's own voice - the past versus the present - the historical sub text versus today's narrator and interviewer, opens up differing categories of knowledge within the two dominating discourses, which allow the documentary to present these 'questions of magnitude' (1986) which exceed any one logic or mode of presentation.

The on-camera narration links the local mythology of the subject to a notion of national heritage which powerfully impacts on audiences from vastly different backgrounds and agendas. This voice-over commentary is able to block any confusion about time and place of each scene and action, whether
archival or contemporary and as Corner (1986) argues ‘It provides a continuity and gives disparate materials a firm filmic structure from which to proceed’ (189). The text becomes the site of contradiction where these narrative strategies seek a resolution to the social contradictions they must represent, if the text is to exert a hold on the viewer. ‘When the conventions of documentary and realism combine, the result is a form of instruction and pleasure with considerable significance, as the documentary effect turns us back toward the historical dimension’ (Jameson cited in Nicholls 1986:110).

As I researched the documentation of our first Federation Parliament and King O’Malley’s epic adventures in politics, or the early colonial history of Horatio Spencer Wills and son Thomas, in order to gain the true story of Cullin-la-Ringo Massacre at Murdering Gap in 1861, a broad historical debate opened up on colonial politics, on conscription, and on questions of ideology, race and frontier war, barely visible today.

The Legend of King O’Malley: national and local narratives.

These historical documentaries present different voices and images carrying compelling and implicit messages which are not always signalled in the title, subtitles or surface action but in the editing process and in the underlying ideology. Some of the archival images portrayed in the Wills documentary may disturb viewers as they relate symbolically to the silent
confrontation of early European settlement and Indigenous tribes in the Springsure district, while anti-conscription speeches and a series of quite cynical cartoons underwrite the O’Malley narrative. What is important to this thesis, however, is the impact these accounts make on Central Queenslanders’ knowledge of their real heritage, with the preservation of these mythologies in local museums, as national monuments, and in the continuity of their celebration in the region’s active cultural life.

King O’Malley’s claim to have landed at Emu Park on the Central Queensland Coast, with his coffin, and to have subsequently regained his health after living with Aboriginal Coowonga’s people for two years has become a postcolonial legend. Its truth has been hotly disputed by many historians and academics, but supported by writers Dorothy Catts, Barry Jones and A.R. Hoyle whose biographies on O’Malley differ widely however, on many aspects. Despite speculation and disbelief about the dubious nature or lack of original documentation supporting the legend, O’Malley’s image in this coastal community has grown from relative obscurity to mythic proportions. The story has strong national connotations; it has a sense of national place, of landscape, juxtaposed with a local sense of belonging to a particular space in time. Born at Valley Falls, Kansas, on July 4, apparently in 1854 (Catts 1953) O’Malley worked in banking, real estate and insurance in the USA before founding the Waterlily Rockbound Church, becoming its first bishop and marrying acolyte Rosy Wilmot who
died in 1886. According to A.R. Hoyle (1981), he left USA after organising a revivalist rally which turned into a public debacle when his associate arrived drunk. Desperately ill, and according to mythology, carrying his coffin with him, he made for the shores of Australia.

Finally cured of his tuberculosis, King O’Malley walked from Rockhampton to Adelaide selling insurance. He became MHA Encounter Bay, SA in 1896 and held the seat until 1899. O’Malley travelled to Tasmania where he held the Labor seat of Darwin in the House of Representatives 1901-17, was Minister for Home Affairs (1910-13), (1915-16). He lost his seat over the conscription issue and retired from politics in 1917. O’Malley worked hard to establish a Commonwealth Bank, selected the site for a capital city Canberra, and was largely responsible for the birth of a transcontinental railway from Port August SA to Kalgoorlie, WA. He died aged 99 years, on December 20, 1953, the last surviving member of Australia’s first federation parliament (Catts 1953, Hoyle 1981). In later years King himself related the extraordinary events of his life with Coowonga at Emu Park, to biographer and friend Dorothy Catts, who implicitly believed O’Malley’s controversial narrative.
The Storyline and the Documentary Treatment.

The documentary begins with rare newsreel footage of ‘the King’ at his home in Bridport Street, Melbourne. It introduces O’Malley with another Labour iconic figure Dr Bert Evatt, as King’s Obituary from The Times, London, December 21, 1953, is announced by the actor who plays ‘The Legend’s’ title role. Archival 16 ml. film of colonial Australia's most memorable events in history such as the naming of the Capital City Canberra in 1911, and the laying of the city’s first monumental stone, make a strong impact on the audience. A Salvation Army camera pans across a virgin bush landscape to capture on film our first federal politicians including Prime Minister Fisher and Minister for Home Affairs King O’Malley, his wife Amy, together with the first Governor General Lord Denman and Lady Denman. In the background can be seen the Australian Infantry and Light Horse Brigade, marching with pride on their return from the Boer War, footage which symbolises the British Empire and O’Malley’s later confrontation with Billy Hughes over conscription in World War 1. More archival 16 ml. footage depicting O’Malley’s input into the establishment of the Transcontinental Railway in 1917 follows as the story unfolds, with visual links to Canberra yesterday and today; to old Parliament House and to the current seat of government, with portraits of past leaders, overlaid with major contemporary issues of the day such as posters satirising women’s suffrage (which O’Malley supported in
Parliament) and conscription propaganda (which he fought even more wholeheartedly).

Switching to present day Canberra, the director’s camera takes the audience into popular O’Malley’s Pub, a tourist stopover in the city centre, in order to record another interpretation of the national story. The hotel walls are covered with cartoons depicting the teetotaller and pacifist politician, with his campaigns for peace and women’s rights. Ironically, O’Malley abhorred the use of barmaids in hotels and fought their cause through government legislation. A light-hearted cartoon on the saloon wall explores the hero's relationship with these female workers of 1900. This inscription taken from the 2nd reading of _The Licensed Victuallers’ Bill_, in Hansard, reads:

O’Malley in Parliament: ‘The beautiful barmaids can only be regarded as the polished fangs of the stagger juice rattlesnake - by sanctions of the law they are Angels of Mercy luring men to their own destruction...’

(Catts 1953:51)

From archival footage and shots of a contemporary capital city, the camera shifts to the local scene of Capricornia. As the sun rises over Rocky Point at Emu Park (the first health resort of Central Queensland, as noted in Chapter One), Aboriginal ranger Bob Muir takes the part of local fisherman Coowonga, as he rescues the ailing American insurance salesman in a brief re-enactment of _The Legend_, pre-empting the local performance of the play
itself. Muir, a descendant of Coowonga’s Darambal tribe and the Wappaburra people of Keppel Island, demonstrates on camera that Aboriginal history is in the land, not in books, and he is prepared to tell the audience (from the realm of his own oral heritage) that the white man did return to health on a diet of oysters and Burdekin plums while living with his community (Huf 1998). This argument is supported by museum curator Kath Austin whose family recollections of a ‘thin, flat, feeble red-headed’ man living with the local Aboriginal community on Cooraman Creek have been handed down from father to daughter, another oral testimony to O’Malley’s presence on the Capricorn Coast (Austin interview 1998).

The video switches to the play itself, and captures that sense of vaudeville revivalism which underpins Michael Boddy and Bob Ellis’ presentation of *The Legend of King O'Malley or Never Say Die Till a Dead Horse Kicks You* (1974). Celebrating 100 years since Federation, the play was performed at Emu Park with much local enthusiasm to a packed local auditorium. As Bob Ellis stated in his interview with the author ‘Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* was a fitting inspiration for the initial action’ (Ellis interview 2001), particularly for King’s arrival on the exotic Tropic of Capricorn. The scene, recapturing the documentary’s introduction, begins:
Act Two: Scene One:

O’Malley: What country friends is this?

Mermaid: North Queensland, yer honour, yonder is the city of Rockhampton.

O’Malley: My God - Are these the borders of hell?
Have I come so far to cough out my life into alien sand far from the hands of men? I need a place to die. The waves are close. The sand is cold. Is there no cave where I can lay my bones

Coowonga: (reassures him) She’ll be right mate!

(Boddy & Ellis 1974:37)

Later, as O’Malley departs for Melbourne and Adelaide by foot, his coffin appears to be a symbol of his burning desire to be remembered by humanity - perhaps to take control of the state or country - as in his soliloquy he demands:

O’Malley: What is the purpose of man - the purpose of man must be to be remembered...

O’Malley: South from Rockhampton, I trudged with my destiny drawing my footsteps forward like a great wind and my coffin over my shoulder.

(Boddy & Ellis 1974:40)

O’Malley the pilgrim begins his ambitious journey towards fame and fortune - some of it real, some purely fictitious - as the director of the documentary follows the action of the play, transposing scenes and documents from real and archival sources.
War and Conscription Issues Reinvented.

The audience quickly senses O’Malley’s two personae - the ambitious and moral politician beneath the colourful storyteller. The video director has used the local performance of Boddy and Ellis’ satirical comedy as a catalyst for the documentary. Originally, The Legend was workshopped by NIDA students in 1970 at Jane Street, Sydney, together with the Nimrod and Old Tote Theatres. It was Australian director John Bell’s first professional production. This satirical comedy toured NSW and Queensland successfully in 1971 before being published by authors Michael Boddy and Bob Ellis in 1974. To the enthusiastic audiences viewing the play in the mid 70’s, the Vietnam War was still very much a public issue, as noted by republican journalist and critic Donald Horne who wrote The Legend’s foreword (Horne 1974:xii). To contemporary audiences this issue is still very much alive in Australia and Boddy and Ellis’ treatment of the O’Malley conscription speech may encourage today’s documentary viewers to question their own political beliefs. It is important, I believe, to consider King O’Malley's conflict with Billy Hughes over the conscription of Australian troops for World War 1, with reference to Australian politics today, not only in the Vietnam experience, but also in the national debate on the current war in Afghanistan and Iraq.
It could be argued that the issue of conscription defines the main theme of
the play, and works as a major focus of the documentary. However, as Ellis
confesses in his interview on camera, O’Malley as Minister for Home
Affairs, made no memorable anti-conscription speech in Parliament. It was
necessary for the playwrights to ‘cast their vote for O’Malley as people’s
hero’ (Ellis interview 2001) by composing his great freedom speech,
referring to his outspoken caucus debates, which eventually tipped the
balance in the referendum.

The video camera captures O’Malley in the play’s most serious moment:

... To me it is not freedom if we can be dragged out of our beds
and flung into jail because exercising our freedom of speech is
treason. To me it is not freedom if men are not free to choose the
freedoms they will die for. To me it is not freedom of the press
if the press speaks only on one side. To me it seems there will
soon be no freedoms left worth fighting for. How does it seem to
you? To me it is not fighting but losing if, for the sake of Mr
Hughes’ obscure war aims, we are letting fields go unploughed
and machinery untended and children unfathered. Volunteer if
you want to. We need volunteers, and you will be welcome. But
once you have no longer the choice to volunteer or not, you will
fight and die without ever knowing what you are dying for.
There is only one answer to the question on conscription and
that is NO.

(Boddy & Ellis 1974:98)

Bob Ellis’ freedom speech becomes the key to the denouement of the play
and a centre point of the documentary. King fought the conscription issue
with his colleague Jimmy Catts, Chairman of the Transport and Railway Union, against Hughes. O’Malley and his friends won the vote, split the Labor Party and in Hughes’ own words ‘buggered up Conscription’ (1974). O’Malley lost his Tasmanian federal seat of Darwin in 1917 through his outspoken ideals and retired to Melbourne. *The Legend* is an evocative drama about politics, about nationalism and imperialism. Such was the political idealism of the early Federation years, O’Malley epitomised the nationalist spirit of the time, however, on the outbreak of the Great War, the two rival strands of nationalism and imperialism became one. They strangulated the Australian ‘nationalism of excellence’ and hopes for a ‘brave new world’ (1974: foreword). While instructing the cast prior to the first production by the Nimrod Theatre in Sydney, 1970, Michael Boddy said about the play:

> This is a legend. We are working from fact. The facts of his life are true...all the legislation O’Malley talks about is real. Working from fact into fiction means that you can liberate the audience’s imagination.

*(Boddy & Ellis 1974:xii).*

Working from fact into fiction means the play *within the documentary*, with its subversive political messages celebrating Federation and freedom, works to liberate the audience’s imagination. The video production can invite viewers to face up to the idiosyncrasies of Australian politics, while still poking fun at republicanism and its roots, at war and warmongers and sadly
at national idealism. As film director Bill Nicholls maintained, ‘all
documentaries are political’ (1986:111). The audience has space to explore
the past as their history merges with the players’ personification of legend
and myth. But then, the viewers must also ask themselves, has the play’s
cultural perspective of ‘parliament as circus’ and ‘politicians as clowns’
been appropriated by the authors Boddy and Ellis for their own political
ends? Has the documentary remained a balanced and truthful account of
O’Malley, both nationally and locally?

Since the national bicentennial celebrations in 1988 and again with
Centenary of Federation in 2001, many small and isolated communities in
Central Queensland have discovered a need to develop an identity which
they feel is truly Australian and which relates to their past. They seek their
cultural heritage in their literature and history, in the image of a folk hero
who also has the potential to be reconstructed as a national icon (Huf, 1994).
Nationalism here is not merely a ‘bush culture’, it is a belief in ‘Australia’s
inevitable progress toward a liberal radical excellence’, writes Horne
(1974:viii). Issues of conscription, old-age pensions, superannuation, and
political graft, a bank for the people have all been woven into the tapestry of
the film showing, I believe, that a documentary can indeed contribute to the
social capital of a nation. By shooting The Legend of King O'Malley as
performed at the Emu Park Memorial Hall, during Federation celebrations,
with audience participation in the jokes and nostalgia of earlier days, the
issues of the past can still be identified through the concerns of today, but in a different guise.

The style and character of this larrikin hero and immigrant from USA, King O’Malley, as portrayed in the documentary, can be strongly related to the romantic colonial working man’s ‘Aussie’ hero of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and to Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined community’- this communion of men, a ‘fraternity requiring an identity through homosociality’ (Anderson 1983, cited in Huf 1992). Lurking behind the tradition, the folklore and the pomp and glory, is a sense of nation and an imagined community bound up with a postcolonial world, which has agonised over imperialism and nationalism since white settlement in 1788 (1994). With all its idiosyncrasies, the documentary can function as a powerful icon of various categories of Australianness. We can visualise this nation as a culmination of a long past of endeavours and sacrifice, ‘a heroic past with great men and glory as the social capital of a nation’ (Anderson: 1983 cited in Huf: 1992), but also with a glorious future. As O’Malley notes in his original speech from Parliament which opens the very first play sequence in the documentary:

O’Malley: In a hundred years from now, Australia will lead the world...and I’m the best salesman for Australia you have.

(Hansard cited in Boddy & Ellis 1974:59)
On camera, the Yeppoon Players and their audience celebrate the legend, the jokes and ironies of the first Federal Parliament, while Emu Park museum curator Kath Austin’s story takes us back to the real past through the collective memory of her community. Finally, journalist and editor Peter Dunn, seated on a rock above O’Malley’s Cave, demystifies the entire plot in contrast to his predecessor the late George Westacott whose final words to the Keppel Bay Historical Society in 1971 are quoted on film:

There is ground for the contention that Central Queensland played a vital part in the career of a statesman who would otherwise have had no impact on the affairs of the country.... without the events related here, there might be no Commonwealth Bank and Australian capital city as we know them today.

(George Westacott, Editor *The Morning Bulletin* 1971)

According to American filmmaker Michael Rabiger, history is ‘the full canvas of human drama, full of repetitions and full of analogues to contemporary situations’ (1998:43). Rabiger claims the strength of historical documentary lies in its diversity of ‘point of view’ ((1998:43). On one level as director and scriptwriter, I have endeavoured to present the national account of an eccentric but moral politician protesting against World War 1 conscription, canvassing for better conditions for old age pensioners and Aboriginals, and christening the site for a capital city. It was
O’Malley’s ‘Torpedo Brigade’, which left Andrew Fisher’s Labor Caucus in disarray by hammering away at banking reforms (Hoyle 1981) while the Commonwealth (‘peoples’) Bank debate still arouses partisan feelings among historians today, according to Robin Gollan (1968). But on another level, there is the fascination of O’Malley the huckster and prophet, the ‘con man who has sold his soul to the devil’ (Boddy & Ellis 1976) and manipulated his colleagues for his own ends. Here is this extraordinary American Bishop of the Waterlily Rockbound Church arriving penniless and ill, at Rocky Point, Emu Park, crawling into a cave, to be rescued by Aboriginal Coowonga, and whose fate it is to become a local and national hero.

As the almost unbelievable image of King O’Malley continues to attract notoriety at the Emu Park Museum, evidence of an historic past on present day perceptions provides for a new level of interpretation through the production of this documentary. Despite the powerful revelations of Australian politics, past and present, what really matters to the Capricorn Coast is the reality of the legend of O’Malley’s arrival from overseas, with his coffin at Port Alma, and the fact that Emu Park’s healthy climate cured the man so that he could walk on to Adelaide to begin his public life as a Labor politician It is the simple, honest narratives from Kath Austin, Bob Muir, editor Peter Dunn and the late local historians Tom Smithwick and George Westacott which project the documentary as authentic and as the
‘social capital’ of the whole community. By studying the various texts of King O’Malley, the biographies written by Dorothy Catts, Arthur Hoyle and Robin Gollan, Michael Boddy and Bob Ellis’ play, archival news reports from national and local papers and Hansard parliamentary records, I have tried to set boundaries which portray the national legend impacting directly on Central Queensland’s regional identity.

As Lyotard (1985) writes, heroes grow through the enterprise and the need of communities for an Australian identity in which a strong sense of a constructed local identity is always embedded. Here is a desire on the part of the local community to reclaim a national persona and a sense of belonging with the past. As noted earlier, these narratives are produced within a culture of the everyday, but they have the characteristics of a folklore closely locked in their mythic structure to that folklore of the contemporary world. They embody claims for membership, and it is in the persistence of those ‘claims for legitimation for an audience’ (Lyotard: 1985:18) that our video documentary displays itself as true rhetoric. Informative interviews with historians, authors, journalists, a museum curator and member of the Wappaburra clan are all captured on camera, together with actuality footage of ‘the play’ capturing the actors’ interaction with a local audience. Backed by a strong selection of historic film clips from our National Screen Sound Archives, and panoramic scenes of a
rugged coastal landscape, these images and the author’s research provide the primary evidential quality sought by all documentary accounts.

British film maker and academic John Corner (1986) has suggested that the future of documentary may be concerned with some of the most important issues of audiovisual form and public culture today. The historical documentary has shown a continuing strength as the combination of archival images, interview testimony from those involved, and read documents such as letters and diaries have proved not only popular but have made a serious contribution to research. Oral history, biography and a concern to document the processes of collective remembering on a national scale are all relevant to reshaping our legends by interplay between serious and popular accounts. The best documentary work has opened up questions not usually addressed by conventional historical scholarship by using sources and images in a way which has both originality and critical force.

It has been debated earlier in this thesis that the documentary maker’s mission is not to change or evade destiny but rather to embrace its substance, to speak passionately of the lessons of history and the choices still available for making a more humane and generous society. The auteur/director should have respect for the integrity of the actual, for the primacy of the truth in the lives of real people both great and small. Rabiger (1998) claims the documentary is the ‘sum of relationships during a period
of shared action’ and ‘a composition made from sparks generated during a meeting of hearts and minds’ (1998:33). I would agree with this assumption that in future, we may see a demand to strengthen the documentary text, taking it deeper into the language of film and further away from the language of the stage or real life, as it consolidates the mythic narrative, but, in a project such as this, it will be important to see that the voice of the local community is not lost.

Postscript:
In 1910 King married Amy Garrod in Melbourne and settled in St Kilda. O’Malley was a shrewd property investor and the couple left a substantial trust fund for scholarships for young women in ‘domestic science’ which are still active today. It seems ironic yet fitting that this unusual politician was such an ardent supporter of the rights of women and opposed all forms of legal discrimination. From perusing parliamentary debates as transcribed in Hansard, it appears he also supported Aboriginal claims of the day for some equality with whites. O’Malley outlived Billy Hughes and other members of the first Australian Federal Parliament. He died peacefully in his home in Bridport St, St Kilda at the age of 99.

(Catts 1953) (Huf, McDonald and Myers 1994)
CHAPTER TWO
Two Historical Documentaries:
Local Identity challenges the Nation

(ii) *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills*:
From Confrontation to Collaboration
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Local Identity challenges the Nation

(ii) *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills:*

From Confrontation to Collaboration

The man I speak of cannot in the world (colony) be single counterpoised: He proved best man i’ the field, and for his deeds was brow-bound with the oak

It may with truth be asserted, it will be long ere we look upon his like again.

-William Shakespeare

Introducing Longstop’s *Biographical Sketch* and Tribute to T.W. Wills

(*The Australasian*, May 8, 1869)

In his text *Directing the Documentary* (1998) Michael Rabiger argues that ‘documentary should act on the heart, not just our minds, as it exists to change how we feel about something’ (1998:12). This is the case, I believe, with both historical documentaries submitted with this thesis, as they do have the capacity to make their audience re-think the subject of each production. The two national and local icons, King O’Malley and Thomas Wentworth Wills, identify with very different colonial, political and ideological backgrounds. Both have an important story to tell with a coherent national voice in opposition to the local story. Film makers Corner (1996) and Rabiger (1998) see documentaries grounded in historical debate, such as the story of King O’Malley or the subject of this section in Chapter
Two, *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills*, becoming an even stronger force with a shift towards symbolic density and a richer visualisation. Documentary projects, Corner writes, will begin to depart from the codes of realism and immediacy, 'not in order to become more self aware, but in order to address the viewer from new, tightly integrated and fully centred positions of engaging portrayal' (Corner 1986:189). In areas of national heritage, where there have been distinct national and historic connotations - a sense of national place, of landscape juxtaposed with a local sense of belonging to a particular space - the documentary may provide an increased imaginative intensity. It may illustrate a more symbolic reinforcement of documentary language.

Documentation is inescapably an expression of the social relationships of its production and reception, according to Chaney and Pickering (1986:45-46) as discussed earlier in this chapter. This involves questions about who is empowered to describe aspects of the real world - a distinctive type of picture of the world whose legitimacy derives from a fidelity to those existing situations which they represent - to a predominant sense of 'the real world', a material and social world, and not just an 'imagined' reality (45-46). The editing of a documentary enforces this specific theme, storyline or argument. The look of the camera, the sound recorder and the whole social and cultural organisation of these productions have in one way or another intervened between the characters portrayed on video and the message, so that on our screen the rhetoric becomes the inter-relationship between all these various dimensions - *image, look and voice*. Silverstone (1986) points
out that ‘political skewing defines the institutional and cultural environment in which documentary films are produced and received’ and this political agenda ‘must be recognised not in its fixity but in its achievements and failures’ (1986:106). Urry (1995) warns that in the video production, the image may take precedence over narrative and the viewer may be seduced by the excess of images. If culture is disintegrated into pure image without referent or content, he suggests we are in danger of presenting a program which is made up of a collage of visual and aural images - ‘a stream of sound bites having no particular continuity’ (1995:216). Whether the documentaries included in this thesis achieve their aim of credibility with their target audience, and whether the director and film maker has achieved a successful and coherent product, complete with continuity of theme, character and storyline, is yet to be determined.

In the second part of this chapter I have attempted to analyse the video documentary on Thomas Wentworth Wills, made in 2004 after much regional and archival research, and several pilgrimages to Melbourne and Sydney to interview sports historians, a psychiatrist, cricket heroes, and members of the Wills family. The product of both narrative and rhetorical strategies is the key to the documentary’s truth and measure of its acceptability as an ideological achievement (Silverstone 1986:106), and again, the credibility of interviews plays an important part in presenting a truthful account to the audience. The part played by the viewer is therefore important, ‘because all argumentation must be adapted to the audience’ (94). Regional audiences were enthusiastic about the Wills family history, when
the documentary was shown in several locations throughout the district. The community’s input into *telling the story* of Tommy Wills and celebrating this legend has been an important element of the video’s success within the heritage tourism discourse. It has been appropriated by local family museums at Minerva Creek Station and Rainworth Fort in Springsure, and by local historical societies, while national and regional media have invited the film crew to take part in various sessions on heritage and sport.

The Script and the Storyline: the Triumph and the Tragedy.

The story of Thomas Wentworth Wills is a triumphant story celebrating the life of a great colonial sportsman - the W.G. Grace of Australian cricket - probably the greatest cricketer of his time. As the narrator informs us, Wills captained Victoria in the intercolonial cricket matches against NSW from 1857 - 1869. It was Tommy Wills who wrote the famous letter to *Bells’ Life in Victoria* in October 1858 suggesting a winter football game for cricketers in order to keep fit, and with four colleagues set down the original Australian Rules Football Code. He coached and captained the first Aboriginal Eleven in the western district of Victoria - the first Australian cricket team ever to tour England in 1868 (Perrin 1998; Harcourt & Mulvaney 1988). But it was also Tommy Wills at the age of 26 who witnessed his father’s death at Garden Creek (later renamed Murdering Gap) on Cullin-la-Ringo Station in Central Queensland. On October 17, 1861, the murder of Horatio Wills together with 18 other members of his party
occurred in what has become known as the worst incident of its kind in the European history of Australia. Cullin-la-Ringo was a ‘payback massacre’, by Kairi Kairi people, in the midst of a violent frontier guerilla war played out between white graziers and Indigenous tribes who fought the settlers on the vital necessities of grass and water. Of course, where 19 members of the white party of stockmen and drivers were killed, more than 300 Aboriginals were murdered behind Mt Wandoow to the south of Cullin-la-Ringo in retribution. (Mulvaney 1989, Carment 1980, Perrin 1997).

The documentary presents two theories which have been put forward to explain why the murder of the Wills party took place. Historian and author Les Perrin claims on camera that while Horatio and Tom got on well with Victorian Aborigines, employed them as stockmen and spoke their language, the Wills’ massive flocks and herds would have been judged to be the coming of a new destroyer of their lands by the disgruntled Kairi Kairi People. However, historian D.J.Mulvaney, author of Encounters in Space (1989), family member Terry Wills Cooke, author of The Currency Lad (1998), and current station manager today Tom H.S.Wills, determine that the massacre was a form of ‘payback’ revenge. The incident was supposedly ignited by the murders committed by the Native Police under Lieutenant Patrick at neighbouring stations some weeks earlier by neighbouring grazier Jesse Gregson, who shot two Aboriginals for stealing sheep, and following the fearful payback dispersal of Aborigines after the Hornet Bank murders in 1859. Fitzroy Basin Elder, Lindsay Black, when interviewed on camera, agreed Cullin-la-Ringo was a ‘payback’ strategy,
and he is adamant that the new European settlers, although they employed Indigenous stockmen, also ‘took their land, sacred sites and all’ (Lindsay Black, interview: 2002). A series of interviews with authors, historians and members of the family provide the historical evidence and rhetoric which is the basis of the video’s argument on the frontier war occurring on the Nogra River and major theme of part one of the documentary. Rex Harcourt, historian, MCC librarian, and co-author of *Cricket Walkabout* with D.J.Mulvaney, speaks on camera about Tom Wills’ close relationship with Victorian Aboriginal clans, and his understanding of the Nogra tribes. Although Wills sought increased police protection following the massacre, there is no evidence of any later antagonism between himself and the Aboriginal cricket team. Harcourt suggests Aboriginal employees on his father’s Victorian properties had taught Tommy spear and boomerang throwing, as well as their language (Harcourt and Mulvaney 1988). He relates family anecdotes of young black friends asking for ‘Massa Tom’ away at Rugby School in England from the age of fifteen (Harcourt interview 2002).

At the time, and new to the colony, Governor Bowen expressed the typical Euro-centric notion of *terra nullius* that Australia was sparsely populated by nomadic people. He wrote to the colonial secretary to inform him of the Wills disaster commenting on ‘the territory over which these few Aboriginal tribes wandered, for it would be incorrect to state that they ever in any strict sense occupied it’ (Mulvaney 1989:95). However, it now seems that the Nogra and Dawson River regions were thickly populated areas. Research
has demonstrated that Aboriginal men and women did manipulate the environment within the boundaries of their territories. Their movements were closely regulated by seasonal, technological and ceremonial considerations. These were never random, but Mulvaney explains ‘while control and exploitation of grass and water for pastoral purposes conveyed upon the European invaders a title to the land and a right to defend it by force, rights to the same resources were effectively denied to Aborigines’ (Mulvaney 1989:96). It is important, and timely, to point out in the documentary that squatters and new settlers in 1861 were themselves divided on the appropriation of sheep and cattle stations. Peak Downs grazier Oscar de Satge wrote after the Cullin-la-Ringo Massacre:

This terrible massacre acted as a warning to many not to trust or admit the blacks...I vowed I would never have the blacks in on any station I managed, and I kept to this rule for over ten years, until the Peak Downs blacks became absolutely civilised.

(Oscar de Satge cited in Mulvaney 1989:101)

Humanitarian graziers like Daniel Cameron of Planet Downs, and Charles Dutton of Bauhinia Downs however, angrily wrote to the government and to the newspapers to express their dismay at the bloody dispersal of blacks in their district:

Bloodshed, terror and anarchy, retaliation and revenge will be quick and sharp. The advocates of treating them (the black tribes) little better than inferior animals will result in their extermination, the innocent and guilty alike will disappear.

(Daniel Cameron, cited in Wright, 1981:128)
The Aborigines have one feeling in common with whites - that of deep implacable revenge for unprovoked injury... Before there were any complaints against the Blacks in this district, the conduct of the Native Police was characterised by the grossest cruelty, the most repressive and exasperating acts inspiring a feeling of hatred and desire of revenge while the conduct of many whites has rather tended to inflame than to soothe or allay.

(Charles Dutton, letter to *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 2, 1862)

The documentary superimposes these *other* voices in graphics, over the massacre landscape, as the camera pans across Murdering Gap and the victims’ gravestones, while descendant of the original Wills dynasty and present manager of Minerva Station, Thomas H.S.Wills relates details of the tragic incident at Garden Creek. A brief vision of the Kairi Kairi people and a mournful didgeridoo casts a symbolic shadow over this historical scene.

What is interesting about researching and documenting the story of Thomas Wentworth Wills is the contradiction within the development of his character in the context of the society of his times. Tommy, the grandson of a convict, had been brought up with the expectations of the colonial squattocracy by his father, an ambitious yeoman farmer and member of the legislative assembly, Horatio Spencer Wills. This young, hardworking, determined but frustrated Queensland grazier is the janus-face of the irrepressible sportsman who communicates with Indigenous people in Victoria on an equable basis not often seen in the colony in the 1850s and 60s. Following the massacre, Thomas Wentworth Wills, at the age of 26, with the few remaining shepherds, sets up a new pastoral station complete
with a flock of 10 000 sheep and cattle, yards, sheds and fences. It is hard to realise there were no telephones, no instant radio or television and the letter and bush telegraph were vital family communication links on 19th Century outback stations. Certainly, the language and style of writing in these letters opens up evidence of a severe level of isolation - a gulf between Victoria and outback Queensland - which psychiatrist Greg de Moore refers to in his analysis of Tommy’s _delirium tremens_ (de Moore 1999).

The Two faces of Tommy Wills: Family Letters and a _Biographical Sketch_.

The documentary introduces a series of historic letters written by Horatio, Elizabeth, family siblings and family company trustees into the script. These letters are the powerful voice of a colonial past which opens up the narrative and guides the viewer through the visual elements of the journey to Cullin-la-Ringo, through the massacre and its aftermath, the building of the station, Tommy’s resignation, his brilliant sporting career and finally, his suicide. For example, Horatio’s delight in reaching the Nogoa River is made obvious in his letter to Elizabeth. Tommy’s letters to his cousin Coley Harrison and his mother tell of his shock following the massacre, and the audience senses his frustration at the lack of funds received from Horatio’s executors back in Geelong to maintain the 200 square mile property, with the necessary stockmen and equipment. The letters and the media’s ‘biographical sketches’ help to explore the two faces of Tommy Wills from the point of view of his cricket contemporaries, including Longstop, Thompson and Point, all famous press correspondents in the new colony.
These original letters and sketches, carefully catalogued in the Minerva Station family museum today, are interwoven through the narrative structure to bring alive the original characters with all their dreams, ambitions, their triumphs and tragedies. Recorded with voice-over on film, they assist in creating a powerful sense of reality and drama throughout the documentary.

As today’s property owner Tom H.S.Wills and the film crew travel to the Garden Creek cemetery at the foot of Murdering Gap, the narrator introduces Horatio Wills to the viewers. On his arrival at Cullin-la-Ringo Station on October 6, 1861, Horatio writes to Elizabeth, home at Bellevue, Geelong. This letter and others, transposed carefully into the documentary present an emotional insight into station life in the 1860s. Here is an excerpt:

October 6, 1861

My dear Wife,

Thank heaven! Cullin-la-Ringo at last! The bullock teams and 7600 sheep all here. Baker and three men about four or so miles back with ewes and lambs. Luckily we arrived when we did for the weather is hot! Tomorrow we unload two drays and start them back to Albinia Downs for the two loads left there... Tom will go with the drays to see all right... our sheep crossed the boundary of the run, Separation Creek, the 3rd day of October, my birthday. I went exploring with Jeremy Baker and was rather surprised at the size of this magnificent station. Today, Mr Patrick, Lieut of black police and troopers gave us a call. The country is magnificent but labour scarce and at high rates. Shepherds thirty shillings per week... farewell my dear, dear wife, kiss baby and all others for me...H.S. Wills
Devastated by the immensity of the massacre, Tommy writes to his cousin Coley Harrison on October 24, 1861:

My dear Coley,
I have not had time to go into particulars, I can only say that all our party except I have been slaughtered by the blacks on 17th Inst. I am in a great fix, no men. If we had used common precaution all would have been well, my poor Father and Baker were most brutally murdered. I want good men up here... What a dreadful end after such trouble as we have had. The climate is splendid but without men I can do nothing. So get us help I have nearly all the sheep all right thank God...Thomas Wentworth Wills

Still distraught he writes to the Colonial Secretary on October 25, 1861:

Honoured Sir,
You have I doubt not ere this heard of the fearful tragedy that has happened on the run known as Cullin-la-Ringo. I merely pray that you will be pleased to allow a police force to be quartered there as otherwise it would be impossible to get men to stop unless so protected. The widow and orphans of the late H.S. Wills join me in my prayer.

Your most obedient servant T.W. Wills – (8611026 Qld Public Records).

His mother Elizabeth breaks the news of their father’s death to Cedric and Horace in Germany, November 20, 1861 from Belle Vue, Geelong.

My dear boys,
You as well as myself have met with so severe a loss that we will not cease to feel it during our whole life...I have not been able to persuade myself of the terrible loss we have sustained...It appears the blacks had been at the station in the morning then left but returned about the middle of the day...everyone was at their work. Your father, hearing a loud noise among the blacks came out to see having his revolver in his belt. He had only time to fire one out of four barrels when the poor fellow was struck on the dear
check.... then dreadfully wounded about the neck....you must for ever love
the memory of your dear father.

Your affectionate mother _E.Wills._

Tommy, struggling to keep Cullin-la-Ringo operating, writes to his mother
on July 26, 1862, complaining about the lack of support he receives from
the station's trustees:

_Dear Mother,_
I am obliged to put up a good shed, one that will last four to five years, cost
200 pounds in all. Also, lambing just coming on requires a great amount of
labour which cannot be done without unless we wish to lose all the lambs
and if that's to be the case one had better give up at once. ...if they (the
trustees) adopt half measures, they had better sell at once.

_Your aff. son T.W.Wills_

Two years later, no doubt disillusioned after a dramatic confrontation with
the trustees in Melbourne, Tommy writes from Bellevue, Geelong, April 2,
1864, informing his brother Cedric waiting at Cullin-la-Ringo, about his
resignation:

_My dear Cedy,_
Mr Morris, Mr Ducker, my mother and self had a grand meeting the other
night and it was ultimately decided that I should not return to the station, ...
it is more satisfactory for me to resign until the ten years are over...I gave
Mr Ducker a list of orders and cheques that I had drawn... please examine
them...Take care of old Jack the horse... don't let Mr Johnson ill use the
sheep.

_Your aff. brother T.W. Wills_

Other family letters, including one from accountant Ducker to Cedric,
reinforce Tom's resignation from the station, until 'ten years hence' when
according to Horatio’s will, the property must be sold. Finally, Egbert will write to Cedric of Tommy’s suicide, a graphic account which acts as a closure for the documentary on the triumph and tragedy of this extraordinary young pioneer and the massacre at Cullin-la-Ringo Station in Central Queensland.

The Sporting Hero and Muscular Christianity.

Returning to Melbourne permanently, in 1864, Wills left his younger brother Cedric to face the conservative trustees as station manager. Despite his resignation from the station and the collapse of his wedding plans to Miss Sarah Anderson, Tommy Wills entered another world, a world of sporting success and adulation as a brilliant exponent of cricket and football. He played over 200 football matches for Melbourne and Geelong as captain and coach. As noted already in this chapter, Wills led the Victorian inter-colonial cricket team to many victories against New South Wales over the next decade. In this second section of the documentary which records Tommy’s national sporting career, his historic letter to Bells’ Life in Victoria written July 10, 1858, demanding ‘A game of our own, played in the winter months to keep cricketers fit’, has already made history in the colony. On camera, MCC librarian Rex Harcourt recounts Wills’ original demands for either football or rifle shooting. The letter was a catalyst in the AFL game’s development which leads directly to the reverence expressed for this national sport and for Wills today at the Melbourne Cricket Club - the mecca for all sporting tourists. As Harcourt reads the letter aloud, the
camera pans across the MCC Museum of Sport and the empowering, larger than life bronze monument of Wills and two young college students celebrating the first game of colonial VFL football. It was played in Richmond Paddock in October 1859 by Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar, with Tommy Wills as umpire.

As already noted, the letters and articles in the media of the day are a major element of the documentary’s structure and development of the script, as they relive a historic past. Longstop’s ‘Biographical Sketch’ of Thomas Wentworth Wills, printed in *The Australasian*, in 1869 introduces part two of the film by giving the audience a shrewd insight into Wills’ character as the sportsman ‘par excellence’, and the current atmosphere of *muscular Christianity* which was so important to the game and the establishment of the time. A short excerpt opens the scene at the Melbourne Cricket Club:

Let me state that my first remembrance of Tommy Wills was in a match at Kennington Oval where we were on opposite sides. He was pointed out to me as ‘that young fellow from Rugby who plays with a 4lb bat and hits terrific’.

*The Australasian*, May 8, 1869

Both Longstop (H.J. Hammersley) and W.J. Thompson were cricketing colleagues of Wills whose articles and letters vividly identify the sportsman’s ‘muscular Christianity’ and prowess with bat and ball, in the language of the day. (Muscular Christianity was a popular expression of the times, initiated at Rugby School in the era of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays.*) W.J. Thompson’s letter to Wills, congratulates Tommy, appointed editor of
The Cricketer’s Guide, in 1871, and identifying his ability to ‘chuck an odd one in’ in order to ‘dispose of the opposing team’:

Dear Sir

The Cricketers Guide ought to be as much a Victorian institution as The Turf Register...

You first want my notions about cricket? Well then, I say that the bowling usually indulged in now is not bowling at all. To bump a ball and so either frighten or endanger a batsman's limbs and trunk is simply not cricket...I hold you sir to have been the first serpent in our Garden of Eden - not that you would not bowl fairly and admirably well, but you will persist in mixing it!... A lazy lot of young vagabonds see Conway bowl high - or Wills chuck an odd one in - straight away they feel inspired to sling and put them down, regardless of pace, pitch or the normal play of the batsman.


Following Wills’ growing alcoholism, tacitness and loss of form, the inspiring words written by Point, sports reporter for The Sketcher - ‘We love thee still Tommy Wills’ are used by the film maker to herald the final suicide scene. Five days after his death, Point in The Australasian again wrote ‘if Tommy Wills had an enemy in this world, that enemy was unhappily himself alone’ (The Australian May 8, 1880) thus bringing the legend to a closure at Tommy’s graveside. These articles and letters are influential in fusing the past with the present within the documentary’s historic frame of reference. All are preserved in Tom H.S. Wills’ Minerva Creek Station museum at Springsure, today.
Cricket as a ‘Racial Statement’ and an ‘Exotic Spectacle’.

In November, 1866, Thomas Wentworth Wills sailed to Portland, and travelled up country to Edenhope and Harrow in Western Victoria to coach a group of Aboriginal cricketers. He built an extraordinary bond of friendship with this Aboriginal cricket team including captain Johnny Mullagh, Redcap, Johnny Rose, Tarpot, Twopenny, Cuzens and Dick-a-Dick whom he virtually protected from exploitation during their successful 1867 tour of Victoria and New South Wales (Whimpress 1999). It seemed another step in a personal tragedy when his colleague and former English professional Charles Lawrence escorted the team to England - and not their coach Wills - on a much publicised and generally successful British season of cricket and athletics. From the study of historical records of the group’s activities, it could be argued that Thomas Wentworth Wills was disenchanted with the black team’s notoriety suggesting they were possibly being seen as a circus act rather than a group of very talented sportsmen (1999:75-80). This whole controversial chapter of Aboriginal Cricket and racial discrimination is explored in the documentary with interview grabs from historians Les Perrin and Rex Harcourt, and a strong cricket voice from former Australian cricket captain Ian Chappell and Queensland Aboriginal cricketer Phillip Minniecon. Where Harcourt claims Lawrence ‘was the man for the job’ Perrin argues strongly on camera that ‘Tommy would have been bitterly disappointed’ quoting journalist Point in this respect. Chappell, considering Wills upfront reputation at this time, reminds
the audience that ‘Cricket was never a gentleman’s game’ and defends Tommy Wills’ expertise as captain (Chapell interview 2003).

