

AUSTRALIA'S PUBLIC SECTOR ENVIRONMENT FOR SHAPING EVENT TOURISM STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

Sustained tourism outcomes from major event suggest a fruitful marriage between a government's stated purposes of event investment, its institutional structures to foster event and tourism; and the roles played by public sector event development agencies (inside and alongside government). This qualitative study across six Australian states/territories highlights how government interest in tourism alongside other event impacts, differing organisational arrangements for event tourism and varying roles of public sector event agencies impact on event tourism strategy. It confirms the importance of seven public sector influences on event tourism, of which the budgetary controls and performance measures of event agencies were primary concerns. Among three different institutional structures for event tourism identified in this study, merged organisational arrangements (combining tourism and event bodies) and mixed arrangements (several bodies of an independent and merged nature) appear to provide the optimal environment for event tourism strategy development. The paper advocates periodic reviews of a state/territory's institutional structures for stimulating event tourism including the degree of emphasis given by agencies to the four strategy arenas of event acquisition, creation, development and tourism marketing. It also suggests periodic reflection on the continued relevance and impact of the seven public sector influences on event tourism identified in this research

KEYWORDS

Event tourism, Strategy, Public sector influences, Organisational arrangements

INTRODUCTION

In Australia, there is now almost a twenty year history of established institutional structures to facilitate the development and promotion of event tourism. The creation of Tourism Event Australia signalled a new Commonwealth commitment to event tourism development, but organisational arrangements have existed in most states/territories since the 1980s to attract major event. Indeed, Australia's ability to win and stage major event such as the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games has consolidated its position as a major international competitor in the event tourism sector. Major event represent however, but one layer of a healthy event tourism industry in which an ever-growing smorgasbord of local event and festivals with tourism potential also feature. Beyond Getz's (1991; 1997) definition of event tourism as 'the systematic planning, development and marketing of event as tourist

attractions' (Getz, 1991), Australian agencies engage in four discrete, but related event tourism activities. These include major event bidding, building existing hallmark and community event, managing major event and, creating new event to generate tourism. In effect, semi-autonomous, but government-owned corporations and government departments combine with event promoters, venue managers and event organisers to shape a destination's event tourism portfolio.

Despite Australia's established and growing event tourism sector, there has been limited analysis of the roles of event development agencies, their institutional settings and public sector influences on event tourism. With various public sector management structures for event tourism across Australia's states/territories, the nature of inter-organisational relationships that shape event tourism

strategies remains worthy of further research. Strategy is often used as nomenclature by public sector bodies to describe tourism development and/or marketing plans and the focus of event tourism strategies is not dissimilar, albeit directed towards developing event and other festivals with tourism potential. With multiple perspectives on strategy (Mintzberg, 1994), event tourism strategies are broadly defined here as 'positions or approaches adopted for event tourism development and marketing'. Notably, strategy may be descriptive or less structured e.g. entrepreneurial and incremental or involve formal planning. Here, strategy is treated as an inter-related, but separate concept to policy (Wahab & Pigram, 1997). Policy making and strategy making are not always engaged in by the same sets of stakeholders and there is not always a sequential relationship between them. For example, in some Australian states, tourism policy formulation has followed the development of strategies.

With the primary focus being the institutional structures or frameworks for event tourism, this paper investigates how the public sector environments across six Australian states/territories impact upon event tourism strategy. The research question is: *'How does the public sector institutional environment impact upon event tourism strategy within Australian states and territories, and why?'* In examining these impacts of the public sector on strategy, the role of public sector agencies in the major strategy arenas of event acquisition, event development, event management and tourism marketing of event is given emphasis, rather than the intricacies of each State or Territory's strategy process. To begin, a short history and profile of Australia's government-funded, event development structures is offered, including their roles and activities that foster event tourism. In so doing, viewpoints about public sector influences on event tourism expressed by Australian event tourism experts in convergent interviews prior to the case research are also presented.

A profile of Australia's public sector arrangements for event tourism

To set the scene, the first Australian state to establish an event development agency was Western Australia with the creation of Eventcorp in 1986 inside the Western Australian Tourism Commission. An early mega-event for this state was the America's Cup held in 1987 which not only stimulated hotel development and the growth of international air arrivals, but also provided a platform for later, successful event and convention bids (Getz, 1997).