When Tom began to coach the Aboriginal Eleven he found that, due to major support from local graziers in introducing the game of cricket to ‘blacks working on the stations’, the development of a talented Aboriginal team was already underway. From the 1850s when white station hands absconded to the goldfields, Aborigines were suddenly regarded as valuable and skilful shearers and stockmen. As the psychological distance between black and white was removed, ‘those who worked together might also play together’ (Whimpress 1999:75). However, the notion of using cricket as a civilising role on the natives has also been viewed as a racial statement by historian Bernard Whimpress when he suggests Aboriginal cricket in the Western District passed through three distinct phases culminating in the grand 1868 tour of England. From initial socialisation the game entered a ‘brief civilisation phase’ and finally the ‘extraordinary commercial period of cricket’ when the Indigenous team became famous and much sort after by the media and the general public (Whimpress 1999:75).

The video production, on one level, must certainly compare the situation of peaceful co-existence on Lake Wallace, Edenhope, with the guerilla war flourishing in Queensland, but it could remind the viewer that a violent stage of confrontation between new settlers and old had already left the Indigenous Western District community decimated (Whimpress 1999:74-75). It must be noted that the Hamilton Spectator, while congratulating the
instigators of the cricket team, used typically racist colonial language in its report on the field of cricket:

Generous kindness of the remote settlers has disclosed to the outer world an undeniable talent in the aborigine, no one who witnessed their exploits on the Hamilton Cricket Ground can doubt, and it remains with those who have at some time or another witnessed the almost feudal attachment of the unadulterated black to his master or companion to say whether they are to be put in a position to achieve success, ...and enable them to show that under a tutelage suitable to their capacities they are second, if not equal to their instructors.


Although the cricket team’s performance at matches in Melbourne and NSW was very successful under coach/captain Tommy Wills, (1866-67) and to a great extent in England under the guidance of Charles Lawrence (1868), this provincial racist thinking, as evidenced particularly by the powerful State Aboriginal Protection Board, would eventually restrict Aborigines in cricket as it would in education, work and other areas of life. One incident alone, also reported in the *Hamilton Spectator* in 1867 during their tour preparation, indicated that cricket overseas would be doomed for the Indigenous people. In order to escape the eagle eye of the Protection Board, organisers of the Victorian /NSW tour found it necessary ‘to spirit team members from a picnic at Queenscliff on the coast out of the colony and on to Sydney by steamer’ (*Hamilton Spectator* 1867). The provisions of the *Aborigines’ Protection Act 1869* revealed that the colonial Governor could prescribe ‘penalties of up to twenty pounds or three months
imprisonment for anyone attempting to remove or instigate the removal of any Aboriginal from Victoria without the consent of the Minister’ (Whimpress 1999:79). This meant the government of the day could curb all opportunities for further Aboriginal tours, especially those organised as private ventures. Supporters of the board argued that the 1868 first Australian Cricket Tour to Britain was merely an 'exotic spectacle' and the 1869 Act designed to protect the Aborigines from exploitation (79-80). However, it also curbed any opportunity for further equitable development of Indigenous people in this sport. This incident is documented quite strongly on the video production using the original newspaper clip, footage of Queenscliff and footage of another successful Aboriginal team to visit Lords in 2001.

It is, I believe, important that the production has recorded the eventual outcome of this first overseas cricket tour. Following their return from the 1868 tour, some members of the team clung to the district they regarded as home and preferred to starve rather than go to a reserve. Of the twelve Aboriginal cricketers who did return from England, (King Cole died of pneumonia overseas, two became ill and returned early) seven spent some time on a reserve. Cuzens, Mosquito, Redcap, Peter, Dick-a-Dick, Jim Crow and Bullocky went to reserves while two, Sundown and Charley Dumas vanished. Tiger and Twopenny continued to play some cricket, and led a roving life, only Johnny Mullagh remained free of reserve life (Whimpress 1999). Despite the care and enthusiasm shown by sportsmen like Tommy
Wills and Charles Lawrence, pastoral cricket did not produce successive generations of Aboriginal Cricketers.

The history of this Indigenous cricket team performing in a colonial past has today become very controversial, and widely publicised by former Australian Cricket Captain Ian Chappell, in his drive to have the team honoured in the Cricket Hall of Fame for their role as first Australian team to tour overseas. At his induction into the Australian cricket hall of fame in 2003, Ian Chappell called for the Aboriginal team of 1868 to be officially recognised as Australian players. On camera, Chappell argues that Mullagh, Mosquito, Cuzens and ‘the rest of the team be given the same status as Don Bradman, Steve Waugh and other test cricketers’ (Huf interview with Chappell at Channel 9, Sydney April 2003). This important political statement is confirmed by local Indigenous cricketer Philip Minniecon, interviewed also on the documentary before the portrait of famous Aboriginal cricketer Eddie Gilbert, at Dreamtime Cultural Centre, Rockhampton.

As early as 1869, it was rumoured that Tommy’s heavy drinking was affecting his playing and his temperament. Tommy however did continue with his ‘peripatetic’ cricket and football and wrote a coaching handbook, but by 1878, he had apparently become an alcoholic and confined for some time in the Kew Lunatic Asylum. Finally on May 2, 1880, he tragically took his own life despite the desperate attempts to save him by his de facto partner Sarah Barber (Wills). At the time of his death at the age of 43, he
had been bought out of the family property and virtually disowned by his mother. It seems the experience of the massacre together with his father’s expectations of him were eventually to destroy him. On May 9, 1880 his brother Egbert wrote to Horace at Coorabelle, Springsure:

Dear Horace,
I will just give you particulars of poor old Tom. He and Sarah had been drinking to such an extent that he got the horrors very bad ...and as she could not manage him, Sarah took him into the hospital...(*but, the next morning at home*) ... when Sarah looked up she saw him with his arm raised and a pair of scissors in his hand. He then struck himself in the chest, she ran and caught his arm, then he struck twice more, falling at the last and onto his elbow...Three wounds through the vest and shirt, bled very little...

Your affectionate brother E.S.Wills.

Sydney psychiatrist Dr Greg de Moore has written several articles on the reasons for Wills’ depression and eventual suicide, which are discussed in the documentary (de Moore 1999). This interview gives a professional point of view on the subject of delirium tremens and on the connected roles of alcohol and sport. Analysing Tommy’s letter writing, de Moore notes that following the massacre, torment was in every word Wills wrote. Again, the letters are a visible sign of the trauma present in Wills’ mind. De Moore suggests Tommy was charismatic and narcissistic with a flair for conflict. He was continually trying out different roles in sport, re-inventing himself and following his own trajectory with ‘the fall out’ that he got bruised along the way (De Moore: interview April 2003). De Moore argues that alcohol was commonly used to influence the course of a game of cricket.’ Champagne lunches were frequently held, even if they delayed the game’s
commencement, and newspaper reports of intercolonial games gave nearly as much space to the celebrations and after-match festivities as they did to the match itself (De Moore: interview 2003). The inquest on May 3, 1880, conducted by Dr Richard Youl, found that Wills committed suicide 'while of unsound mind from excessive drinking' (Perrin 1997: 162).

There has been much speculation as to the life Tommy Wills may have lived had it not been for the massacre which had such far reaching effects on his mental and emotional state. Under his father's guidance, in the new and prospering colony, with the huge potential of Cullin-la-Ringo Station, it is not unreasonable to envisage that a pastoral empire may have been created. If Tommy Wills had not gone off to Queensland in 1861, it could have been he, rather than his cousin, Colden Harrison who received the title of Father of Australian Football. Biographer Les Perrin argues that Tom lived in the wrong era of successful sportsmen:

It is a tragedy that such an outstanding sportsman should have died in the circumstances in which he did. He had showed immense friendship and goodwill towards members of the Aboriginal cricket team, despite his experiences of 1861; he was extraordinarily innovative with his ideas about Australian Football, and he virtually introduced colonial cricketers to the high standards of bowling and batting as practised overseas (Perrin 1997:162).

But with renewed admiration today, Thomas Wentworth Wills' sporting feats are proudly displayed in the Melbourne Cricket Club's Museum of
Sport. His image is emblazoned on two memorial bronze doors, celebrating the first overseas touring cricketers and the birth of Australian Football. A Tom Wills Room has been established in the Great Southern Stand and the statue celebrating the first schoolboy football match in 1859 enhances the entrance to the Museum of Sport. As librarian David Studham comments on camera, the museum is an icon which attracts more than 70000 tourists each year to the Melbourne Cricket Club. As Rex Harcourt proudly informs the viewers on camera, 'Tommy is the only Australian sportsman to feature on two bronze doors at MCC’s Museum of Sport' (Harcourt interview: 2002). A monument at Moyston in Western Victoria and a nobly engraved headstone at Heidelberg Cemetery also recognise Thomas Wentworth Wills' outstanding cricket and football talents.

In conclusion, this video production has attempted to capture a piece of Australian history, the story of a national sporting hero, and a series of historic events overlaid with a family narrative which spans more than a century. The documentary has studied the underlying contradictions within the historical context of Tommy Wills' life from the racial conflict of 1850s and 60s over land ownership between Aboriginal inhabitant and new European settler on the Nogoa and Dawson Rivers in Central Queensland, to the celebratory sports landscape of the 'more civilised and settled' south. But the successful achievement of its coherent narrative voice is still an ideological achievement, using different discourses, different political and social environments, different textual dynamics in both form and content, in order to achieve a final successful product. As these local and national
legends are documented, the author and film maker is aware that every icon functions as a symbol of a pervasive regional identity.

By recording interviews with Wills’ biographer Les Perrin, historian Rex Harcourt (co-editor of Cricket Walkabout with D.J. Mulvaney), authors Martin Flanagan and Gillian Hibbins, M.C.C. librarian David Studham, and family historians, Terry Wills Cook, Kenley Simpson, and Lorna Smith, I have endeavoured to capture the passion and drama of early frontier settlement and a brave new colonial sporting world. Further interviews with psychiatrist Greg de Moore, Australian cricket hero Ian Chappell, Fitzroy Elder Lindsay Black and Queensland Indigenous cricketer Philip Minnecon, have expanded the script regarding black and white relations and presented a sense of ‘hereness’ of the past and the present in this production. The interviews, together with the series of historic family letters referred to in this documentary, are a key to the ‘truth’ of the film’s message, and measure of its acceptability. I would agree with Frederic Jameson that the ground of documentary resides in this relation between character, icon and interviewees as social agents presenting the narrative ‘within the three dimensional coordinates of narrative, history and myth’ (Jameson cited in Nicholls 1983:110).

The documentary has redefined the Wills history from today’s perspective, positioning Thomas Horatio Spencer Wills, born 101 years and one day after the massacre, as the link between history, heritage, sport, nostalgia and cultural tourism. Great Grandson of Cedric Spencer Wills - younger brother
of Thomas Wentworth Wills - Tom runs the family property on the Nogoa River today, under the shadow of Mt Horatio and Mt Elizabeth. As already noted in this chapter, he cares for the family museum and heritage-listed gravestones on Garden Creek. Tom sits on the Springsure Native Land Rights Committee with Fitzroy Basin Elder Lindsay Black. It is through studying the diaries, journals and station books, the Wills original family letters, portraits and memorabilia, with T.H.S.Wills’ assistance, that I was able to piece together a documentary film on T.W.Wills.

It is interesting to note that following academic research for the video production and thesis, Regional Arts Development funds were made available to catalogue and index the Cullin-la-Ringo family records and the farm journals which tell of the day-to-day station management from 1861 - 1961. A council presentation was held with regional librarians accepting copies for their history collections. The Bauhinia Shire Chairman proudly announced the outcome for the Wills archival collection on local radio, suggesting the research and outcome had stimulated more tourists to visit the district on their journey to the Matilda Highway and the Longreach Hall of Fame. He maintained that the viewing of the documentary and short grave site tours would enhance the Back to Springsure celebrations.

In Chapter One, the author led the audience on a pilgrimage along the Tropic of Capricorn to document the region’s cultural and social approach to its heritage. This journey On The Western Line and its message on tourism’s impact on regional identity is the major hypothesis of this thesis.
However, I believe that by delving into the lives and significant events connected to some of the region’s historical icons, the documentaries examined in this chapter relate importantly to the preservation and reinterpretation of both national and local identity. As noted earlier, these two documentaries have entailed much research of actual situations, actual people living in a time of extraordinary change, and definitive research of archival sources in order to discover the truth and ‘bear witness’ to the legends of federation politician King O’Malley and visionary sportsman Tommy Wills. The treatment of the script in both accounts of O’Malley and Wills has invited the audience to make judgements about motive and responsibility, about the real possibilities of our heritage and our culture together with the appropriation by local communities, museums and tourist institutions, of these historic icons.

This is only a beginning, but it may invite further exploration of the regional identity of Horatio and Thomas Wentworth Wills, and ‘larrkin’ federation minister King O’Malley, and their controversial position in the history of European settlement in Central Queensland. However, what is important to this thesis, is the impact their stories have made on the present day Central Queensland community’s sense of pride in the preservation of these mythologies in local museums, in cultural centres and as national monuments, with the continuity of their celebration in the region’s active cultural life. The life of these museums and ‘metaphors of power’ situated in each regional town will be studied in detail in Chapters Three, Four and Five.
Postscript: Another perspective

By October 17, 1861, the date of the Cullin-la-Ringo Massacre, explorers Bourke and Wills had already perished at Coopers Creek on the Queensland frontier through their lack of trust in the local Aborigines who may certainly have kept them alive in the alien bush. Major Mitchell had explored Salvador Rosa and the Expedition Range (all sacred Kairi country) and had noted the Indigenous people’s clever use of fire to clear and control the river flats in order to attract wild game. 50 miles from Cullin-la-Ringo and north of The Expedition and Staircase Ranges (featured on the documentary), grazier Jesse Gregson, in 1861, was poisoning Kairi water holes and shooting black hunter-gatherers at Rainworth Station, while Lt Patrick and the Native Mounted Police were forcibly evicting blacks from station and river camps. Ironically, while squatters were still conquering the northern Australian spaces and destroying sacred sites, in Victoria the new settlers were at last starting to applaud Dick-a-Dick and Johnny Mullagh’s cricket exploits and plan future intercolonial matches.
Structure and Treatment of
Two Historical Documentaries

(i) The Legend of King O'Malley

The National Story
Federation and eccentric American pacifist and politician King O’Malley becomes member of South Australian House of Assembly in 1896. In 1891 he is elected a member for Tasmania in Australian House of Representatives and Minister for Home Affairs 1910-13; 1915-16, under Barton and Fisher’s Labor Governments. O’Malley chooses the site for the Federal capital and Canberra is named by Lady Denman (wife of Governor General in 1913); O’Malley is instrumental in founding the people’s bank - The Commonwealth Bank, 1910. Australia House and the Trans-
Continental Railway become realities.
With the coming of World War I O’Malley opposes Billy Hughes over Conscription and splits the Labor Party. With his wife Amy, he sets up scholarships for young women in domestic science.
Archival and present day shots of Canberra, politicians, Parliament House (old and new) and cartoons from the walls of O’Malley’s pub, provide controversial background footage to the production.

The Local Story
The Emu Park Legend tells of the huckster, the prophet, the self-made Bishop of the Waterlily Rockbound Church from USA arrives at Rocky Pt, on the Capricorn Coast, dying of tuberculosis. He is rescued by Aboriginal fisherman Coowonga
(re-enacted by ranger Bob Muir) who carries him from the cave to live with the Darambal tribe. King regains his health, walks back to Adelaide, selling insurance on the way, and becomes a famous and outspoken politician. O’Malley’s image is appropriated by Emu Park Museum and community as a tourist icon. The local museum committee have preserved the cave, newspaper reports, books, memorabilia, and acquired bicentennial funds to build a plaque in memory of a unique local and national hero. King’s supports have highlighted the communities desperate need to attract visitors to the central coast.

about the action to follow. The director follows the heritage trail from Emu Park to Canberra as the narrator links national and local issues to tell of this extraordinary man's life backed by interviews, a re-enactment of the beach scene, documented archival footage illustrating historical landmarks and scenes from Boddy and Ellis satirical play.

**Interviews**

Kath Austin, museum curator
Bob Muir, Aboriginal ranger
Bob Ellis, playwright
Peter Dunn, editor/publisher
Barry Jones
(barry.jones@alp.org.au)

**Narrative treatment**

O'Malley's Obituary is announced over archival newsreel clips of the old politician with Dr H.V.Evatt. This narration informs the audience

**Speech**

**The Play**

The re-enactment of The Legend of King O’Malley by Boddy and Ellis at Emu Park, 2001 portrays parliamentarians as clowns with minstrels on stage symbolising O’Malley's Waterlily Rockbound Church. The actors present the play’s humorous and satirical message on national identity and national issues as they perform in from of an enthusiastic local audience.

**The Ideological Structure**

The director explores the politics of local myth versus national history. The documentary pokes fun at this extraordinary character however, woven through the antics of national politics is the argument which underpins the play and the local story - conscription a vital issue in WW 1, is again relevant to the Vietnam War, at the time of the play’s production in 1970s. The idealism of early Federation pervades the play and the documentary.

**Biographies: King O’Malley**

D. Catts (1938)
A.R. Hoyle (1981)
R. Gollan (1968)
M. Boddy and R. Ellis (1974)

(ii) The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills (1835-1880)

**The National Story**

Tommy Wills, the sporting hero from Rugby writes the first football code for AFL in 1858. The W.G. Grace of Australian Cricket, his success in intercolonial matches between Victoria and NSW is exceptional. Wills is editor of The Cricketers Guide in 1871. In 1866 he coaches the first Aboriginal Cricket Team which later tours England. Links with Aboriginal cricket today are explored with Ian Chappell and Phillip Minniecon,
while strong connections with AFL football are debated by Rex Harcourt, David Studham and Gillian Hibbins.

The Melbourne Cricket Club Hall of Fame and Sports Museum has erected two bronze doors, a Wills Room and a football monument in his honour. But alcoholism and delirium tremens result from sport and the trauma of Cullin-la-Ringo. Wills commits suicide in 1880 despite the efforts of his de facto wife Sara to restrain him. TW is buried at Heideberg Cemetery by his cousin Coley Harrison, sister Emily and brother Egbert.

**The Local Story**

Horatio Wills and son Thomas make the eight months journey from Lexington to Cullin-la-Ringo in Central Queensland, with a party of stockmen, cattle and sheep.

Great grandson of Cedric, Tom HS Wills, manages the family’s Minerva Creek Station today. He personifies TW on camera as he tells the story from the gravesite and from the property’s family.
museum. He reads the dramatic family letters evoking the hero's tragic life, on camera, for the audience.

**Narrative treatment**

The director follows the heritage trail - to Cullin-la-Ringo, to the murders on October 17, 1861, and relates the impact on the family through the letters from mother Elizabeth to her sons in Germany, and Tom to his cousin Coley. The narrator then links the tragedy of the massacre with Tommy's sporting successes through a series of important interviews. Both Les Perrin and Kairi elder Lindsay Black speak about reconciliation.

The narrative switches from voice over to THS Wills actually relating the shocking events of October 17 before exploring letters in Minerva Museum. This technique positions the viewer in very close proximity to the tragedy. Archival footage of country, of Aboriginal tribes, photographs of original settlers, maps, and theme songs about Tommy Wills all provide a powerful impact.

**The Letters**

Horatio to his wife Elizabeth Wills 6/10/1861
Tommy to Coley Harrison 24/10/1861
Elizabeth to sons Cedric and Horace Wills 20/11/1861
Tommy to mother Elizabeth Wills 26/7/1862
D.F. Ducker to Cedric Wills 20/2/1864
Tommy to Cedric Wills 2/4/1864
Tommy to Cedric & Horace Wills 15/3/1880
Egbert to Horace Wills (Tommy's suicide) 9/5/1880
Interviews

Tom Horatio Spencer Wills

Les Perrin, author/historian

Martin Flanagan, sports writer

Terry Wills-Cooke, family historian

Rex Harcourt, author/historian

Gill Hibbins, author/historian

David Studham, MCC librarian

Ian Chappell, cricket legend

Phillip Minniecon, Aboriginal cricketer

Dr Greg de Moore, psychiatrist

Lindsay Black, Fitzroy Basin Elder

Lorna Smith, tourism operator

Kenley Simpson, family historian

Press Clippings, see Bibliography

Biographies and Journals:

Thomas Wentworth Wills

D. Carment (1980)

M. Flanagan (1998)

D. J. Mulvaney (1967)


L. Perrin (1998)

T. Wills-Cooke (1997)

Wills-Cook private collection

T.H.S. Wills, Wills family papers

Minerva Creek private collection

The Ideological Structure

The director explores national reality of sporting hero within local tragedy during the era of frontier war of 1850s-60’s when Nogoa and Dawson River tribes fought white European settlers over land rights and survival. The irony is that Tommy Wills (who grew up playing football with Aboriginal children) coached and captained the Aboriginal Cricket Team within five years of the massacre. This is treated as reconciliation in the documentary.
CHAPTER THREE
The Role Of The Local Museum, Monument and Memorabilia
as Markers of Regional Identity

Fig 15

Fig 16

Fig 17

Fig 18

Fig 19

Fig 20
CHAPTER THREE

The Role of the Local Museum, Monument and Memorabilia

as Markers of Regional Identity

Museums alone have the power, in some sense, to carry the past into the present by virtue of their real relationship with past events.

(Pearce 1992:24)

Local history museums are widely perceived as an important anchor for developing a regional cultural tourism industry. Current moves on the part of the Queensland Government to sponsor cultural planning and development throughout regional centres, together with a new awareness of the economic potential of heritage tourism, is providing a major impetus for change in the cultural identity of this region. As stated in the introduction to this thesis, rural communities everywhere, hit by economic rationalism during the last two decades, believe they can turn their past into a historic display which may ensure their survival in the present and into the future, as the heritage industry becomes a major agent in turning remote places into tourist destinations. The increasing popularity of visiting local history museums, heritage areas, theme parks and cultural centres, surely illustrates the importance of the past to tourist agendas. This expansion of tourism interests into the fields of culture, history and ethnicity also shows how these sites are being drawn into the newly constructed tourist spaces by
discourses around issues of civic responsibility, access, sponsorship, participation and competition for audiences (Trotter 1996, Witcomb 1993). This pull of tourists to the local museum has impacted on the community, the volunteer curators, the local historians and on the regional identity of the ‘place’ itself. While a vigorous production of eccentric ‘unusual monuments’, situated in local parks and gardens, has enhanced an industry commemorating local citizens and local events, appealing to the tourist to ‘pause’, stop and view the past (Bulbeck 1989:26).

The Local Museum: cultural tourism *On The Western Line.*

In this chapter, the author has again travelled along the Tropic of Capricorn in order to research local museums and outdoor art objects, from Emu Park to Mt Morgan, Biloela, Springsure, Boguntungan, Jericho, Marlborough, Barcaldine and Winton in the far west. Many of the small museums are documented throughout the video *On The Western Line.* Some were merely brief stopovers on the train journey. The author’s footage of the Historical Society Railway Volunteers and their display of memorabilia and archival documents at Rockhampton’s old Burrough Chambers introduced the story of the Great Northern Railway, which underpins this region’s settlement of the outback and the train journey. Ilfracombe’s railway-siding farm machinery museum was filmed from the *Spirit of the Outback*, while many of the public statues and works of art documented in this chapter, were
actually situated in railway sidings, goods yards and in the precincts of the local history museum along the railway track, where they proclaim the fame of their home town, because a local son or daughter made national history. Some historic collections observed at Mt Morgan Museum and at Qantilda Museum at Winton were visualised as critical heritage locations in the documentary. The Minerva Creek Wills’ family museum was a central focus of archival research for the author’s video production on Tommy Wills and Emu Park’s historical museum became an important study area for local information on the King O’Malley production.

Until recently a history of local acquisitions and local enthusiasms has perhaps insulated museums from the customer focus of the modern tourism industry. But according to Peter Vergo (1991) there has been a self-conscious shift in orientation away from the museum’s carefully preserved and cherished artefacts to emphasise education, visitor services and the authentic ‘experience’ and engagement of the senses, all important aspects of the tourist industry. A revival of interest in the past, generated by an individual and nostalgic quest for identity and family roots, is occurring, and as Pearce (1992:24) wrote, museums still have the power to carry the past into the present by virtue of their real relationship with past events. As can be seen in each documentary accompanying this thesis, Central Queensland local museums, located in country towns and often in isolated and outback districts struggling for economic survival, have become a focus of heritage
and cultural tourism. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett maintains that tourism needs destinations and local history museums are premier attractions. Museums need visitors and the tourism industry more than any sector of the economy can ‘deliver the hordes to museum doors’ (1998:132). As featured in each documentary, these local museums are vital destinations linking the author’s journey to special commemorations and events and to the ordinary people of Central Queensland. Where museums were once defined by the curator’s relationship to ‘the collection’, today they are defined more than ever by their relationship to visitors, to good service and the ‘museum product’ (1998:132).

Museums have long served as ‘surrogates for travel’, a particularly important role before the advent of mass tourism as noted in Chapter One. Therefore, continuing with the concept of tourist as traveller we can visualise ‘immersion in a world other than one’s own as a form of transport’ (1998:132). Whether one travels five hours from Australia to Bali or New Zealand by jet plane, or ten hours by train from Rockhampton to Longreach and Winton in the far west, what is most ordinary in the context of the destination becomes a source of fascination for the visitor. It may be cows being milked or sheep being shorn on the farm, zinc, copper or coal extracted from an underground mine, or sapphires being scratched up from a mound of gravel, ‘once it is a sight to be seen, the life world becomes a museum in itself’ (1998:133).
Museums are seen today therefore as an integral part of the tourist’s cultural itinerary, becoming interwoven in a network of attractions that form the recreational geography of a region (1998:131). Small museums in remote or seaside towns in Capricornia are being promoted as tourist destinations because of their different historical content. These sites unapologetically construct the past as somewhere unique to visit. As noted above, local history museums like Mt Morgan (the site of one of the world’s richest gold mines) or Emu Park (the region’s first seaside health resort) demonstrate how local authorities can support museum activities and how they can serve their communities by reaching out to different audiences, to residents and travellers alike, focusing on commemorative bicentennial and federation events and exhibitions.

The Regional Museum – tourist’s responses, their likes and dislikes.

From their inception folk museums have always preserved souvenirs of travel, such as collections of minerals, primitive tools and weapons, arts and artefacts. By exhibiting this memorabilia from our early settler and Indigenous cultures, museums have attempted to reconstruct the places from which these things were brought - from the pioneer cottage or bush kitchen to the Aboriginal community prior to white settlement. The collection of the small regional museum is an ‘undrawn map’ of all the places from which
materials have come. It is the ‘floor plan’ which determines where people walk and which ‘delineates a virtual space of travel’ (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998:130-132). (The use of this virtual space will be studied further in Chapter Four, when the author explores the interactive devices and hi-technology panoramas being developed by postmodern regional cultural centres).

It has been estimated that seven billion tourists are already moving around the globe annually each year. Although Australia currently receives a modest five million international visitors per annum, compared to France and Spain which each receives 60 million tourists, it is expected that this country’s international visitors will double to 10 million by the year 2010. Certainly tourism on the Capricorn Coast is the largest industry in the shire today, employing more than 1000 people with average occupancy rates of 72 percent, according to the Livingstone Shire Directory (2001). Domestic tourism still represents about 85 percent originating mainly from this region, South East Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. In 2003, one million overnight domestic visitors travelled to the Central Queensland region, while 3792 million ‘domestic visitor nights’ were spent - with an average of five nights per visitor. However, in 2003, the Capricorn region also attracted 98 000 international visitors, (five percent of the total of international tourists visiting Queensland). Of those visitors, 86 percent were holidaying in the Capricorn region, with 10 percent visiting friends
and relatives, and only three percent visiting for business reasons. Significant source markets were Europe 29 percent, United Kingdom 27 percent, New Zealand 10 percent and the USA 10 percent (National Visitor Survey, Bureau of Tourism Research September 2004). This survey found that historical villages, cultural centres museums and local galleries were all popular with a large percentage of visitors, national and international.

According to Foo and Rossetto’s 1996 survey across Australia, one in two international visitors sought at least one cultural experience during their stay. About 60 percent sampled some cultural attraction such as: a historic building, site or monument 30 percent; museum or art gallery 27 percent; Aboriginal site or cultural display 15 percent; performing arts 12 percent; and festival or fair 5 percent (1998:7-8, cited in Craik:2001). Federal tourism minister Fran Bailey announced recently ‘Australia is attracting more export dollars from tourism than from the export of coal and wool combined, as the number of international tourists in 2003/4 rose from 4.7 million to 5.1million’ (Tourism Australia 2005).

The author’s original museum survey of 650 tourists, undertaken for this thesis in 1995-96, (and in 1997-98), supported the above data taken from Capricorn Coast Tourist Organisation, as well as Foo and Rossetto on characteristics and motivations of cultural tourists. I began my regional research with Tony Schirato, by surveying eight local museums and cultural
centres in Central Queensland, basing our questionnaire on Bennett and Bourdieu’s hypothesis (Bennett, Bulbeck and Finnane, 1991; Bennett: 1994) that the barriers to museum visitation were largely cultural, and not economic, and that frequency of museum visitation would correlate positively with the visitor’s level of educational attainment. Travellers were asked where they came from, why they came, and what their perceptions of the local museum or cultural centre’s role in the community were. They also were asked to include their occupation and educational levels reached at school. Tourists completed the questionnaires distributed to Winton’s Qantilda Museum, Biloela’s Silo, Mt Morgan, Emu Park and Marlborough Historical Museums, plus Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Longreach, Dreamtime Cultural Centre, Rockhampton and Australian Workers’ Heritage Centre, Barcaldine. Personal comments were mostly positive, and the survey showed (like Bennett’s respondents), museum goers visited for fun, because they were on holidays or touring, wanted to study a particular exhibit, while about half the tourists surveyed had no particular reason for visiting the museum, and only a small percentage visited for educational reasons (Huf and Schirato Survey 1996, Appendix 2).

Bennett’s travellers viewed museums, followed by monuments, as most notable heritage sites (rather than churches, schools or libraries). He hypothesised that familiarity with the cultural codes of the history museum was acquired mainly in formal education. In his study, those with university
or postgraduate degrees comprised 27 percent of his sample, representing the highest proportion of those who attended museums for fun (38 percent). On the other hand 43 percent who visited museums ‘for no particular reason’ was made up of those who had completed only primary school or secondary school to year 10. We found there were similar responses to visitor perceptions of our museums in Central Queensland. Respondents showed that ‘museum goers’ were critical of ‘not enough information’; in some cases ‘not enough hands-on activities representing the old days’. They wanted more Aboriginal history, more information about women pioneers; they wanted more ethnic and migrant history, and at Barcaldine, demanded ‘more history of the Australian Labor Party’. Bennett (1994) also concluded in his survey of museums and art galleries that if tourism was an objective, then history was being placed on the tourist agenda in a way that art was not. For example, it seemed to him that art galleries were not perceived as places to which children could be easily taken. He believed that ‘history trust’ museums might target these groups of young people for special attention if their present levels of visitation were to be maintained in the future (Bennett 1994). After observing some of the programs to come from Queensland Museum in the last five years, it appears this strategy has been followed in this region. While many visitors continue to merely visit the museum to see ‘what’s on’, others will use museums both local and regional as an important social or academic resource. A new people-centered approach, together with new practices in acquiring important community
oral histories, and empowerment for the local curator and volunteer committee, are making a difference.

According to our survey, most people who frequent Capricornia museums did so because they were travelling in the area, en route to another destination. The country of origin for the majority of visitors to museums in Capricornia was Australia 89 percent, while only 11 percent come from other countries. A small rise in international tourist numbers was experienced at the national icon, Longreach’s Stockman’s Hall of Fame, and at Dreamtime Cultural Centre, which is situated on the main coastal highway from Brisbane to Cairns. The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Most overseas visitors were from Europe and Germany, United Kingdom, USA and a small percentage from South-East Asia.

The average age of visitors to the centres was between 36 and 55, with the second largest group being 56 to 65. We concluded that most of the visitors were either retired or on holiday. The majority had travelled by car to Capricornia and stayed at the nearby caravan park or local motel. Many had travelled out west from Rockhampton or Mackay. Of the visitors surveyed, 80 percent had completed secondary school while only 29 percent had completed further education. Despite strong local advertising, most visitors
found out about the museum by word of mouth 47 percent, promotional material from brochures 24 percent, information centres accounted for 18 percent visitors; only 2 percent read about the museum in the local newspaper and 9 percent from some other means. There was a strong correlation between the role of the museum and the role of the region’s history and the region’s past.

Tourists’ Comments: mostly honest, predictable and encouraging.

Capricornia respondents felt that:

Museums should tell what life was really like in the past 81 percent
Museums should help us learn from the past 79 percent
Museums should tell about lives of ordinary people
and not just famous events 79 percent
Museums should be full of old and interesting objects 50 percent
Museums should have displays with public participation 50 percent

(survey by Huf and Schirato 1996
Appendix 2)

As recorded by Bennett, and most evident in our research (see Appendices), the overseas market was not plainly visible. Surprisingly few tourists other than Australians travelled to the far west, although this is changing rapidly with government support for the Heritage Trails Network, linking the popular outback Matilda Highway with the Capricorn Highway, Bruce Highway and other national routes. Although detailed surveys by the Australian Tourist Commission have shown that this region is favoured as a
tourist destination by both domestic and international travellers, research undertaken for this thesis (as discussed above) calculated that 80 percent of the total market for tourism in the Central Queensland region were Australian visitors. Lennon’s report for the Queensland Office of Arts and Cultural Development, (Hidden Heritage 1995), maintained the industry misread the early signs by ironically providing infrastructure for mass overseas tourism and failing to nurture the domestic market. The international backpackers’ market has also been targeted strongly by local commercial interests, especially the ‘farmstay’ market. Important issues still need to be resolved, however, and many of those surveyed suggested museums needed better road signage, better lighting, accurate names, dates and events, improved advertising strategies, both visual and in the media. Some tourist-driven suggestions included comprehensive self-guided tours and some begged for more public participation in interactive presentations although these were not everybody’s choice.

The ‘reluctant’ museum visitor in Central Queensland was certainly not reluctant to express his or her mind on local cultural tourism. However, comments were mostly predictable and may lead, in the future, to museums and cultural centres agreeing to the tourists’ demands by being more definitive with the facilities, displays, and activities they advertise and the markets they target.
At Emu Park visitors loved the old machines, especially the phonograph, the authentic train engine and carriage, the ship’s bell and the coin collection.

‘The History of Emu Park is a wonderful collection of photographs which bring back memories’ ... ‘perhaps more typewritten cards and labels needed’.

At Winton encouraging comments were made on the horse and cattle dog performances, collection of harness, saddlery and old sulkies, the display of old cars, the bottle display, the ambulance history; ‘friendly attendants’ newspaper cuttings and ‘the wonderful tableau of Waltzing Matilda’.

At Mt Morgan visitors wrote there was a good general story of the area and excellent mining exhibits, everything very well presented, ‘loved the history, museum well set out - layout and presentation of historic articles well done’, but some tourists pleaded for ‘more contextual information re provenance and usage please!’

At Biloela the relatively new Silo produced some interesting remarks from a variety of visitors including farmers, truck drivers, PNG pilots, students and retired couples. Tourists liked the hands on electronic display, great history, guns, pioneer church display, information on red claw farming, brochures on local farming history, the history of cotton and mining displays. Comments included - ‘would like to see more material, information brochures and booklets available to take away’.
At Marlborough a Dutch visitor was intrigued by a tricycle wheelchair. Tourists were impressed with cataloguing of unusual pioneer artefacts and objects and highly praised the presentation and labelling, the easy access and the description on each exhibit. The local memorabilia, craft work and the old school books, were popular, ‘just wanted to see them’ while one public servant demanded ‘we wanted more social history of the local sugar industry’ and ‘more about the Aboriginal and South Sea Islanders’ history of the district’.

(see survey data in Appendix 2)

Nostalgia for the past seen as ‘A Vehicle of Commodification’.

In the introduction to this thesis, the author maintained it is nostalgia that invites this dialogue between the past and the present in order to make these archival connections with our ancestors and our roots. According to Lowenthal, nostalgia allows us to cope with the past and the present by offering an escape, a refuge, a respite - or more constructively ‘by offering an explanation for the present’ (1985:8). Hewison has argued that nostalgia for the immediate past has become a vehicle of commodification with commercial interests reinforcing the longing for authenticity in order to exploit it for economic, political and social gain (Hewison 1987). Like Hewison, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett acknowledges the heritage product represents authenticity and social capital in an important, value-added industry. There is a range of vested interests in the presentation of heritage with different agendas, but by understanding the processes whereby heritage
is produced within a tourist framework, it is possible to build a productive alliance (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett:1994). Robin Trotter maintains museums are witness to the extraordinary power of objects to interpellate viewers and in so doing give access to the individual and collective memories stored therein (1999:24). In this way, community museums work on arousing nostalgic responses through these shared memories.

The author has observed within each small local museum that familiar objects and tokens of the past evoke a strong nostalgic impulse which connects with notions of identity. Therefore it can be seen that tourism and heritage are linked to our regional museums as a form of travel based on nostalgia for the past, and the desire to experience diverse cultural landscapes and forms. This, I think, is very evident as expressed in the museums throughout Central Queensland which have been interpreted in many different ways in all three documentaries.

Where cultural or heritage tourism emphasises products such as heritage, museums, historic homes and spaces, pulling tourists towards specific destinations ... nostalgia looks backward and seeks escape in the past ... even though such refuges may be a construct of the individual or drawn from public representations or images of the past.

(Davis 1979, cited in Trotter 1999)
Critics of rural museums, however, often point to the fact that many of the representations of the past do present an old-fashioned and politically conservative point of view. Peter Vergo claims in his book, *The New Museology*, that unless museums are prepared to radically re-examine their role within society (and not merely measure their success in terms of more money and more visitors) they may find themselves becoming dubbed as ‘living fossils’ (Vergo 1991:3). Whether we like it or not, Vergo maintains every acquisition or arrangement of a work of art within the context of a museum display means placing a certain construction upon history ‘be it a distant or recent past, our own culture, or someone else’s’ (1991:3). Some academics suggest our museum services are being compromised by too close an association with tourism. Trotter (1996) questions whether museums have become merely exhibitionists for the sake of the traveller. Are museums, which were once defined by their relationship to objects and curators, today being redefined by their relationship to tourists? Could there be a crisis in museum identity? American professor of tourism studies Dean MacCannell cautions that cultural tourism should not be just an aggregate of commercial activities or a vehicle for commodification: ‘It is also an ideological framing of history, nature and tradition - a framing that has the power to shape culture and nature to its own needs’ (1992:1). He maintains that museums are places where the community talks to outsiders and are places ‘where different social relations are established’ (MacCannell 1992:1). Kirschenblatt-Gimblett also claims that rural and regional spaces
do not have to be equated completely with a ‘static’ past. Museums can
speak to the present with a positive contemporary voice and this valuable
community resource can ensure that community’s survival into the future
(Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1994). Certainly the focus of cultural and heritage
tourism on the museum as a tourist destination and its role in community
education and research (as well as conservation and preservation of objects
and memorabilia) are important issues in the region today.

Jane Lennon (1995) warns that in many isolated country museums small
volunteer committees cannot cater for increasing numbers of cultural
tourists arriving daily in their efforts to seek out and understand the regional
diversity of the Central Queensland outback. These museums may be in
need of technical assistance in cataloguing and conserving collections. As
noted in tourists’ observations, these heritage sites were often difficult to
locate, tucked away in a back street with no signposts. Often, the
committee’s efforts have been compounded by ageing volunteers,
difficulties in processing and curating artefacts of the past, but also by
government grant knock -backs and inability to get projects finished to
deadlines. ‘The responsibility for resourcing these community organisations
lies with state and federal governments, so that the towns themselves may
develop highly professional local museums, but instead, local history
centres have often been marginalised’ (Lennon 1995: 73).
Four areas of need for local museums have been identified as collections, training, marketing cultural tourism and funding. Certainly in the area of archiving and collecting, computer technology can develop the community museums’ empowerment and is the hook into government funds which are becoming increasingly available for training in the use of computer databased cataloguing skills (1995:73-74). Despite their many management problems however, local history museums are an integral part of the cultural and social life of the community, and there is general agreement that museums today must negotiate for the competing expectations of diverse constituencies in a context very different from the nineteenth century and the birth of their forebears - the European museums.

Case studies in Capricornia: fossilised - or commodified by tourism?