Eventcorp (2006a) makes overt reference to its tourism orientation in its corporate overview and its interest in prestige event with tourism impact is underlined in the current See It Do It campaign (EventCorp, 2006b). With a similar charter, but more focused on overall economic development, Queensland Event was formed in 1989 close on the heels of Brisbane's World Expo 88. In contrast to the location of Eventcorp within Western Australia's Tourism Commission, Queensland Event is a government owned company within the portfolio of the Premier of Queensland. As a result, it operates separately to Tourism Queensland, the statutory body responsible for state level tourism marketing.

In South Australia, the Australian Major Event (AME) Company, initially established in 1995 as a statutory authority separate to the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC), soon became an arm of the Commission and these arrangements remain in place in 2006. Its creation marked the strong reaction to Victoria's controversial and successful bid to take the Formula One Grand Prix from South Australia (Mules, 1998). AME's charter is to concentrate its support on large event that generate around \$5 million in economic impact (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2006). Subsequently, the state of Victoria was aggressive in its quest to position Melbourne as the sporting capital of Australia. With the Grand Prix, the Australian Open and the Commonwealth Games 2006, the state of Victoria has boomed as a sports tourism destination. The creation of Melbourne Major Event Company (MMEC) in 1991 by Premier Kennett, heightened the atmosphere of inter-state competition to win major tourism-generating event (Gans, 1996; Mules, 1998). This rivalry continues, albeit in a more amicable manner, to this day.

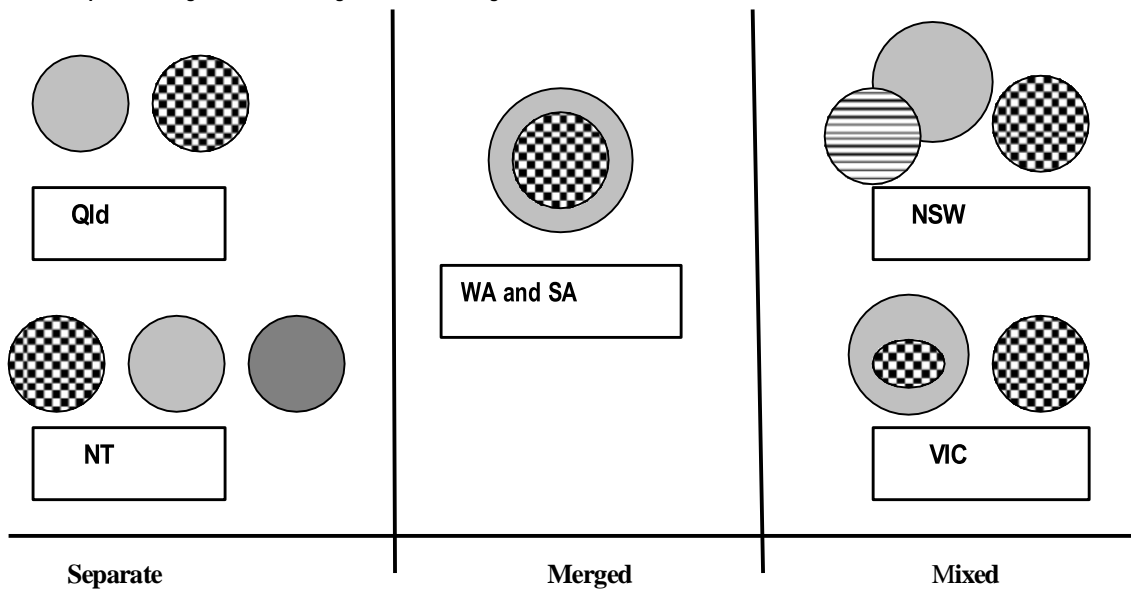
Following the success of the Sydney 2000 Olympics, Tourism New South Wales revised its organisational arrangements for event tourism. Event personnel within Tourism New South Wales and its subsidiary Tourism Sydney were assigned the role of managing, developing and marketing a portfolio of regular 'signature event' within the State. The Major Event Board within the Premier's department assumed responsibility for sourcing and delivering major, one-off event while Tourism Sydney spearheaded a metropolitan event tourism strategy. Thus, event tourism planning and development in New South Wales is reliant on intra and inter-organisational relationships across several government departments and departmental divisions.