The documentary *On The Western Line* pointed out that conservation of a local heritage industry poses a challenge for local museums like Emu Park on the Capricorn Coast, Marlborough in the north, Mt Morgan, Mitchell, Bogantungan and Winton in the western outback, as they balance the responsibilities of protecting their heritage with that of attracting the tourist and supplying the marketplace. However, this study maintains that the local history museum has proved to be adaptive and enduring, by collecting objects and archival material from early settlement and denoting their
heritage as a ‘heroic past’ to attract the traveller and therefore give relevance to their own existence in an often precarious economy.

Studying the environment of these small local history museums in Capricornia it was obvious that very different communities had very different missions. On my first visit in 1995 to Winton, the birthplace of Qantas, the oldest airline in the English speaking world, and A.B. Paterson’s unofficial anthem Waltzing Matilda, I explored the small and proudly local Qantilda Museum with its historic Christina McPherson Cottage. Today, the interactive and postmodern panorama within the multimillion dollar Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre has appropriated Christina’s Cottage and Banjo’s legend, but Qantilda museum has remained, nearby, still imbued with the bush ethos of the early grazing settlement in far western Queensland. Thomas Wood’s interpretation of Waltzing Matilda was a popular exhibit at the original museum. Wood, one of the first English tourists to arrive at Winton by rail in the early 1930’s, describes the original settlement, Pelican Waterhole thus:

If you were not told it stands where several sheep runs meet and that it came to life because water was found here, you would see no reason why it should not be anywhere else in this plain.

(Thomas Wood Cobbers 1934)
This visitor was apparently enchanted with hotelkeeper Shanahan’s version of Waltzing Matilda. Wood incorporated the following story and McPherson’s tune in his best-selling travelogue, published in 1934:

The Story goes that Banjo Paterson used to come and stay with old Robert McPherson out at Dagworth Station. They were driving into Winton in the buggy when they passed a man carrying his swag. ‘That’s what we call Waltzing Matilda in these parts’, said McPherson. Banjo was so struck with the phrase he got a piece of paper and wrote the verses there and then. When they got to Winton, his sister (Miss McPherson) who was a bit of a musician, wrote the tune and they all sang it that night at the North Gregory Hotel.

(Wood 1934, cited in Huf, McDonald and Myers, 1994)

When our survey questioned visitors to the original museum, respondents were passionate about the tableau of Christina McPherson playing Waltzing Matilda on her autoharp with Banjo standing by. The national song writing scene was originally portrayed in an old fashioned tableau ‘frozen in time’ in the Christina McPherson Cottage, but these days, the verses issue forth from an interactive ‘sound and light show’ at a simulated Combo Waterhole panorama, at the Cultural Centre next door. Much local controversy still surrounds this legend and its interpretation at the Centre will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Qantas (Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service) began its first regular airmail and passenger service on November
2, 1922 at Winton, flying between Cloncurry and Charleville, a distance of 577 miles. The birth of Qantas, at the Winton Club, was a highpoint of the original museum, but its history has also been relocated to the Cultural Centre, together with collections of fossils from Lark Quarry and much social history memorabilia.

The carefully collated artefacts of early Anglo-Celtic station life however, are still tucked away in the Qantilda Museum beside the antique bottle collection, a serious collection of guns, and the stable of old station cars and station machinery, which remain to fascinate some tourists who seek the old, the nostalgic and the authentic pioneer past. Adjacent to these pioneer objects are the implements and weapons of the Aboriginal Kalkadoon Tribe, the earliest inhabitants of Winton and northwest Queensland. Beside these weapons, and roughly labelled as native inhabitants, are a series of old black and white photographs of Kalkadoon women, taken by white colonial male photographers. The documentary narration has commented on Chilla Bulbeck’s claim that too often the Aboriginal story has been confined ‘to prehistory, a time before the white settlers came’, to a form of primitive racism. Certainly, the Aboriginal story has to be translated if white tourists are to have any chance of comprehending it. But why, asks Bulbeck, (1991) ‘is it always the subordinate culture’s symbols which are translated into those of the dominant culture, and usually without question’ (169). However, as noted in Chapter One, ‘this strategy allows the incorporation of
Aboriginal history into the ‘never-ending’ story of the nation, as the project of a national history enfolds diverse and often conflicting stories into a single narrative’ (Bennett cited in Bulbeck 1991:169).

Certainly, the rewriting of Aboriginal history and the representation of their history has strongly influenced debates such as land rights, compensation and just who are the appropriate custodians of Aboriginal artefacts. But I would argue that Indigenous people in this region are now taking charge of the disposition, handling, access, ownership and interpretation of their own patrimony - the spaces in which they live - and their way of life. A new generation of museum professionals is proactively addressing the stewardship of cultural property, its presentation and interpretation. This thesis looks more closely at these discourses in the presentation of today’s dreaming, specifically at Dreamtime Cultural Centre and Bambruk Living Cultural Centre in Chapter Five.

Where our museums mythologise our heritage, there are many schools of thought on the commemoration of our past, but all agree that contemporary interpretations through the collection of memorabilia in local museums and commemorative events and anniversaries are critical to the community’s need for a collective purpose and meaning for enriching the present and securing continuity with the past (Durkheim cited in Schwartz 1990:81). Winkworth argues that perhaps more than any other sphere of history, the
representation of the past through its material culture is a product of contemporary taste, fashion and commercial interests. This has important consequences for the kind of history that is produced and for the way in which museums position themselves in relation to market driven interests in the ‘material past’. One contentious issue in the past has been that with little or no government funding to local museums, the state and federal museums were charged with the mission of preserving Australia's material culture. In practice this resulted in scouring the countryside and displacing objects from their local context to the vast storage systems of Australia's national and mainstream museums (Winkworth 1991). However, since bicentennial funding of heritage projects in 1988, the situation has changed somewhat and we begin to see throughout the region the importance of preservation and identification of regional and local artefacts of historical significance has been realised.

As already discussed in this thesis, Kylie Winkworth claims improvised and hand-crafted objects have always had their admirers, but their significance was more likely to be found in family associations or in the ingenuity and utility of the object than in any appreciation of investment value, or quintessential Australian character (1991:117-129) In the austere context of national history museums these objects are decontextualised from their associations with a local past. The removal of objects from their local context, according to Winkworth, also removes their true pioneer
connotations about poverty, about making-do and about improvising (1991). This is a challenge for local museums like Winton, Marlborough, Mt Morgan and Emu Park as they balance the responsibilities of protecting their heritage with that of attracting the regional and national tourist and supplying the marketplace.

At Mt Morgan, once known as Iron Mountain, the site of one of the world’s richest gold mines, there is a very different community to that of Winton. This town grew, not from the grazing industry with its romanticised pioneering ethos, but from the tough and violent days of the gold rushes in 1882. It functioned as a gold and copper mine until 1990. It has a community grown out of the descendants of old miners, but it also has a migrant 'alternative' lifestyle community searching for cheap housing and simple living. Like many other old gold mining towns where the mine whistle is silent and the gold and copper long gone, there is a dilemma as this new community with a different agenda has arrived in town. Through our documentary, On The Western Line, we have observed the town coming to life once a year with the Golden Mount Celebrations and the famous Running the Cutter race, which takes place each Easter, outside the museum in the main street. ‘The Cutter’ is reminiscent of the days when the miner’s boy was sent down to the pub at the end of the last shift to bring back beer for his mates. This celebration, we are told, is an important meeting place for old residents and not merely an event popularising heritage for tourists
and new settlers. As Mt Morgan, like other old gold mining towns, experiences drastic change - a social revolution in fact - the community must come to terms with its own local character today, and its own type of tourism.

The role of the local museum in preserving the legends and lifestyle of the miners and the mine itself is an important one. It is part of the town’s ‘collective remembering’ which we have noted previously is social and wholly involved with the production of the community’s cultural heritage. The Mt Morgan museum houses an authentic and valued historic collection of mine relics, gold samples, surveyors’ reports and photographs reminiscent of the life of the mining community from the busy commercial scene at the turn of the century to the quiet post-war days of neglect and desperation. It is easily accessible to the whole community and it has received substantial grants from the state government recently to assist in improving the quality of services to the community and contribute to the preservation of objects and documents relevant to the region's heritage. These grants are being made available with the paternal guidance of the Queensland Museum.

Mr Fred Christmas, curator and former metallurgist with the mining company, is documented on camera at Mt Morgan, within his museum studying the letters of the Chinese miners and relics from the old mine, prior
to the closure of the open cut. These precious documents were brought out for our inspection together with photos of prestige federation football teams and members of the long gone Mt Morgan Board of Management - all memorabilia of a previous lifestyle - ‘all related to the town’s heyday, like a memory palace to be subjected to the tourist’s gaze’ (Healy 1994:34). However, today, the community has almost forgotten the story of the Chinese riots at nearby Crocodile Creek in 1867. Chinese history and artefacts are relegated to a back room of the museum, despite the fact that this community was an important part of the national mining venture. Of course, in the decade prior to Federation and the White Australia Policy, discrimination against Asians and particularly the Chinese was rife. Perhaps today, the alternative community at Mt Morgan is more concerned about another bank shutting its doors than it is about heritage. As Fred Christmas escorts the writer and camera crew out of his museum towards the postmodern, colourfully painted cement statue of ‘The Cutter’, he tells us enthusiastically that his committee wants to see the tourist industry revive the old mine as a ‘living museum’. ‘We should have tours of a working mine truly reliving the past’ he says (Christmas interview 2002).

Mr Christmas is a visionary, a curator who sees symbols of the past, such as the gold mine, becoming a significant symbol of the future as the town’s heritage is turned into a successful and popular tourist destination. He took part in the author’s museum survey, noting visitors were impressed with the
presentation of ‘machinery of yesteryear’, mining exhibits and the old photographs. ‘Good general history of the area, very well set out’ said several tourists. This small museum is not tucked away as so many seem to be, situated in the main street opposite the iconic sculpture of The Cutter. However, it is still marginalised through lack of funding, in the status of its curator, volunteer workers and in recognition of its needs from the wider regional community and shire council.

At Emu Park, the first health resort on the Capricorn Line, the story of King O’Malley, last surviving member of Australia’s first Federation Parliament, is the cultural property of the community. The small local museum has recovered the folklore, the oral history, the news clippings, biographies and artefacts concerned with the legend, including ancient photographs of O’Malley’s Aboriginal rescuer Coowonga and his tribe. (Much of this information was documented on camera as described in Chapter Two). According to local mythology, Coowonga, a fisherman from Cooroman Creek, rescued O'Malley as he lay dying of consumption in a cave off Rocky Point at Emu Park. He fed the Yankee immigrant on oysters and Burdekin plums until he was strong enough to walk to Melbourne and a life of politics (cited in Huf: 1994, see Chapter Two). O’Malley, Minister for Home Affairs from 1910 -1916, a larrikin politician allegedly fathered the Commonwealth Bank, put lavatories on trains, was responsible for the Transcontinental Railway and procured the land on which Canberra was
built, is a national and local icon. His legend has been handed down through
generations of Emu Park fishermen. Despite some speculation about the
dubious nature of (or lack of) original documentation supporting the legend,
King O’Malley’s public image has reached mythical proportions and is
venerated by the coastal community, as noted in the video production
concerning his life.

At the Emu Park Museum in Hill Street, formerly the old Post Office,
librarian and editor of the museum newsletter *Emu Droppings*, Kath Austin,
on camera, recalled her father’s story of seeing a very sick man ‘flat with
red hair’ being lifted out of a precarious cave and carried to the Aborigines’
camp near Shelley Beach. Together with her band of museum volunteers
Kath believes wholeheartedly in the local myth. Museum and Historical
Society president Joe Cousins escorted the film crew to O’Malley’s Cave to
shoot *On The Western Line*’s opening sequence on the historic rescue. For
many years, the museum committee pleaded with the Commonwealth Bank
for $140 000 to build a substantial museum through the Bicentennial
Commemoration of Historic Events and Famous People Program in 1988.
Finally, a grant for $4000 arrived in time for the committee to build a
memorial plaque outside the old railway shed and museum. The committee
also asked the Commonwealth Bank to name the Emu Park agency The
King O’Malley Branch in honour of its founder, but their request was
On Friday, February 7 1992, two hundred seaside dwellers travelled to the small Emu Park museum to pay their respects to their local hero and ‘father of the nation’, and officially commemorate the bicentennial plaque in his honour. More than 180 school children sang *Advance Australia Fair*, and politicians, historians, members of the Aboriginal and Islander community and heritage lovers from up and down the central coast attended the official monument celebration. Whether the story is historically correct does not deter this community. Their ‘truth’ lies in the fact that Emu Park’s climate cured the man so he could walk to Adelaide to begin his public life. The Capricorn Coast Mirror ran an article which read:

> King O'Malley and his story will now live forever at Emu Park and the Emu Park Museum has gained a monument that is expected to make it even more worth a visit by Tourists heading north or south.

*(Capricorn Coast Mirror, 7.2.92)*

The museum committee’s efforts may become overwhelming for the small group of volunteers who undertake cataloguing and curating artefacts of the past. Their work may not be appreciated by the whole community; their efforts may be compounded by grant refusals and the inability to get projects completed as planned to local deadlines. They may be disillusioned by neighbours who call the local museum a ‘tip for unused junk’ (give it to the museum!) - a common remark which may contribute to the low status of
the small town museum. In some local history keeping places there is a certain tension and atmosphere of insecurity about what lies ahead for their collection. During my research, tensions did arise within the Emu Park committee over possession and ownership of archival material. One volunteer felt empowered through her museum involvement to become the virtual owner of all O’Malley archival documents. When members of the public were invited by the Capricorn Coast Mirror to assist with any history which could be useful for a projected historical documentary, this person wrote to the editor informing him that the research had been completed and there was no benefit in prolonging an inquiry into the local story of the Yankee Bounder. In many of the small rural museums the author found that some patrons set themselves up as custodians of the local history and were quite possessive and suspicious about access to their archival collection by outsiders.

The national O’Malley mythology has certainly been recorded from Kalgoorlie in Western Australia to Darwin in Tasmania, but the local stories remain in the ‘collective memory’ of old families in Emu Park and Rockhampton and, as noted in the introduction, these shared memories can provide a social cohesion but they can also (as above) be a source of great conflict as Darian Smith pointed out (1994:16-19). Collective memories are both reflected and reinforced through culturally and temporally specific activities at Emu Park such as the commemorative bicentennial plaque
ceremony and public performances of *The Legend of King O’Malley* in which the whole community participated. As we have seen, in public commemorations, the past is expressed through a series of collective myths, which are explanatory, connecting the past to the present and providing a historical rationale for the existence of our town or shire. ‘As we share those memories that are perceived to be central to our own identity, we are incorporating a memory of events, which are outside our lived experience but central to the identity of our society’ (1994:19). Through our local Emu Park history museum perhaps we can remember people we have never met, places we have never been to and events we have had no part in, for example, the displacement of Coowonga’s tribe - the Wappaburra people from Keppel Island - linked historically to Coowonga, fisherman and saviour of Australia’s first Minister for Home Affairs, and both documented in the author’s video productions.

Are small history Museums today in Crisis?

Cultural tourism has been an important asset in encouraging people to come to their own local town and to take part in the preservation of their own historic past and at the same time encourage tourists ‘to stop a while’. While working with several small museums in Central Queensland, consultant Dr Andrea Witcomb discovered there was an emerging pattern of disadvantaged rural communities due to farm recession, drought and
disintegration of rural services, which had severely affected local historical societies (1996). One interesting case study researched by Witcomb was Mitchell, an ageing town of 1000 people south west of Biloela and two hours due west of Rockhampton. Witcomb found that there was no longer a supermarket and the only bank had closed. Women who once worked as bookkeepers and secretaries had been superseded by computers in those businesses still surviving. There was a dwindling source of off-farm employment, generally. But Mitchell lies on the popular tourist-oriented Matilda Highway and the local progress association picked up on the dynamics of heritage tourism as one answer to an economic reinvestment in the town. Dr Witcomb ran a series of workshops to help establish professional guidelines for collecting, conserving and documenting historical collections, before a 12 months strategic plan was put together to redesign the local tourist and heritage centre. As a result, a successful $50 000 state grant made it possible to procure a professional curator to design an exhibition on the town’s favourite myth (Witcomb 1996). The presentation of the local bushranger story of the cattle stealing brothers Patrick and James Kennif, together with a spectacular monument (sculptured after the style of Nolan’s Ned Kelly) has been a notable success.

At the small coastal village of Marlborough, 100 kilometres north of Rockhampton, an extraordinary situation existed where a local grazier built and dedicated a small building and valuable farming collection to the local
townspeople. When this benefactor died, the ownership was left to a committee called the Marlborough Museum Board. But the board was in conflict with the volunteer local group who actually curated, repaired and set up some excellent exhibitions. Under the professional training of Dr Witcomb, these women learnt about preservation of the local dairy and chrysoprase industry artefacts and utensils; repaired milking machines and separators; and invented an interactive phonogram which told stories about explorers’ expeditions, the local pastoral history and the escapades of bushranger Frank Gardiner. The former president and member of this initial workshop, Mrs Maggie Emmery provided an enlightening interview on the issues involved in curating a small museum within an environment of cultural controversy (Emmery: interview with author, 1997). This is her story:

We wanted to turn Marlborough into a tourist destination, get people off the highway, and set up interesting exhibits at every corner. The surveyor replaced all original street signs and mowed the town in the original survey plan and in 1995 we set up a craft shop and opened our first exhibition A Woman's Work. The display featured artefacts and implements, work tools from pioneer homesteads and also displayed explorer Andrew Murray's diaries, Rachel Henning's letters and photographs from historic Marlborough Station, the home of Rachel Henning and her brother in the 1870s. The exhibition launch in September 1995 was attended by crowds of enthusiastic local visitors as well as tourists. Queensland Metals Incorporated, involved in mining locally, supported the effort with state-of-the-art computers and photocopiers. Plans were made for another series of
events and displays. Country women, isolated on stations, their families grown up and many unable to drive a car and get away from the property just loved working on the museum exhibits. My neighbours today say it was the best time of their lives.

(Curator Maggie Emmery 1997)

Museum goers reported excitedly on the exhibits. Family tourists and backpackers noticed the new road signs pointing to the tiny heritage village and drove through to discover the museum. They were impressed with A Woman's Work. ‘We loved everything from Women's Work to the cataloguing of all the colonial objects, even the old bottles’ (Author’s Survey comments). However, the conflict between Board and volunteers grew. The Board did not take any interest in building and collating a collection that no one person legally owned - they had no interest in planning future collections and so a stalemate was reached in the community, according to Mrs Emery.

Dr Witcomb, as mentor and advisor, together with curator Maggie Emmery and the volunteer committee, spent two years of intensive exhibition development work. They were assisted by Queensland government grant programs in professional development ‘supporting museological management of local collections’. But finally both Witcomb and Emmery decided they would no longer apply for grants for Marlborough Museum under the government’s new programs of assistance scheme. Both agreed that grant structures unfortunately could undermine local volunteer
organisations. The category of Individual Projects to assist in the professional development of individuals working with Queensland collections was initially of great assistance to the enthusiastic team. However, the museum had a small membership spread across a large rural area and the local volunteer community did not have the people and time resources to undergo the kind of training and intensive daily work the grant structure demanded of local museums (Witcomb and Emmery 1997).

Today, Marlborough rests quietly off the highway ...and reminisces about other days. The Historical Museum holds examples of the local chrysoprase and gives something of the history of the mine in an excellent display. This small museum is a real surprise ... a level of real professionalism tinged with grass roots enthusiasm pervades the place and its many interesting displays. In the grounds several sheds shelter a collection of old farm implements and horse-drawn drays, wagons and sulkies together with half a dozen vintage tractors. These machines are complemented by the indoor displays that portray the human scale of the past. Here are to be found the household goods of the 19th Century... furnishings and table settings of the early homesteads, the First Aid kit used by the bush stockman, the methylated spirit fired irons, kerosene fridge, the homemade chair and genuine antique sideboard. A number of displays are linked to audiotapes which give the visitor a sense of the sounds from past times to add to the experience. The visitors’ book contains signatures from all over the world, all impressed with the time capsule they have found here.

(Livingstone Shire Directory May 2001)

It was curious to read the Livingstone Shire Community Directory 2001 and discover 'A Woman's Work' does not appear visible anymore, although two
Board members continue to caretake the building. The shop has recently closed. Certainly the underlying problems of funding, training, data cataloguing and employing volunteers as curators are pressing ones and evident in the administration of many small museums from the coast to the outback. The author must now ask the question, which rural history museums will actually survive?

Tourism is becoming an increasing force within the sphere of cultural heritage, as reiterated throughout this thesis, but what is the impact on the regional communities who endeavour to exhibit their heritage for growing ‘hordes of visitors’. Local museums are an important element in the development of an integrated cultural industry, and are vital in fostering cultural and heritage tourism, but will these small history museums remain viable? Must these museums rethink their roles and acknowledge their competitive position within leisure and tourism industries? In her Queensland policy report *Hidden Heritage* (1995) Jane Lennon notes that there are many issues of great concern to regional museums, as has already been highlighted earlier in this chapter. Lennon claims that the government museum grants program has merely been a ‘band aid’ patching up current local problems. In this region, stretching from Winton to Emu Park, and from Mitchell to Marlborough, sufficient funding is of huge concern to the conservation of historic archival material. Lennon believes that the declining numbers of senior volunteers may not be able to effectively market their
community's cultural attractions and suggests there is a strong need for training collections management in cataloguing and computer technology skills. As has been already noted, rural history museums isolated from the main tourist flow are often difficult to locate. They may have collections of national significance but the local community often is not aware of this. Certainly research for this project has shown such problems do exist among heritage collections housed in small regional museums.

In the present economy, therefore, it is possible that many small keeping places, which have a role as a social and communal centre, may collapse from lack of support. Working as a volunteer is often no longer seen as a hobby and increasingly there is little space for local museums to serve as social groups and historical societies can be devastated by short-sighted bureaucratic decisions. The Rockhampton Historical Society, which has existed for nearly thirty years in the original Borough Chambers on the banks of the Fitzroy River, has now to decide whether to move away from its focus on historical document archives and strengthen its object collection, in order to be eligible for the current Arts Queensland grant system, or accept that the society might disappear with the death of its elderly members. The documentary, *On The Western Line*, visited the Borough Chambers to film the display by the Railway History Volunteers and noted the richness of the collection of local family history documents, garments and household artefacts from the past. But the heritage-listed
building is situated in a crisis environment, on the northern bank of the Fitzroy River, as Lorna McDonald intimated in her jubilee report *Delving the Past 1948-1998* (McDonald, 1998). There is no air conditioning, no security against the treacherous river and in time of serious and frequent flooding volunteers must work by boat to rescue precious documents and archives.

It was a bitter dispute in 1947 concerning maritime history, the discovery of Keppel Bay (by Cook and Flinders) and the Fitzroy River, which provided the catalyst for the founding of the town’s own historical society. McDonald noted the society had been formed to research and preserve the history of city and district in archival and library form, but had become a museum by default of successive city councils. Writing the jubilee commemorative booklet in 1998, she remarks on two particular clauses from the original constitution which she maintained indicated the humanity, liberal mindedness and foresight of those early members. They were:

1. The identification and marking of places and buildings of historical interest and their preservation for posterity.
2. The study of the various native races of the above described territory before and since British occupation.

(McDonald 1998:2-3)
Heritage projects are often determined by local government’s financial interests at the expense of a community’s cultural interests as has been noted in cultural policy discussed within this thesis. However, McDonald argued that by the end of 1996 the collection had reached crisis point. The storeroom was so over-filled that shelves began to collapse while the floor was buried under boxes, trunks and items of furniture. Eventually in 1997 the City Council provided a demountable container for the storage of non-perishable hard items only, but failed in a verbal promise to raise the main building from ground level and to install a shade cover (McDonald 1998).

These small museums in the region represent the public memory of our accumulated past, and as noted above there are tensions not merely within management and policy but within the two strands current writing on history and museum presentation. The first looks at regional and local collections of history in a museum which may be already at crisis point, the second studies processes of remembering and collecting, analysing and documenting on a national scale. We have observed tensions about women’s history at Longreach and Marlborough, tensions about Indigenous icons as local Aboriginal tribes debate which exhibits they should display (the past or the present); tensions at Emu Park about the collection of local documents; tensions at Winton about which version of Waltzing Matilda will be remembered and celebrated. As Paula Hamilton stresses ‘history and memory are everywhere at a critical turning point’ (Hamilton 1994:11).
It can be seen that regional and local museums today are fully aware of the importance of serving the needs of national, community and special interest groups as they come under pressure from government policies and practices. But will they be able to cope with the competition from other popular leisure industries and other commercial activities? The current *Livingstone Shire Arts and Cultural Policy Consultation* (which covers Marlborough, Yeppoon and Emu Park) noted in its cultural policy report that there should be more acknowledgment and reflection of the community's histories and historic sites in redevelopment and tourist oriented plans. The report noted:

1. The desire for Council to support new ideas and projects and make arts and culture a flagship for the Shire
2. The need to develop projects which give tourists a reason to stay overnight
3. Cultural activities could be developed around existing histories eg: the King O’Malley story and reconciliation program in Emu Park’s Festival of the Wind
4. The need to consult with the community on important aspects of heritage. The draft policy noted that council should promote cultural development as part of community development (including cultural heritage recording and management).

*(Livingstone Shire Draft Arts and Cultural Policy, May 2001)*

There is a strong culture in Australia that believes everyone ought to have an equal right and opportunity to make use of our publicly owned museums.
But we have also observed that rural spaces and heritage sites do not have to equate only with the past - they too are affected by postmodernism and globalisation (Turner 1994). Today, a historical museum and its oral and written history, its memorabilia and archival artefacts, are almost obligatory for any community, but so is the outdoor public art, the pioneer park, or the collection of antiquated farm machinery. The unusual monument dedicated to the past - even a tree - can be evocative of past happenings. All are sites of nostalgic reminiscence, all places that remind the visitor of their own particular history as can be seen below, in this final section of Chapter Three, concerning the outdoor cultural objects spaced along the Tropic of Capricorn within the environment of our small historic museums and keeping places.

Outdoor Cultural Objects and Regional Identity.

Since 1988, as noted in the introduction and documented in On The Western Line, there has been an explosion of outdoor cultural objects and monuments in Central Queensland which have in some ways challenged the nation builders of orthodox history. Chilla Bulbeck’s national register of ‘unusual monuments’ identified 800 local community monuments funded by the Australian Bicentennial Authority to commemorate the ordinary people of Australia whose interventions with history have been mostly local (1989:26). The honest simplicity of these monuments including plaques and
fountains, clocks, birdbaths and murals is apparent, as they appear in the friendly surrounds of rural parks and gardens along the outback Capricorn and Matilda Highways. Many of these monuments were captured on camera as the author travelled west by train. Many of these public statues and sculptures are situated in the precincts of the local history museum where they proclaim the fame of their hometown, because a local son or daughter made national history.

From Mt Morgan and Rockhampton to Barcaldine, Longreach and Winton, the documentary has recorded monuments as tributes to our miners, our pioneers and bush workers such as ‘The Ringer’, positioned outside the entrance to the Hall of Fame at Longreach, Banjo Paterson and his Swagman at Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Centre, ‘The Cutter’ at Mt Morgan, while another famous bronze statue of Jackie Howe the gun shearer and a unique sculpture of the bushranger Kennif Brothers are tourist destinations in the western towns of Blackall and Mitchell. Like Paterson’s ‘Swaggie’, Eddie Hackman’s bronze statue of ‘The Ringer’ is the archetypal image of the Australian bush worker, the model of white Anglo-Celtic masculinity represented in so many of the outback’s unusual monuments which connect their way of life to local stories and the nation’s myths. As Bulbeck (1989) noted, these monuments have been built through a need to develop an identity which rural communities feel is truly Australian and which relates to their past and in some cases, to their future. Chapter one introduced
many of these cultural objects viewed within the documentary. Not only bushmen and bulls, but giant sapphires of the Central Highlands gem fields, Winton’s dinosaur rubbish bins, a piano perched in a Clermont gumtree (from the great food of 1885) have all been featured on the author’s video film. They are representative of the numerous outdoor art objects which appear throughout the region, constructed by small communities to celebrate their district’s local pioneer and frontier history and to attract the tourist to stay and explore their particular story.

One impressive memorial cairn built north of Cloncurry commemorates the Kalkadoon war of 1884. According to Gibson and Besley (2004) it is the only memorial in Queensland that directly acknowledges racial conflict on the frontier and its inscription bravely links events of the past with political issues of the present (2004). ‘The spirit of the Kalkatunga tribe never died at battle but remains intact and alive today within the Kalkadoon tribal council’ (2004:52). Between Winton and Lark Quarry, where Kalkadoon battles were also fought in earnest, only a very small mound of stones was found by the author at a dusty highway crossing. Certainly a huge mural celebrates Indigenous and national icon Aboriginal actor David Gulpilil welcoming visitors to Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Cultural Centre, but the only official monument the author could discover recognising the South Sea Islanders in the Yeppoon district was Armstrong’s Monument, an old fig tree where small SSI children apparently frightened the sugar plantation
manager's horse in the 1880's (see Chapter five). However, it is important to note the SSI Joskeleigh Cemetery is now heritage-listed.

The most meaningful monuments of all may be the weathered gravestones on creek banks, hidden behind derelict station sheds and in small private cemeteries commemorating the heroes and victims of history. European, Indigenous, or ethnic, some are just rocks or circles of pebbles, mostly ignored by the tourist on their outback pilgrimage. Gibson and Besley (2004) warn that many of these objects are under threat as poorly managed urban renewal brings cultural homogenisation, and as political definitions of cultural tourism protect some forms of rural heritage and not others. While researching this project, the author has noted that local conflicts still exist, for example, between the Bauhinia Shire Council at Springsure, the Wills family of Minerva Creek and the new owners of grazing land at Murdering Gap over the care and governance of the Cullin-la-Ringo massacre grave sites. Also at Springsure, the local Wealwandangi people, with elders Lindsay Black and Fred Conway, are fighting land claims over graves and sacred sites, still not recognised by local authorities, despite the presence of a unique keeping place Yumba Burin, for ancestral cylinders, brought home from southern state museums to their final resting place, as portrayed briefly in the documentary *On The Western Line*. 
In her article ‘Aborigines, Memorials and the Frontier’ (1991) Bulbeck maintains that the rewriting of Aboriginal history has strongly influenced debates on land rights, compensation, memorials, and on just whose nation the Bicentenary has been celebrating. As discussed in relation to Qantilda Museum’s exotic display of historic photographs, the monuments that Aboriginals claim as their own (such as western Queensland’s Kalkadoon obelisk or national sacred site Uluru), have become battlegrounds. Bulbeck argues that Aboriginal people have still not been given a significant voice in determining the meanings of their ceremonial monuments (1991:168-178) and this debate continues in the following chapters with its relevance to Central Queensland’s Dreamtime Cultural Centre and to Bambruk Living Cultural Centre in Victoria’s Wimmera district.

The life of the early pioneers is one of the most popular themes of public art and outdoor cultural objects according to Lisanne Gibson and Joanna Besley whose book _Monumental Queensland_ (2004) researched the correlation between public art, unusual monuments and regional identity. Many of our heroic pioneering statues appear to articulate stereotypes of masculinity - the explorer, the digger, the shearer, the bushworker, the bushranger. Here we see cultural objects that celebrate a particular way of life, a particular economy, and a major industry that connects to the Central Queensland way of life. Some of the most famous icons of the rural industry are the larger than life cement bulls at Rockhampton, which greet the curious traveller at
every major entrance to the city, which has become known as the Beef Capital of Australia. Each is a replica of a different breed of cattle endowed with a social and economic significance, such as Brahman, Africander, Hereford or Santa Getrudas. Their specific identity is articulated as a ‘category of value enabling recognition of objects and places whose sign is not primarily aesthetic or historical’ (2004:130). Funded by cattle breeders and the local city council, the very first of these statues mounted on 76 centimetre plinths, was unveiled in the early 70s at a cost of around $7000.

‘Rocky bulls have become a bit of a joke with Australians’ (Gibson cited in 2004:130). According to academic and social scientist Mark Gibson, they have been lampooned as icons of a conservative ‘red neck’ culture, which some urban Aussies imagine dominates rural and regional Queensland. Gibson writes that the bulls have been described as representative of ‘defensive ordinariness’ or a ‘reluctance of the city’s elites to cede cultural control or open up change’ (Gibson 1996:6-8). Thus the big bulls might be taken almost as sentinels guarding against more innovative and imaginative claims on civic identity. But Gibson and Besley warn that the meanings of the bulls to the local population and the visiting tourists are more layered than this perspective allows for. Despite recognising the negative connotations of the statues, many residents have expressed a degree of pride in their presence: due to both a perceived need for the City ‘to have a recognisable identity in order to attract industry and tourists’, and their
belief that ‘the City had a great many assets of which outsiders might also become aware’ (Greer, Reis and Locke cited in 2004:132).

These bulls, captured in a brief moment of humour on camera, are highly representative of the innovative nature of Australian industry development. They are also indicative of the way in which the local image again and again overtakes the national images of a place. Gibson and Besley point out that the statues of famous racehorses Bernborough and Gunsynd support claims to a national notoriety, as well as local fame, in their hometowns in southern Queensland. Central Queensland has a life-size bronze statue of explorer Charles Archer and his famous horse Sleipner, positioned in the gardens of the city’s major theatre and art gallery, overlooking Rockhampton’s Fitzroy River. Designed by Australian sculptor Arthur Murch and commissioned by the City Council, the statue pays tribute to the history and to the prosperity of all Australia but for the local population, it recognises the pioneering Norwegian family who founded an historic dynasty in the sheep and cattle industry at Gracemere in 1853.

Ruth Barcan writing of consumer totemism and serial monumentality claims that ‘Big Things’ demonstrate the community’s role in constructing or reconstructing the meaning of an object, so whatever its origins, it becomes owned by the community or becomes a significant part of the home environment. (1997:165). ‘Big Things’, writes Barcan, inscribe identity onto
otherwise empty or featureless regions in an attempt to displace a perceived lack. They are about the exchange of both images and capital and the relationship between these two. ‘Big Things’ help affect a commodification of place often exceeding their status as advertising a product and coming to advertise a region (2004:39). As postmodern simulacra ‘Big Things’ such as big bulls, big dinosaurs, sapphires, pineapples and bananas come to exceed and in some sense precede the ‘real’ on which they were modelled.

One eccentric monument designed by a Winton immigrant opal miner Arno Grotjahn, (and caught on camera briefly in *On The Western Line*), Arno’s Wall contains an extraordinary collection of household items, old lawn mower parts, an early model HG Holden, vintage typewriters and motorbikes. It reminds the author of the Australian film *Mad Max*, as it tells a story of multicultural diversity, and Arno’s journey to Australia in 1962. ‘It is a history of machines and mankind itself’, claims Arno (2004:184). As Gibson and Besley have noted, these signposts are an essential element of the local and national story. Instigated by local groups, with limited resources, using their own imagination to portray their pioneer and frontier heritage, as noted earlier, these signposts intersect with national historical mythologies and are an important part of the region’s geography and social conscience - a vital element portrayed in all three documentaries accompanying this thesis.
Two outstanding monuments of outdoor art in Capricornia depicting the arrival of Captain Cook in Keppel Bay in 1770 and the European settlement of Jericho in 1802, are reflected upon in *On The Western Line*. They have both been designed by local artist Peggy Westmoreland and constructed by engineer Steve Kele. Located high on Constitution Hill at Emu Park on Keppel Bay, ‘The Singing Ship’ was designed to cast the shadow of a sailing ship on the surface of the sea and create the sound effects of wind whipping through the sails. The site overlooks the Keppel Bay islands named by Cook after the Lord of the Admiralty (2004:56-57). As Gibson and Besley suggest it is as much a tribute to its creators as to Cook’s exploratory trip along the Queensland Coast. Two plaques honour Captain James Cook and the makers of this monument which is featured in both documentaries *On The Western Line* and *The Legend of King O’Malley*. The Singing Ship and its time capsule, donated by the local historical society, have become a tourist icon and popular destination on the Capricorn Coast.

Inviting the traveller to stop and spend time studying the local culture, and again designed by Westmoreland, the sandstone sculpture ‘The Crystal Trumpeters’, is located on the west bank of the Jordan River 200 kilometres west of Emerald, at Jericho. This small town with a population of about 100 people looked to the Old Testament for inspiration for a bicentennial project which has again become a popular tourist destination. It depicts the story of the fall of the biblical town of Jericho. The monument comprises a series of
coloured local rocks, representing the Israelites’ return to the Promised Land, but also symbolising the barren anthills and desert landscape of this particular locality and linking the pioneer railway and grazing town to the struggles of other pioneers and travellers. Westmoreland, the artist, is a former resident of this small frontier town. Nearby in Alpha, a colourful series of murals designed by Alice McLaughlin and Beeny Fuentes, have also taken the rural landscape as their theme to depict local stories of the town’s heritage and current survival.

Still causing much friction in the community are two very historic monuments - a rather fragile old ghost gum tree, ‘The Tree of Knowledge’ at Barcaldine, which commemorates the Shearers’ Strike of 1891 and the birth of the Australian Labor Party, and the original Coolabah Dig Tree at Comet, mourning the loss of explorer Ludwig Leichhardt, who disappeared without a trace on his journey across Central Australia in 1848. Certainly, *On The Western Line*’s narrator pointed out that the Emerald Shire Council’s Leichhardt Tree restoration project had the historic tree stump dug up (from a remote location on a distant property) and encased beside a replica under the eaves of a new toilet shelter in small town Comet’s public park. The town’s symbol of the Strike, which has stood in splendour in front of the railway station for more than 150 years, is now swamped by a new Tourist Information Centre and dwarfed by a gigantic windmill imported to advertise the Workers Heritage Centre, claims Professor Joan Kerr (2001:9).
Professor Kerr derides both symbolic monuments claiming that the importance of real place is completely lost here because ‘Dead trees can’t resuscitate small towns’ or ‘appeal to the cultural tourist of Central Queensland’. In her research article for *Australia Art Monthly* (March 2001), Kerr attacks almost all unusual monuments of Central Western Queensland, claiming that ‘the eccentric vernacular art of country towns’ has been supplanted by tourist art which is ‘big, generic and slick’ (2001, 3:8).

Kerr refers to the Crystal Trumpeters as the ‘Great Jericho Artwork’, also as ‘eccentric and generic’, and writes that the setting for Westmoreland’s ‘antipodean version of the biblical Walls of Jericho doesn’t do much for either work or town’ (2001: 12). She depicts one of Alpha’s murals by Alice and Benny as ‘a bucolic landscape full of cattle adorning the butcher’s shop,’ commenting sardonically ‘I wish I could say that Alpha’s murals attract thousands of tourists, but they don’t’ (Kerr 2001:12). Kerr’s report on Muttaburra’s local dinosaur culture is also quite scathing:

The life-size model Muttaburrasaurus at Muttaburra, a town far too close to Longreach, is puny and passive when compared with Queensland’s collection of Giant Things and couldn’t infuse life or money into anything ... It was small, grubby and pathetically sheltering under a makeshift protective plastic awning in an unvisited park.

(Kerr 2001:8)
She does however note that these well-promoted experiences do attract the ‘grey nomad’ - the retired couples who comprise the vast majority of outback museum visitors. But she claims that for most country towns, ‘real art’ equals ‘popular icon’ and an object that ‘photographs better than it visits’ (2001:12). Kerr did compliment Winton on its 1950s bronze Jolly Swagman sculptures by Daphne Mayo but concludes that overall, benefits of cultural tourism don’t work in the smaller towns. Her very negative criticism of generic and postmodern presentation of the region’s cultural heritage is in contrast to Winkworth and Bullbeck’s research, and is discussed in more detail within Chapter Four’s debate on interactive heritage centres and ‘metaphors of power’.

Making sense of a region is an enormously important public construction project, and the identity-making of individual regions is weak in Australia, argues Donald Horne who repeatedly criticises the heritage industry today, claiming that most local history societies are limited and most local museums lack meaning (Horne 1996). In his article ‘A better class of monument,’ for *The Weekend Australian*, Nov 16, 1996, Horne writes that something better can be done for Australian country towns than fatuous promotion of Big Bananas or Big Pineapples: ‘sensible and interesting stuff that could give the people who live in an area an idea of its past, and something to encourage the people who live there to take a more intelligent
and wider interest in themselves and the human condition’ says Horne (1996). Certainly, Central Queensland has at times been described as tawdry and vulgar, as we have seen above - the land of the giant cow (or bull), the big sapphire, the home of a ringer, the swagman, and the dinosaur rubbish bin. But this brand of local magic can also be contested politically as difference and otherness, which feature in all tourism discourses, regardless of site or history.

As visitors from interstate and overseas are invited to explore the local history museum and these eccentric and vernacular monuments, I believe they will gain a new awareness of place. Both the rural museum and the monument in its public space confront the traveller with a singular message, a reminder to the viewer to pause, to stop, and to ponder on the past. Perhaps our ‘unusual works of art’ do unconsciously borrow and reinforce the rationale that justifies the national monuments to great men and, are a way of saying ‘we too helped build the nation, if in a smaller and more anonymous way’ (Bulbeck 1989:26). Collective memories are all around us not only in the myths of our past but in the material culture of our everyday lives and tourist sites, memorials and local history museums are a part of that public and collective memory

Cultural tourism has been an important asset in encouraging people to come to their own local town to take part in the preservation of their own past, and
their own history. Rural communities can play an important role in a cultural tourism industry by taking part in turning their heritage sites and small local museums into tourist destinations. This is particularly relevant to small, regional museums where it has been suggested that recording oral histories and collective memories can change the focus of history itself and open up new areas of imagining and inquiry (Haley 1973, Thompson 1988, cited in Trotter 1998). They can turn their past into a display which ensures their economic and cultural survival in the present and into the future, and local and state governments are increasingly becoming interested in this possibility.
CHAPTER FOUR

Cultural Centres, Authenticity

and the Postmodern Pilgrim
CHAPTER FOUR

Cultural Centres, Authenticity

and the Postmodern Pilgrim.

That's what people love about this country. They love coming here because it's real. It's not fake. It is real and it is genuine and it is authentic... It's about the people, it's about the way we are as a country. And that's such a special quality about this country.

(John Morse, Australian Tourist Commission, Telstra Luncheon, October 1999)

The modern tourist quest, we are told, is for authenticity. It is for true meanings, and as John Morse, managing director ATC maintains, for genuine and authentic experiences. The challenge is to increase the depth of knowledge about what Australia can offer. The key to tapping potential visitors’ desire to know who we are and how we live ‘is to promote an image of authenticity’ and project this diversity and vitality as ‘young, vibrant, stylish and colourful’ (Morse, cited in Craik 2001: 100). He argues that Australian tourism, pre-occupied with national identity, needs to project a different image, one that can encapsulate ‘our multiculturalism, our culture, our natural and man-made attractions’ (2001:101). Social critic Donald Horne has linked the notion of the tourist to the pilgrim, intent on a personal journey through museums and art galleries, on a quest to discover an enlightened world of culture - ‘metaphors of power, learning and art in the contemporary museum’ (Horne 1984:249). But Horne argues that in
many high profile destinations ‘an air conditioned dreamland has been created for tourists to see only staged events’ (1984:249). Too often, he claims, original meanings have been lost or overlaid with new meanings, and objects and cultural practices decontextualised, as today’s tourist undertakes a ‘quasi-religious ritual’, as tourism resonates as a ‘cult of the dead’ and a ‘cult of the past’ (249). For the postmodern ‘pilgrim’, guidebooks take the place of sacred texts with the rituals of seeing the art and artefacts attaining meaning through their fame. He cautions that this ‘fame’ could take the place of the desired impact of ‘authenticity’:

The fame of the object becomes its meaning, and the only substantive meaning to the modern pilgrimage is obtained through purchases and souvenirs.

(Horne 1984:249)

Have our cultural centres indeed become ‘air-conditioned dreamlands’ or ‘hybrid artificial metaphors’ (Witcomb 1994) preying on tourists in order to satisfy their enormous appetite for power? Jenny Craik (2001) confirms that the global traveller certainly is a ‘more sophisticated beast’ than her/his predecessor, possessing a greater knowledge of options and accustomed to lifestyle-oriented and consumer-driven ways of life (104-105). The postmodern tourist of the 21st century knows what she/he wants, and although often regarded as a symptom of modernity, tourism seems to suggest for many the search for places and experiences that are stylish,
oriented towards the future, and which epitomise *postmodernity*, ‘fusing past, present and future in a liminal timelessness and spacelessness, characterised by pastiche, simulacra and iconography’ (Urry cited in Craik 2001:102). As Craik has also noted, ‘tourism does seem to perform a double duty as economic salvation and nationalist cultural iconography’ (1992:89), as tourist advocates all agree that Australia needs to project this *different* image - while retaining authenticity - an image that can encapsulate the multidimensional aspects of Australia, including our pioneer history and multiculturalism, our contemporary art and our Aboriginal attractions.

 Positioned along the Capricorn and Matilda Highways which form the cultural tourist route for Central Queensland, the ‘authentic’ role of our Heritage Cultural Centres, as likened - or opposed to - ‘air-conditioned dreamlands’, will be addressed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. They are indeed becoming destinations of empowerment, having a major impact on regional heritage tourism with their ethnographic realism, high technology, storehouse of historical artefacts and in most cases very generous bi-centennial funding. These ‘metaphors of power’ have become national icons at the same time as they have promoted local myths, local heroes and the local history of our past, whether it is a white pioneer history or a black and Indigenous ‘Dreamtime’ story. Longreach’s Stockman’s Hall of Fame is presented as a national shrine to the outback, Winton’s Waltzing Maltilda Cultural Centre publicised as the only museum named after a song, and
Barcaldine’s Australian Workers Heritage Centre, proudly celebrates the birth of the Labor Party and the Shearer’s Strike of 1891-94. Each has embodied the notion of special significance for rural grazing and rural workers’ enterprises, and the involvement of these specific tourist projects within Central Queensland has encouraged economic independence, cultural survival, and a deep-rooted passion for regional history.

Contemporary perceptions of Indigenous tourism centred at Rockhampton Dreamtime Cultural Centre, and its proposed partnership with the adjacent mainstream Pioneer Heritage Village, will also be examined to discover how these interactive and multicultural centres appeal to today’s diverse travellers. In the case of Dreamtime Centre, funded primarily by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council (now defunct), federal government and city council, there has been a shift towards cross-cultural understanding and reconciliation with a renewal of community energy in restoring and displaying Indigenous stencil art of the ancient Carnarvon people in the authentic sandstone caves. Chapter Five will study the change in direction made by present management, in contrast to founder Dr. Nola James’ vision for the collection, preservation, protection and education of Aboriginal culture (Griffin and Shelley 1993). Today, the emphasis is on self-sufficiency and financial success as a commercial venture which has been achieved with record attendance at the new conference and theatre
complex, and record occupancy of the adjoining motel facing black actor Gulpilil’s poster positioned on the main highway to the tropical north.

As early as 1965, government reports on the travel and tourist industry predicted Australia was on the threshold of a great opportunity. The Harris, Kerr & Forster Report 1966 (Craik 2001:100-102), stated it was not enough to have natural wonders, a sunny climate, heritage and the outback; it was necessary to address the needs and patterns of usage of today’s tourists. In considering the region’s unique attractions which could be developed for inbound tourists, it must be noted that this report emphasised the potential of Indigenous cultural tourism. The report focused attention on the centrality of Indigenous Australia to international tourist appeal. This relates strongly to Aboriginal destinations like Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Cultural Centre and Bambruk Living Cultural Centre in the Grampians, Victoria, both unique Indigenous tourist destinations, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five.

As has already been stated in this thesis, the whole theme of tourism is interwoven with the journey or pilgrimage in a quest for knowledge and learning. I believe this is where the documentary On the Western Line works as a discovery voyage, as a process of external discovery and internal self-discovery for the ‘auteur/film director’, and as the author’s true identity is redefined as a traveller, experiencing this sense of place, within a particular
region of Central Queensland. Certainly heritage tourism becomes a pilgrimage based not merely on buying souvenirs, as Donald Horne claims, but on nostalgia for the past and on the traveller's desire to experience the power of the real things in the real place. It is the desire to experience diverse cultural landscapes and forms, from the examination of the physical remains of the past and natural landscapes, to local cultural traditions with real people today, that motivates the international and domestic tourist (Trotter 1992). This is authenticity indeed.

With this increased public awareness of the Australian past, questions emerge querying the ongoing reconstruction, reinterpretation, restoration and preservation of these diverse cultural heritages that constitute that past. Geoffrey Bolton (1991: 224-225 cited in Kapferer 1999) suggests these questions focus on the ways in which people are actively taught about national and ethnic cultural identities through the informal instruction proffered by heritage centres, by halls of fame and local history projects. This enhancement of regional identity is crucial to the understanding of national identity, but also central to the promotion of tourism in Australian country towns and regional centres desperately seeking nostalgia and a spirit of place and space (Walker 1991, cited in Trotter 2001:172). Improving the 'authenticity' of local culture is promoted as a benefit to both host community and visitors, with realistic interpretations of local attractions
enabling residents to gain a renewed sense of community pride, with tourists able to gain a far deeper appreciation of the community’s uniqueness.

Tourism empowerment along the Matilda and Capricorn Highways.

Many local tourist destinations on the Tropic of Capricorn such as The Silo at Biloela, The Woolwash at Blackall, and The Pioneer Heritage Village at Rockhampton are craving attention from travellers as they struggle to function in a difficult rural economy, with the intricacies of making a profit and fitting council and government policies on heritage and cultural tourism at the same time. With the establishment of the latest cultural tourism strategy, The Queensland Heritage Trails Network, further important issues of cultural and natural heritage, national and regional identity and the economic benefits possible through heritage initiatives, have been identified. There is a definite need for social sustainability, which can only be achieved by combining government funding with community support, through the creation of these partnerships and best practice planning. According to Queensland Heritage Tourism Network spokesman Niall Macken, in his address to an inaugural Queensland Heritage Conference at the Queensland Museum (2002), the network was conceived as a means of creating a critical mass to expand the tourism potential in the outback and to collectively showcase its unique environment, heritage and stories, to visitors both national and international. Adequate funding was the first key
in the survival and conservation of heritage places, heritage stories and memorabilia, and their improved presentation and management, he said.

Over $100 million has already been committed to the network to link these significant features of Queensland's natural and built environment, its Aboriginal culture, social and cultural history, and on the Tropic of Capricorn, The Heritage Trails Network has identified and committed funding for several current major projects. These include funding for the Longreach Qantas Founders’ Museum, Australian Workers’ Heritage Centre at Barcaldine (establishment of a major interpretation of the role of women in Australian working heritage), Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame (development of custodial and museological capacity will assist in presenting a changing exhibition program interpreting pastoral heritage), Blackall Wool Scour (a conservation management plan), and Rockhampton Customs House. Here we see the development of a town museum concept enhancing the city’s historical industries where the story about governance and settlement, gold, transport and communications will be presented in this beautiful old National Trust listed building (Macken 2002). The establishment of this network marks a substantial engagement in this region between the tourism industry and the heritage industry to create a viable cultural tourism market based on European and Indigenous culture, nature based tourism, and arts and heritage tourism. It certainly has the potential to
expand into a diverse industry already recognising the demands of authenticity and interpretation of the region’s shared memories:

This heritage is held in places, buildings and artefacts. It also resides in the memories and stories of individuals and in the shared memories of communities. To understand a place, one must know its memories.

(Macken 2002)

As knowledge about the outback has increased the number of tourists who include an outback component of their trip has increased. As popularity of the outback increases so does the provision of viable travel options. In Queensland, the 1700 kilometres road from western New South Wales border to the Gulf of Carpentaria in far North Queensland popularly known as the Matilda Highway has been a brilliant drawcard for outback tourism exploring *Waltzing Matilda* country, *dinosaur fossil* country at Richmond and Lark Quarry, or *Tambo Teddy* country in the south, while in Central Queensland, manager of Rockhampton’s Council Heritage Precinct Tom Upton notes that the Capricorn Highway, the arterial highway to the west, is becoming just as important a link to Longreach, Winton, Hughenden, Clermont and Capella in the Central Highlands with its destination also aimed at promoting Outback Culture (Upton interview 2002).
Destination Outback Culture: The Stockman’s Hall of Fame.

The Stockman’s Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre, situated 700 kilometres west of Rockhampton on the Tropic of Capricorn, has been marketed as true example of Australian heritage converting a location in the isolated far west into a truly viable destination, as noted in the introduction to this thesis. Social historian Robin Trotter writes, ‘The Hall of Fame builds its appeal on one of Australia’s most enduring and most favoured mythologies - that of the outback worker’ (1992:160). While Judith Kapferer (1998) argues that for most Australians the bush is as alien as a foreign country and rather less easily accessible, this outback ethos has provided the stimulus for the kind of patriotic or nationalist tourism which has been developed in Longreach and the surrounding districts. Here we find the extraordinary feats of bushmen like Nat Buchanan, legendary shearer Jacky Howe, and bushranger Captain Starlight, not to mention the legend of Waltzing Matilda and the ‘unsung heroes’ of the Shearer’s Strike, are retold on all possible occasions.

The Hall of Fame was selected for funding by the Australian Bicentennial Authority for its pioneering view of the past, its vision to preserve the national heritage of the past and its aim to recreate a national culture for the future (Trotter 1992). Dedicated to the vision of two men with a passion for
the outback, Hugh Sawrey and R.M. Williams, it was founded as the Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame in 1974. The late R.M. Williams, Australian legend, publisher of the magazines *Hoofs and Horns, Outback*, and marketer of the Aussie *drizabone* raincoat and other bush gear, claimed there was a need to provide a museum, art gallery, and historical library to preserve Australian outback culture. He conceptualised the Bicentennial National Trail before he joined with Sawrey to promote this repository for outback culture:

We wanted to remember with honour the people of the Outback whose lifestyle and outlook most Australians wouldn't even know about. It seemed important to us that an old drover who walked his cattle a thousand miles or more should be remembered for that achievement.


Another important force driving the construction of the centre in Longreach was Dr Tom Murphy, local doctor and head of the local lobby, who argued that tourism would be ‘the future of the west’. ‘It would bring more people to the area and generate improved services and educational facilities’

(*Longreach Leader* November 13, 1981)

The lobby group won the approval to build the Hall of Fame with the support of the whole community, who wanted to develop it into a monument to Australia’s outback heritage (*Longreach Leader*, May 30, 1980). The
area’s historical significance was assured by its association with Banjo Paterson and ‘Waltzing Matilda’, with the early grazing squattocracy and with its importance as a major Flying Doctor base and home of Qantas (Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service). There was originally, some conflict between Longreach, Winton and Cloncurry over historical associations - particularly with regards to Qantas’ birthplace, but as HOF manager Brian Osborn explained to the author:

The real story goes, QANTAS was born in the creek at Cloncurry, nurtured at Winton and matured as a national air service in Longreach.

(Osborn interview 1997)

When the Hall was conceived, as a second national memorial after Canberra’s Australian War Memorial, it was designed to resolve the conflict of the past and present, with the use of traditional outback building materials of stone and corrugated iron, all icons signifying toughness and durability and the Australian outback. Trotter notes the nationalist meta-narrative that informs the underlying ideals of the HOF suggests a visit ‘really is a national pilgrimage’ (Trotter 1992:330). Inside, displays make use of postmodern interactive hi-technology such as the hologram of the drover, numerous audiovisual facilities and computer terminals - all present in abundance to inform and to entertain. But outside the Hall, the statue of The Ringer signifies a pioneering ethos of independence and strength. The whole
setting, structure and content works at projecting the bush legend - establishing outback stockmen and settlers as the founding fathers who built the nation’s pastoral economy developing rural export industries in cattle, sheep and grain (Huf 1996).

Since its establishment and high profile opening by Queen Elizabeth in April 1988, the Stockman’s Hall of Fame has revitalised a town suffering from a declining regional grazing economy. Tourism Outback has sponsored many independent tourist businesses, bed & breakfast accommodation, riverboat cruises, Qantas original museum tours, cattle and sheep station tours with links to the heritage trails network both north and south of the Matilda Highway. The old pub and farm machinery display at Ilfracombe and the original Woolwash at Blackall ‘up the track’ have become popular as specific constructions of a pioneering past. Winton has now developed its own Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre and at Barcaldine on the Capricorn Highway, the Australian Workers Heritage Centre has been established. Cultural tourism has changed the life of the central west today as each district is linked by the history of early settlement; by confrontation between white grazier and the Aboriginal tribes, by Shearers’ Strikes and Labor politics and by an underlying desire to preserve their heritage.
HOF Board member Sir Frank Moore, prior to the official opening by the Queen in April 1988, claimed that this historic journey or pilgrimage to the outback was part of the authentic tourist experience:

It has to be an attraction that asks people to make a journey across the country. By having the Hall of Fame so far inland, by making it so significant to Australians, it will attract people to make the journey across the Dividing Range, to travel across their country, many for the first time, and in doing that they will have a different appreciation of Australia.

(Sir Frank Moore, Sunday Mail Magazine, April 3, 1988)

According to HOF managing director Brian Osborn, 1998’s Festival of the Outback featuring both Longreach and Winton, was an outstanding success attracting domestic and international tourists in numbers never seen in the bush since the Queen’s visit:

One of the reasons we set up here is that the people travel through all this country to get out here. By the time they actually get to Longreach they have some idea of what our pioneers went through. Because of the distance and the change of country you actually travel: - you have a look, you come out on the train, you have a look at the difference in the country as you travel along - the hills get flatter and flatter, the air changes - I've talked to people who visit from all over Australia and I don't think any of them would take away the experience of the journey. All of a sudden, they are discovering their own country.

(Osborn interview 1998)
Osborn and Moore's remarks reinforce a community's desire to build a successful tourism industry in the Central West, and as can be seen today, the development of the Matilda Highway stretching from Southern Queensland to the Northern Territory coincided with the development of a national heritage trail. From recording extremely strong visitation figures for 2000 of 63,951 tourists, in 2001, (the financial year of the Olympic Games and large country fuel increases) there were 54,776 tourists, while the forecast for 2002 was 58,148 tourists. About five percent of these were international visitors. Current HOF director Peter Andrew does warn that visitation in the west can be adversely affected by a combination of floods, the fall in the value of the Australian dollar, or overseas crises which may send petrol prices soaring (Andrew interview 2002).

How does the Hall of Fame represent all Australians as promised, and is it part of a wider tourist space addressing an Australian nostalgia for the past and uniting a whole region in tourist ventures for the future? Who visits and why? What features has the Hall of Fame in common with Barcaldine and Dreamtime? Do these complex tourist attractions have their own life cycle? These are questions which should be answered, if heritage tourism is to become accountable and an accepted part of remembering the past. Certainly, the centre is today a primary destination for package tours, independent travellers and, as we note from the documentary On the Western Line, a major destination for train travellers on the Spirit of the
Outback. The author’s original survey of visitors to Central Queensland museums and cultural centres (discussed in Chapter Three) did emphasise that Australian tourists are still outnumbering global visitors in Capricornia, but these figures may change further with a strong tourism market developing in South Asia. Growth in inbound tourism has been healthy with domestic tourism still accounting for 75 percent of estimated tourist expenditure, but at the same time the number of international tourists visiting Australia and Queensland has increased to 5.1 million. Last year, spending by overseas visitors reached $17.3 billion with 40000 overseas visitors travelling to Queensland’s outback tourist destinations (International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia 2004/5).

The Members of the original Board, including chairman Sir James Walker, did not refer to the Hall of Fame as a tourist attraction but rather as a Shrine to the Outback. Tensions have at times polarised groups wishing to present the Hall of Fame as a national ‘shrine of remembrance’ to the outback heroes and bush pioneers, rather than as a ‘living resource centre’ celebrating the preservation of bush lore and inventiveness (Trotter 1992), while at the same time preserving a museum built around collections of oral histories, historical documents, photographs and artefacts of both early settlement and future development. The Stockman’s Hall of Fame has become a model for similar developments throughout Queensland such as the Qantas Founders’ Museum just across the road, opened officially in

A pilgrimage through the past - confined to stockwhips and saddles?

As noted in *On The Western Line*, the Stockman’s Hall of Fame is imbued with the pioneer myth. It celebrates the authentic bush family and the collective memory of the white European pioneers contrasted uncomfortably with a backdrop of romanticised Aboriginal and Indigenous first inhabitants. Portraits of graziers, blacksmiths and drovers responsible for opening up an ‘alien and inhospitable land’ gaze sternly from the exhibition walls. Even the bush sports displayed, such as wood chopping, rough riding, and horse racing exemplify Australian masculinity and the pioneer spirit. It has even been claimed that Aboriginal women as ‘tough drovers boys’ (Kapferer 1998:226) have received more recognition than white women who until recently were generally represented as helpmates supporting families and providing homes for fathers, brothers, husbands and sons bent on conquering the land.

The ideology of the Hall of Fame, therefore, represents Australianness and toughness symbolising the positiveness of the bush as it depicts the survival of the outback-male character against all odds. However, there has been
much debate on the way rural women, rural Indigenous and ethnic workers have been ignored in the past. Following strong community and media criticism, a section on women has been integrated into the main display, and legendry pioneers like Elizabeth Macarthur, wife of Captain John Macarthur who bred the first Australian Merino sheep, are prominent together with women pilots like Nancy Bird Walton who have made a strong impact on the aviation scene. Today, the tourist can view a marble bust of Mary Durack, HOF board member and author, whose roots were in Irish settler stock, photographs of women drovers, station owners, nurses and cooks represented in the permanent exhibition side by side with the male pioneers of this country. Some homage has been paid to the Afghan hawkers together with Aboriginal stockmen and women who were a vital workforce on early pastoral stations, and a rose garden, planted in the grounds of the art gallery epitomises nostalgia for rural pioneer matriarchs struggling to produce the flowers of their homeland, as noted earlier in this thesis.

The introductory video to the Hall of Fame welcomes the visitor to the earliest periods of Australian history encapsulating the arrival of Aborigines, the trekking of explorers across great distances of ‘vast and empty’ landscape. Early maritime exploration, the penal settlement and pioneer pastoralist activities are also examined. Certainly, here is a pioneering past that is restored, recreated and elaborated, often in cruel conflict with Indigenous people. In Chapter One, the author referred to
Chilla Bulbeck’s debate on the many tensions of writing Aborigines into the ‘unitary narratives’ of Australian history presented by monuments and museums. Normally, she claims, the problem is resolved by writing the Aboriginal story as a part of pre-history, a time before the white settlers came:

Aborigines almost always start with the story in the first panel, but are not seen again as the processes of white civilisation reshape the land.

(Bulbeck 1991:11)

This is precisely what has occurred at Stockman’s Hall of Fame with a panel depicting an Aboriginal family around a campfire as the first in the mural celebrating the discovery and opening up of the land by white explorers and settlers. This racist imagery contrasts ‘the underdevelopment of Aboriginal peoples with the industrialism and technological inventiveness of the settlers’ (1991:11). It pervades many of the Hall’s displays. (We have observed the same images in the Qantilda Museum, now appropriated by the Matilda Cultural Centre, Winton, and noted the ‘pre-history’ treatment of the Kalkadoon people documented on camera for On The Western Line and discussed in some detail in Chapter three).

Like Bulbeck, historian Judith Kapferer (1998) maintains that too often the contributions by Aborigines, women, and non-Anglo ethnic groups in the
pastoral industry been taken for granted. The HOF might be accused of going against the line of egalitarian mateship that is thought to characterise rural people and rural workers in particular, but certainly the importance of ‘individualism’ and the ‘ideals of both mateship and egalitarianism in Australian rural mythologies’ must be recognised:

Individualism is celebrated in terms of the kinds of character traits which are, or were in the past, commemorated by the HOF thought to be conducive to the settlement and ‘taming’ of a harsh and unpredictable environment - self-reliance, stoicism, fortitude, stamina and physical strength.

(Kapferer 1998:225)

Emerging from the film auditorium, the tourist travels the wooden ramp back to 1860, and outback station settlements, to a 1920s bush kitchen, to the School of the Air, Flynn of the Inland. The first floor with its resource centre, library and computers invites the visitor to trace his/her heritage. However, where white Australian tourists to the Hall of Fame are offered this opportunity of tracing their genealogical roots, Aboriginal kinship systems have so far been forgotten. Throughout the whole masculine and pioneer theme pervading the HOF is this symbol of the land itself – and the true nostalgia of 19th century outback we are celebrating. The digitised hologram drover seated at his campfire surely reminds the visitor of a brave pioneering past as he speaks on the subject of bulldust and flies:
...Know the country and you can survive. I suppose I've criss-crossed the continent 100 times - Strezlecki track, the Birdsville and the Muranji. One false move here and you're looking at a thousand bleached bones - men and horses and cattle. Banjo the poet got a bit of it - 'And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended' except he left out the flies, the bulldust, the empty bellies and the rains that can soak your bones to a chill...

(The Drover Hologram: HOF)

These contrasting images of the land and the relation of human beings to it are embodied within each cultural centre. This is the same country depicted just as romantically by Winton's Waltzing Matilda Centre with Banjo's mythic swagman telling the shearer's story at Dagworth Station and ironically, this is the same land translated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders at Dreamtime and Bambruk Cultural Centres, but in a vastly different language. By studying each heritage location and 'metaphor of power' we can comprehend the number of social and cultural problems with which contemporary Australians wrestle when visiting or touring these cultural centres. The Hall of Fame highlights only some of these ambiguities. The celebration of the pioneering spirit of early pastoralists with their desire to 'tame the land' and conquer the seasons must be studied together with the 'laissez faire' approach to agricultural production practised by the local Aboriginal people, to understand the real and authentic character of this country. Indigenous tribes should not always be depicted
as stone age primitives lacking in initiative and merely content with a hunting and gathering mode of production - their culture of living with the land and a unique environment must be explained in a way which comprehends the future as well as the past.

Historians Geoffrey Bolton and Margaret Anderson have also both acknowledged the masculine bias of the Hall of Fame noting that too little recognition has been given to the roles of women and Aborigines, as argued above, but they do praise the ‘mythologising and celebratory themes and continuing vigour of the outback tradition in Australian rural culture’ (Kapferer 1998:122). However, there are endemic demands of particular groups for inclusion and representation, in expanding ‘hegemonic understandings of rural life’ and contributing to the ‘progress and development of Australian culture’ (1998:122).

Donald Horne’s earlier criticism of this national icon, reported in The Weekend Australian, was not as considerate as Kapferer, Bulbeck, Bolton or Anderson. In fact, his audacious and outspoken article led supporters of the Centre to write furious replies in the Stockman’s Hall of Fame Newsletter:

The Stockman’s Hall of Fame at Longreach is a disastrous step back ... because the people running it tried to rig Australian history so it was virtually confined to sheep and cattle industries, and then tried to rig it so that these industries consisted almost
exclusively of white men on horseback. A few Abos and sheilas also got a look in but no banks, no pastoral houses, no government infrastructure, no scientific research, no country towns. The emotionally basic objects were the branding irons, the stockwhips and the saddles.

(The Weekend Australian, January 4-5, 1992)

Indignant replies came thick and fast:

Which came first, the pioneers of the outback or Mr Horne’s banks, government infrastructure and scientific research?

(HOF Newsletter, March 1992:13)

The HOF depicts true blue Australian history and is the right effort in the right place about the right people.

(HOF Newsletter, June 1992:10)

It is not the magnificent HOF but Donald Horne and his kind, the weakling republicans and new flaggers who rig Australian history. They try to put it over us that our British founders and Australian forefathers simply tore down the forests, shot the Aborigines, exploited their womenfolk and destroyed the environment and that we ought to be thoroughly ashamed of them and of our nation's unique history and achievements. The HOF not only helps substantially in preserving our heritage from the past but also is an inspiration to this and future generations of young Australians to emulate them and complete the nation building that they began.

(HOF Newsletter, June 1992:11)
In 1989, only a year after the official opening of the Stockman's Hall of Fame, multiculturalism was officially defined as having three main dimensions: economic efficiency - the need to utilise skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background; social justice - the right of all Australians to equality of opportunity and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender or place of birth; and cultural identity (as noted in the introduction), defined as the right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion (Jupp 2001).

The author's original survey of visitors to the Hall of Fame noted that there was a demand to learn more about pioneer women and their role in the outback. For example, visitors requested:

'More photographs of stockwomen'
'More information on the life of the early women drovers and the pastoral industry'
'We liked the women aviators' history'
'The achievements of women settlers is underrated, as is the role of Aboriginal people'
'I fell in love with a very old side saddle'
'I like the talking drover' (stringy bark swaggie)
'Local museums and cultural centres in small towns create a common interest for local people to work together'
The interactive information computers, and video displays on helicopter mustering - or bull riding- were voted as most entertaining, together with young stockman Damian Curr’s live sheep dog performance. Several interstate visitors had come to see the camp drafting as a priority. Others came to revisit their family’s past, as their fathers had been stockmen, or blacksmiths, or wheel rights, perhaps working on the early Great Northern Railway, also celebrated at the Hall of Fame.

Some demanded explorer’s maps and documentaries on Leichhardt or Kidman, and more information on the Great Artesian Basin; but the architecture of the Hall of Fame was admired as ‘spectacular’ and so was the welcoming film on early Australian history. ‘It’s the unsung heroes we’ve come to see...’ and ‘local museums in small towns create a common interest for local people to work together’ according to a visitor who lived nearby (see Appendix 2 for more survey results).

Winton: Birthplace of Qantas and Paterson’s Waltzing Matilda.

Two hundred kilometres north, on the Matilda Highway is Winton, the birthplace of Qantas Airways, the oldest airline in the English-speaking world, and Banjo Paterson’s ‘Waltzing Matilda’, Australia’s unofficial national anthem. As the documentary narrator proudly informs the audience, *Winton has the only cultural centre named after a song.* Australian Art
Convenor Joan Kerr writing for *Australia Art Monthly* (March 2001) claimed the ‘most successful museum combination of old ‘*history*’ and new ‘*heritage*’ seen on her visit to *Western Queensland,*’ was the postmodern interactive, multi-million dollar Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre, opened in 1998 by Queensland Premier Rob Borbidge. Again built of colonial timbers and iron, with a life sized windmill and statue of Banjo at its main entrance, the Centre has appropriated the original Christina McPherson Cottage, with memories of the early white grazing settlement in far western Queensland. The sound and light show in the cultural centre’s Billabong Courtyard and its sophisticated hologram entertainment with miniaturised pop stars in *The Home of the Legend* haven’t obliterated old-fashioned displays, says Kerr who was critical of most outback heritage in western Queensland, which she argues is mostly nationally oriented, ‘generic, slick - and of course big’ (2001). However, The *Spirit of Matilda* has linked this outback community to its heritage through its historic battles with land and authority. It has linked the glamorous new cultural centre to the shearers’ war, politics, culture, and to survival of the bush. ‘Waltzing Matilda’ is celebrated with poetry competitions, cattle drafts, race meetings, re-enactments and the community can still, according to Therese Raddic ‘sing up Frenchy Hoffmeister’s Ghost (1996:38).

A.B. Paterson’s national song has been claimed as a powerful political allegory based on the 1991-94 shearers’ strike which virtually ended at
Robert MacPherson’s Dagworth Station, north of Winton. According to local historian Richard Magoffin, the swagman was Samuel (Frenchy) Hoffmeister, a shearer involved in the strike at Dagworth, in April 1894. His grave remains on a quiet billabong on the banks of the Diamantina (Magoffin interview 1998). There has been much controversy over the words and the music of ‘Waltzing Matilda’ which was written by Banjo, set to the Scottish tune of Craigielea by Christina MacPherson on her autoharp, and supposedly first sung by Paterson and his friends at Winton’s North Gregory Hotel. Banjo Paterson himself said on radio later in life:

The shearers staged a strike by way of expressing themselves and MacPherson’s woolshed at Dagworth was burnt down. A man was picked up dead. While resting for lunch, Miss (Christina) MacPherson played a little Scottish tune on a zither. I put words to the tune and called it Waltzing Matilda.

(A.B.Paterson, ABC *Golden Waters*: 1934)

Paterson later admitted to Mr Laurie Copping, president of the Children’s Book Council, Canberra, in a letter written at the Australia Club, that ‘It might all have been the affect of the bore water’ (June 16, 1939, M.L.). There have been several authentic manuscripts, supposedly put together by Christina, who heard the Scottish ballad ‘Craigielea’ at the Warnambool races, Victoria, on April 24, 1894, before coming north to live at Dagworth. Station records show she may have had some assistance from Dagworth bookkeeper Harry Nathan. It began as a song for the squattocracy but soon

Today, the figure of Christina McPherson, the piano and the song have been relocated from the old cottage to a central position in the Cultural Centre next door. Here in the Billabong Courtyard, the sound and light display (mentioned above) presents an interactive and simulated performance of Banjo’s ghost (Hoffmeister the shearer turned swagman) committing suicide at Combo Waterhole observed by troopers and squatter. Like its fellow hologram of the drover at Longreach, it is an emotive re-enactment, as shown on camera On The Western Line, a panorama which bravely attempts to capture the style and mystique of the Australian outback.

One possible reading of the swagman is as powerful adjunct of the Anzac legend. Therese Raddic’s paper ‘The Songlines of Waltzing Matilda’ (1996) reinforces the outback myth of the innocent male victim, ‘at one with nature in Australia-the-beautiful, the independent man brought low by brutish authority defied, or monied interests, certainly victorious in defeat!’ (Raddic 1996:39). Many books have been written about the birth of Australia’s most popular song including John Manifold’s Who Wrote the Ballads (1964), Oscar Mendelssohn’s A Waltz With Matilda (1966), Harry
Pearce’s books *On the Origins of Waltzing Matilda* (1971) Thomas Wood’s *Cobbers* (1934) and Winton local historian Richard Magoffin’s three publications of the story behind the legend. As Raddic (1996:38) maintains, anecdote and conjecture rule in a battle that has raged for years in newspapers, journals, literary periodicals and letters to the editor columns throughout Australia.

Marie Cowan’s adaptation of the music in the early 1900’s enabled her husband and tea merchant James Inglis to market *Australian Billy Tea* successfully, after Inglis had bought the copyright of Paterson’s song in 1900 from publishers Angus and Robertson. According to Magoffin, Inglis also obtained a copy of the original tune from Paterson himself. In 1911 the Cowan version - the popular version we know today with a ‘jolly swagman’ and a tea billy that ‘boils’ appeared in a students’ songbook at Sydney University. When war broke out in 1914 it was used in recruitment drives, spread to military bands and wherever troops marched (Raddic 1996). Thomas Wood’s book *Cobbers*, complete with the ‘real’ music and MacPherson’s setting, became a best seller (Huf, McDonald and Myers 1993). Raddic suggests the Winton song, drawing on the resources of the male cult of bush poetry and coming into existence as an expression of middle-class migrant nostalgia - has survived to advertise billy tea and to be a camp follower in two world wars. Despite being turned down as our national anthem, ‘Waltzing Matilda’ remains the most popular national
song. It became an icon at the Olympic Games, commemorating ANZAC on the shores of Gallipoli, even starring in films like *On the Beach*.

These images of Cowan, her music, the billy tea, the squatter’s daughter and Banjo Paterson and the outback station are all present in Winton’s Cultural Centre. However, Richard Magoffin, Winton’s own historian, self-imposed interpreter of the song and ‘keeper of Hoffmeister’s sacred site’, conducts his own Hall of Fame 100 kilometres north of Winton near Dagworth Station and the famous Kynuna Blue Heelers Pub, where the Great Shearers’ War eventually came to an end in 1894, and where Magoffin swears ‘Waltzing Matilda’ was first performed at Dagworth Station (Huf interview 1998). Typical of so many commemorations of regional heritage, there are ongoing tensions between Magoffin and the Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre’s presentation of the national myth. The documentary *On The Western Line* captures these legendary concerns in the final scene, at Combo Waterhole, Kynuna, as Magoffin’s plays *his* authentic version of this national song on the piano accordion.

As previously debated in this thesis, the present outback festivals do not have to destroy the past. Old and new, grand and modest can coexist, as seen with the multi-million dollar Waltzing Matilda Centre at Winton. The reinvention of the swaggie and the ghost in the Billabong Courtyard, the sophisticated holograms, and the story of Qantas and the Royal Flying
Doctor typify Australian ‘living’ cultural history. This living history is further reinforced in Winton’s main street by Daphne Mayo’s bronze sculptures from the fifties portraying the Jolly Swagman and his creator Banjo Paterson, while a quite surreal sculpture by Jane Van Dyke and Paul Stumkat represents the *Matilda* in sandstone and bronze. As noted in Chapter Three’s more detailed discussion on these ‘outdoor objects of art’ Bullbeck (1991) maintains local groups, with limited resources, have used their own imagination to interpret their living heritage in a way which the author argues certainly enlivens Australian history in a genuine and refreshing way.

Is it the preservation of our past - or a new view imposed by tourists?

When Winton held its *Waltzing Matilda Centenary* in April 1995 and again its *Easter Festival of the Outback* in 1998 the town stepped back into the 19th century as a memory of itself, as the legend was re-enacted for the local population and the tourists. Emile Durkheim argues that ties to the past should be cultivated by periodic commemoration rites which reproduce the past to make it live again as it once was. The point of such a day or week is to bring people into the presence of one another to remember their heritage. ‘The resulting social mood facilitates communication with objects in the society and infuses them with a collective purpose and meaning’ (Durkheim
in Schwartz 1990:81). It seemed fitting that the Premier of Queensland that year stated in Winton:

‘Waltzing Matilda’ and outback Queensland represent our heritage - our culture and our tradition and many of our national assets worth fostering and preserving. The anniversary has provided a focus on the outback’s contribution to the nation and its role in the tourism industry.

(Waltzing Matilda Newsletter, April 1995 Issue 2)

Again the author notes that the emphasis made by politicians is on the nation, but what of the community of Winton? Where our museums and cultural centres mythologise our heritage, there are many schools of thought on the commemoration of our past. All appear to agree that contemporary interpretations through the collection of memorabilia in local cultural centres and commemorative events and anniversaries are critical to the community's need for a collective purpose and meaning for enriching the present and securing continuity with the past. However, to many residents of Winton, the restoration of the 1880's and the hi-tech marketing of their legend may not mean the preservation of their past but the violation of it with a new imposed view of the past pressed on them by the Museum committee of management and the commercial tourist operators. How do they accept the surge of tourists visiting their town for the celebrations of Waltzing Matilda? Do they accept the ‘peering, snooping and bargaining’ as part of the tourist image? Or do tensions and resentment arise as the influx
of visitors obsessively try to grab hold of their past. When we interviewed local artists, exhibition curators and ordinary citizens, they mostly welcomed the tourist industry with open arms, but as academic historian Tom Griffiths argues, 'heritage too disguises its own revolution' (Griffiths 1985:53). So the reader may picture in this case Winton as a historic relic of the past, but in reality, the old town may be completely changed by the influx of newcomers, by the replacement of old roads by new, old houses by new, old hotels by new, as tourists bring with them this new and imposed view of the past.

The *Spirit of Matilda* is re-enacted at every outback commemoration. In my research for this thesis I visited Central Queensland’s far west - first in April 1995, to film the Winton’s *Dunny Derby* and the centenary celebrations of Paterson’s composition of the song (1895). Another expedition was made to complete the documentary *On the Western Line* at the Festival of the Outback in 1998; these journeys included filming the dramatic re-enactment of shearer Hoffmeister’s demise at the opening of the Cultural Centre, attending bush race meetings and bush poetry championships, rodeo and camp drafts, experiencing the ancient dinosaur world of Lark Quarry with Tommy Emmanuel and John Williamson, again singing *Matilda*. These special events captured on camera, all epitomise the cultural tourism experience today, as it impacts on regional identity, whether seen as living history, or, as a new and imposed view of the past.
Barcaldine: the site of the shearers’ strike and the first artesian bore.

Barcaldine, 70 kilometres east of Longreach, is the site of the first artesian bore in Central Queensland, discovered in 1886; it became the headquarters for the Great Shearers Strike of 1891, while the birth of the Australian Labor Party took place under the iconic Tree of Knowledge, still standing beside the railway line, which also arrived in 1886. The Australian Workers’ Heritage Centre’s main brief is to record and interpret the issues surrounding the Strike and the subsequent election of the first truly representative Labor Party. But this history is hard to find in Barcaldine, says Professor Kerr (2001) who has again complained that grim motels, caravan parks, fast food outlets and overblown clubs with poker machines have swamped the historic town and its ‘sacred sites’ such as the Tree of Knowledge and the Bach Creek Windmill (2001:10). (Kerr’s criticism of Central Queensland’s local and vernacular works of art and tourist icons have been discussed in more detail in Chapter Three).

Kerr has severely criticised the Centre, opened in 1991 by Prime Minister Bob Hawke and funded by the Australian Labor Party, for its national and local political orientation. Kerr argues that while the town was catapulted into Australia’s text books as the headquarters of one of the greatest upheavals in Australia’s working history, the Great Shearers Strike of 1891, the Centre merely maintains a ‘revisionist’ history excluding the local white
pioneers and early station owners from a suitable role in commemorating the region’s heritage (2001). She attacks the designers of the Centre for ‘museumising’ the former high school, erecting a fake Billabong at the centre of the complex, and recycling the giant plastic tent that originally formed the centrepiece of the Australian Bicentennial Authority’s national touring exhibition in 1988. But surely, the Big Tent represents the shearers’ strike camps of the 1880’s and every worker’s home. Black and white photograph displays, she claims, have been ‘curated by experts in major cities - too many bland and forgettable -’ while the few original artworks are ‘mostly mediocre responses to the museum’s generic aims’ (2001:10):

Photographs and wordy labels won’t bring to life the collections of Aboriginal workers, white women of all classes and periods, and the many white Labor Movement men, celebrated and unknown, included.

(Joan Kerr, *Australia Art Monthly*. March 2001)

Political town rivalries at Barcaldine certainly have argued vigorously about the Workers’ Heritage Centre and its role as curator of their piece of history. The town’s only other repository of historical objects, the small local pioneer museum, remains isolated from the Heritage Centre and struggles to survive in an opposing atmosphere of Labor oratory and documentation. The tourist brochure however, reminds us that the Workers’ Heritage Centre ‘is a very young initiative of a monumental piece of history’. It asks the visitor to stop and marvel at the *Tree of Knowledge* still standing near the
railway line which opened up the area in 1886. The line itself epitomises the men and women who came to Barcaldine to ‘civilise’ the outback, run the hotels and the local grocery stores and hotels, as well as pioneer the new sheep stations. The documentary *On the Western Line* has, I believe, captured the spirit of these bush shearers and rail workers by visualising the symbols of both - in Barcaldine’s *Tree of Knowledge* and *The Big Tent*, together with Bach Creek Windmill and the quite exotic Alpha railway murals nearby, painted by Benny and Fuentes for the local community.