In the Northern Territory, the NT Major Event Company housed inside the Chief Minister's department takes the primary role of stimulating event tourism. Originally formed to manage the V8 Supercar event, its charter is to attract and develop major event of economic value (Northern Territory Major Event, 2006), but also to maintain a select stable of event that satisfy the social needs of Territorians including a major defence force contingent. The Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, although not studied for logistical reasons and leadership changes at the time of this research, also have institutional structures in place for event tourism.

Figure 1 summarises the organisational arrangements in place for event tourism across the six Australian states studied. These include separate arrangements where event and tourism reside in different organisations, mixed arrangements (event and tourism are separate, but tourism divisions within departments also perform event tourism roles) and merged arrangements (event and tourism in the same organisation). Undoubtedly, geo-

political influences in each state/territory can produce differences and similarities in structural linkages between event and tourism and the charters of public sector event agencies. A variation in agencies' emphases on economic versus tourism specific outcomes of event and their socio-cultural impacts can be linked to political priorities of different Australian states/territories. For example, Queensland Event, which works independently of Tourism Queensland, tends to emphasise overall economic development (Queensland Event, 2006). In the Northern Territory, interest in fostering the celebration of indigenous culture and satisfying the entertainment needs of a population isolated from other Australian cities is highlighted (Territory Business Magazine, 2001). Of interest in this paper was the degree to which some of the different motives for event investment flow on to the roles and structures of agencies shaping event tourism. Finding out the mix of public sector influences on event tourism strategies was also of value given the lack of research in this area.

Figure 1 Separate, merged and mixed organisational arrangements for event tourism



Note: = State tourism body = Event agency/division = City agency = Sports department
 The line in case B denotes a shared staff member liaising between the event agency and tourism body
 Qld = Queensland, WA = Western Australia, SA = South Australia, NSW = New South Wales, NT = Northern Territory and VIC = Victoria

Insights to public sector influences and relationships impacting on event tourism

Before conducting the main study, convergent interviews among six Australian experts in event tourism (spanning government, academia and the event industry) served to highlight some likely public sector influences on state-level strategy making for event tourism. In the context of interpreting 'event tourism strategy', destination brand enhancement, increased tourism visitation and tourism yield were generally accepted as the intended outcomes. Convergence was evident among the expert interviews on the notion that event tourism strategies should be part of the overall tourism strategy for a destination and a discrete aspect of planning a major event. Indicative comments were that: 'event tourism strategy needs to be a long term plan to bid for and obtain the sorts of event that are going to maximise tourism benefits for the city or state' (Interviewee D) and 'you need to identify in the context of opportunity costs.....those event that are actually going to lead to tourism outcomes' (Interviewee E). Here, it was felt that the event agencies' reliance on off-budget government funds to attract major event may well prohibit a funded, long term strategy for event tourism.

Nevertheless, the opportunity to approach Cabinet at any given point with new event opportunities was also seen as a way of maximising overall dollars for event acquisition and in turn, a state's ability to foster event tourism. Historic issues were raised about the status of event tourism in Australia and the government's role in this domain. For example, some participants alluded to shifts in the lifecycle phase of event tourism with regard to competition and strategy making across the states. An industry operator referred to the 1980's when 'everyone saw that there was a lot to be had out of event, socially, economically....so the race was on and it was the prestige that could be gained by securing and winning event' (Interviewee F). Reference was also made however to 'a maturing of the way governments handle event away from the days when 'there didn't seem to be much rationalisation, with some states being very competitive and other states backing off and not being able to compete' (Interviewee E). Views about the growing maturity of government engagement with event were peppered with observations about public sector influences on the charter of event agencies that, in turn, affect their stakeholder networks. While many agencies have a primary role of acquiring event, they also have a

role in supporting existing event, seeking funding or marketing expertise. In some cases, state government departments rather than semi-autonomous event agencies are charged with building the tourism potential of existing event. A challenge within most agencies is that they often have a limited number of personnel who have expertise in either event or tourism, but not both. Hence, the degree of pro-activity of different agencies in attempting to balance event acquisitions with tourism marketing of existing event is a recognised problem. The event tourism experts acknowledged that the opportunity for inter-organisational linkages to fill gaps in expertise or resources had not been fully tapped.