Most notable at Barcaldine Workers’ Heritage Centre, is an educational initiative which has been used extensively as a role model for other cultural centres now realising the importance of education in funding tourist enterprises. The Wanpa-RDA Matilda Environmental Education Centre is situated in *The Big Tent* where students from all parts of the region can get a hands-on, *virtual* educational experience of their history. It incorporates a modern 56 bed residential facility that students use as a base while exploring geographical sites as diverse as dinosaur prints, the trails of Burke and Wills and Leichhardt, the artesian water trail, and the rich heritage of Aboriginal art and culture. A permanent teaching staff conduct the school workshops throughout the year. Their brief is that both heritage tourism and eco tourism have in common a raison d’etre for teaching about the past and about the creations of human endeavour on one hand, and the natural environment as celebrated in World Heritage listed sites, on the other.
The centre’s brochure draws together all cultural tourism attractions in town under the banner of *The Big Tent*, including the heritage listed Masonic Lodge of 1901, and the first free flowing bore on the Great Artesian Basin (noted above), sunk in 1886 at Back Creek, just east of Barcaldine. The story of the Aussie Digger’s Slouch Hat, claimed to be born from the Strike, adorned with emu feathers and housed in the district Folk Museum, is not forgotten; nor is the model steam train which runs on the last Sunday of the month from March to October. What is important here is the involvement of the whole community today in developing a successful heritage tourist concept which is different, and which celebrates the real place and the real event. Undoubtedly, there was some criticism of the Shearers’ Strike historical displays by visitors to the centre who replied to the author’s 1996 survey on regional museums and cultural centres (see Appendix 2) but most were encouraging. Some astute tourists wrote:

> The Centre here at Barcaldine trades on the town’s association with the Shearers Strike of 1891. The strike is clearly the publicly stated reason for emphasis on this being the workers’ heritage centre. And yet, the amount of information about the events of ‘91 and its immediate lead-up is miniscule. What there is, rather insults the serious student by its superficiality.

> The minor instances of documentary display relating to the ‘91 strike have obviously suffered from cautious selectivity ...these draw little lessons for the reader that class struggle (like crime?)
doesn't pay. It's Sunday School stuff. And all this from a 'workers' town.

The heavy hand of the Qld State and its business backers is all too evident as are the numerous photos of R.J. Hawke. The irony is that if RJH had been around in 1891 he would have sold out to the shearers inside a week.

The Shearers' Strike also gave birth to the Country Party! More information needed on the social influences and expectations that shaped the minds of the shearers - otherwise they may be regarded as 'pure' rebels - social history of the era needed here.

But there were also many congratulatory comments by travellers to Barcaldine:

I was particularly interested in the remarks of a young Australian who said 'I didn't know that my heritage was so rich'. When discussed further he said 'they didn't teach about this at school, they taught me about England, Germany and Japan.

Most of all I liked the history of the men who went to jail for standing up for shearers' rights, and *The Tree of Knowledge*.

The particular exhibit I wished to see was *The Tree of Knowledge*.

(Schirato/Huf: Survey of museums and heritage centres: 1996)
It’s national, slick and generic - but not local vernacular.

Although Central Western towns are increasingly dependent on tourist attractions for their identity and economic survival, Kerr claims significant numbers of visitors are only attracted by the largest and newest, ‘by the national, slick and generic, and not the local vernacular’. This will almost invariably destroy the character of the places they wish to promote, she complained on an inspection tour of the Matilda Highway (2001). Professor Kerr (convenor of the program in Australian Art at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Canberra), has argued that small rural towns should not be resuscitated as their demise was imminent anyway, noting that the two weapons being used for regional survival ‘history and art’ were questionable. The growth in public art, historical museums and other non-natural tourist attractions has indeed been dramatic thanks to politicians’ unquestioning new faith in the benefits of tourism, Kerr announced rather scathingly:

To museumise a factory... or a railway station in almost any country town has long been common, but the key attractions in this new fight for economic survival are different ...imports that change rather than freeze a place’s history and appearance. The eccentric vernacular art of country towns is being supplanted by a form of tourist art that is national, generic, slick and of course big.

This thesis would suggest that local icons and local art objects such as The Big Tent, the Back Creek Windmill, Benny and Fuentes’ collages are all eccentric, vernacular and local, all recognising the ordinary working men and women whose collective labours were the backbone in the construction of this nation. For example, the Back Creek Windmill, captured on film together with the *Tree of Knowledge*, heralds the important discovery of underground water with Queensland’s first artesian bore and commemorates European grazing settlement. Certainly, it is important that custodians of local history such as Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Centre and Barcaldine’s Workers’ Centre are not left to hand out ‘clichés of pioneer life’ regardless of site or history, by creating contrasts between the conditions of the locals and those of the tourists. Ringers, shearers, miners, drovers, windmills, akubra hats and Drizabone coats, are all iconographic images that promote, sell and speak for the outback - as do the other and different images of our Indigenous and ethnic communities.

It will be interesting to monitor the development of further outback tourism to discover if it will be based *only* on simulacra of authentic outback rural life and history as some social critics have prophesised. John Urry (1995) notes that there are always gaps and silences as society transmits information through a range of markers which continuously reinforce or change their meanings. The Matilda Highway stretching from Cunnamulla to the Gulf of Carpentaria has itself become a marker of outback tourism as
the traveller takes part in diverse historical and nostalgic experiences and as a mass of tourist attractions en route are being identified and marketed as part of the system. In Rockhampton, and on the Central Coast, Tom Upton, director of the city’s heritage precinct and current heritage projects, envisages the Capricorn Highway, the arterial route from coast to far west, as being another heritage marker and key link to cultural tourism destinations on the Tropic of Capricorn.

As noted earlier in this thesis, Robin Trotter (2001) argues that Longreach’s Stockman’s Hall of Fame has already become an ‘ideological core for Outback Queensland’ (2001:347). Operating within the discursive framework of the pioneer legend, it has attracted tourist destinations that represent a range of pasts and different histories, linked physically to the Matilda Highway, such as Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Centre, and the Australian Workers’ Heritage Centre at Barcaldine, on the Capricorn Highway, and I would suggest to Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Centre and Pioneer Heritage Village on Queensland’s arterial Bruce Highway. Despite oppositional perspectives, each centre constructs and confirms regional and outback heritage values, including regional Indigenous values, which are all closely linked to our heritage tourism industry.

In the language of citizenship, culture has been seen here as enhancing cultural capital and its distribution across the population. Craik cautions,
however, that elitism and the self-referential peer group surrounding major
cultural institutions, and even community cultural development programs,
can nip this mission of enlightenment in the bud (2001). Growth in inbound
tourism has been seen as healthy, with domestic tourism accounting for 75
per cent of estimated tourist expenditure. Alongside this trend are increased
demands for related eco-tourism, culturally sustainable tourism, and tourism
accountable to current ideas about ‘national identity and Australianness’. It
seems that cultural tourism is a specific type of travel, developing and
responding to changing tastes. These trends appear to relate to three factors,
international trends in tourist behaviour, maturation of the Australian
tourism industry changing ideas about nation and identity and the fact that
there has been a shift away from natural wonders and monuments, according
to Craik (1992) towards a more nuanced image of Australia. Perhaps now is
the time to promote a truly authentic Australian lifestyle, and its cultural
assets, heritage, arts, craft, festivals, and multiculturalism. Tourist
experiences on outback farms, heritage sites and cultural centres, museums
and galleries will all have economic gains for the community as a whole. In
Chapter Five, the author examines the possible links between
Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Centre and Heritage Village and discusses the
current policies which the Queensland Government is forging through
partnerships with local councils and communities through the Queensland
Heritage Trails Network, which according to Niall Macken (2002) will help
drive Queensland into the new millennium.
CHAPTER FIVE
Politics of Reconciliation:
from Dreamtime to Pioneer Village

Fig 27

Fig 28

Fig 29

Fig 30

Fig 31

Fig 32
CHAPTER FIVE

Politics of Reconciliation:
from Dreamtime to Pioneer Village

The products of a new country should be secured as early as possible and every object bearing upon the manners and habits, the arts and manufacturers of a primitive race should be gathered and deposited in some public institution before it is too late.

(Gerard Krefft, Curator of the Australian Museum, 1871, cited in Healy 1994:43)

Aboriginal Tourism is a win, win, win situation. It’s a win for the Aboriginal people, in helping them to achieve economic independence. It’s a win for the Australian people generally who can through tourism find out more and discover more of this rich and diverse culture. It’s a win for our overseas markets, over 80 percent of whom want to experience culture in some form or another.

(John Morse, Australian Tourist Commission, 1999)

Ours wasn’t a written history, but an oral history passed down from generation to generation, and that’s how it survived so long. Our history goes back to the old people and what they said was the truth…. the younger people aren’t always telling the truth.

(Dr Nola James, Darambal Elder, 1992)

Aboriginal activist and member of the local Darambal tribe, Dr Nola James’ inspirational vision was responsible for the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ Dreamtime Cultural Centre at Rockhampton. The DCC was opened by Prime Minister Hawke in 1988, the same year as Queen Elizabeth II launched Longreach Stockman’s Hall of Fame. Dr James, the centre’s first cultural director, was awarded an honorary doctorate at Central Queensland University, in recognition of her
contribution to Aboriginal culture, traditional dance and art forms, shortly before her death in July 1993.

The Dreamtime Centre, the biggest Indigenous cultural centre in Australia, is situated on 10.5 hectares of natural parkland, north of the city opposite the Central Queensland University. As Griffin and Shelley (1996) maintain in their paper 'Dreamtime in a Cow Town', visitors are impressed with the self-sufficiency of the management and the network of skilled Aboriginal and Islander workforce. The location itself, with its museum, authentic sandstone art gallery, theatre, convention centre and sleek new motel, attract a great many conference-goers as well as thousands of tourists both domestic and international. Like the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, whose origin was in the commemoration of the bush worker, the Dreamtime Centre is a project that had its origins in one single vision - for the revival and maintenance of the culture of the Darambal tribes of Central Queensland. Federal bi-centennial funding helped to make this dream come true through the aspirations of Dr James, supported by the elders of the Central Queensland Aboriginal Corporation and the Rockhampton City Council. Dr James' ambition was not only to preserve local heritage, but also to empower the local community and develop self-confidence among her people (James interview: 1992). The scheme, first promoted in 1980s, was approved by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1986 with the original Board including elders Ted Mitchell, Jack Gela, the centre's present manager Bob Blair and Dr James (1992). With its highway billboard depicting Aboriginal icon and actor David Gulpilil, and
its bi-cultural displays, Dreamtime Cultural Centre today encapsulates a challenging interaction between Indigenous people and Torres Strait Islanders.

An Indigenous cultural tourism industry is becoming a new growth area within special interest tourism, as captured on the video production *On The Western Line*. ATC managing director John Morse (cited in Craik 2001) suggests tourism and reconciliation go hand in hand, as the opportunity to experience Aboriginal culture and art provides Australian and overseas visitors with a better understanding of the community itself. In this chapter, the reader will be able to study the tourism potential of Central Queensland’s Dreamtime Cultural Centre in presenting its own heritage and educating global visitors in a unique Australian past. Director Bob Blair’s contemporary approach of entertaining visitors at a magnificent facility, where 40 000 years of Indigenous history is presented side by side with a modern convention centre and motel, can be compared with the Bambruk Living Cultural Centre at Budja Budja (Halls Gap, Victoria). Management at Bambruk is intent on ‘recreating an Aboriginal identity from the remains of a shattered past’ (Kapferer 1998: 222). Certainly in neither of these cultural centres do we see Aboriginal property merely providing a mirror for the colonizing gaze, as has been suggested by some historians.

As the motel and conference centre have been developed and original curatorial input decreases, it seems that there could be division between
cultural authenticity and integrity on one hand and the need to attract
visitors. Critics from both Aboriginal and mainstream local groups have
suggested Dreamtime Cultural Centre has become non-traditional, ‘just
another tourist attraction forced to peddle pseudo-authentic primitivism
and stereotypes of Aboriginality’ and ‘a sell-out to dominant white
perceptions of what compliant and respectable Aboriginals should be
presenting’ (Griffin and Shelley 1993:170, Witcomb 1994:6-7). However,
Craik (2001) warns that as Aboriginal cultural tourism looks increasingly
destined to epitomise an image of Australia that attracts ‘hoards of
inbound visitors’ (109), it is important that Indigenous communities,
government, the tourist industry and the Australian public tackle the place
of Aboriginal culture in Australian life in order to redress the many
tensions and contradictions in reconciling Aboriginal ways with the
aggressive demands of today’s tourism industry (109). Here, we may see
the politics of reconciliation as Rockhampton City Council plans a new
initiative, with the Pioneer Heritage Village, three kilometres north of
Dreamtime, with a proposed heritage trail which will link the two
culturally diverse tourist destinations. This eco-environmental trail,
according to Bob Blair and Tom Upton, director of RCC’s city heritage
precinct, will celebrate 40,000 years of Aboriginal presence and two
hundred years of black and white confrontation and cooperation. The
plight of self-employed entrepreneur and pioneer descendant George
Birkbeck at Old Glenmore Homestead (situated ‘across the road’), and his
shattered dreams of cooperating in the proposed heritage trail with both
centres, is also addressed in this chapter, as heritage tourism strategies in
the Rockhampton region have impacted on Birkbeck’s livelihood. Here,
the reader has the opportunity of observing that tourism can be a very
selective industry.

The Dreamtime story began with young peoples’ workshops.

The Dreamtime Centre story began in 1973 with a small number of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait mothers starting a dance group for their
children. Nola James introduced corroboree dancing which quickly caught
on among the dancers. She obtained a grant from the Aboriginal Arts
Board, augmented the group from the Indigenous community at
Woorabinda, and soon cultural instruction was being given by Woorabinda
elders. At this time, James began collecting Darambal tools and
implements from the Archer and Jardine pioneer families and invited Ted
Mi Mi, an elder from Gayndah to instruct her group in the skills of artefact
making, which they passed on to younger people. Over the years, Nola
James and her colleagues painstakingly acquired information pertaining to
the pre- and post-invasion Aboriginal communities of what is now the
Central Queensland region. She visited galleries, museums, politicians,
and worked unceasingly for the establishment of a local cultural centre
(James, interview: 1992, Griffin and Shelley 1993). With solid support
from ATSIC and the local City Council this dream became a reality.
Initially the centre was to have been named *Darambal* after the local tribe, (who remain traditional owners of the Dreamtime site), but the material remains of the Darambal have sadly been dispersed and Nola James concluded that it was necessary to extend the Centre’s interest to the Carnarvon people of the sandstone region 300 kilometres to the south west and change the name to *Dreamtime*. Griffin and Shelley (1993) suggested this could be seen as a concession towards the concept of *Pan-Aboriginal culture* - culture imported from other areas - which has become a vexed issue linked to the wider issue of marketing ‘authentic Aboriginality’ to tourists (164). This issue of Pan-Aboriginality was to be avoided at all costs, according to the experts called in to develop the centre’s cultural policy, and the tribal motif of the water-lily, an important logo representing all the Darambal people, with each leaf symbolising one of the four main clans of the traditional owners (*DCC Tourist Brochure* 2001) is highly visual throughout the centre today.

While the growth of a positive heritage tourism industry in Australia and its economic importance for the region has not been overlooked, one of the centre’s main aims is to educate people in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture - in the publicity brochure’s own words - ‘to maintain their culture and history for future generations, and to entertain the tourist’. The brochure continues:

Here is a blend of 40 000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, a combination of traditional history as well as the present, and traditional people making a stand-alone
venture by sharing their beliefs, knowledge and culture with the paying public.

(DCC Tourist Brochure 2001)

Craik (2001) suggests attention to Indigenous tourism was minimal until the 1990s when the Department of Tourism targeted its growth and ATSIC developed both a tourism and a cultural industry strategy. ATSIC recognised a culture, supposedly under threat, was unique in terms of customs, art and habitus. This is reflected today in the growing demand by inbound tourists to experience aspects of Aboriginal culture. In 1996, the estimated value of Indigenous owned mainstream tourism was $20 to $30 million, and the estimated value of Indigenous art and craft was a ‘staggering’ $200 million (ATSIC and ONT 1997, cited in Craik 2001:107). Most frequently associated with experiencing Aboriginal culture, art, artefacts and ceremonial sites, as mentioned previously, the history and tribal ways of Indigenous people are high on the agenda for overseas visitors. Half of these tourists express an interest in seeing and learning about Aboriginal arts and culture while over a third undertake a related activity such as taking a native plant tour or learning to throw the boomerang, as well as perhaps visiting an art gallery or museum. (Zeppel & Hall 1992: 47-48, cited in Trotter: 1996).

Domestic tourists have been slower to experience Indigenous tourism, although local school children now make up the largest proportion of visitors to Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Cultural Centre. Visitors here averaged 25000 per year through the 1990s but changes in policy and
effects from global activities overseas have seen that number on the
decrease in recent years. Indigenous tourism may provide the mainstream
Australian with the opportunity for a better understanding of the
Aboriginal culture and appreciating their ancient and unique way of life.
Others maintain there may be distinct limitations to the growth of
Indigenous tourism. Activities constructed for the modern tourist are
usually derived from traditional culture, native ceremonies and native
sacred sites. Dreamtime mythology is often the centrepiece of much
Aboriginal tourism, but protocols about story telling, playing the
didgeridoo, or experiencing specific tribal cultures, present important
issues of ownership of information. Chris Healy writes that our museums
have played a crucial role in giving material form to the articulation of
‘race’ as a component of differentially valued humanity. He also cautions
that in the past, Aboriginal artefacts and skeletal remains were only
important to our national museums as ‘objects of scientific curiosity and
of a dying race’:

If this Aboriginal property is to be part of non-Aboriginal
remembering in all its complexity and pain, then the museums
that hold the material must be more than the treasure houses of
civilisation or photo opportunities on a tourist route.

(Healy 2001:44)

This debate is a vital one for the involvement of Aboriginal people in
contemporary heritage centres, such as Dreamtime or Bambruk Living
Cultural Centre, or in smaller keeping places like Springsure’s Yumba
Burin which have all featured significantly in the documentaries
accompanying this thesis. Nola James surely recognised these ancient artefacts were important resources in the dynamic process of remembering, empowering tourists and the Indigenous community to make these connections, between objects, memory and history but in their own place and space. Originally, the Centre’s exhibition hall contained displays of cultural artefacts, including a prized collection purchased from the Jardine family and collected in this district, early last century, by Fitzroy Jardine, geologist and headmaster of Rockhampton Grammar School. In recent years this collection has been removed to the storeroom, and the hall transformed into the ‘look and feel’ of an ‘authentic’ sandstone cave ‘now enhanced by the magic of the natural environment’ (DCC brochure cited in Griffin and Shelley 1993:161) in order to house the Vanishing Culture of the Sandstone Belt.

In touring Dreamtime Cultural Centre, I have studied the ways in which the production of Aboriginal culture at Dreamtime has helped to define a particular regional identity. The issues which are so important in the area of Indigenous tourism are authenticity, practical tourist venture-funding and outcome, and the empowerment of specific categories of knowledge presented in the museum displays and performances. For example, the authentic stencil art gallery tells its own story of the displaced people of the Carnarvon Ranges - but it must surely be shown in a way which indicates Indigenous ownership of the art and of the land. Where Chilla Bulbeck (1991) raised issues on the rewriting of Aboriginal history and questioned the appropriate custodians of Aboriginal remains and
Aboriginal artefacts, Nicholas Thomas (2001:299) also claims that too often there is a decontextualisation and displacement of native artefacts, utensils and weapons into a space which he maintains is functionless. However, today, within the hallowed walls of Dreamtime, management maintains that these artefacts are not displaced so much as presented for the relearning and renewal of reconciliation.

Although Dreamtime is associated with an ancient and primitive past, stories and customs have been revised in the light of white contact, such as major historical events like massacres, or recent landmarks like the Mabo and Wik judicial decisions on ‘native title’. As interest in Aboriginal tourism has expanded since the national debate on native land rights, regional politics remain an essential ingredient in managing a cultural centre, in packaging and presenting the exotic elements of the ‘native’ way of life, the past and the present, and what remains authentic of the regional identity of the Darambal and Kairi clans. Questions about cultural appropriation, cultural rights and social justice cannot be separated from any discussion of Indigenous tourist projects. The local identity of place and categories of Indigenous knowledge remain very much the cultural capital of the Darambal clan and TSI community.

If touring the past of one’s own culture and background raises a whole range of issues, then touring the past of other cultures and other peoples invokes a quite specific set of different concerns, as Robin Trotter (1996) and Jennifer Craik (1993) both maintain. They argue that the debate
around postcolonialism and tourism has always centred on exoticism, voyeurism, spectacle and the commodification of culture - with the site, people and culture of tourist destinations packaged and experienced as the *Other, as different from home*. This explosive interest from overseas visitors, in Australian Indigenous cultures, coincides with a resurgence of Aboriginal political activism and a ‘push’ for cultural revival in the last two decades. The establishment not only of the Dreamtime Centre in Central Queensland, but the Shepparton Keeping Place, Victoria, Tandanya Cultural Centre at Camp Coorong, South Australia, and the Bambruk Living Cultural Centre (Budja Budja) in the Victorian Grampians are all making a distinctive mark on the tourist world. Tourism has become a central objective, but as Trotter (1996) emphasises, it must not be forgotten that these heritage places were established with the dual objectives of servicing a diversity of Aboriginal cultural needs as well as providing a touristic experience for non-Aborigines, in examining the lifeways of the *Other*.

Touring the past: Dreamtime, postcolonialism, voyeurism and the *Other*.

The grounds of Dreamtime Cultural Centre are divided into two halves by Limestone Creek. On the highway side of the creek lays the ‘business’ section with its smart new motel, convention centre, gallery, gardens, lawns and artificial waterfall. Across the wooden bridge, and over the creek, as depicted on the documentary, the visitor discovers the traditional bush tracks leading to a sandstone cave, an Aboriginal burial chamber, a
community of gunyahs, and a series of bora initiation rings which were discovered on site, once traditional Darambal land. The narrator of the documentary *On The Western Line* introduces Dreamtime Cultural Centre by quoting the rather pedantic visitors’ brochure which promises to educate the tourist:

To step into Dreamtime is to step back into a world where folklore teaches that people searched for food by the dim light of the moon because there was no sun. Here old myths and traditions spring into life... *Learn* how primitive tools and implements became effective food gathering and home building aids... *Experience* a traditional campfire. Marvel at old carvings and paintings and ancient relics. *Understand a civilisation* that was extremely well advanced even before whites arrived.

(DCC Tourist Brochure 2001)

The walls of the main Nola James administration building and information centre represent the towering cliffs of the Carnarvon Gorge shrouded with eucalypts. The main Aboriginal displays are constructed around the tribal groupings from the Sandstone Belt of Central Queensland, from Carnarvon Gorge and the Exploration Ranges, and not as expected from the coastal Aboriginal groups. However, as noted on camera, the main visual display still focuses on a lost culture, the myths of prehistory and a history of cultural and social disintegration. This past still underscores all elements of visitor experience, as for example, does the brochure (above) with its language of ‘white colonisation’ apparently measuring the relative degrees
of civilisation experienced by the Central Queensland Indigenous community.

The Ted Mitchell Gallery as noted above, is the current home for the *Vanishing Culture of the Sandstone Belt*. A video on Carnarvon Gorge and the Kairi Kairi people of this region, introduces tourists to a historic section on Aboriginal stencil rock art, first recorded by T.S. Parrot in 1888. The narrator’s voice demands that the last remnants of stencil art be preserved as the destruction of the landscape by Europeans is linked with the disappearance of original inhabitants. Spectacular sandstone formations found in the Carnarvon Ranges are portrayed by replicas of The Chimneys and Mount Mooloolong, the home of evil spirits. As the visitors enter the reconstructed Kennif’s Cave and Mulvaney’s Dig, they breathe in the history of cattle duffing and the 40 000 years history of Aboriginal occupation. The narrator again speaks of anthropologists and vanished tribes, victims of white land-clearing practices and introduced European diseases. He mentions the horror of opium introduced by Chinese during the early gold rushes, of the frontier war which existed in the 1850s-60s. ‘Their stories are still kept alive in the memories of their tribal descendants’, says the voice. These stories are also reproduced on display panels around the sandstone cave. The young female guide takes a more traditional role in relating the tale of the Rainbow Serpent of Lake Nugga Nugga, and of the Goori Goori bird, a legend of the Bidjara people, who was said to have fed on children who foolishly became lost and separated from their parents. A diorama demonstrates traditional bush
tucker and medicinal plants, tribal shelter, hunting and corroboree ceremonies, while a journey through some simulated caves take the tourist back to admire an ancient stencil art form, developed long before European invasion.

The story of the Carnarvon tribes is told in the same mode today as it was when the gallery was opened nearly 20 years ago, ending with early photographs of a few town fringe dwellers, depicting the shrinking tribal family group. But the ethnographic hologram in the guise of a tribal elder, with his story of the real Dreamtime, and the genocide of the frontier war of 1850s and 60s has been deleted from the museum’s offering. In its place, in the last sandstone cave, management has placed a small wall plaque inscribed with a positive if confronting message, referring to the importance of traditional culture and law:

Our story is in the land. It is written here in our sacred places. Our children will look after this place - that’s the law among my people. This Dreaming place - you can’t change it - no matter who you are.

(Darambal Elders, DCC 2004)

This lack of information on a vigorous frontier confrontation that existed between native tribes and European white settlers in this region during the 1850s -1870s is, I believe, a concern, as noted by the comments of university students and tourists interviewed by the author for this thesis. As Griffin and Shelley (1993) point out, management may shy away from
making overt political statements or even alluding to contemporary issues, but in confining itself to developing and promoting unique Indigenous traditions, the Centre may be in its own small way contributing to future economic and political payoffs (173).

Andrea Witcomb (1994) writes that most important to traditional Aborigines is the issue of ownership of information and who has the right to give that information. The issue is complicated, as ownership of Aboriginal art, tribal weapons, and even musical instruments - are of utmost importance to the resident clans. When female guides were originally permitted to play the Didgeridoo for tourists, Darambal Elder and Dreamtime board member Ted Mitchell responded by writing a stinging letter to the local newspaper:

The Didgeridoo is a sacred man’s artefact...the Didgeridoo is not a Central Queensland artefact and one hopes that permission has been given to our people to play this important artefact from the appropriate people in the rightful areas.


From Ted Mitchell’s comment it can be seen that these issues about protocol of access to cultural endeavours must still be addressed within the tourism industry. Mitchell’s attitude grounds Aboriginal heritage firmly in the past and does not appear to embrace gender change within a more mutable conception of Aboriginality. But today, a feeling of peace pervades this whole bush area as we filmed the documentary. Groups of tourists and school children take conducted tours to throw boomerangs
with an Aboriginal guide and listen to the haunting sound of the didgeridoo. The young guides taking the film crew through Dreamtime's sacred grounds are at pains to point out that the didgeridoo is an import from the north, and that special permission has been given for it to be played at the Centre. (The author does discover, later, these instruments are all for sale in another authentic sandstone cave - the Dreamtime Shop - next to the Aboriginal prints, books, boomerangs and other cultural souvenirs).

A ‘Living Community’ from the Sea.

The Torres Strait Islander section of the tour is separate, isolated by the stream and bridge and offering a different cultural perspective altogether, which could be symbolic of the separation between mainland and islander tribes. Here is a traditional Torres Strait Islander thatched house and a reconstructed concrete dugong cave in which tourists can view islander warrior headdresses, ceremonial clothing, shell adornments and other artefacts, while watching Mrs Mabo (daughter in law of Eddie) plaiting traditional islander baskets. Where the young, efficient Aboriginal guides are dressed in Dreamtime uniform, with a smart, contemporary spin on the stories of their people (in which they often appear as distanced as we are to the past), entering the Islander dugong complex gives the visitor a sense of coming into contact with a real living culture - and a culture of the sea rather than the land. An audiovisual production enhances this atmosphere
of a sea and island culture continuing smoothly from the past into the present.

Mrs Mabo, a middle aged and dignified islander from Mer Island, explains the geography of her islands proudly, tells stories of her past as she presents fish catchers, sardine traps, musical instruments, woven baskets and magnificent baler and conch shells to her admiring audience. As she tells of the old pearl fishing industry, the traditional ways of doing things and past European exploitation, she chuckles about the new tourist economy flourishing in the islands today. Here in the Islander complex of sandstone caves, the role of interpretation of each artefact and ornament, each hunting and ceremonial implement is personal and unique. On a recent research visit to the Dugong complex, this proud and smiling woman suddenly remembers filming the documentary. She gives the author a hug and asks after a colleague who is working on Torres Strait history. Then she tells me her husband Mario, son of Eddie Mabo, has died. I promise to visit again shortly. Mrs Mabo, who is depicted on the documentary camera, in the Dugong cave weaving blady-grass baskets, is reminiscent of the Indian guide from another place who says proudly ‘We are also a living culture, and we must present a living community today’ (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett: 1998:236).
Challenges for Dreamtime in the 21st century: the Big Picture.

When active in the 80s and 90s, ATSIC’s Cultural Tourism Strategy stated specifically that the reasons for Indigenous involvement in tourism were ‘economic independence, cultural preservation, employment for community members and a sharing of a rich and unique culture’ as well as a revival and renewal of Indigenous arts and crafts in the community (ATSIC 1994 &1997, cited in Craik 2001). Former ATSIC advocates stressed the benefits of involvement in tourist projects to respective communities including an attractive package promoting cross-cultural understanding and reconciliation. But some observers have felt that Indigenous corporations should be very wary of rushing headlong into tourism as a panacea for Aboriginal poverty and dependence on the state (Trotter 1996:172). Tourism is known as a very selective industry. It does not benefit regions, enterprises and communities in equal ways, and it can undermine the economies and well-being of regions not on the tourist bandwagon. Craik (2001:110) cautions all communities to question whether this is the key industry they truly need, in order to achieve prosperity, cultural enrichment and sustainable growth in this millennium.

Cultural tourism has been rediscovered as a marketing tool to attract travellers looking for personally rewarding and enriching tourist experiences and in Australia is most frequently associated with experiencing Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal arts, artefacts and ceremonial sites as noted throughout this chapter. But it does appear, except for some
brief incidents, 'the perception of the *Old Ways*, and the invasion of European settlement which led to the displacing of Aborigines from their traditional tribal territories with tragic consequences for their culture, tradition and lifestyle', has been firmly placed in the background at Dreamtime (Griffin and Shelley 1993: 171-3). It seems both young Islander and Aboriginal guides together with managing director Bob Blair instead look to the future through the strategies of a *post-tourism* era, through the medium of Conference Centre, Restaurant/Theatre and Motel, to empower their regional identity:

> We want to be the best just because we’re black. We can compete; we’re up there with the best of them...How is a white organisation run? Does it make money, is it efficient, does it look after its staff, are it’s eating and toilet areas clean? ...then I would ask: How does a black organisation run anyway?

(Director Bob Blair, CTDO 1994, cited in Trotter 1996:14)

Mr Blair, former ex-army officer, has made no secret of the fact that self-funding is more important than remaining dependent on government handouts, and with it the need to increase visitor numbers, whether as culture 'gazers' or conference 'goers'. The centre’s manager reinforces the claim that the centre is run like a white organisation. He was reported in *The Morning Bulletin* after receiving state tourism awards as early as April 1993 saying: 'People will now sit up and take notice and realise that we are doing something for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism'. He has been criticised for running the Centre 'like an army establishment'
but he makes no apologies for his management style of a centre which includes both tourist attractions and contemporary motel and conference centre. Blair considers criticisms of the Dreamtime centre as ‘being too europeanised, too clean’; only reveal stereotyped perceptions of Aboriginals. He believes Indigenous people involved in tourism must be better operators than the rest. (see Morning Bulletin, April 1993, Trotter 1996, and Blair: interview with author: 2002).

The Convention Centre has become a high-profile venue for both university and business oriented conferences. The brochure proudly claims that it is fully air-conditioned, equipped with the latest audio-visual technology. The elegant new Dreamtime Lodge Motel and million dollar Theatre Restaurant, caters for 100 people (it originally provided traditional Aboriginal food at bush tucker nights but has reverted to a more mainstream Australian cuisine). It has been created to assist the DCC in achieving financial independence, and was opened in February 2000 by Senator John Herron. Dreamtime is a member of the Capricorn Tourism Development Organisation and the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce. It participates actively in regional promotional activities including hosting international journalists and academics, provides traditional dancers for Beef 97 and Beef 2003 and 2005. It has recently entered into a marketing plan with other local tourist enterprises including Olsen’s Capricorn Caves and Rydges International Resort. When Dreamtime is linked physically with the pioneer trail to the council-owned Heritage Village, these
strategies will present both cultures collaboratively to the travelling public. (Blair and Upton, interviews with author 2002).

A living culture of the past - or ‘hybrid’ culture of the present.

In a critical paper querying management for the way in which display practices negotiated questions of cultural authenticity, former National Maritime Museum curator and academic, Andrea Witcomb (1994) claims that the reproductions of sandstone sculpture, videos and modern technology confuse the boundaries between traditional Aboriginal culture and non-Aboriginal influences. She too feels that the centre has become a hybrid cultural centre concentrating on the entertainment and the economic sustainability of the location rather than the authentic presentation of a culture, ancient but still dynamic and living today’ (1994:1-2). Witcomb argues that the effect of true authenticity with regard to traditional cultures was to be achieved, only by placing them ‘back in time by freezing the moment’ (MacCannell 1989 cited in Witcomb 1994:3). MacCannell suggests that most tourists are deeply involved in this search for authenticity, as discussed earlier, but anthropologist Eric Michaels confuses the issue by replying that authenticity is not important to traditional Aborigines. The important issues are those of ‘ownership of information and who has the right to give information’ (Michaels cited in Witcomb 1994:3). If concern with ownership rather than authenticity is the main characteristic of traditional Aboriginal society, then I would agree.
with Dr. Witcomb that the Dreamtime Cultural Centre is surely non-traditional in the presentation of its public image.

A group of international university students, interviewed after completing a marketing analysis, told me they were puzzled they could find few references at Dreamtime to the frontier war that existed in 1850s-60s in Central Queensland, or to the crimes committed by both black tribes and white settlers in those violent pioneer days. The students were critical at the lack of communication between the two Indigenous groups in the presentation of their heritage to the general public. The students also claimed their research showed there was a deep lack of interest in these dynamic cultures by the local European community. The original survey of visitors to Central Queensland’s small museums and cultural centres in 1996 (Huf and Shirato) showed enthusiasm for the Dreamtime concept, but pointed to the need for more information on a troubled history:

From USA: ‘We really enjoyed the demonstrations of boomerang throwing, didgeridoo playing and the Torres Strait Islanders lecture/tour on native plants.’

From the Gold Coast: ‘We especially liked Mrs Mabo and the Torres Strait Island exhibits and the participation of visitors in all the activities’

From NSW: ‘The gentleness of the landscape and the personnel involved. Interpretation would be lost without the guided tour.’
From Townsville on a conference: ‘The TSI cultural talks by the young guides were excellent.’

From Adelaide: ‘Loved the guides, would like to see more information on local people and local history’

From CQ University on a conference: ‘Well organised, very articulate guides’

From the Sunshine Coast: ‘Would like more information on plants, native medicines, and more information on Torres Strait Islanders’ lifestyle, and inland native living structures.

From New Zealand: ‘We wanted to learn about tribal history, conflicts, frontier war and have more explicit information on ecological relationships and spiritual identities of the local tribes.’

‘We wanted more concise information on tribal and family social structures of Aboriginal lifestyle’.

Respondents agreed that museums should tell what life was really like in the past; they wanted to know about the lives of ordinary people and the lifestyle of the Indigenous groups in the community. Almost all ticked the box to ‘come again’.

(A short analysis of the original survey is noted in Chapter Three and in the thesis Appendix 2).

Today’s concept of cultural tourism is certainly a challenge for the local tribes whose leaders conceived the whole notion of a cultural centre and museum. From the very first proposal, the Elders were seriously involved
in the decision whether the Dreamtime Centre should be a static museum display, celebrating an ancient past, or whether it should emphasise living presentations involving Aboriginal guides displaying their cultural skills, their Didgeridoo playing, boomerang throwing and basket-weaving. As Dreamtime Cultural Centre continues to be administered by Mr Blair with his board of Aboriginal Elders and local business leaders, there still remains huge tensions between the desire to maintain cultural authenticity and integrity, the need to attract travellers and to maintain a viable, profitable tourist and business venture. On the one hand, is the centre’s need to position itself as a museum intent on Aboriginal conservation, but also, on the other, as a site for cultural learning and sensitive interpretation. Is the cultural tourist being ignored in the race to attract hi-profile conferences? Has management turned its back on authentic heritage tourism by discontinuing the trail to bora rings and tribal burial sites, and by dismantling the collection of ancient artefacts and weapon displays?

Research for this thesis has shown that Rockhampton's Dreamtime Cultural Centre (traditional or non-traditional), presents its own unique approach, not only in origins and motives, but also in outcomes and future direction illustrated in the three faces of education, tourism and commercial survival, as discussed above. Australian identity is perhaps increasingly defined in terms of Aboriginal culture and cultural diversity, it is important to consider its impact not only on the Indigenous economy and identity, but on the need for a broader Australian community to redefine itself in relation to the global projection of an Aboriginal-centred
sense of Australian identity (Craik, 2001:89). I would argue however, that although Dreamtime Centre has become an instrument for the re-creation and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures in today’s demanding tourist environment - on a national and global scale as well as local - there are many interpretations of this unique heritage. On one level these cultures may be seen as historic and unchanging, such as the ancient stencil art and islander grass weaving, while on another level, exhibitions of didgeridoo playing and boomerang throwing display interpretive strategies which are definitely contemporary in presentation. In the process of protecting, preserving, renewal, revival and recovery of Indigenous weapons and artefacts, there’s an inference that real Aboriginality can be represented as contemporary but still authentic. Artefacts, dance, and legend may be evidence of a past culture, but continue into the present. Through the interactive frameworks of planners, management and the day-to-day interpretation of the young and contemporary guides (who may distance themselves unconsciously from a past era), new meanings as well as old continue to construct Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders as ethnographic objects and products of their own ‘museumisation and exhibition’.

Victoria’s Bambruk Cultural Centre: An authentic Budja Budja rock art site.

Here, I would briefly like to compare Dreamtime’s approach to the tourist industry and Indigenous heritage with Bambruk Living Cultural Centre
located at Hall’s Gap (Budja Budja), in The Grampians, Victoria, (the home of many of the first Aboriginal cricket team described in the second documentary on Tommy Wills). Bambruk is situated in a long-established domestic holiday destination, complete with rock climbing and authentic Aboriginal rock art sites. Bambruk’s management states that its main mission is recreating an Aboriginal identity from ‘the remains of a shattered past’ and presenting this identity to the discerning middle class tourist. With an award for its design, the low slung building with undulating red corrugated iron roof houses an outstanding exhibition of Koori art, clothing, weapons and tools, a bush-tucker restaurant and arts and craft shop, in many ways similar to Rockhampton’s Dreamtime Centre. An environmental soundtrack (again similar to Dreamtime’s video presentation) introduces the visitor to a forgotten place with ‘the call of the wildlife, the wind rustling through the tall timber and the running streams and waterfalls’ again reminding one of Dreamtime’s presentation of the sandstone people’s stencil art. According to sociologist Jane Kapferer (1998), ‘the presentation is a happy conjunction of the postmodern tourist’s preference for simulacra, and the owners’ wishes to control naturally occurring phenomena’ (222).

The journey pathway is bordered by medicinal plants with popular Latin and Koori names listing the uses to which each plant was traditionally put. The Bambruk pathway leads to a cleared ceremonial ground. Here, displays of dancing, music and cooking are performed. The Bambruk restaurant serves authentic local dishes like emu sausages, kangaroo and
crocodile. The guidebook reaches out to discerning tourists with the following advice:

By creating an awareness and understanding of our lifestyle we hope that some of the negative attitudes and prejudices that exist can be overcome. Together we can improve the future...we can share in the resources of this great land ... a land rich in many thousands of years of history and culture that is part of every Australian’s heritage.

(Bambruk Living Cultural Centre 2002)

However, the Bambruk guidebook also preaches a darker lesson, with topics including *The Killing Times* - when 2000 Kooris died in this region during the first 20 years of white settlement; *The Survivors* - with social, political and economic systems shattered; *The Mission* - when missions closed by 1920, Kooris became innocent victims of an attempt to bring about cultural genocide; *Assimilation* - complete imposition of white values; and *The War Years* - with Koori soldiers excluded from post-war soldier settlement schemes (Bambruk Guidebook 2002). As the determination to raise non-Koori consciousness of the shameful past remains the dominant purpose of this centre, Bambruk’s philosophy comes from a different worldview to Dreamtime’s marketing strategies where Bob Blair has endeavoured to maintain a non-political environment.

It can be argued that both Bambruk and Dreamtime are offering a tourism experience in line with the Federal Government’s project of Aboriginal reconciliation, but the Victorian project of reconstructing a truly ancient
Aboriginal past contrasts strongly to the contemporary scene visited by young Rockhampton guides as they talk of a future studded with successful conference events, as they attempt to reconcile Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures with a genuine level of today’s Australianness. Bambruk Living Cultural Centre is built on a historic site with an active heritage value, and endowed with the ‘triple power of the real’ (Moore 1997). These sacred sites encourage the construction of particular meanings and understandings of national and regional identity which may be lacking at Dreamtime Cultural Centre. Despite these tensions between the desire to maintain cultural authenticity balanced with the need to attract visitors and tourists, Capricornia’s Dreamtime Centre has endeavoured to retain the integrity demanded by the traditional Aboriginals in their mission to educate non-Aboriginal people to preserve and respect their culture. One of the major issues involved in the emergence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural tourism in the last decade (as discussed earlier in this chapter) is the community’s empowerment to manage their own affairs to produce their own tourism strategies, not only as a cultural form, but also as an economic activity. This contemporary presentation of a culture that positions itself in the past and into the future has led to the development of a new and dynamic regional identity, which we are seeing today. It illustrates global concerns on ethnographic tourism, identity, and the importance of regional projects which must also be economically driven - relative to the aspirations of the stakeholders - the Darambal people, the people from Mer Island,
management, the Rockhampton City Council and the local tourism industry.

*When I visited Dreamtime recently, a group of Aboriginal delegates were sitting down at the Conference table preparing an agenda. Another group arrived for a regional housing cooperative meeting. The administration staff came forward to welcome their new tourists and the guides took control of the tour as visitors arrived from the motel or from the buses. Mrs Mabo welcomed them from the Dugong Cave with a beaming smile and a wealth of information; Scott practised on his didgeridoo and Bob Blair left the shop with its shelves of new books, brochures and artefacts, to attend a media interview on the proposed new venture - the authentic Heritage Trail to the Rockhampton Village.*

Rockhampton Heritage Village: Active outdoor museum, or occasional theme park?

Rockhampton Heritage Village is situated 11 kilometres north of the city on the Bruce Highway, and three kilometres from Dreamtime Cultural Centre. It is advertised as an active outdoor museum where visitors can truly experience the sights, sounds and smells of the city’s rich and colourful history. The visitor to town is invited to explore an extraordinary collection of clocks, old farm machinery, slab cottage workers’ huts, vintage cars, and enjoy the horse drawn vehicle rides. ‘It is a guaranteed family fun day and an educational opportunity for youngsters
to learn about what it was like in the olden days’ (Queensland Heritage Trails 2002).

The Heritage Village has an interesting history. The museum was originally established in the 1970s at Gangalook Station, near The Caves township with the renowned *Hall of Clocks*. The clocks, including an ancient Dutch water clock, were owned by the Hinz family who donated the museum to the Rockhampton City Council in 1990, on the condition the council took over the upkeep and preservation of their valuable collection of clocks and vintage cars. By employing 150 ‘Work for the Dole’ volunteers, the slab cottage museum was shifted to Rockhampton and its present site in the early 1990s. The state government assisted with the decision to actively develop a pioneer village at the cost of $4 663 600, with $1 million provided by Rockhampton City Council. It would provide local employment, become a village to house obsolete or historic buildings, (such as Kalapa State School and Stanwell Catholic Church) and become a national icon similar to Longreach’s Hall of Fame.

In the early 1990s the Queensland Museum was approached to develop a branch at Rockhampton, and taking over the heritage styled project seemed a strong possibility. With the current emphasis on recognition of regional culture the relationship between state and local museum became a central issue. Demands for greater access and equity in the distribution of cultural resources, and in the setting of policy frameworks, was an important debate in the mid 1990s. A new awareness of the potential of
economic and cultural tourism was providing a major impetus for change in cultural regional identity in Rockhampton, but the move to have a state museum branch did not eventuate. Local councils and tourist operators, local cultural institutions and small museums, had been getting together for the first time, under the supporting umbrella of a Community Arts Officer, installed by Arts Queensland and the Regional Arts Development Fund. RADF enabled a pilot study to assess the need for a ‘pioneer’ styled museum and theme park close to town. Certainly, the heritage village was destined to play a more decisive role in the construction of a local cultural identity but, in the 80s, little or no government funding to local and regional museums was available. It was the major state and federal museums positioned in remote capital cities who were charged with the mission of preserving Australian material culture of the past (Queensland Heritage Trail 2002).

As was noted earlier in this thesis, and as Kylie Winkworth (1996) has argued, scouring the countryside, and displacing objects from their local context to the storage systems of Australian national museums was the dominant policy of centralisation at the time, but this strategy came under attack from art-lovers and regional collectors. Collecting for the local context, and about the local regional identity is the aim of dedicated Rockhampton heritage-lovers. But does it always work? Harvey (1996) argues it is necessary to understand the relationship people construct between space, place and the environment, as these social constructions are wrought out of the experiences of material survival and the objective
facts to which individuals and institutions respond. Harvey maintains that ‘critical frameworks of analysis are notions of culture and place’ (1996:44) and again, we find the most potent museums or heritage attractions are where the two powers of the real (thing and place) are combined, with much of this power lost - unless the real objects remain at the real site in their original historic setting (Moore 1997). Although objects can tell us so much about past and present societies, their power is seldom realised, if ‘objects become divorced from the social and cultural environment responsible for their existence’ (Brown 1993:141 cited in Moore 1997).

In 1996, the Pioneer Heritage Village had a successful and well-attended opening ceremony, which was documented on the video On the Western Line. It featured an original Cobb & Co Coach, vintage car joy-rides, a ceremonial march past by the Australian Light Horse Brigade, local brass bands, shearing exhibitions and a poets’ breakfast held in the smartly reconstructed shearing shed. But since then, financial and management problems have persisted in the village’s everyday operation. Why is this so? The following critical report, made to the author by a former village administrator reveals how important is this original historic setting, this ‘triple notion of the real’ in relation to the real people in the real place.’ (Moore 1997, Winkworth 1991).

My interviewee, Ms Lisa Loader, pointed to some of the issues surrounding the village’s survival stating that the lack of any authentic heritage at the site (apart from the clocks, a slab cottage and the bush
hospital exhibit) means the village (in her estimation) can only ever be a 'non-working working village':

As a theme park it does not offer enough excitement or activity to compete with other such attractions. This is due to the scale of the village, the spread out nature of the buildings and the huge financial undertaking to staff it successfully. Apart from group bookings, it is difficult to create a critical mass of activity for visitors. The occasional Sunday markets and Australia Day events work well because the numbers of locals who attend make the place begin to feel active. Situated on land owned by the Department of Natural Resources, and leased to the Council, everything on site has been relocated, or constructed new. It holds little real interest for the visitor with a true interest in heritage. The village doesn’t have any real 'hook' to interest people - anymore than the numerous other heritage style villages along the coast. The working heritage village model as a tourist attraction does not succeed financially anywhere in the country. The largest locations such as Ballarat's Sovereign Hill (with a massive population on its doorstep) is still funded by government to a large extent, and the staffing and maintenance costs are exorbitant.

(Loader interview May 25, 2002)

Ms Loader admitted that the current Bush Hospital display worked particularly well, but it was not enough to attract the level of visitation needed to justify the expense of operating such a large site, and could only complement a working display notion (2002).

As the village is laid out over a vast site, facing the Bruce highway, any semblance of stepping back in time is lost because of the passing traffic as the noisy access from the highway becomes a basic problem. The City Council originally promised a tourist destination that would attract visitors to the city and not be a huge cost to run, but the reality has been quite the
opposite. Council was naive in its acceptance of the village, and the financial implications and responsibility it was taking on in regards to the heritage collection. Evidently not willing to fund the model it had approved, it acquired a virtually ‘non-working, working village’.

(Loader interview 27/5/02)


Tom Upton, Rockhampton Heritage Precinct director, however, has definite plans for the restoration of a powerful heritage marker in the Pioneer Heritage Village. He argues that the city has the capacity to design the innovative heritage trail, from Dreamtime Cultural Centre to the Village. The trail will build a cultural bridge between Indigenous and pioneer heritage and is planned to open later in 2006. Mr Upton visualises the Pioneer Village as a starting point for a whole new heritage tourism strategy. The Queensland Heritage Trails Network has been approached to support and fund the upgrading of a unique precinct centred on the Customs House, a major architectural icon on Rockhampton’s Quay Street. The Big Picture is to redevelop the Quay Street Fitzroy River frontage which has a concentration of heritage buildings, already listed with the National Estate, according to Upton. The entire precinct collection including the Pioneer Village, Archer Park Railway Station, Old School of Arts, and heritage-listed Customs House will be linked on a journey taking a tourist loop to the far west on the Capricorn Highway to Emerald, Ilfracombe and Longreach cattle country; on the Matilda Highway to the north through Hughenden and Richmond dinosaur country; back to the coast at Mackay; and to the south through Blackall, Tambo, and
Toowoomba. The Heritage Village could also be the starting point for a heritage trail to such popular tourist destinations as Carnarvon Gorge and the Central Highland Gemfields:

Because of its physical location and cultural heritage importance, this heritage precinct will open up tourist access, information and interest to the north, south and west. It will be an educational experience and a very real cultural heritage experience.

(Upton interview, 2002)

Attracting a partnership between Heritage Village and caravan travellers, schools, backpackers, senior bus travellers and international tourists is essential. Upton also plans to set up a printing shop, horse arena for rodeos and light horse events, permanent bush hospital and fire engine displays. Over the last twelve months he claims the success of Heritage Village Sunday Markets in attracting 6000 people per Sunday, has installed new confidence in the enthusiastic local organisers and volunteers. Special events such as steam train journeys from Archer Park to the historic beach resort of Emu Park are in the planning stage as are workshops in heritage restoration. These will be important new initiatives as education and interpretation becomes a pivotal key to the survival of the Pioneer Heritage Village. Travellers love the sense of discovering a local historical relic, a local historical place or space - or as seen specifically here, a local art and craft market offering an attractive and marketable product, - and a heritage trail as a concept of organising rural and local tourist sites. As was
reiterated early in this thesis ‘the way to the heart of a tourist is through the locals’ (John Morse 1999 cited in Trotter 2001: 340).

The private Aussie Battler: Disillusioned by political opportunism.

Across the highway from the Pioneer Heritage Village is Old Glenmore Homestead, the original site of Glenmore Station, once spanning 75 square miles, and one of the two oldest pioneer homesteads in the district. It has been the home of the Birkbeck family for more than 140 years. Samuel Birkbeck and his Spanish Mexican wife Daniana Valdez took up the initial station in 1861. Their daughter Ellena married William Knox D’arcy, Mt Morgan gold millionaire who founded the Anglo Persian Oil company just prior to the First World War. In 1980 George Birkbeck restored the old slab hut and Glenmore Inn which served miners travelling to the early gold rushes in the district. Today he operates a privately owned family museum displaying a wealth of historic artefacts, station documents and old machinery. He runs bush tucker and bush dance functions on his property. Old Glenmore Homestead is listed by the National Trust and is a major venue for all historical society outings. But George is disillusioned on the subject of heritage tourism within today’s political opportunism and shifting rural economy.

Despite being former chairman of the local National Trust branch, as a private operator he has difficulty obtaining heritage grants or tax incentives for the private museum curator. He struggled to gain a
partnership in tourism with the city council but in vain. He originally believed the Pioneer Village would cooperate with other heritage initiatives and that the proposed heritage trail would service Dreamtime Centre, the Pioneer Village and Old Glenmore Homestead (Birkbeck interview 2003). This has not eventuated. The Pioneer Village has instead become a competitor, according to Birkbeck. It has created a bigger shearing shed for its bush dances and duplicated Glenmore Homestead’s bush tucker events. George Birkbeck maintains heritage tourism has diminished during the past ten years, and claims international tourism has been stifled by world events. The tourist experience is an important event at Glenmore, and this entrepreneur is not only organiser, chef and comedian at each ‘gig’, but also Glenmore Station architect, designer, general farmer and handyman. George feeds the Clydesdale horses ambling about the back yard and runs each tourist event. His package tours are well-organised and attract overseas visitors. However, local authorities, rules and regulations, health and safety precautions are making life intolerable for the independent tourist operator:

Australian regulations are stifling the little Aussie Battler. There is no money in self-guided tours, no money in merely visiting old museums - every community has its relics, but a butter churn is the same, whether at Port Arthur or Cape York. There has to be a different experience.

(Birkbeck interview June 2002)

As George Birkbeck struggles with the restoration of his log cabin and signage for his function area and restaurant, he ponders on where his
tourist trail should lead. Should there be heritage links to Mt Morgan Gold Mine and Museum, only 30 kilometres south, or should there be a trail to the only other original remaining pioneer homestead still inhabited by the Archer family at Gracemere, 20 kilometres across the Fitzroy River? How is the private and independent museum operator to survive? As noted in the introduction to this thesis, and despite a heritage-led economic recovery being flagged in some rural areas, 'the careful marketing of culture is seen to play a more and more important role as the industry moves from local product-driven to a market-driven economy' (Dayton 1997:144). Small privately owned family museums, such as Tom Wills' Minerva Creek museum or Lorna Smith's Rainworth Fort, at Springsure (both documented on the author's journey west), struggle like Birkbeck, to maintain their historic archives in order to present an attractive, and well documented collection for the demanding cultural tourist.

Heritage trails linking pioneers with 200 years of black and white history.

As each local tourism venture strives to bring these alternative groups together, the question must be asked - are we in danger of confusing the historic reference of these discourses (with little common meeting ground other than the tourist dollar) and should we be looking more closely at questions about cultural appropriation, cultural rights, control and ownership of cultural sites and social justice? For example, when Dreamtime Cultural Centre and the Pioneer Heritage Village complete their environmental pathway - spanning two hundred years of black and
white history - can we argue that exploring ideologically different cultures affords the tourist an experience which is truly different? How do we actually equate Indigenous touring with touring pioneer Australia? Will these groups be empowered by a relationship which helps to shape regional identity and can they be successfully incorporated in a regional and cooperative heritage industry today? Witcomb (1993:180) suggests that the move to establish the importance of local context and identity has resulted in a new awareness of the right of different communities to retain access and ownership of their own material culture. In the final analysis, the Dreamtime Cultural Centre will find its own balance and work through its own tensions in a way that will be distinctly its own (Griffin and Shelley 1993:173), and this author confidently believes so too will its confronting neighbours, the Pioneer Heritage Village and Old Glenmore Homestead.

These issues, briefly targeted in the documentary On The Western Line and again in the South Sea Islanders’ search for their Heritage Trail of Endurance discussed in Chapter Six, are vital in the understanding and shaping of local and national identity. It is important to define cultural difference within the heritage tourism industry, but I would agree with Upton and Blair that our national heritage can be shared, despite the contradictions, silences and omissions already discussed throughout this thesis. When we study the regional heritage industry and its powerful icons such as the Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Barcaldine Workers Centre, Waltzing Matilda Centre, or Dreamtime Cultural Centre and Pioneer
Heritage Village at Rockhampton, we may visualise the emergence of a strong regional identity typified within all these ‘metaphors of power’, and hopefully not just a series of tourist attractions dictated to by economic marketing and corporate management to peddle pseudo-culture and hybrid-heritage to tourists’ expectations.
Postscript:

As this thesis was prepared for submission, my colleague and local historian Lorna McDonald compiled a small brochure entitled ‘Rockhampton’s Heritage Walk: Take 10 000 Steps’ (2005). Illustrated with original photographs of the city’s first business ventures along Quay Street, (courtesy of the Historical Society), published by Andersons City Printing Works, (the original printers), it encourages visitors to take 10 000 steps along Rockhampton’s Heritage Precinct bordering the Fitzroy River. Proudly launched by Tom Upton on August 25, 2005, it also celebrates 150 years since Rockhampton was first settled. One hundred and fifty three bronze plaques have been positioned along the walk so tourists can locate significant historic locations such as the Stanwell stone Customs House which officially proclaimed the city as a port of entry in 1858, with the birth of gold mining and grazing industries. On September 3, this year, Archer descendants Australian Bruce Forster and Norwegian James Archer sailed up the Fitzroy with a convoy of local sailing boats, re-enacting Colin Archer’s voyage on the Ellida in 1885. Citizens cheered profusely from the old city wharf. It seems that Councillor Tom Upton’s dreams for a city precinct which celebrates its history with public appreciation are coming true as these organisations above are starting to work together to present a new cooperative face to the tourism industry.
CHAPTER SIX

(i) *The Trail of Endurance:*

Walking the Sugar Trail with the South Sea Islanders

Fig 33  Fig 34

Fig 35  Fig 36
CHAPTER SIX

(i) The Trail of Endurance:

Walking the Sugar Trail with the South Sea Islanders

In the land of his ancestors the planting of pine trees was of particular importance. They believed that the spirits taught a man how to live in a community. First a man grows yams and trades them. Then he builds his house and thirdly he plants the tall pine. The tall pine, the hoop pine, is a symbol of a sacred site; planted around the house of an eminent person it is a symbol of enduring lineage. When a chief dies, people say the pine buds are dropping on the ground.

(Jilly Landers, interview December 2001)

To the average merchant trading in the South Seas, a speculation in Kanakas was no different from a speculation in pork, coconuts or shrunken heads.

(Edward W. Docker The Blackbirders, 1970)

This chapter invites the reader to take a final journey on the heritage trail with the South Sea Islander community of Central Queensland in order to capture this migrant group’s own story of cultural identity within a turbulent Australian past. The community’s exotic history has the potential to make a strong impact on the region’s tourism industry, as the Pacific Islander immigrants and their descendants’ real identity has been subjected to many interpretations by the wider population. Dynamically challenged by the group’s own individual experiences and stories, it is still very much contested ground. In this thesis, the author has argued that identity, nostalgia and the meaning of place are vital elements in shaping the heritage industry debate. This sense of history and place has involved the Pacific Islanders in researching their ancestors and their ‘storylines’ in a
significant Cultural Mapping Project called *The Trail of Endurance: A Journey from Paradise*. Undertaken in conjunction with the Livingstone Shire Council on the Capricorn Coast, the project was supported by a Queensland State Centenary of Federation grant of $90000, awarded in 2000 following the state government’s official recognition of this unique migrant community. Allegedly kidnapped or ‘blackbirded’ from the Pacific Islands, including the Solomons, Vanuatu and Loyalty Islands, during 1860s to 1890s to work on the East Coast sugar plantations, this was ‘at last a fitting tribute for their hard work and contributions made to the prosperity of the state’ noted project coordinator Val Wex, (foreword: 2001) in the final publication.

During 1998 and 1999, council research staff and the SS Islander community conducted stages one and two of this project when they recorded the oral histories of the elders and direct descendants of these first indentured island labourers, still living on the central coast in former sugar towns Mackay and Yeppoon. The group also researched and identified culturally significant sites in the shire such as the original Mill House, Old Kanaka Sugar Trail, and the historic route (also known as a trail) to the village of Joskeleigh, Keppel Sands and The Sandhills Cemetery. This was a valuable stepping stone to stage three which allowed the committee, led by coordinator Val Wex, researcher Jilly Landers and writer Peter Panochini, to produce the written history of those Pacific Islanders indentured to the Yeppoon Sugar Company between 1883 and 1901. *The Trail of Endurance: A Journey from Paradise*, a compilation of
oral histories telling of the lifestyle and hardships endured by the indentured labourers, and the official records of the SS Islanders’ ‘sugar story’ in Australia, was launched at the Yeppoon Library to a packed local audience, on December 14, 2001. The cultural mapping project has been an initial step in developing a community-owned strategic plan for the continued preservation of South Sea Islander historic (and often controversial) sites. It is evidence of a determined desire to reconcile the cultural identity of these Pacific Island migrants whose history has been one of harsh racial discrimination, and a major factor in the community’s state of disadvantage.

In order to document the significance of these sacred sites within *The Trail of Endurance*, I was able, with my camera, to attend and record the inaugural Australian Sugar Museum’s exhibition *Refined White* with which the South Sea Islanders’ Joskeleigh Museum opened its doors on July 15, 2001; attend the book launch celebrations, and witness and film the nostalgic re-enactment of the *Journey from Paradise*, in February 2002. Through interviews with researcher Jilly Landers, curator Doris Leo, and with author Peter Panochini, I was able to study the controversial *Old Kanaka Sugar Trail* and join Uncle Stumpy and his friends as he revisited Bong’s *Corner* and the *Red Eye Tree* on the road to Joskeleigh and The Sandhills Cemetery.
The Trail of Endurance: A voyage of discovery and controversy.

The cultural mapping project involved a voyage of discovery to explore what this embattled group may have lost in their forced migration to Australia, but also to explain what they may yet find in the culture they now share with European Australians. Author Peter Panochini (2001) noted in his introduction that the current campaign was instigated by descendants of immigrants who were allegedly kidnapped from the Pacific Islands, mainly during 1860s-1890s (as noted above) to work on the sugar plantations and in the new pastoral industry of Central Queensland and NSW as early as 1843. A total of 62 500 Pacific Islanders, or ‘Kanakas’ as they were popularly called, were ‘enticed to Australian shores according to popular consent by unscrupulous traders’ (Panochini: 2001: 8). Settling on the central and northern coast, these Islanders still consider they are the descendants of slaves, although 90 years after the last sugar cane was commercially grown in Central Queensland, their vital role as pioneers of Central Queensland’s pastoral industries has largely been forgotten by the wider community (Gistitin 1995, Panochini 2001).

The dominant social view today (and the view of many historians and academics) is of a group of immigrants who ‘voluntarily’ enlisted for a three-year term of labour under contract in Queensland, and who chose to stay here. However the SS Islanders do not share this view of their ancestors as free and autonomous people. The community continues to hold the belief that their ancestors were indeed kidnapped or ‘blackbirded’
by the South Pacific labour trade and subsequently did become slaves. Historian Clive Moore points out that the term ‘blackbirding’ was derived from the African slave trade and has strong connotations of illegality. When used by Australians today, the implication certainly is of ‘shady, if not illegal activity’ (1985:xii). When interviewed for this report by the author, SS Islander project officer Jilly Landers was adamant that her ancestors, the Kanakas, came to Queensland shores in chains (Landers, interview 2001).

This belief has also been reinforced by historian and author Kay Saunders, who stated that Islanders in Queensland ‘comprised a form of highly unfree labour, subject to stringent legal and social discrimination’ (1988:168). The question of identity has emerged in recent years as a crucial one for the community. Carol Gistitin in her history of these Pacific immigrants, *Quite a Colony* (1995), argues that their identity has always been shaped by the controversial standing of their ancestors and has been open to interpretation and myth making (89-93). It is interesting to note that the 1991 *Evatt Foundation Report* strongly supported this view of ‘unfree’ labour, when it ruled that Pacific Islanders were brought forcibly to Australia as ‘indentured and slave labour’ (1995:89). This report has been used to lobby and generate awareness among social agencies of the current situation of South Sea Islanders, and recognition of the inequality of their status in society.
Steve Mullins (2002), in his research on the Capricorn Coast SS Islander group, argues that perhaps no other Australian identity has drawn so heavily on its history and agrees that for the present generation of Islanders, history as noted above, is still contested ground. South Sea Islanders exist as an identifiable minority; primarily because of the binding power of a tradition that stems from the 19th century labour trade, the plantation experience and a hundred years of exclusion (2002:9). Continually marginalised from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation (ATSIC, now defunct), these Pacific Islanders have quietly fought to have their rights accepted by Australian society. As recently as 1991, with the changes in the Commonwealth Administration of Aboriginal Affairs, they realised they were officially divided from the Indigenous group. Issues such as housing, education and work opportunities for young people were neglected because of the lack of recognition of Islanders, their lack of a collective voice, and their skin colour, which led only to confusion with Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. But today, tighter boundaries have been drawn, and together with the current focused debate on land rights, there no longer remains any basis for an equal policy for all Blacks. As Gistitin writes, ‘a more positive interpretation of the past will encourage Islanders to assert their identity and legitimacy, and to anticipate the future with some confidence’ (1995:90).

Roger Keesing has called the discourse of identity, legitimacy and historical origins ‘the political myth-making of our time’ (1989:20), but
maintains that recreating the past is a necessary part of affirming an identity. Clive Moore, as argued above, suggests that this ‘victim interpretation’ of Islander immigration together with early alienation from mainstream Australian society has produced a historical myth that ‘needs the balm of kidnapping, or blackbirding as psychologically imperative’ (1991:67). He writes that the assertion of this identity and an appreciation of Islander achievements and acknowledgment of the injustices suffered in the past have been fundamental to their survival and ‘will assist them in securing an equitable place in the future’ (Moore 1991:67). The community has certainly achieved considerable success in recent years, and succeeding generations are filling roles in the Queensland’s work force which must give them personal satisfaction.

The South West Pacific labour trade and the ‘Journey from Paradise’.

Between 1883 and 1901, thousands of Islanders were taken from their island homes by the South West Pacific labour trade and hundreds indentured to the Yeppoon Sugar Company alone, to prepare the plantations for the Farnborough Sugar Mill (Gistitin 1995). As early as 1867 and 1868, about 438 Islanders entered Central Queensland through the ports of Rockhampton and Gladstone, indentured for three years to work on sheep stations in the west. The impact of pastoral life in Queensland on these Islanders (referred to by their descendants as the Old South Sea Boys) and their contribution to the grazing industry is another important factor of their Australian heritage which has largely been
forgotten. *The Northern Argus*, September 1867 contained the following item commenting on these unusual bush workers:

KANAKAS - The Clarence brought up 189 (transhipped from the Oscar, lying in Brisbane harbour) South Sea Islanders, natives of Tanna. We understand that 30 of them are engaged by a squatter on the Downs, and 40 more by a gentleman on the Barcoo.


Following the demise of the Farnborough Mill in 1901, and the new Federation’s insistence that only white Australians could work in the sugar and pastoral industries (*Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901*), whole families were stranded along the coast and left to survive by gardening, fishing, and carting timber. Many eventually resisted the forced federal government repatriation of Islanders in 1906-1908. They chose to stay in Queensland. They had to fiercely argue their case to remain, and so, at this period in history, they became immigrants of their own free will. In the central region they settled in communities at Joskeleigh, The Sandhills and Keppel Sands near the mouth of the Fitzroy River, and Kanaka Town in North Rockhampton (Huf, McDonald & Myers 1994, Gistitin 1995).

This South Sea Islander community, on whose shoulders the Queensland sugar industry certainly prospered, has gained cultural empowerment as a black migrant settlement reaching back five or six generations. They see themselves as quite distinct from other ethnic minorities, although their historical experience in Australia, like that of the Indigenous people, has
also been one of control and exclusion. To a significant extent, Australian South Sea Islander identity has been affected by the sometimes-troubled relationship with the Indigenous communities. Despite the fact that about half the South Sea Islanders in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission survey also had Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ancestry, there were and still are grave tensions (HREOC Report 34-35, cited in Mullins 2002:7). Many Aborigines resented the fact that since 1970s, South Sea Islanders were able to access programs or occupy positions they believed were reserved for them; but Islanders believed they were pressured out of programs that their activism originally helped to establish (Mercer cited in Mullins 2002:7). Only on August 25, 1994 did these people finally receive some recognition by the Commonwealth Government as ‘a unique minority group which is severely disadvantaged as a consequence of racial discrimination’ (Panochini 2001:205-206). Today, the specific role of this group’s South Sea Islander ancestors as pioneers of sugar and pastoral industries is being historically reinvented. Since their official recognition from Queensland Premier Beattie in September 2000, there is an eagerness to move on, to address past history constructively and to ensure the positive survival of their island culture and heritage in this country for future generations.

The restoration of the Joskeleigh SS Islanders’ Sandhills Cemetery in 1991-92 has been one successful project for heritage listing, organised by community leader Mabel Edmund (AM). Mabel raised the necessary funds and secured the cooperation of local district authorities for this assignment
which has empowered the whole community. Mabel epitomises the outstanding strengths of women in her society. Her political career began with a concern for her child’s access to school across a constantly flooding creek. At twenty-one she protested vigorously to the Livingstone Shire Council with great success, became a member of the Parents and Friends Association of the one-teacher Nerimbera School, and later, coming to live at Joskeleigh with her family, she was elected to the Livingstone Shire Council in 1970, as the first black woman in Australia elected to local government. Of part Aboriginal ancestry, she also became a member of the Aboriginal Loans Commission of 1974. After assisting more than 2000 Islanders and Aborigines towards home and business ownership, she received the Order of Australia in 1986 (Gistitin 1995, Huf, McDonald and Myers 1994).

Mabel Edmund has become an empowered and much respected ‘voice’ within her community as personal memories, reminiscences and family history have been documented in her two important and historical autobiographies. The author interviewed Mabel Edmund, for the documentary On The Western Line’s segment on the Pacific Islanders. Despite her later disabilities, Mabel’s passion for preserving the Islanders’ contested past was distinctly visible in this conversation with the author. These SS Islander descendants feature not only in On The Western Line, but are the subject of a video production in progress on the original Kanaka Sugar Trail and its impact on this region’s cultural heritage. By this work of inquiry and retrieval into the collective memory and identity
of these Pacific Islanders, I believe the filmmaker can assist in preserving
the heritage of this marginalized group. The medium of ‘reality
documentary’ with its ideological vision is becoming a primary channel
for collating official and unofficial historic and cultural knowledges as
discussed in earlier thesis chapters.

*The Trail of Endurance* and the Islanders’ collective memory.

Social historian Darian Smith (1994) claims there has been a welcome
return to the storytelling function through ‘a celebration of the imaginative
elements in historical reconstruction and a greater awareness of historical
representations’ (1994:25). Following a shift within history writing under
the influence of post-structuralist and Foucauldian theories, popular
culture today invites identification and the creation of community, so
people can decide if the documentation of *A Trail of Endurance* or the
exhibition *Refined White*, (discussed later in this chapter) diverges from
their communal memory of the experiences of the past. The publication
itself begins with a series of short historic notes and newspaper stories of
this industry in human beings which presents a vivid and visual (if
controversial) picture of the South West Pacific labour trade. Author
Panochini combines subversive news reports and oral histories in order to
build a greater awareness of the communal memory of this immigrant
population. These excerpts below, taken from interviews and archival
newspaper clippings, paint a disturbing picture of the reasoning behind
eyear Islander migration to Queensland:
The fact of coloured labour being cheaper has nothing whatever to do with the matter. The point is, that coloured labour has been proved times without number the only reliable way of getting the work done. White labour has been tried. The men have been found unfit for the work and have run away or absolutely refused to work. Much of the labour on a sugar plantation is of a most trying and laborious description and it has to be performed in a muggy climate, under a fierce tropical sun.

*(Capricornian, July 5, 1884, Rockhampton)*

Off this island (Tanna) no less than seventy three men and women have volunteered to go to Queensland for ‘three fella yam, alonga six fella pound’, which I am given to understand is the largest haul that has ever been taken off any one island in the New Hebrides group. The mere fact that there are still any amount that want to come is a conclusive proof that their work amongst the sugar cane is not distasteful to them.

*(Morning Bulletin, March 20, 1885, Rockhampton)*

Despite the presence of government agents on trading ships, there were many accounts of despicable and viscous treatment of the Melanesians:

I saw the Dutch skipper marching up and down his deck with a rope’s end in his hand, with which he, every now and again, gave a cut to an Islander who was standing up in irons and made fast to the rigging.

*(Agent Douglas Rannie, cited in Panochini 2001:59)*

The mortality rate among the white population, aged 15 - 35 at this time was about 6 persons per 1000. The death rate for South
Sea Island workers was 85 deaths per 1000 natives in 1875, 147 deaths in 1884, and 53 deaths per 1000 in 1893.

(Parnaby, cited in Panochini 2001:13)

George Ernest Morrison, a Melbourne journalist, accompanied the brig *Lavinia* in 1887, on the return home to the Pacific Islands with about 20 islanders who were too ill for further work:

He noted one woman who had been landed in Queensland only 10 months before, healthy and active, as being now crippled and left in a shocking state of neglect. Once all the sick natives had been disposed of either by their dying and being thrown overboard or landed on some island convenient for the captain, the *Lavinia* proceeded to recruit new islanders. Any attempt at fleeing gave those on watch the opportunity for a little ‘sport’ by shooting the escapees.

*(South Sea Islands Cultural Survey, Vol 2 1999,13)*

The islanders organised resistance against being sent home on completion of their contract term and later, ‘as a product of the *White Australia Policy* in 1903-6’:

The manner in which return labour is disposed of...remains a great blot on the system. There have been instances where the captains of return labour vessels have put their boys down on the wrong island, which simply meant death and mutilation to them. The tribes on numerous islands are all hostile to each other, speaking several different languages and are in several instances cannibals.

*(Capricornian, July 5, 1884:59)*
The story of sugar cane cultivation and refining on the Capricorn Coast was one full of failures and broken dreams, ‘built on white gold and black sweat, in a tropical paradise beneath the golden sun’ (2001:15). As Panochini notes, the Yeppoon Sugar Company failed in all of its intentions. But, sadly, the great absence from the picture of the past at Farnborough, today, he concludes, are ‘the identities of the indentured workers themselves’ (2001:15). Therefore, it is important to rediscover some of these identities in order to reconstruct an authentic picture of the era from the stories and myths, memories and anecdotes, letters and official records of this unique group of immigrants.

Milestones of History: The Old Kanaka Sugar Trail.

From the first published collection of oral histories identifying significant sites and islander stories, to the final launch of the *The Trail of Endurance: A Journey from Paradise*, the underlying ‘politics of place’ and the ‘power of the real’ need to be examined in conjunction with contested cultural milestones and heritage sites such as the stone-pitched pathway over Meikleville Hill at Yeppoon on the Central Coast. The Trail was allegedly built by the very first indentured Islanders to arrive at Farnborough from Mackay in 1883-84. But today its heritage is bitterly attacked by white land developers in the area as being merely ‘anecdotal’ evidence (Mullins 2002). The Kanaka Trail - the original stone-pitched pathway measuring 4.5 kilometres - lead from the sugar mill past Yeppoon to the small seaside
harbour at Fig Tree Creek. It is the most significant memorial to the SS Islanders of Yeppoon, a truly historic relic of the era, but it has become the centre of conflict and tension between islanders, historians, environmentalists and developers:

Steadily climbing the foothills of Meikleville Hill towards the dark brow of the Bluff and the distant saddle, it reached the side of the range...in a relatively short distance the track on the northern side of the Bluff climbed several hundred vertical feet, clinging to steep rocky slopes and was carried across deep gullies, by magnificent stone pitched viaducts or culverts. The major structure of the trail is the 10 metre high viaduct that carries the roadbed over a deep gully at the confluence of two spurs... a lasting testament to the good workmanship and expertise involved in placing stones as large as half a cubic metre in size in a subtle batter to build a wall almost 30 feet in height. It has stood for over 120 years.

(Panochini 2001: 186)

The 1.4 kilometres section of the road (left in situ) is of most historic relevance and arguably worth preserving for future generations. Its construction is certainly identical to stone pitching by Kanakas on the old Fitzroy River wharf, and to station wool washes in the far west of Central Queensland (Huf, McDonald and Myers 1994:76). The stonework is also similar to wet field terracing on the steep volcanic slopes in the Pacific Islands (Panochini 2001:186). This legacy of exotic Melanesian stone pitching should arguably enhance the region’s cultural image. But the entire process of recording and tracing the history of this road, including
the present day conflict between islander groups and developers on whose land it allegedly sits, has revealed how intimately *The Trail* is tied to the history of the entire district.

Stories have been handed down orally from generation to generation by residents living on the boundaries of *The Trail*. It has been linked positively by survey maps discovered by researcher Jilly Landers (survey map lot 224, 1906) and ironically supported by two local court cases reported in the local newspaper at the time - each concerning well-known mill managers Edward Melhuish, Rutherford Armstrong, and Yeppoon’s Dr William Thurston. The first unambiguous evidence that a road existed between Yeppoon and the plantation emerged in connection with a poisoning incident on 13 February 1886. The court hearing, reported in *The Morning Bulletin*, March 4, 1886, noted that on that day the plantation manager, Edward Melhuish was called by his overseer from Taranganba station to attend five South Sea Islanders who apparently had drunk water from a tin contaminated with ‘white lead’ or paint. ‘Melhuish arrived at Dr William Thurston's house on the Yeppoon side of the range at 11.30pm, asked for advice about medication for arsenic poisoning and continued over a *very bad mountainous road* to the plantation’ (Mullins 2002:12).

Another Rockhampton court case in 1901 accused manager Rutherford Armstrong of employing South Sea Islanders to construct a road, despite the *Pacific Island Labourers Act 1884*, which made it illegal for Kanakas to build roads (or do any work other than tropical agriculture). Although
Matthew Bryan, for the Pacific Islands Department, gave evidence that on 14 July 1901 he had seen seven SS Islanders constructing a road across the mountain’s saddle, ‘three or four miles long and about 12 ft wide...between the plantation and Yeppoon’ (2002:5) and despite testimony from three islanders Bestlema, Maggie and Toowarra that they had been working on the road, the case was dismissed. The defence lawyer claimed the women were constructing firebreaks, not roads, stating, ‘you cannot put much reliance on the Kanakas’ evidence, these are mere colloquial things’ (Mullins 2002:5).

Affirmation of the Old Kanaka Trail is also evident from Peter Panochni’s oral history research with local European settlers:

Ariel drew a line along the western side of the Bluff quite high up. ‘And this’ she said with a gleam in her eye, ‘was a road that they carted the sugar on...the Kanakas did... It went over the saddle and on further up to the mill’.

(Ariel de Landeles, aged 90, interview with Panochni: 2001:178)

He (Rutherford Armstrong) used to tell us the sugar was taken over the hill up there, where the Kanaka Trail is - to the Mill, and that the Kanakas built the road. Walking through the scrub we came across some stone pitching in one of the gullies. We found the old track and walked along it to where it came out in Appleton’s’ pineapple farm. Mr Appleton too said that it was the old Kanaka Track.

(Letter to ASSI from pineapple grower Peter Hutton 2001:142)
These accounts all point to the Old Kanaka Sugar Trail as a unique part of local heritage. However, although anecdotal and oral evidence above show that island skills were used here, an application by the community (with Professor Mullins acting as consultant), for the Environment Protection Authority listing on the Queensland Heritage Register, of ‘a 1700 metre remnant of a stone-pitched track across the hills that divide the town of Yeppoon from the old plantation site’ was turned down in January 2002 (Mullins 2002:2).

This application has caused a bitter controversy in Yeppoon that continues to drag on. Contacting the EPA to see why the heritage listing was not going according to plan, Cultural Mapping Project participant Doris Leo was told merely that the problem was political. One may ask, is this a deliberate non-recognition and deletion of history as we have seen so often in Aboriginal and ethnic history? Are these memories of an extraordinary era in the region’s settlement still so problematic they must be forgotten? The listing was strenuously opposed by a property developer and a letter writing campaign in the local press and public agitation over the issue was exacerbated by divisions within the local SSI community. The situation became so intense that government agencies thought it necessary to intervene and attempt mediation. Finally a group of SS Islander elders wrote to the local paper to condemn a campaign of such ‘blatant misinformation, abuse and threats’ (Willie and Leo cited in Mullins 2002:3).
In his essay ‘Heritage and the Built Environment’ John White (1996) argues that identifying the cultural heritage significance of a place leads to an understanding of the ways that the place may be conserved. A policy can be formed to delimit the extent to which the place may be altered or adapted without detriment to its cultural heritage significance. Certainly, the *Queensland Heritage Act* which came into force on August 12, 1992 provides for the conservation of the state’s cultural heritage with ‘comprehensive protection for places of significance by agreement and through implementation of conservation measures’ (1996:130). The Heritage Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining a register of places of cultural heritage significance with criteria for evaluating the listing of these places. As part of this control, development in places included on the register is subject to approval from the Council with the intention of encouraging provisions to protect places ‘where there are significant cultural relics or historical archaeological material is included’ (130-131). White suggests that negotiations are often the best way to steer the course between conservation and development requirements, as ‘what is of cultural heritage significance in the environment is a matter for public discourse’ (131). It is interesting to note, however, in the very first year of the Act’s operation, there were a total of 141 objections representing about 15 percent of the places on the Register (132). It does appear that a certain ignorance or fear about what heritage conservation entails, still exists within a large section of the public.
Throughout this thesis it has been argued that *place* - because of its special association with a particular community or group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons - is a most important heritage factor, but unfortunately, in the case of the Old Kanaka Sugar Trail, the environmental protection criteria noted above, have presented an ugly threat to developers and land owners on whose land The Trail lies. Instead of encouraging conservation, nervous landowners have claimed history is ‘merely heresay’ and oral accounts ‘merely gossip’ as we have seen above. ‘To some, the act of listing is an appropriation; to others it confers status, merit and public approbation and legitimises these values’ (White 1996:132). In this instance, the developers have seen the listing as a distinct appropriation of their rights and their land. With the Livingstone Shire Council (and local media) now reaffirming its support for the CMP, Pacific Islander significant sites and museums, Mullins is making a further approach to the EPA. In the end, cultural significance will surely be generated by community regard and not by the contemplation of academic criteria or disdain of ‘*mere colloquial things*’:

The preservation of the ‘Old Kanaka Trail’ would demonstrate how their (SSI) participation in the colonial workforce had been limited and confined, a process that continued well into the 20th century when Australian governments tried to legislate them out of the sugar industry altogether. Given that the 1884 Act prevented Islanders from road building beyond the plantation, and that the 1892 Act outlawed it absolutely, the ‘Kanaka Trail’ ... was rare indeed. To my knowledge there are no other surviving examples.
The only official monument or memorial marking the presence of the sugar plantation, which I could uncover was a pinnacle of rock dedicated to the last manager of the company. Overgrown by the roots of an ancient fig tree on the highway to Yeppoon’s major beach resort, it tells of a trick played on Rutherford Armstrong by two children placing a dead possum in the path of his horse, causing it to shy, and throw him to the ground. Another nostalgic link from the past was found recently in the lantana scrub at the back of Farnborough in the remains of a buried tilt-dray from the sugar mill. The local paper, *Capricorn Coast Mirror*, reported triumphantly on its discovery, and it has been donated to the Joskeleigh Museum to be restored to its original state (Leo interview 2001). As noted earlier in this chapter, The Sandhills Cemetery and Islander resting place at Joskeleigh, is the only heritage listed site celebrating the Pacific Islanders’ long contribution to our region’s economy and way of life (Edmund interview 1998).