Overall, it was thought that the political agendas and priorities of Premiers and ministers did influence event tourism strategies and the inter-organisational relationships that shape them. Event investment competes with other public policy agendas and public demands for accountability and transparency tend to cement the primary focus on economic rationales (well founded or not) for event investment. The convergent interviews also highlighted the impact of agency performance measures on whether tourism and/or other indicators assumed more importance and whether inter-organisational relationships had any notable role to play in strategy making. Here, the dominance of contracts in supply-side relationships for major event was seen to dictate the profile of stakeholder input to many event. Yet it was agreed that more insights to the types of networks being used or able to be established to mould event tourism strategies were needed. In summary, these preliminary interviews with experts helped to shape the study in the absence of literature dedicated to this topic.

METHOD

Given the paucity of empirical research about event tourism strategy making, interpretive research suited the 'how' and 'why' question posed to understand the impact of the public sector institutional environment on event tourism. Using a semi-structured, interviewer's guide, the authors explored reasons for the different organisational arrangements for event tourism relative to state government policies and purposes of event investment; the roles played by event agencies across different states and, the importance of a number of public sector influences on event tourism identified in convergent interviews.

A total of 54 research participants were interviewed across the six states/territories. Replication logic provided a rationale for the choice of states/territories and this was based on judgments about the lifecycle phase and observed structures for event tourism development in each state. For example, similarities between certain states as well as differences in the environment for event tourism strategy making might have been expected based on these criteria. Case study participants included senior managers of public sector event agencies, executives of tourism marketing authorities, event directors and local government representatives with a role in event tourism. This mix of interviewees in different types of organisations served to triangulate data sources. Subsequently, both within and cross case analyses were employed to understand the emerging themes and patterns. Through using N-Vivo, a tree of codes and sub-codes was created on-line and continually refined, so that results were not stilted or constrained by a pre-determined coding structure. Manual examination of results within and across the coded data led to a summation of the primary findings on the research question for reporting.

RESULTS

Organisational roles and structures for event tourism

Active roles played by event agencies in four distinct strategy arenas and the three categories of organisational arrangements for event tourism (presented earlier in Figure 1) were confirmed. The traditional roles of event and/or tourism organisations exist within the *strategy arenas* of major or mega-event acquisition, event development, event management and tourism marketing in support of event. Separate, merged and mixed *organisational arrangements* were linked to the government's intended purposes for event investment in each state. To begin, those cases that emphasised the multiple reasons or purposes for event investment had established an event agency that was *separate* to the tourism body to ensure that they were not linked with one agency more than others. 'Having major event directly aligned and concentrated on the business of the day of one agency [means that there isn't] an opportunity for cross-government policies and strategies to be adequately built into what is happening'. Several of the states with separate event agencies had developed or were developing a broad based, event policy at the time of the research. Because of the possibility that the tourism marketing of events could be de-emphasised in a broad event agenda, some of these states housed one or

more event personnel inside tourism agencies to help fulfil that role. Also, in the Northern Territory, the role played by the sport and recreation department in managing several key events meant that this department and the event agency liaised independently with the state tourism organisation for marketing support on an 'as-needed' basis.

In the *mixed* organisational arrangements, event and tourism bodies were independent of each other, but more than one organisation had an active, complementary role in event tourism. For example, in New South Wales, the major event board, the tourism authority and city tourism authority each had complementary roles in shaping the event tourism agenda. The reason for the separation of the event and tourism bodies in these cases was that the event agency could concentrate on mega-event acquisition, while the state tourism body focused on tourism strategies (marketing to attract event tourists). Because there was more than one organisation involved, there was an expectation that inter-agency communication would shape overall event tourism directions. 'It's not like they're making decisions out of left field, they are involving other government agencies' (E1). In effect, variations in the organisational arrangements in each case were mainly based on whether event were seen to be a subset of the state's tourism goals or whether tourism was treated as one of a range of motives for event investment. The perceived ability of one or more organisations to fulfil all of the identified roles that contribute to event tourism was another contributing factor.