Simon Schama (1996:8) reminds us that inherited myths and memories of these special landscapes, like the Old Kanaka Sugar Trail, The Sandhills Cemetery and Rutherford’s fig tree, do share two common characteristics: ‘their surprising endurance through the years and their power to shape living institutions today’.
Politics of place and Tales from Uncle Stumpy.

Stephen Muecke writes that ‘reading the country at its most important nexus is the country itself’ (Muecke 1996:17) and recovering myth and memory beneath the surface, I would argue is of primary importance within this chapter, and indeed, within the entire thesis. In his introduction to Reading the Country (1996), Muecke argues that ‘politics of place’ is an attempt to construct a theory of place - to discover a method of charting meanings of those specific places in which people must find a way to live in one manner or another. As each chapter of this thesis has reiterated, ‘place introduces specificity and difference and the possibilities of reading the country in terms of inherited cultural and historical determinations rather than in terms of individual differences’ (1996:18). The importance of place has emerged through our concepts of ecology, of world heritage, of the environment, but the study of specific local places puts things more on the scale of everyday living, as one can see the individuals, the beliefs, the culture of the people working in what they say and do. Stephen Muecke and his travelling companion across Roebuck Plains in Western Australia, Aboriginal elder Paddy Roe, maintain two vital pieces of logic were made clear:

‘This piece of country might be insignificant - might also be full of meanings’ ...‘The only way to go was on foot, but at that pace a whole different range of things becomes visible’

(Muecke 1996:19 & 16).
Paddy Roe's dreaming is particularly relevant to the South Sea Islanders' notions of place and country as recorded in Panochini's conversation with SS Islander, elder Uncle Stumpy (Ronald Miller), as they travel *The Trail of Endurance* in an old station wagon to Joskeleigh. By revisiting Ron's own culturally significant sites, together, we are able to capture these storylines of a particular landscape in time, through Uncle Stumpy's 'dreaming'. 'The first landmark to slide into view on *The Trail* is Duby's (or Darr) Lane, running off to the right from the Joskeleigh Road', writes Panochini as Uncle Stumpy relives the past:

> 'That couple of old fellas, Jimmy Darr and Bob Bas, used to live up there, where Lui's parents lived. Those other old blokes, Jimmy Mungar and Tommy Tabby used to live up there at Keppel Sands, hey?'

Uncle Stumpy points out the window at a particular tree.

> 'Num Bug tree there - like a big fig tree - can you can eat them? I don't know...Num Bug? Num Bum maybe, if you eat 'im.'

This clever pun brought laughter all round and the car swept on towards the salt flats and Joskeleigh. With the desolate salt pan behind, the view opened up to reveal long field strips marked off by long lines of old trees and Uncle's memories began to come thick and fast.

> 'This is where the pigs chased Lui and me around. We go round and round but we got away from him. It's all changed now. There used to be a big house there - Mary Querro used to have it there. Right on the saltpan. Them boys came there, drinking and fooling round, having a cigarette and burned the house down.'

> 'Cricket pitch up there. Them boys used to hit the ball through the creek. I was only a kid and couldn't play yet'... 'You know, only the men played cricket then. We'd be over here chasing the balls...'
Some big mullet up there...we used to make little bows and arrows...the prong would stick out like that. We used to come here shooting eels...’

The name of the richest Islander to emerge from Joskeleigh still brought the hush of respect.

‘Jimmy Youse’s property. Taro used to grow here, where the undergrowth is. A crocodile chased Karen Youse one day. She was getting soldier crabs - she had to climb a tree down there...’

The car approached Bong’s Corner, the site of much superstitious activity and strange occurrences over the years.

‘Bong’s Corner!’ announced Uncle Stumpy, ‘I was thrown off the horse just here!’

Behind the legendary Red Eye Tree was the site of Bob Bong’s grass hut and the huts of the ‘old fellas’. These areas were places of superstition and fascination for the young blokes, said Ron. The ‘old fellas’ living on the edge of the village area were still linked to the Island ways and some may have still practised the natural magic (Pourri Pourri) of their Melanesian culture.

‘Ah! them old fellas...’ repeats Ron.

(Excerpt: ‘Tales from Stumpy’ in Panochini 2001: 165-170)

There is no doubt the sites where the old men lived are of great importance to the SS Islander community. Their special powers of healing (and harming) not only linger in the places they inhabited, but connect back to the cultures of the Western Pacific home islands. All that remains of the old dwellings may be an iron bed and some old pots, but these sites represent self-reliance and independence. As Raphael Samuel (1994) wrote, and as this thesis has sought to debate: ‘memory is a dynamic shaping force of our culture, changing colour and shape according to the emergencies of the moment’ (Samuel 1994:176). As he also reminds us,
memory is inherently revisionist, changing the environment of the story constantly, so that, far from being handed down in the timeless form of tradition, this ‘collective memory’ is progressively altered from generation to generation.

Throughout this thesis, nostalgia and memories of the past have linked the reader ‘to place, to time, to nation’. Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (1994) have argued these memories may be a source of great conflict, but assist us in placing value on our individual and collective social experiences and ‘enable us to inhabit our own country’ (1994:1). Together with earlier accounts of exclusion and exploitation, the stories involving the Farnborough Sugar Mill, the Old Kanaka Trail, The Sandhill’s Cemetery and the village of Joskeleigh, are all part of the community’s collective memory, commemorating the Pacific Islander’s vital role in the development of a regional sugar industry, in building a prosperous community, and an Australian way of life. The final section of this chapter will examine the Sugar Industry’s historic and exhibition Refined White which opened the Joskeleigh SSI Museum, in 2001. The following year, I filmed the community’s re-enactment of The Journey from Paradise in the neighbouring school paddock in January 2002. Here the legends of early settlement were re-invented for the tourist, at a ceremony in which the local community could re-enact those traumatic past events, layered beneath the surface of the performance.
CHAPTER SIX

(ii) The Grand Opening of the South Sea Islanders’ Museum:

A Journey from Paradise
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(ii) The Grand Opening of the South Sea Islanders’ Museum

*A Journey from Paradise*

We must look after these artefacts from the islands in this museum. The young people over there, on the islands, at Pentecost, they are going to the city, they’re forgetting to look after things.

(Joskeleigh museum curator Doris Leo, February 2002)

The Australian Sugar Industry’s exhibition *Refined White* was a major success at the grand opening of the Joskeleigh Museum on July 25, 2001. Initially planned for one month, the exhibition ran for a three months extended season, so popular was this story of the sugar industry in Central Queensland. Entitled *Refined White* by curator Michael Berry, it illustrated how South Sea Islanders came to cut sugar cane in Queensland and made national history by ‘refining the White Australia Policy’ - certainly a curious title made clearer by studying the exhibition itself. Conceived to address a gap in the ASI Museum’s own collection and to enable a more complete presentation of the industry’s history, it documented the contribution made by the Pacific Islanders, and exposed the hardships they faced from 1843-1904. The exhibition was part of a Queensland Sugar Trail linking a variety of historical facilities and special events to the display which travelled throughout the state and the Northern Territory with the aim of preserving and promoting Australia’s sugar heritage.
Visiting the exhibition *Refined White* and later attending the re-enactment of the *Journey from Paradise*, I was able to personally experience the *cultural empowerment* of these migrant people. This particular community of Joskeleigh, situated on the sandhills at the mouth of the Fitzroy River, and still peopled by SS Islander descendants (as discussed earlier in this chapter) originated in 1909 when James Youse, an indentured labourer from the island of Tanna, purchased 51 acres of land in his Australian wife’s name, in order to graze beef and dairy cattle and grow small crops (Gistitin 1995:26). The Joskeleigh museum has appropriated the school teachers’ dwelling built in the 1950s when the school was attended by Islanders and their neighbours. The ongoing struggle to keep the school open bound the community together giving it a further will to survive, until the school closed in 1985. The re-enactment took place within the original school grounds, complete with hoop pines and palm trees planted by first generation Islander/Australians, which gave the performance a very real and authentic atmosphere. The Sandhills Cemetery where Islander ancestors are laid to rest is situated opposite.

According to Kevin Moore (1997) in his text *Contemporary Issues in Museum Culture*, this power of ‘real place’ and authenticity, together with the power of ‘real people’ developing their own representation of Islander history, has the ability to carry the past into the present by virtue of a genuine relationship to past events. The most successful, most effective representations of the past (whether in museums or elsewhere) are those which employ this ‘triple notion of the real’ (Moore 1997:135). Local
visitors and an enthusiastic regional audience attending both celebrations were able to experience this *realness* with its relationship to dramatic milestones which occurred during the birth of Queensland’s sugar industry and the importation of this ‘living’ group of people. With the Joskeleigh museum’s unique island artefacts and photographs, presented by *real* Islanders interpreting their *real* history within a *real* place, it can be visualised as a significant geographical site with historic connections linking this ‘authentic’ village of Joskeleigh to the other ‘authentic’ heritage sites of Farnborough Sugar Mill and the Old Kanaka Trail, each positioned within a particular cultural discourse as part of a growing regional heritage industry.

*Refined White*: Brown Sugar and the White Australia Policy.

At the exhibition *Refined White*, the viewer is presented with an educational appraisal of the sugar trade along the Eastern Coast of Australia, a political voice which mirrors Panochini’s local story, *The Trail of Endurance*, and Capricorn Coast’s Cultural Mapping Project. Because of the national significance of this period of Australian history, and a realisation of the ignorance of the SS Islander culture and heritage generally, the curator Michael Berry has installed a teaching resource to build on young people’s awareness of such issues as immigration and racism. *Refined White* (informally called ‘*the brown sugar story*’ by local museum goers) invited students to examine a number of controversial issues such as slavery, human rights and freedoms, citizenship and social
justice. A series of posters and tableaux inspired young viewers to explore these concepts by looking at both historical and contemporary experiences of Pacific Islanders in Australia. For example, the student learnt that the Islander community, by refusing to go home, successfully revolted against the *White Australia Policy* of 1901 and caused a ‘refinement’ of that harsh and racist early legislation of a new federal government in a new state:

As the new Commonwealth Government was moving to deport Pacific Islanders, it was also preparing to shut the gate on future undesirable immigrants of all colours and non-European origins, known as the *White Australia Policy*. Of the 9324 Melanesians in Queensland in 1901, only 1654 were granted exemption and could remain. It was likely another 500 escaped to the bush, assisted by sympathetic Australian farmers.

(Berry 2000: 77)

This era of intensely political Queensland history is highlighted throughout the entire exhibition. Government posters portray a *White Australia Policy* depicting the 1901 *Immigration Restriction Act*, complete with dictation test. Official documents also feature the 1901 *Pacific Island Labourers Act*, when all Pacific Islanders were to be returned to their place of origin by 1906, and the 1903 *Commonwealth Naturalisation Act*, which prevented non Europeans in Australia from acquiring British citizenship. A further group of posters and political cartoons illustrate repressive federal legislation including the *Sugar Bounties Act* 1905 (a bounty would be paid to farmers provided their sugar cane has been grown or produced by white labour only); the *Sugar Cultivation Act* 1913 (Pacific Islanders must read and write 50 words in English to be granted a certificate to work in the
sugar cane fields) and the *Liquor Act* 1885-1904 (a licensed victualler or wine seller shall not sell liquor to an Aboriginal, native of the Pacific Islands or Polynesian born in the colony or any half-caste of that race):

The government set us free, changed the legislation and said ‘all right, you are now Australian. You’re allowed to do whatever you like’. But then the unions stepped in and banned us Islanders from working in the canefields. So what could we do then? There was nothing here - we were not skilled men. There was no such thing as Government housing or help for us.


Throughout this confronting display, I observed a critical voice informing on Australians’ past heritage, black, white and ethnic, which continually impacts on present day politics. The viewer is told that official recognition by the state government in September 2000 supposedly made amends for past injuries to South Sea Islander descendants who now number about 20 000 in towns and country areas along Queensland’s coastal region. But, we are told, perceptions of the past still find expression in the discriminations of everyday life as history informs a nostalgic and often tormented culture. Contemporary oral histories from the Central Coast community (illustrated below) work as a forceful reminder of the positive achievement of the South Sea Islanders today. These stories are an integral, balancing element of this whole exhibition:

The culture is so important to know...Young people should know how they got here and why they were here...Being born in the 1930s and seeing the change towards SS Islanders in the 21st
century and seeing us being recognised, I think there is nothing to express how wonderful it feels.

(Joe Leo, retired grader driver, Joskeleigh)

Now it’s time we stand up and make a mark on this place, and in a sense we can say we are here because we are good workers and that will never die, it’s part of our heritage.

(Maude Corowa, coordinator employment & training, Livingstone Shire)

These little kids don’t notice my colour. but they might go home and they’ll come back and they will say ‘Miss Warcon, my mummy and daddy say that you have black skin.’ And I would say ‘Yes, I do’ but the kids do not see that. They see you as a teacher, then a black teacher. And I would say that I am Australian first and if you want to look further, yes I am a South Sea Islander.

(Cath Warcon, teacher, Tarangaba State School, Yeppoon)

As noted earlier in this chapter, stories and family memories link the Australian Islander community to place and to time - they place value on their individual and social experiences and they enable Cath, Joe and Maude to live as Australians as shared memories provide a social cohesion for the entire group (Darian Smith 1994). Collective memories are embedded in this display - in the language, the everyday tools and artefacts, and the significant sites illustrated in each tableau. The various discourses used in this exhibition historically condition its audience to receive a constructed account of the South Sea Islander epic and the history of an Australian slave trade which began in a British colonial state
before Federation. Media advertisements, oral histories and graphic illustrations pasted on large exhibition panels depict the local settlers’ beliefs about piracy and kidnapping and reinforce this belief for viewers of all ages. We are told that as a string of sugar and gold ports grew along its northern coast, the Queensland Government became desperate for income and trade of any kind was recklessly encouraged. The government supported the setting up of vast sugar plantations which became hungry for cheap indentured labour. As a final task of the learning and teaching resource unit, students are asked to consider how the differing accounts of European historians, 19th century traders and Australian South Sea Islanders influenced their own conclusions about recruitment or blackbirding of islander labour:

My grandmother Katie Marilla was ‘black-birded’ as a 15 year old from Oboa Island in Vanuatu in 1875...One memory I find hard to erase is the sight of scars around her ankles, which were still evident at the time of her death in 1944. These were embedded from the chains that were fastened around her ankles as she walked from one plantation to another.

(Mrs Rowena Trieve, *Islander Recognition Ceremony*, Brisbane, September 12, 2000)

If you take away a recruit from his home without ‘buying’ or ‘paying’ for him, that is without making presents to his friends to compensate them for losing him, they will say you ‘steal’ him.

(William T. Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders & The Queensland Labour Trade*, 1873)
These accounts inevitably echo the oral histories published in Panochini’s CMP Project *The Trail of Endurance* (2001), but a students’ educational theme does highlight Australian politics of early settlement. Exhibition viewers are told that an Act of Parliament in 1868 was meant to guarantee specific standards of ‘treatment of Polynesian Labourers’. In theory this meant that islander recruits were protected from abuse by the owners and overseers of sugar plantations. Hours of work, wages, daily rations, clothing, accommodation and medical services were all stipulated. But as the text suggests, ‘few islanders would have escaped beatings, medical neglect, or deprivation of food and leisure, let alone the extreme abuse from the use of whips and chains’ (Berry 2000). Unashamedly political, the curator’s voice debates the history of ‘an Australian slave trade’ as opposed to ‘voluntarism’.

The viewer discovers that of the 62000 islanders who came from more than eighty islands, less than eight percent were women. Islanders married into Aboriginal and European families creating an even more diverse multi-cultural community today. We are told that although the conditions of indenture required labourers to be returned to their island homes following expiration of their contracts, it is calculated that by 1901 at least 2400 Islanders remained in Australia in small settled communities in coastal Queensland. At this point in the exhibition, student viewers were finally asked to critique their history, their government and their culture, to consider the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and draft an *Australian Bill of Rights*.
The authentic story in photographs: black and white.

A major part of the exhibition was the display of archival photographs of the Kanaka sugar trade in black and white, depicting indentured labourers toiling on the sugar cane fields, clearing the tropical rainforest, planting and cutting cane or relaxed at ‘smoko’ around their traditional grass huts which surrounded the Mackay and Yeppoon plantations. Families were also photographed in European work clothes in front of the sugar mills while Islander youths (field workers) posed in the studio in their best European clothes. Enlarged sepia landscapes included the Farnborough Mill’s first cartloads of sugar cane making their way around the Yeppoon Bluff at low tide. Other photographs portrayed families taken at home in the village after Sunday church service or having a meal under a mango tree. Father has his fob watch, elegant polished shoes, mother wears her best Sunday dress; happy relaxed families smile in front of their houses while a child poses in Sunday school dress with a rose bouquet. Here indeed was the exhibition’s theme of *Refined White* revealed!

The audience is reminded of the similarities to white Australian pioneer families. It is as though the family is posing for itself and not the camera by projecting an image of what they *believe themselves to be* (desperately wanting to become Australian citizens.) The viewer’s gaze is then suddenly confronted with the horror of photos of pirate ships, a sea of black faces, despair and chains of Melanesians being ‘hunted’ in the Pacific Islands. Racist cartoons of the day attack the ‘aliens’ for taking
Pacific Islands. Racist cartoons of the day attack the ‘aliens’ for taking white men’s jobs, both in the sugar fields and on the western station properties. These photographs, many from privileged historical collections at the John Oxley Library, Central Queensland University and Mitchell State Library are an important primary source and a fitting subject for historic deconstruction. Notions of race and power are refracted through notions of culture and class, youth and age, black and white, family, community and survival. It seems that the curators and historians, who are normally so concerned about the evidential status of their documents (as we can see in the bitter conflict over maps and records of the Kanaka Trail as discussed earlier) are content here to take photographs on trust and to treat them as transparent reflections of fact. As Samuel points out:

We may caption them to bring out the tell-tale detail but we do not feel obliged to question or corroborate the picture’s authenticity, to inquire into its provenance or to speculate who is present and who isn’t.

Samuel 1994: 333)

Powerful images framed within the exhibition have been supplemented at the museum by audio interviews with community leaders, by Melanesian artefacts, woven baskets, traditional fishing implements, weapons, and the treasure boxes which always accompanied the returning workers to their former island homes. In her paper, ‘Oral History as a Tool of New Museology’, Robin Trotter argues that new perspectives on the past are being offered with the intent of putting people at the centre of the museum’s activities in order to empower groups, who have been
marginalised or subordinated to dominant classes - to act as a ‘vehicle for social change and as a way of re-asserting cultural autonomy’ (Trotter 1992:2). All these concerns appear to be articulated in this exhibition. When interviewed, Doris Leo, third generation SS Islander descendant and Joskeleigh museum caretaker of a valuable and permanent collection, stated that the exhibition *Refined White*, together with the re-enactment of the South Sea Islanders’ original Journey to Australia, described below, had been a ‘whole learning experience for the community’ (Leo interview 2002). These events had brought the ‘power of the real’ home to the people of Joskeleigh and Yeppoon.

*A Journey from Paradise*: A dramatic re-enactment.

Landmarking, historic recreation and cultural conservation are all instruments with a history. They leave their own traces on the sites they mark as heritage.

( Kirschenblatt Gimblett 2001: 156)

When the interface of folk festivals or re-enactments is examined, it can be seen that heritage productions tend to conflate their effects with the instruments for producing them thus becoming a critical site for the production of meanings *other* than ‘heritage’ messages (Kirschenblatt Gimblett 2001). For example, the festivals of the outback or the re-enactment of shearers’ wars and miners’ strikes become cultural forms in their own right as powerful engines of meaning, with messages of colony and settlement, reconciliation and re-invented identities, all encoded in the interface of the performance. In the re-enactment of *A Journey from*
Paradise at Joskeleigh, on February 18, 2002, the strong relationship between the community and its identity, its political history and heritage, was dramatically displayed in both narrative and pantomime.

With the re-telling of the legend, the author was able to witness an important scene in heritage preservation which becomes a tool - not only for living out the SS Islanders’ own history - but as an important way for attracting cultural tourism, with the triple notion of the ‘real’ as a major bonus attracting travellers. The real people were identified taking part in the rich and historical re-enactment of their ancestors in the midst of a living community and significant sites created by that same community. This live display, staged as an actual performance, gave the illusion that the activities the audience were watching were being done rather than represented, again creating a dramatic effect of authenticity or realness, that the tourist demands. Semiotically, people taking part in a live display become significant as ‘signs of themselves’ so that the audience experiences a representation - even when the representers are themselves citizens (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998:55).

On the day of the re-enactment, about 30 members of the Joskeleigh and Yeppoon SS Islander communities and their neighbours dressed up as indentured labourers and pirates, assembled on the old school grounds with a virtual backdrop of island palms, sugarcane, several horse and cart combinations, a sailboat replica of the South Pacific labour trade and a make-believe ocean. A script was written by SS Islander descendant Judy
Tatow and her daughter Julie acted as compere. The performing troupe presented their island myths with pride. They commenced with a ‘blackbirding’ scene on Pentecost Island, illustrating how Pacific Islanders - men and women - were ‘tricked onto the sailing boat and later herded onto the mainland sugar plantation’ (re-enactment script). The actors evoked emotions of fear and bewilderment as they began to clear the rainforest, plant and cut the sugar cane, in a true atmosphere of the real. Several hundred people from Rockhampton, Yeppoon and rural districts came to view the performance, to participate in the dancing and singing, eat island food, and celebrate the heritage of the Pacific Islanders.

Whether re-creations of daily events or staged as formal performances, this practice gives the illusion that the activities you watch create the effect of authenticity, or realness. This is living history, incorporated in the strategies of heritage interpretation. Samuel writes: ‘If there is a unifying thread to these exercises in historical reconstruction it is the quest for immediacy and the search for a past which is palpably and visibly present’ (1994:56-57). It is stepping back in time for those who want to sample the sights and sounds of the Old Mill, taste the coconut being extracted by villagers from their local trees; smell the sugar cane, follow the horse and sugar cart through the village and take a walk with history. This re-enactment shows no signs of exhausting its imaginative appeal as it conveys the lived experience of the past to everyone. Part of its appeal and vigour is that this living heritage owes a great deal to the enthusiasm of the local islander descendants who may spend their weekends
rebuilding drays and wagons, or creating the trade boats that sailed across the Pacific. The old tracks and paths are living links to the past, a kind of visual equivalent to a stake in the country itself. Walking the *Trail of Endurance* and re-enacting the nostalgic history of the sugar industry will not only recreate the conditions and life of the sugar industry indentured labourers but will assist in nurturing and conserving this precious, cultural environment.

As has been argued previously in this thesis, heritage is created through a process of ‘exhibition’ as knowledge, as performance, as museum display. Where the *Refined White* sugar exhibition has endowed the Pacific Islanders’ heritage with a fresh vision, so has the re-enactment embodied a cultural production revealing the power of display in cultural tourism generally. Heritage, as a cultural production, has given these significant Australians with their significant sites, their cultural mapping project, museum displays and re-enactments, a second life as *exhibitions of themselves*. From a colonial past, a past of forced acculturation and indentured labour, the heritage industry has not so much reversed that process, (even though its discourse of reclamation and preservation makes such claims) but the industry has produced something new and there is no turning back. Re-telling the mythic narratives of the Kanaka trade is a way of providing an explanation connecting the past history of the sugar industry to the present, as observed through the performance of descendants presented in a symbolic action. As local festivals and re-enactments acquire these new meanings, they re-invent our regional
heritage and I would suggest they are creating a new regional identity which admits to the powerful multicultural elements of our society.

Australians are coming to realise that Aboriginal knowledges and ways of living are a core part of national identity, so too are Pacific Islander and ‘Kanaka’ histories coming to occupy a dignified place in a multicultural Australia. The author is reminded of Raymond Williams’ words that a culture can never be reduced to its artefacts while it is being lived (cited in Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998:165). As the Mornington Island Woomera Culture Team (below) is quoted as saying:

Our culture is not just something fading from the past but we are contemporary people in a real world - our Dreaming is not just of the past but also of the present.


South Sea Islander descendants feature in the author’s documentary On the Western Line, and are the subject of a video production in progress on the Old Kanaka Trail and its proposed heritage listing. The medium of ‘reality documentary’ with its broad ideological vision is becoming a primary channel for collating official and unofficial historic and cultural knowledges. As debated in Chapters One and Two, this work of inquiry is being extended into all kinds of spheres that would have been thought unworthy of notice in the past, with whole new areas of data coming into focus by exploring the collective memory and identity of each regional community whether their roots are European, Indigenous or Islander. We may conclude that many successful heritage documentary productions will
be produced depending on the virtuality of the event. As has been noted earlier, cultural tourism needs destinations, and historic re-enactments and heritage pageants are part of a network of attractions that form ‘the recreational geography of a region’ (1998). The Old Kanaka Trail, Uncle Stumpy’s Red Eye Tree and Bob Bong’s Corner, Mabel Edmund’s Sandhills Cemetery project and Joskeleigh Museum, all share the ability to recreate a living cultural industry through authentic experiences in which the audience can confront the ‘incomprehensible’ (1998:203).

In conclusion, I believe we can see that an assertion of identity, a public appreciation of South Sea Islander achievements and an acknowledgment of the injustices suffered, through the demanding processes of this current Federation funded research project, will assist Central Queensland Islanders to secure an equitable place in the cultural heritage of this region. Currently, organisations such as the South Sea Islander Cooperative are strategically addressing important issues like housing, education and the need for a collective voice in society. The rebirth of Australian South Sea Islanders United Council (ASSIUC) with a Rockhampton branch formed in 1992 has begun repositioning South Sea Islanders in the national political arena, assisting the community to re-establish connections with their islands of origin. As Islanders have combined to lobby Parliament for recognition, opportunities have appeared to clarify an identity, and establish a solid base for legitimacy, which is one of the main ambitions of this Pacific Islander group. Through the analysis of the cultural mapping project, the exhibition and re-enactment, we have observed how
traditional story-telling strategies, and a sense of place have empowered this community to show why the South Sea Islander Museum at Joskeleigh, or the Old Kanaka Sugar Trail over Miekleville Hill should be notable heritage destinations. The ‘authentic’ interpretation of momentous past events has been depicted with integrity, thus impacting on the development of heritage tourism strategies for the future. As Kirschenblatt Gimblett maintains, heritage and tourism both deal in ‘the intangible, absent, inaccessible, fragmentary and dislocated’ (1998:167). These are features of ‘the life world itself’, which is one reason for the appeal and wholeness promised by the various worlds of the museum, the festival, the theme park and the re-enactment, as showcased within this thesis.

Today, the South Sea Islander community has shown the capacity to connect with its broader pasts, to an almost forgotten period of exploited and allegedly slave labour in 19th century colonial settlement. Incorporating memories of these events is central to maintaining and reconstructing the cultural identity. This group has been empowered to take charge of the disposition, ownership and interpretation of their patrimony (1998:165), the spaces in which they live, and their way of life. The sugar industry exhibition, old mill photographs, oral histories and dramatic re-enactments of a strange and historic journey, are all part of a community driven heritage tourism program asserting the restoration of a living link between the images of the ancestors and the community.
CONCLUSION

*On the Western Line*: The Impact of Central Queensland’s Heritage Industry on Regional Identity.

![Fig 41](image1)
![Fig 42](image2)

![Fig 43](image3)
![Fig 44](image4)

![Fig 45](image5)
![Fig 46](image6)
CONCLUSION

*On the Western Line: The Impact of Central Queensland’s Heritage Industry on Regional Identity.*

In order to study the impact of the heritage industry on the Central Queensland region and its integration into a wider national economy, the author undertook a personal journey on the *The Spirit of the Outback* to the far west, with digital video camera and crew, documenting the role of local communities in appropriating their museums, monuments and memorabilia as ‘markers of regional identity’. The reconstruction of a cultural identity through the interpretation and preservation of local history and national heritage has been the underlying theme within the written essay and accompanying three documentaries. This thesis has maintained that heritage tourism is becoming a major force which will encourage each regional community to share their cultural heritage with the national and international visitor, thus developing a sense of local empathy and empowerment.

The concept of nation and national identity is increasingly being challenged by the need for a cultural persona, which belongs to the people, whether they inhabit a small seaside town, or isolated piece of land in
Capricornia’s outback, still widely known as ‘frontier country’. Benedict Anderson maintains that nationalism depends on the idea of the nation as an ‘imagined community’ — *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them — ‘because in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (1983:15 cited in Schaffer 1995:21). Anderson claims that nationalism is a product of text, novels, newspapers (and I would suggest documentary and film) as they represent historical events. In this context we can visualise the outback ethos of ‘white male Anglo-centric Australian nationalism’ which pervades our region’s myths, museums and heritage centres as being part of this ‘imagined community’. Throughout the author’s journey the audience can visualise this *imagined nation* in the deep-rooted and ‘horizontal comradeship’ (1995:21) that exists within Central Queensland’s many diverse communities. Each bush ballad, each story of an unsung hero, each statue of ringer, shearer or miner helps to invent this imaginary construct of nation. However, I would suggest, so do the legends, didgeridoos, bora rings and sugar trails of our Indigenous and South Sea Islander communities, as Australians of all colours and creeds celebrate their diverse pasts.

It has been claimed that the ‘local’ is being subsumed within a new global culture, and local identities severed and dislocated from national frames of reference. Regionalism within socio-economic and cultural discourses
today offers a counterbalance to this globalisation, according to Robin Trotter (2001:134-5). Geoff Lawrence (1996) and Gene Dayton (1997) write that the emerging pattern of rural Australia has been one of disadvantage, blaming the impact of this global restructuring process for a stagnant rural economy. But in the last two decades, the growth of interactive ‘living’ cultural centres promoted through bi-centennial and government heritage funding, and the upgrading of small history museums has produced new sources of income in a region ‘desperately seeking to survive’. Tourism has offered a second life to many isolated towns and distant locations which have become the adventure traveller’s cultural destination today as ‘heritage’ has become a memorable way of making claims to a place, of providing communities with an infrastructure in order to celebrate their past. Local government, community institutions and private interests are all involved in constructing, branding and marketing diversity and difference within this industry and, by careful networking, local communities can maintain their economic prospects in difficult times.

In my thesis I have argued that a strong relationship exists between memories of nation, place, community and identity, whether Indigenous, European or Pacific Islander. Historians and social scientists have begun to explore these relationships, no longer assuming that geography is simply the ground on which events took place (Sinn: 1998). Hewison and Trotter
(1987, 1995) have noted how nostalgic memory has the capacity to connect communities with their broader past, with national events, public figures and local history, far beyond personal experiences, back to an almost forgotten period of 'indentured labour' and 'frontier war'. This community framing of national and local history is portrayed strongly in the three documentaries accompanying this thesis, as each video film emphasises the power of the local discourse in relation to the national historical discourse. This region's cultural identity has been researched through national and local archives, through history books, journals, newspapers, oral accounts and interviews, and in this context, the social production of the community's collective memory has indeed become a cooperative process. In the public arena, these nostalgic representations have appeared in monuments, in exhibitions, in reconciliation and celebration events, plays and dramatic re-enactments, and recorded here on documentary film, as the digital video camera has been one of my primary means of observing and analysing Central Queensland's regional identity. The importance of nostalgia and the collective memory has been captured on video at celebrations located at various diverse historic destinations on the Tropic of Capricorn, which are drawing lovers of cultural tourism, and 'reluctant museum visitors,' both Australian and international, into the area.
My research noted that 80 percent of the total market for tourism in the Central Queensland region were Australian visitors, with the majority travelling by car, staying in caravan parks or with relatives and friends. Detailed surveys by the Australian Tourist Commission have shown that this region is favoured as a tourist destination by both domestic and international travellers, supported by the author’s preliminary survey (Huf and Schirato survey 1996). However, both local and international tourists (who are arriving in ever growing numbers), are keen to sample cultural attractions, historic buildings, Aboriginal sacred sites and art galleries. As documented, some tourists complained about issues such as poor road signage or lack of historical information, especially on sites of colonial confrontation, or at Aboriginal sacred sites, but all came to local museums to find out what life in the past was really like.

Chapters One and Two involved an analysis of the author’s pilgrimage by train to the far west and a critique of two historical documentaries relating to local and national narratives concerning King O’Malley, federation minister for home affairs, and Tommy Wills, survivor of the Cullin-la-Ringo Massacre in 1861, author of the first Australian Football Code, and coach and captain of Australia’s first Aboriginal cricket team. The three documentaries underpin the main argument running through the thesis - that nostalgia for the past, the power of the collective memory, and the
empowerment of local versus national identity are all vital elements of the heritage tourism industry.

The documentary *On the Western Line* works on many levels, as a journey of inquiry to discover the rich history of the outback through its collective memory, and on another level, to capture the tourism product of Capricornia by documenting the producers of these heritage locations and events as markers of regional identity. On the journey west, the visitor's desire to experience diverse cultural landscapes and heritage sites has been matched by the local citizens' desire to see their life-narrative passed onto other generations, as the past becomes the present, as history links the traveller to place, time and destination. The camera has explored a range of regional heritage events while the written thesis has studied the dilemmas facing Indigenous, migrant, pioneer and postcolonial communities in attracting the tourist, on one hand, and retaining their individual identity, on the other, today. As noted in the introduction, the faces of European pioneer and Aboriginal Australian are seen against an historic background of confronting land rights, colonial war, the growth of labour unions, and the rapid expansion of wealth from wool, cattle and later from gold. The train journey on *The Spirit of the Outback* along the Great Northern Railway, or Central Western Line, as it is called today is a pilgrimage for both film director and audience.
As author, I would argue that the auteur/director of the documentary is virtually empowered to describe aspects of the real world from the point of view of camera or participant. The editing and the selection of footage has played a significant part in the visual production by imposing an authorial perspective on content as these regional narratives and local identities are captured on camera. Thus the viewer sees Banjo Paterson’s Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre and the Stockman’s Hall of Fame dramatically juxtaposed with glimpses of historic but forgotten destinations - such as the once bustling rail and mine workers’ towns like Boguntungan, and Mt Morgan - now bypassed on the tourists’ map by major highways, outback express trains and tour buses. *On The Western Line* has documented historical events, local museum exhibitions, and surreal outdoor objects of art. Segments of Dreamtime’s Reconciliation Festival and the ‘grand opening’ of Rockhampton’s Pioneer Heritage Village have cut to Duaringa’s Mad Hatters’ Races in aid of The Royal Flying Doctor, or to a poets’ outback breakfast at Winton; to archival footage of miners ‘running the cutter’ at Mt Morgan and early film depicting pioneer Colin Archer’s arrival in the *Ellida* on the Fitzroy River, in 1885. With their diffuse levels of involvement, we see that each community leaves traces of its myths and legends on its own sacred sites, as each group has been documented within a space and place called ‘Central Queensland’.
In Chapter Two’s analysis of the video productions *The Legend of King O’Malley* and *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills*, historic footage has been superimposed on contemporary interviews with activists, historians, tribal elders, journalists, pioneering families and sports legends, to present a striking impact between regional and national narratives. These films contrast colonial issues of the day such as federation politics and frontier war, with today’s concerns for civil liberties and land rights. As these confronting voices were recorded, it was noted that each interview, letter and old photograph functioned as a symbol of regional identity contesting these provocative issues. Tensions within each narrative opened up a privileged version of past events, which supports the author’s argument that all documentaries are political.

The historical documentary’s combination of interview testimony, read documents and archival images, has made a serious contribution to research and is becoming an important political tool in examining issues of public culture and heritage. The treatment of the video script in both these documentaries carries compelling messages for local, national and even global audiences. As present-day reality is juxtaposed with legend and myth, viewers have been invited to make judgements about the historic truth surrounding these iconic characters whose lives have been appropriated by regional museums, by authors of musical comedy, by national sports galleries, by Parliament, from a colonial past of political
and racial upheaval, within the first European settlement of Queensland. What is important here is the impact these mythologies have made on the community’s sense of heritage, and the continuity of their nostalgic celebration in the region’s tourism industry today. The local story of King O’Malley has been researched from A. R. Hoyle and Dorothy Catts’ biographies, supported by authoritative interviews, Boddy and Ellis’ musical play *The Legend of King O’Malley or Never Say Die Until a Dead Horse Kicks You*, performed at Emu Park on the Capricorn Coast to celebrate Federation in 2001. The extraordinary legend of the Yankee larrkin salesman dying of tuberculosis, rescued from a Zilzie cave by an Aboriginal fisherman, before walking to Adelaide and a life in Australian politics, was captured on camera through the stage performance of local actors. The *national* story, focussed on the politician, who is responsible for naming Canberra, introducing the Commonwealth Bank and resisting Billy Hughes’ call for conscription in World War 1. However, where King O’Malley has been virtually forgotten on Capital Hill today, the narrator points out that King is indeed a *local* legend at the seaside villages of Emu Park and Zilzie, despite the fact some historians still claim his Capricornian stay was a myth.

Thomas Wentworth Wills’ *national* story involves a serious historical account of Australia’s W. G. Grace of colonial cricket, who invented the first code for Australian Rules Football before coaching the very first
Australian Aboriginal Cricket Team in 1866-67 (which later toured England). The local legend considers the tragic and ironic twist of a young colonial grazier who endured the murder of his father on the Nogoa River in Central Queensland in 1861, but stayed to manage Cullin-la-Ringo Station, before returning to Melbourne and the sporting world of fame. The tensions between the film’s re-enactment of the bush massacre, the reading of family letters by descendant Tom H. S. Wills at Minerva Creek Station, and colonial news clippings of the cricket hero who finally commits suicide, all give testimony to the truth and reality of the documentary. It is again ironic as the narrator reminds the viewer that the national sports icon (although immortalised by two bronze doors and a statue at the Melbourne Cricket Ground) is remembered only once a year at Cullin-la-Ringo, on the anniversary of the massacre at Murdingy Gap in 1861.

In researching the first Aboriginal Cricket Team, I found the same underlying issues of exclusion and marginalisation were active in Indigenous state policies in both Queensland and Victoria. Although the Aborigines’ Protection Act 1869 was designed to protect the Aborigines from exploitation, it actually curbed all further development by Indigenous people in this sport for more than a century (Whimpress:1999, Mallett: 2002). This was just one issue which I believe was important to include, in order to balance the story of Tommy Wills and his Indigenous friends
within the colonial society in which they lived. With interviews from contemporary cricket hero Ian Chappell and Aboriginal Queensland cricketer Phil Minniecon, I attempted to justify the colonial sporting scene and the ‘muscular Christianity’ of the 1860s with today’s cricket ‘as a gentleman’s game’ and to note Chappell’s insistence that Johnny Mullagh and his Aboriginal eleven should be inducted into the Cricket Hall of Fame. We are reminded that documentary is culturally determined, and where the director stands in relation to his/her protagonists ‘will rest on temperament, background and how he/she intends to work for change (Rabiger 1998:320). Documentaries are a construct – they reveal as much about their makers as they do about their subject. It is our own assumptions that we put on the screen. ‘In a just and open society, every group should represent itself rather than hiring an ‘expert’’, says Rabiger (320). ‘Once the frontier was literacy, the next frontier is democratic representation on the screen. We – whoever ‘we’ means – have to become our own experts’ (1998:320).

The second component of the thesis and major written critique, analyses the different layers of meaning inscribed within the narrative, the look and the ideology of the documentaries initiated within this research. Their role in portraying the impact of heritage and cultural tourism on regional identity is an integral part of the thesis. The interiorising force of the oral word relates in a special way to the ultimate concerns of existence, to
ceremony, to authenticity, and to the intimate and communal life of the
town or region, as Lyotard (1986:106) writes. Chapter Three has analysed
the role of Capricornia’s local museums as markers of regional identity
and as an important anchor for the heritage industry. As Jane Lennon has
noted in *Hidden Heritage*, Queensland is a large and culturally diverse
state with a history of strong regional identity and decentralised
development which makes it different from other Australian states. In the
last few decades over 200 community based local museums have been
established in this state mostly due to local initiatives (Lennon:1995). The
local historical museum has long served the inquisitive appetite of the
local and international traveller, and the increasing popularity of visiting
museums, historic homes and heritage listed sacred sites illustrates the
importance of the past to tourist agendas. There is a continually changing
tourism market, as these locations are being drawn into a network of newly
constructed tourist spaces by discourses around issues of civic
responsibility, access, sponsorship and funding, and competition for
visitors (Lennon, 1995).

After studying the environment of small museums in this region, it was
obvious very different communities existed with very different agendas,
intent on placing value on their own particular experiences. Again, cultural
presentation issues were raised within Chapter Three which need to be
addressed by museum curators throughout the area. The collection of
voyeuristic Aboriginal photographs of the local Kalkadoon women at Winton’s Qantilda museum, for example, have been confined to a time of pre-history. Chilla Bulbeck (1991) makes the point that it always appears to be the subordinate culture’s symbols which are translated into those of the dominant culture allowing for what Tony Bennett calls ‘the never-ending story of the nation’ (Bennett cited in Bulbeck, 169). It is interesting to compare this presentation, documented on camera in *On The Western Line* with the very different presentation of Darambal and Torres Strait Islander artefacts at Dreamtime Cultural Centre, Rockhampton, and at Bambruk Living Cultural Centre, The Grampians, Victoria (the latter filmed briefly on location for *The Triumph and Tragedy of Tommy Wills*).

In the private sphere, hand-crafted objects have always had their admirers within the local museum and their significance and ‘quintessential Australian character’ is exhibited in every outback museum, according to Kylie Winkworth (1991:117). Both Winkworth and Bulbeck (1991) have warned, that if these objects are decontextualised from their association with a *local* past, and removed to the austere context of a *national* museum (as so often occurs), their true connotations may be lost altogether. The author has argued in this chapter, that it is a strong challenge for *local* museums, such as Mt Morgan, Emu Park, Winton, Marlborough or Biloela, as they balance the responsibilities of protecting their heritage and historic artefacts with that of attracting the tourist and
supplying the marketplace. At Mt Morgan, the original site of one of the world’s richest gold mines, a very different local culture has emerged from that of western grazing towns. The original community were the descendants of working class miners, living in the violent days of the 1880s gold rushes. But an alternative lifestyle group searching for cheap housing and a simple environment has come to town. As the local museum preserves the authentic tools, diaries and photographs of the miners, under curator Fred Christmas’ careful administration, perhaps this other local population can learn to appreciate the stories of the Chinese riots at Crocodile Creek or the discovery of gold by the Morgan brothers, in order to appreciate the town’s past. But are they more concerned with the closing of the town’s only bank? Will the new tourist concept of guided tours to the redundant mine invigorate new feelings about the town and its history? The documentary _On The Western Line_ did observe the town coming to life once a year, with the Golden Mount Celebrations and the famous _Running the Cutter_ race, but a final, solitary camera shot panning across the empty High Street to focus on a deserted and distant mine, suggests the documentary maker too has feelings of doubt about the town’s future.

The spirit of King O’Malley pervades the local museum at Emu Park, as old photographs and clippings of King’s alleged habitat on Cooraman Creek with Coowonga’s tribe, or his national activities in Canberra are
presented for the visitor’s gaze. The memorabilia of the first seaside resort of Central Queensland and its fishing industry, including letters and journals of Mt Morgan mining families, or townsfolk from the thriving railway and meat processing industries of Rockhampton, who journeyed east to the seaside for their annual holiday, are contained in an old post office. Nearby is King O’Malley’s commemoratives plaque. Museum volunteers have called for national recognition and an Emu Park branch of the Commonwealth Bank to be established in his memory, but to no avail. Finally the town set up its own community bank with assistance from a national competitor. Like so many small regional keeping places, insecurity about their identity has troubled the museum volunteers over recent years, as tensions about ownership of archival material and funding for historical research show that a need for professional training in curatorial skills is becoming urgent.

At Marlborough, after visiting the museum’s impressive first exhibition A Woman’s Work, (featuring Rachel Henning’s (1862) letters from Marlborough Station), it was obvious that issues were being raised on the museum’s viability, between the board and female volunteers. Concern regarding sufficient funding for the archival collection, the need for training volunteers - not only in management but in computer technology and data bank collection - and the need for an overall program to re-evaluate these small centres of local heritage, is evident throughout the
region. Rockhampton Historical Society, in their traditional if precarious waterfront home at the old Borough Chambers, and Livingstone Shire Council have reported through their cultural policies that there is a need to consult with the community on all aspects of heritage, to identify places of historical interest and preservation, to study Indigenous and ethnic history, and to promote cultural heritage recording as a part of community development (Livingstone Shire 2001, McDonald 1998). Many isolated museums were visited briefly for this thesis over a period of time and each was well aware of the importance of serving the needs of community and special interest groups (if they were to survive) as they come under pressure from government policies and practices. Small country museums are popular tourist destinations within a successful tourism industry, but there still remain contradictions concerning the version of history which should be remembered and how it should be presented to the public.

Since the national bicentennial celebrations in 1988, hundreds of ‘unusual monuments’ have erupted along the Tropic of Capricorn, within their own unique environment, which the author has captured on camera. These monuments work as a tribute to ordinary people whose interventions with history have been mostly local. Bulbeck (1989) contended that although many of these statues proclaim the fame of their hometown heroes, they do not challenge the nation builders of orthodox history. On the Western Line projected romantic images of bush workers, together with bos indicus
bulls, sapphires, dinosaurs, windmills, and historic images such as the *Tree of Knowledge* at Barcaldine and Leichhardt’s *Dig Tree* at Comet. Always eyecatching, these vernacular sculptures, postmodern simulacra and historic icons documented on camera across Capricornia, seem to affect a commodification of place, often exceeding their status in advertising a product or a region. As already noted by the author, (after Bulbeck 1989, Winkworth 1991 and Gibson and Besley 2004), these objects of art are a deliberate attempt to reflect back to the viewing public the proposition that the local population helped build this region. There has been much conflict over gendered monuments, over Indigenous sacred sites and over care and governance of historic graves, but finally, they are all part of a regional collective memory, building on the need to develop an identity which rural communities feel is truly Australian.

In Chapter Four, the author confronts the tourist’s quest for authenticity, as the *Spirit of the Outback* travels west past Central Queensland’s ethnographic cultural centres, Longreach Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre, and Barcaldine Workers’ Heritage Centre. ATC managing director John Morse claims people love coming to this country because ‘it’s real and it’s authentic – it’s not fake’ (1999). Donald Horne (1984) has also agreed that contemporary tourism is for discovering authenticity and true meanings, but he is concerned that these meanings have been lost or overlaid by a desire to experience the
virtual thrills of high technology. Dean MacCannell maintains that most tourists are involved in a search for authenticity with its referent in primitive society, with a supposedly spiritual way of life. 'The tourists' way of getting on with the 'natives' is to enter into a quest for 'authentic experiences, perceptions and insights' (MacCannell 1973:589). Although often regarded as a symptom of modernity, Craik (2001) too argues that tourism for many is oriented towards the future and thus represents postmodernity by fusing past, present and future in a timelessness characterised by pastiche, simulacra and iconography. Australian tourism, which has in the past been pre-occupied with national identity, needs to project a different image, says Craik, - an image which encapsulates our multiculturalism, our diverse cultures, natural and man-made attractions and our sense of regional and local history.

Together with Rockhampton's Dreamtime Cultural Centre and Pioneer Heritage Village (studied in Chapter Five), these storehouses of historical artefacts and ethnographic realism are becoming national icons and destinations of empowerment, as they have promoted local myths, local heroes and the regional history of our past - whether a white pioneer history or an Indigenous Dreamtime story. The success of each postmodern and interactive cultural centre on the Tropic of Capricorn, mostly established through bicentennial and 'centenary of federation' funding, has rested on the notion of special significance for rural grazing
and rural workers’ enterprises, and, in the last decade, on reconciliation and cross-cultural understanding, in order to capture the global tourist market.

The Stockman’s Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre, 700 kilometres west of Rockhampton on the Tropic of Capricorn and the Matilda Highway, has been marketed as a true example of Australian outback heritage. It has built its appeal on one of the country’s most enduring mythologies - the bush worker - and a symbiotic relationship with the pioneer squattocracy of the Queensland sheep and cattle stations. This outback ethos has provided the stimulus for a patriotic and nationalist tourism which has developed in the far west linking Longreach with Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre, and Barcaldine’s Workers’ Heritage Centre, which commemorates the great shearers’ strike between 1891-95, and the birth of the Australian Labor Party. The area’s historical significance has been assured by its association with Banjo Paterson and Waltzing Matilda, with the Flying Doctor Base and the original home of Qantas, the dinosaur discoveries at Muttaburra and Lark Quarry and the almost forgotten story of the western Kalkadoon people and original owners of the land.

The ideology of the Hall of Fame, like that of Winton and Barcaldine’s cultural centres, symbolises the positiveness of the bush, depicting the
survival of the outback male character against all odds. The recognition and true representation of women pioneers, Indigenous and ethnic bush workers, has been an important issue, brought to the public’s notice by Hall of Fame board member Dame Mary Durack. The mythologising of celebratory themes, and masculine bias of these ‘metaphors of power’ certainly has been criticised, and a rose garden has now been planted to commemorate the women pioneers. An early feasibility study estimated 265 000 people pass through the area annually, and at the present time, according to management, at least 2000 visitors per week seek out Stockman’s Hall of Fame. Tourism Outback sponsors riverboat cruises, Qantas original museum tours, cattle and sheep station tours with links to these cultural centres and to the heritage trails network both north and south of the Matilda and Capricorn Highways. The heritage industry has impacted on the life of the entire Central western region. The old pub and farm machinery display at Ilfracombe and the original Woolwash at neighboring Blackall have immediately become popular as unique constructions of a regional pioneering past. Muttuburra, nearby, celebrates its famous Muttaburasaurus and so does Lark Quarry. Each destination has become an important part of this ideological core of the outback.

The spectacular and highly technical presentations, visible at these popular cultural centres seem to prove that the present production of ethnographic outback displays and historical panoramas does not have to destroy past
mythologies. A sound and light (son et lit) show in the Billabong Courtyard at Winton’s Waltzing Matilda Centre presents the famous legend with its re-invention of the hologram of the ‘jolly swagman’ troopers and squatters, at the eerie water hole, while its neighbour, the old-fashioned Qantilda Museum next door still parades a yard of old cars, trucks and station vehicles. Professor Joan Kerr claims Winton’s centre is the most successful museum combination of old history and new heritage discovered on her western Queensland tour of heritage centres (Kerr: 2001). Both thesis and documentary highlight the tensions which still exist between local historian Richard Magoffin and cultural centre management over the authenticity of ‘Waltzing Matilda’, and its original performance by the author and his friends at Dagworth Station or at Winton’s North Gregory Hotel.

As Therese Raddic (1996) writes, the Winton song draws on the resources of the ‘male cult of bush poet’ and still remains our most popular national song. It may have been ‘all the fault of the bore water’ (Paterson 1934. cited in Magoffin 1996), but it has certainly survived to be a camp follower in two world wars, advertise Billy Tea and starred at Sydney’s Olympic Games (1996:38-40). These tensions are symbolic of many contentious debates over contemporary and traditional interpretations of historic events, which we see in presentation and performance throughout the region. It has been argued that these mythical origins are always
contested and perhaps are more interesting in their tensions than their authenticity.

Barcaldine, 200 kilometres east of Longreach, became renowned as the headquarters for the shearers’ strike and the birth of the Australian Labor Party, which took place under ‘The Tree’, beside the railway line in 1896. The bicentennially funded Australian Workers’ Heritage Centre, depicted as ‘The Big Tent’, symbolises the shearers’ strike camps situated across Central Queensland in the 1890s and also links the strike to the birth of the railway (which was responsible for the government’s quick response in bringing in an army to quell what almost became a civil war (Bolton cited in Huf, McDonald and Myers 1993:190-191). Joan Kerr’s severe criticism has vilified the Centre as being mediocre, arguing that visitors to Capricornia were only attracted by the largest and newest, ‘the national, slick and generic’ (Kerr 2001:17). She has denounced the $7.5 million state supported project documenting the role of the nation’s female workers, as being ‘stodgy and un-informative’ (2001:18). This was a surprising attack as the exhibition recognised the early history of women both at home and in paid employment as part of an aim to recognise both male and female citizens whose collective labours have been the backbone of this remote and isolated region. Where historians and social scientists have argued strongly that outback towns have been changed by the influx of tourists and their ‘new’ view of history and the past, Kerr has suggested
small towns should not be resuscitated by tourism, as their demise was imminent, and their ‘two weapons of history and art were questionable anyway’ (2001:17-19).

This thesis has argued that current government strategies, like the Queensland Heritage Tourism Network, can be seen as a way of empowering cultural centres and smaller museums to attract tourists by show-casing their regional and national history within a unique environment. Over $100 million has been committed to the network to link these significant features of Central Queensland’s natural and built environment and marks a substantial engagement between the tourism industry and the heritage industry to expand a cultural tourism market by ‘recognising the demands of authenticity and interpretation of the region’s shared memories’ (Macken 2002:7). Craik (2001) also writes that it is crucial these communities maintain an economic base, not only to sustain themselves in the short term, but also to sustain their culture into the future.

Chapter Five has highlighted the conservation of Indigenous history and culture at Dreamtime Cultural Centre, comparing Rockhampton’s interpretation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture with Victoria’s Bambruk Living Cultural Centre, in The Grampians, Victoria, before studying neighbouring Pioneer Heritage Village and its very
different concept of regional history. Craik (2001) warns that the expansion of Aboriginal cultural tourism must impact not only on Indigenous identity and social organisation, but on the need for the broader Australian community to redefine itself in relation to the *global* projection of an Aboriginal-centred sense of Australian identity. It does seem that an interest in Aboriginal culture particularly from overseas visitors has coincided with a resurgence of Aboriginal political activism and a push for cultural revival. In the tourism industry, these sophisticated ethnographic ‘keeping houses’ are uniquely placed to present and reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. These people have a long association with collecting tribal artefacts and historic objects.

The tendency in Aboriginal cultural politics of linking cultural uniqueness, distinctiveness and *difference* to the revival of Aboriginal cultural traditions in order to gain economic and political advantages has been a major issue in Central Queensland. As Griffin and Shelley’s paper ‘Dreamtime in a Cow Town’ questions, has the Dreamtime Cultural Centre confined itself to developing and promoting unique Indigenous traditions, like the sandstone caves of the Bidjarra Tribe, so that it may in its own small way contribute to future economic and political pay-offs? (Griffin & Shelley 1996:173). This thesis has portrayed a strongly independent Dreamtime Cultural Centre at Rockhampton, with luxury Motel and conference venue, managed efficiently by its local Aboriginal
(ex-army) director, Bob Blair, with council support. Although the centre has been severely criticised by some academics for acting as a conduit for ‘pan-Aboriginal culture’ or ‘pseudo-authentic primitivism and stereotypical Aboriginality’ (1993:170), Blair is attempting to reconcile Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures with today’s multicultural Australian tourism industry. Blair’s philosophy at Dreamtime comes from a very different worldview to Bambruk where the determination to raise non-Koori consciousness of the shameful past remains the dominant purpose. However, both offer a tourism experience in line with the government’s project of Aboriginal reconciliation today. Like its Victorian sister Bambruk, Dreamtime Cultural Centre will surely find its own balance in the next decade and will work through its own tensions to address tourists in a contemporary Indigenous voice. As Stephen Muecke has pointed out, since the 1992 Mabo decision there has been a radical change in how the country and the original black settlers are perceived in Australia: ‘Australians are coming to realise that Aboriginal knowledges and ways of living are a core part of national identity’ (1996:11). He warns, however, today’s conception of ‘nationhood’ uses Aboriginality as a commodity to be bargained for in exchange for Aboriginal land and institutional power and control. With the issue of Aboriginal sovereignty, there is more at stake, he argues, than the use of lands, there is the right to control the production of Australia’s mythologies(11), and I would suggest
the production of Indigenous museums, cultural centres and keeping places.

Current moves to sponsor cultural planning and development throughout regional centres together with a new awareness of the economic potential of cultural tourism is providing a major impetus for the preservation of Indigenous social and cultural history. Together with Dreamtime’s manager Bob Blair, Councillor Tom Upton (city heritage precinct director) is designing a tourist trail from the Indigenous cultural centre to the Pioneer Village, which he claims will span 200 years of white occupation and 40,000 years of Aboriginal history. It will be a cultural bridge between Aboriginal and European heritage, and is planned to open late in 2006. The Queensland Heritage Trails Network has been approached to support this venture, together with the upgrading of a city precinct, including the heritage listed Customs House and Archer Park Railway Station. Upton sees Rockhampton’s newest heritage venture, The Pioneer Heritage Village, attracting a partnership with backpackers, becoming a venue for rodeos and light horse events and acting as a starting point to visit other popular tourist destinations, such as Carnarvon Gorge and the Central Highland Gemfields.

The Village was destined to play a major role in the construction of a local cultural identity, and was successfully opened in 1996, with authentic
replicas of early settlement from shearing shed, to blacksmith cottage, plus relocated local school, church, a collection of clocks and a small bush hospital brought from Mt Morgan. Although Upton believes the Village has the capacity to become a national tourist icon, others in the community have misgivings about the project. Museum and gallery curator, Lisa Loader, suggested it could only ever be a theme park. Loader claimed the village did not have any real ‘hook’ to attract heritage tourists, although the Sunday Markets and Australia Day events worked well due to the numbers of locals who attended. ‘The Pioneer Heritage Village can only be a ‘non-working, working village’ she maintained (Loader interview 2003).

Across the highway from the Pioneer Heritage Village, George Birkbeck maintains Old Glenmore Homestead, the original site of Glenmore Station and Birkbeck’s family home for more than 140 years. In 1980 George restored the old slab hut and Glenmore Inn which served miners travelling to the early gold rushes. Birkbeck, who calls himself ‘a private Aussie battler’, is disillusioned by the ‘political opportunism’ surrounding him. He struggled to gain a partnership in tourism with the Pioneer Village, and hoped the proposed heritage trail would service both Old Glenmore Homestead, Dreamtime Centre and his neighbouring museum. This has not eventuated. Instead, the Village has become a competitor, building a bigger shearing shed for bush dances, and duplicating his outback suppers.
George maintains heritage tourism has diminished during the past ten years, and claims international tourism has been stifled by world events and a shifting rural economy. (Birkbeck interview 2003).

Small privately owned family museums such as George Birkbeck’s Old Glenmore Station, Tom Wills’ museum at Minerva Creek, and Lorna Smith’s Rainworth Fort at Springsure will no doubt continue to struggle to preserve their valuable archives for the demanding cultural tourist. As the introduction to this thesis has stated, despite a heritage-led economic recovery being flagged in some rural areas, the presentation of culture is seen to play a more and more important role as the industry moves ‘from local product-driven to a market-driven economy’ (Dayton 1997:144). As Blair and Upton strive for their heritage trail, will we see both groups empowered by a relationship which could help to shape a truly cooperative regional identity? Or is there a danger of confusing the historic reference of these discourses, with little common meeting ground other than the tourist dollar as debated in Chapter Five? In that case, should we be looking more closely at questions about cultural appropriation, cultural rights, control and ownership of cultural sites and social justice?

Finally, in Chapter Six, the author has argued that the South Sea Islander community is a prominent cultural group which has been empowered by presenting its contested history in the public domain. This community has
a history in this state as a black migrant people reaching back five or six
generations, on whose shoulders the Queensland sugar industry was
established. Peter Panochini, author of the Pacific Islander history
publication *The Trail of Endurance: A Journey from Paradise*, has argued
that 62500 immigrants were 'enticed' to Australian shores in a form of
slavery called 'blackbirding' by the South West Pacific labour trade.
Between 1883 and 1901, hundreds of islanders (known as Kanakas) were
brought from the Pacific Islands and specifically indentured to the
Yeppoon Sugar Company to clear the plantations and work at the
Farnborough Mill. Following the demise of the mill and the government’s
decision to repatriate all Kanakas in 1906-1908, they argued their case to
remain and became immigrants of their own free will, settling in
communities at Joskeleigh, The Sandhills, Keppel Sands at the mouth of
the Fitzroy River, and at Kanaka Town in North Rockhampton. The
question of identity, especially in relation to Aborigines and Torres Strait
Islanders, has emerged in recent years as a crucial one for Islanders, which
according to this community is shaped by the past, by the standing of
ancestors, and is open to much misinterpretation.

As this thesis has already established, Pacific Islanders exist as an
identifiable minority primarily because of the binding power of a tradition
that stems from the 19th century labour trade, the plantation experience
and a hundred years of exclusion. There is disagreement by some
historians with islanders who believe strongly that their ancestors were kidnapped to work as slaves and ‘indentured labourers’ in Queensland. However, in the larger story of labour migration it appears many young men from Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands went willingly to work abroad and their communities were content to see them go (Mullins 2002). Certainly, according to Clive Moore (1985) there was much deception and coercion used by labourer recruiters, and today there is universal acknowledgement that the labour trade was brutal.

I originally set out to study the community’s Cultural Mapping Project and publication of three important oral histories, following their successful grant of $90 000 from the state government. I became involved with courageous SS Islander Mabel Edmund and the restoration and heritage listing of The Sandhills Cemetery at Josekeleigh, together with a further heritage project to geographically site the original Old Kanaka Trail from sugar mill to Ross Creek over Miekelville Hill. Unfortunately, true recognition of the Old Kanaka Trail (through The Queensland Heritage Act, 1992) instigated a threat to local developers and to land owners on whose land The Trail lies. Instead of encouraging conservation the Act has caused strong local community tensions which have halted any kind of reasonable solution. When opponents of the Old Kanaka Trail listing repeatedly referred to the application as ‘a land claim’, the criticism cut
deeply. The bitter public controversy caused by this application has affected progress on future heritage listing of The Old Kanaka Trail.

The South Sea Islander culture has survived one hundred years on the margins of Australian society by being self-reliant and by maintaining a low profile, but the community is acutely aware of the need to protect their heritage places and their identity. The Australian South Seas Islanders United Council (ASSIUC) recently established their own historical museum at the original Pacific Islander village of Joskeleigh. It was opened in 2001 with the sugar industry’s excellent and political exhibition, *Refined White*, which I attended, together with the historic community re-enactment of the *Journey from Paradise* the following year. After witnessing these presentations of SS Islanders’ Australian heritage, walking the old Kanaka Sugar Trail, and visiting the Old Boys’ sacred places at Joskeleigh, I was reminded of Simon Schama’s comment that landscapes can be self-consciously designed to express the virtues of a particular political or social group (Scharma:1995). It is indeed a sense of real place, isolation, and a sense of nostalgia for the past, which motivates this marginalised group to search for their ancestors and their storylines? As Kevin Moore has said, the power of the real place seems to have the strength and the ability to carry the past into the present by virtue of its real relationship to past events, with the most successful and effective representations of the past being those employing this ‘triple notion of the
real’ (Moore: 1997). Here at Joskeleigh and Farnborough this power of the real can be negotiated by linking the historic site of the sugar mill to the Old Kanaka Trail and historic village (still peopled by descendants of the Pacific Islands) and to the museum run by real islanders interpreting their real ‘refined white’ and ‘brown sugar’ stories.

‘Conservation whatever the doubts about the notion of heritage, is one of the major aesthetic and social movements of our time’ according to Raphael Samuel (1996:25). Samuel (1996) claims we live in an expanding historical culture in which the work of inquiry and retrieval is being extended into areas of unofficial knowledge which may have been thought unworthy of notice in the past (25). We can see that conservation of small marginalised communities and their history is vital and certainly this unique SS Islander Community is broadening its knowledge in its own historic roots in Central Queensland society today. Even Uncle Stumpy’s Bong Tree is becoming politically important as this community gains a new awareness of place, as they are confronted with not only the myths of their past, but the material culture of their everyday lives.

It has been argued throughout this thesis, heritage is a way of producing ‘hereness’. Heritage is one of the ways locations become a destination; heritage is a ‘value-added industry’; heritage tests the alienability of inalienable possessions; heritage produces the local for export
(Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998:149). And, as tourism becomes one of the world’s largest export industries, it will continue to import visitors ‘in hoards’ to consume goods and services locally. Today, we are told, the Queensland Government Cultural Statement proposes a cultural tourism strategy that will encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more, and make return visits, thus broadening the tourism base. It will be interesting to evaluate the discourses of heritage tourism over the next decade. As discussed earlier in this thesis will we see television and film present a new mode for textual analysis and how will we re-interpret these visual images of our heritage sites in order to develop a more provocative, more truthful picture perhaps, of our region? Will we see the countryside changed and commodified by the influx of newcomers as tourists bring with them this ‘new view of the past’? Will we see more documentaries using a vigorous public debate in order to inform Australians about the issues of heritage, white/black relations, frontier war, multiculturalism and regional identity as the whole realm of audio-visual depiction undergoes change. There will be opportunities within the historic and heritage documentary to combine archival images with interview testimony, letters and diaries to open up issues of people and place with an increased intensity and a symbolic reinforcement of national and historic values.

This thesis has argued that the heritage industry is an important political tool for all Indigenous, ethnic and isolated rural communities where a
hallowed sense of place, a collective memory and nostalgia for one's roots are packaged together with relics of the past and real life experiences in the production of a regional cultural identity. It has been an important asset in encouraging people to come to their own local town to take part in the preservation of their own past, and their own history. Regional shires must see that these historical sites are ready to take up the challenge. Some may only market to their own communities but all should be aware they should not be inundated with this 'marketing/tourism push' at the expense of their collections and self-determination.

As Christopher Wood writes:

In trying to package itself to attract a burgeoning new class of curious and sophisticated travellers, Australia is in a real sense having to invent itself...What we're doing, if you like, is creating a whole new cultural geography based on things other people want to learn about; making Australia into a bounded place with a vast typology of things to see.


A new historical gaze is taking in areas of human activity ignored before by history, including the family, the workplace, ordinary people and ethnic communities who have often remained invisible to past historians (Trotter 1998). It will be exciting to evaluate these discourses of heritage tourism over the next decade, where the recording of oral histories and the collective memory can change the focus of history itself and open up new
areas of imagining and inquiry. I believe the enhancement of a regional identity is crucial to the understanding of national identity and to rural and regional centres seeking their own authentic spirit of place and space.
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Capricorn Coast Mirror (Yeppoon)
Capricornian (Rockhampton)
Clermont Times
Courier Mail (Brisbane)
Hamilton Spectator
Herald Sun (Melbourne)
Kowree Advocate (Hamilton)
Melbourne Leader
Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton)
Mt Lyell Standard (Tasmania)
Northern Argus (Rockhampton)
Sydney Morning Herald
The Times (London)
APPENDIX ONE
The following documentary video productions are an important element of this thesis.

Produced and Directed by Liz Huf, editor Peter Lawrence
Central Queensland University, Multimedia Design Centre.

*The Legend of King O’Malley*, 2002.
Produced and Directed by Liz Huf, editor Sheila McCarthy
Central Queensland University, Multimedia Design Centre.

Produced and Directed by Liz Huf, editor Peter Lawrence
Central Queensland University, Multimedia Design Centre.
Appendix 1.

Chapter illustrations from documentary and text.

Figure 1  Kath Austin and Liz Huf, Emu Park Historical Museum
2  Steam train approaching Westwood
3  Swaggie and accordion on the *Spirit of the Outback*
4  Kulgoonah Spirit Dancers and Reconciliation
5  Bush poet at Winton
6  Bob Muir alias Coowonga the Aboriginal fisherman

7  King O’Malley, Federation Minister for Home Affairs
8  O’Malley and the ‘people’s bank
9  Billy Hughes and O’Malley debate conscription on stage
10  King O’Malley’s memorial plaque at Emu Park

11  Thomas Wentworth Wills
12  The Aboriginal Cricket Team with Wills, MCG, Boxing Day, 1866
13  Horatio Spencer Wills’ Grave at Murdering Gap on Cullin-la-Ringo
14  Rainworth Fort, built by Jesse Gregson near Springsure

15  Mr Christmas, curator of Mt Morgan Mine Museum
16  Christina McPherson Cottage, Winton
17  Clermont Historical Museum
18  Bos Indicus Bull, Rockhampton
19  The Ringer, Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Longreach
20  The Cutter, Mt Morgan

21  The Tree of Knowledge, Barcaldine
22  Workers’ Heritage Centre, Barcaldine
23  Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Longreach
24  Tourists enter the Hall of Fame
25  Banjo’s panorama at Winton’s Cultural Centre
26  Waltzing Matilda Cultural Centre, Winton

27  Dreamtime Cultural Centre, Rockhampton and Gulpilil
28  Dr Nola James, whose dream for a cultural centre became reality
29  Peter Costello, ‘Reconciliation means Love’
30  Fred Conway and Liz Huf at Yumba Burin
31  Locomotives at Rockhampton’s Pioneer Heritage Village
32  Australian Light Horse Brigade at the Village Opening

33  South Sea Islanders at Yeppoon Sugar Plantation
34  South Sea Island indentured labourers at Farnborough Mill
35 The Warkill Family, Rockhampton
36 Mabel Edmund OA at The Sandhills Cemetery

37 Re-enacting the *Journey from Paradise* at Joskeleigh
38 All hands on deck!
39 South Sea Islander elder and artist
40 School teacher Cath Warcon and class

41 Tommy Emmanuel, Banjo Paterson and Winton swagman
42 Kalkadoon school children perform at Lark Quarry
43 King O’Malley lays the first stone for a capital city
44 The Back Creek Windmill, symbol of the west
45 Taking the cattle home
46 Richard Magoffin, local historian at his Kynuna Hall of Fame
APPENDIX TWO
The Asia and Pacific Research Centre (CQU)

A Visitor Survey for Local Museums and Heritage Centres
of Central Queensland Region

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This survey is part of an analysis of the role of museums and monuments within the context of regional tourism. The questionnaire can be answered by any person visiting a local museum or heritage centre. Please place a mark in the appropriate box, or circle a number on each scale, otherwise answer open ended questions. All information will be handled with the strictest confidence.

Thankyou for your assistance.
A visitor survey for Local Museums and Heritage Centres of Central Queensland Region

This survey is part of an analysis of the role of museums and monuments within the context of regional tourism. The project is being undertaken by Ms L.Huf and Dr T.Schirato of the Department of Communication and Media Studies for the Asia Pacific Research Centre, Central Queensland University.

Date........................Visiting Museum or Heritage Centre at.................................

1. How did you visit this museum or heritage centre? Please tick!
   a. Alone       ( )
   b. With friends ( )
   c. With family ( )
   d. As part of an organised tour ( )
   e. Other       ( )

   (if other, please describe)

2. Did you come?
   a. by air       ( )
   b. by car       ( )
   c. by bus       ( )
   d. by train     ( )
   e. Other        ( )

3. Where do you normally live? Indicate country or state, town and district

4. If on holiday, where did you stay last night? Indicate town and mode of accommodation

5. How did you find out about this museum or heritage centre?
   a. Local paper eg Morning Bulletin ( )
   b. Brochure ( )
   c. Information Centre ( )
   d. Word of Mouth ( )
   e. Other ( )
6. Why did you come? Please tick all relevant boxes

a. I wanted to learn something about the past ( )
b. I wanted to learn something about the district ( )
c. I thought it would be a good idea for the family ( )
d. My friends and relatives invited me to come ( )
e. The children wanted to come ( )
f. I had nothing else to do ( )
g. I am on holidays, touring ( )
h. I just came to look around ( )
i. A particular exhibit I wanted to see ( ) This exhibit was.........
j. I needed some unusual archival information ( )
k. Other ( )

7. What did you like most?

..............................................................

8. Is there enough information to accompany the exhibits?

(yes) (no)

If not, what type of information would you like to see?

..............................................................

9. What is your perception of the role of a local museum?

Please rate the statements below in order of their importance to you from 1 to 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 not imp.</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 imp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Museums should tell what life was really like in the past</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums should help us learn from the past</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums should tell us about the lives of ordinary people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums should have displays with public participation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums should tell us about lifestyle of this district</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums should tell us about famous people &amp; events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Would you come again?
Yes ( ) No ( ) If travelling past ( )

The following questions are useful to the researchers, but optional of course to the respondent.

11. Which age group do you belong to?
a. 17 and under ( )  b. 18 to 35 ( )
c. 36 to 55 ( )  d. 56 to 65 ( )
e. 66 and over ( )

12. Sex?
Male ( )  Female ( )

13. What is your occupation? ..........................................................

........................................................................................................

14. What was your last qualification?
Completed primary school ( )  Completed high school ( )
Completed a university degree ( ) Completed a postgraduate university degree ( )
Other qualifications ........................................................................

Thankyou for your assistance with this survey

Elizabeth Huf  Dr Tony Schirato

(Adapted from surveys by T. Bennett et al and A.Witcomb)
SMALL MUSEUMS IN CAPRICORNIA

INTRODUCTION
Museums, Heritage and Cultural centres in Rockhampton, Winton, Barcaldine, Emu Park, Mount Morgan and Longreach were part of a survey on Local Museums and Heritage Centres conducted by the Central Queensland University Asia and Pacific Research Centre. The survey incorporated visitors place of origin, age, occupation and education, as well as where they stayed. The survey identified the perceived role of the museum in the community, both locally and nationally and provided feedback on what improvements which could be made to increase the effectiveness of the museum or cultural centre (Recommendations Appendix A).

GENERAL VISITOR INFORMATION
The Country of origin for the majority of visitors to the Museums in the Central Queensland was Australia, 89%, while 11% overall were from other countries. The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast). The average age of visitors to the centres was between 36 to 55, with the second largest group being 56 to 65. Of the visitors surveyed 80% had completed secondary school while only 29% completed further education. From this age group most of the visitors were either retired or perform home duties (possibly retired couples).

The majority of visitors travelled by car and stayed in either Rockhampton or Longreach in a Caravan Park. Most of these visitors found out about the Museum by word of mouth, 47%, while only 2% from local newspapers. Information Centres accounted for only 18% of visitors while promotional material from brochures was 24%.

VISITOR INFORMATION ON MUSEUMS
The majority of tourists surveyed stated that they came to museums to learn something about the past and that museums should tell what life was really like in the past. Most visitors said that museums should teach us about the lives of ordinary people and the lifestyle of those people in the area, as well as those famous people and events. A large percentage of visitors surveyed said that there should be "increased participation" in the displays being offered.
SUMMARY
In the past, most Museums have promoted their product to a broad tourist market and general public. Our survey has comprehensively shown that a great deal of the current advertising (although essential information) appears to be fairly ineffective in drawing maximum audiences. If the museums are to attract more people, according to the survey, they need to revise their strategies to increase tourist recruitment. There are several recommendations which touch on the areas where people feel could be improvement.

According to our survey, most people who frequent our museums do so because they are travelling in the area. The majority visit museums as they pass through to another destination (this also causes some concern). In some cases there needs to be better road signage and improved advertising strategies both visual and in the media. Museums and Cultural Centres may have to be more specific with their attractions, activities and facilities they advertise, and the markets they are targeting (the overseas market is certainly not plainly visible).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Better lighting and signage on displays
- Accurate names, dates and events
- More signs on roads, including directions and distance
- More public participation at museums, including free standing displays
- Comprehensive self guiding tours
- More historic information

Overall the quality of local Museums, Heritage and Cultural Centres were outstanding.

Liz Huf
INTRODUCTION

Marlborough Museum was part of the survey on Local Museums and Heritage Centres conducted by Central Queensland University Asia and Pacific Research Centre. The survey incorporated visitors' place of origin, age, occupation and education, as well as where they stayed. The survey also incorporated the perceived role of the museum in the community, both local and national. Feedback on what improvements could be made to increase the effectiveness of the museum (Recommendations Appendix A).

GENERAL VISITOR INFORMATION

The Country of origin for the majority of visitors to the Museums in the Central Queensland was Australia, 89%, while 11% overall were from other countries. The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast). The average age of visitors to the centres was between 36 to 55, with the second largest group being 56 to 65. Of the visitors surveyed 80% had completed secondary school while only 29% completed further education. From this age group most of the visitors were either retired or perform home duties (possibly retired couples).

The majority of visitors travelled by car and stayed in either Longreach or Rockhampton in a Caravan Park. Most of these visitors found out about the Museum by word of mouth, 47%, while only 2% from local newspapers. Information Centres accounted for only 18% of visitors while promotional material from brochures was 24%.
INTRODUCTION

Emu Park Museum was part of the survey on Local Museums and Heritage Centres conducted by Central Queensland University Asia and Pacific Research Centre. The survey incorporated visitors place of origin, age, occupation and education, as well as where they stayed. The survey also incorporated the perceived role of the museum in the community, both local and national. Feedback on what improvements which could be made to increase the effectiveness of the museum (Recommendations Appendix A).

GENERAL VISITOR INFORMATION

The Country of origin for the majority of visitors to the Museums in the Central Queensland was Australia, 89%, while 11% overall were from other countries. The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast). The average age of visitors to the centres was between 36 to 55, with the second largest group being 56 to 65. Of the visitors surveyed 80% had completed secondary school while only 29% completed further education. From this age group most of the visitors were either retired or perform home duties (possibly retired couples).

The majority of visitors travelled by car and stayed in either Rockhampton or Longreach in a Caravan Park. Most of these visitors found out about the Museum by word of mouth, 47%, while only 2% from local newspapers. Information Centres accounted for only 18% of visitors while promotional material from brochures was 24%.
The Country of origin for the majority of visitors to Mount Morgan were from Australia with less than 5% from other countries (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Visitors country of origin for Mount Morgan Museum**

The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast). The average age of visitors to the centres was between 36 to 55, with the second largest group being 56 to 65 (Figure 2). Of the visitors surveyed 80% had completed secondary school while only 29% completed further education. From this age group most of the visitors were either retired or perform home duties (possibly retired couples).

**Figure 2. Average age of Visitors to the Mount Morgan Museum**

The majority of visitors to Mount Morgan travelled by car and stayed in either Longreach or Rockhampton in a Caravan Park. Most of these visitors found out about the centre by word of mouth 47% while only 2% were from local newspapers. Information Centres accounted for only 18% of visitors while information from brochures about the museums was 24%.
Museums should tell us about the lives of ordinary people

Percentage of visitors

ROLE3

data collected by CQU
GENERAL VISITOR INFORMATION

The Country of origin for the majority of visitors to the Dreamtime Centre was Australia (70%) with approximately 30% from other countries (Figure 1). This varied from other Museums, and is probably because the Dreamtime Centre is situated in a large regional centre and on a major Highway.

Figure 1. Visitors country of origin for Rockhampton Dreamtime Centre

The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast). The average age of visitors to the centre was between 18 to 55 (Figure 2). This was also different from other Centres once again probable due to the position. Of the visitors surveyed 80% had completed secondary school while only 29% completed further education. The most frequent visitors to the Dreamtime Centre were either retired or perform home duties (possibly retired couples).

Figure 2. Average age of Visitors to the Rockhampton Dreamtime Centre
The Country of origin for the majority of visitors to Winton and Barcaldine was Australia with less than 5% from other countries (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Visitors country of origin for Winton and Barcaldine Museums

The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast). The average age of visitors to the centres was between 36 to 55, with the second largest group being 56 to 65 (Figure 2). Of the visitors surveyed 80% had completed secondary school while only 29% completed further education. From this age group most of the visitors were either retired or perform home duties (possibly retired couples).

Figure 2. Average age of Visitors to the Winton and Barcaldine Museums

The majority of visitors travelled by car and stayed in either Longreach or Rockhampton in a Caravan Park. Most of these visitors found out about the Museum by word of mouth, 47% while only 2% from local newspapers. Information Centres accounted for only 18% of visitors while promotional material from brochures was 24%.
The Country of origin for the majority of visitors to the Hall of Fame was Australia (98%) with less than 2% from other countries (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Visitors country of origin**

The majority of Australian visitors were from Queensland with the largest percentage coming from South East Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast). The average age of visitors to the centres was between 36 to 55, with the second largest group being 66 and over (Figure 2). This was different from other Centres as the majority of tourist were 36 and over. Of the visitors surveyed 80% had completed secondary school while only 29% completed further education. The most frequent visitors to the Centre were either retired or perform home duties, possibly retired couples (reflected in the age of tourists).

**Figure 2. Average age of Visitors**

The majority of visitors travelled by car and stayed in either Longreach or Rockhampton in a Caravan Park. Most of these visitors found out about the Museum by word of mouth, 47%, while only 2% from local newspapers. Information Centres accounted for only 18% of visitors while promotional material from brochures was 24%.
Museums should tell what life was really like in the past

Percentage of visitors

ROLE1

data collected by CQU
Museums should help us learn from the past

Percentage of visitors

ROLE2
data collected by CQU
Museums should have displays with public participation

Percentage of visitors

ROLE4
data collected by CQU
Museums should tell us about lifestyle of this district

Percentage of visitors

ROLE5

data collected by CQU
Museums should tell us about famous people & events

Percentage of visitors

ROLE6

data collected by CQU
R'ton: Visitors' age 1996

Percentage of visitors

AGE

data collected by CQU
R'ton: Visitors' country of origin 1996

Percentage of visitors

COUNTRY

data collected by CQU