Contrasting organisational arrangements were evident in those cases where the event agency had been *merged* with the state tourism body. Here, the structures were merged because of a perceived need to fully capitalise on the tourism market potential of event and so, in-house structures for event development with some autonomy were established. However, because of the need for close liaison between tourism marketing and event personnel, in-house agencies with far less autonomy had begun to emerge and this lack of autonomy was amplified by political issues discussed later.

As noted earlier, the four primary roles of the event agencies were shaping the strategy arenas of event acquisition, event development, event management and tourism marketing of event. Certain types of roles of event

agencies were emphasised over others depending on the organisational arrangements, the lifecycle phases of different event tourism roles and related political priorities in each of the cases. To begin, the strategy arena of major event acquisition was given priority in most event agencies because they were initially set up as independent entities for that purpose. The independence of these agencies allowed them to be entrepreneurial and competitive with event acquisition. However, in some states, these event agencies then assumed roles in event management and development because of the limited resources and expertise in the local event sector. For example, event agencies shared responsibility for regional event development programs with tourism and other government departments in most cases. Local government grants also supported event and festival development at city and local levels to help fulfil civic entertainment goals. Nevertheless, because these roles are shared with other organisations, event acquisition continues to be a dominant aspect of strategy for public sector event agencies. Rarely have independent event agencies in Australia assumed a direct role in tourism marketing and some ownership of this role has only occurred after event and tourism bodies have been linked or amalgamated (e.g. Western Australia and South Australia).

In all cases where separate event agencies have been maintained, there has been no specific charter for the event agency to undertake the tourism marketing of major or mega-event secured. In cases with either one or no event marketing personnel inside the tourism body, a gap in both the resources and commitment needed for the tourism marketing of event was evident. This situation arises because neither agency sees that it has the responsibility or resources to focus on event tourism strategies. 'We see our role as more to make sure that the event is actually staged well and give the other bodies, whose real role it is to market the state, a platform to be able to go and do that' (B8). 'For the tourism authority to shift focus to leverage event would mean that we would have to sacrifice some tremendous work we are doing with industry' (B2). Consequently, event tourism strategies can be hampered by the separate agendas of tourism and event agencies, an absence of a shared focus on event tourism and limited inter-agency relationships and resources to nurture these strategies.

The extent to which agency roles emphasise event acquisition over event development or vice versa and participate in hands-on event management appeared to be related to the lifecycle of event tourism activities. For example, event acquisition is thought to have reached maturity, where rising costs and competition for a small number of mega-event are reducing interest in bidding for event retained only for short periods. A typical comment was 'We're questioning...do we actually go out and buy an event that we own rather than simply encouraging event that are set up here and then moved away in two or three year's time' (B8). However, because this turning point has only just arrived, there was little evidence of major event development of this nature and a continued emphasis on event acquisition in most cases. Like event acquisition and development, the in-house management of event was tied to lifecycle issues such as the perceived embryonic state of the event sector. 'We quickly learned here that for the actual management of event, there wasn't a lot of that expertise here and hence the role fell to us [the event agency]' (C2).

The political priorities of governments, especially new governments were confirmed as reasons for the agency's role in certain strategy arenas to be given greater prominence in some cases. For example, the desired event investment purposes of new governments sometimes affected the event agency's role in event acquisition. A comment in relation to the Northern Territory was, 'The government's focus is to put resources into developing local event as a priority, so they're not really looking to invest in the acquisition of a large suite of event' (F7). New governments in other cases had also precipitated the loss of independent boards within the event agencies or the loss of a separate line of reporting to the board. In one case, these changes created far less autonomy for the event agency, greater inclusiveness in the state tourism body and a reduced impetus with event acquisition. A comment here was, 'The problem with being out there looking and bidding for new event is it can be politically awkward because you have to have people on planes or overseas which is fine in a semi-autonomous agency, but it's often frowned upon in a government department or division' (C1).

The roles of event agencies in the different strategy arenas of event acquisition, development, management and marketing have led to a number of perspectives on the separation or amalgamation of event agencies with

state tourism bodies. Most interviewees supported the idea of maintaining an event agency that is separate to the tourism body to acquire major event because they were perceived to operate more effectively. 'It's important to have some sort of major event group off to the side....it makes sense because their responsibility is to make decisions based on what they know to be the issues, the criteria, the results...that shouldn't be influenced by agendas that are running within various government agencies' (E1). A range of benefits for event tourism strategy was associated with an event agency or company being housed inside the Premier's portfolio. These benefits included enhanced funding and political support for event acquisition and development and fewer restraints to act competitively. A negative aspect was that these organisational arrangements have not always engendered a relationship between tourism and event that optimises event tourism strategies. 'You know there are some of us that recognise the tourism value of event, but we really don't have a clear strategy...at a destination level, some of the marketing plans might reflect the role of event...' (B2). 'I think there needs to be much more communication between the two [agencies] on a local level than there is now' (F1).

The perceived advantage of merged event and tourism organisations was a closer alliance between personnel in both areas. However, cases with merged structures also demonstrated that intra-organisational relationships between tourism and event personnel could be improved. These relationships were sometimes hindered by the different mindsets of tourism and event personnel. However, a positive implication of these merged arrangements was that the development and marketing of event as tourist attractions received more attention. 'There were a number of event identified, particularly in our international marketing, that we were able to leverage in terms of achieving incremental growth in visitor numbers and exposure in the overseas marketplace' (A4). However, negative implications were a perceived loss of ability to act competitively and a related loss of an entrepreneurial approach towards procuring event, as noted earlier. 'The restraints of government mean that it can't be quite as entrepreneurial as if it were outside of it...and winning event is an extremely competitive business' (A5). 'Having all agencies [event and tourism] incorporated into one may not give them the edge that they need to be competitive' (B6).

Intra-agency pressures on merged event agencies to integrate with the culture and operations of the tourism organisation appeared to compound this problem. There was a concurrent desire for the event agencies to be entrepreneurial and also blend into the operating culture of their tourism counterparts. Tourism personnel offered comments such as: 'I mean their glory days were when they had a bucket of money but had separate offices, recruiting structures' (A1); 'they do seem to want to be just a little bit more independent' (A5); 'some of these people now sit in the same division as me, but again this is meant to close down the tourism and event silos and build the bridges' (A3). Although the event agency had been moved inside the tourism body, it was clear that agency personnel still maintained their autonomy where possible. Thus there was evidence of improved relationships between event and tourism personnel to benefit event tourism strategies, but some obstacles in merged structures that do influence the shaping of event tourism directions.

In Victoria, both an independent event agency and the tourism authority had responsibility for event acquisition and development with their roles delineated by the size of the event involved. In addition, the tourism authority organises the tourism marketing for all event at both city and regional levels. A shared role in bidding for event also led to some commonality in operating cultures that was not evident in other cases. Personnel within the tourism authority 'chase event, work with event and look at marketing strategy' (D1). The event agency 'has a budget to go out and acquire event, bid for them and bring them into the calendar' (D3). Here, neither agency was seen to operate in ways where government processes impeded event tourism strategy. 'Neither operate like what I'd call traditional public sector agencies, and that's pivotal to why the strategy has been successful' (D6). A shared role in acquisition, albeit for event of different scope, also affected perceptions of these agencies' entrepreneurialism. For example, the event agency and the tourism authority were seen to match each other in their pro-activity.

Within New South Wales, the separate but inter-related roles played by the event unit, the state tourism body and city tourism agency emphasised the importance of inter-agency communication. Where the tourism body had established event tourism directions through the state's tourism strategy and engaged in regional event

development, the major event unit was responsible for event acquisition. The advent of the city tourism agency meant that a third organisation, a subsidiary of the tourism body, was responsible for tourism marketing of event. The benefit of the city agency's involvement was its ability to overcome gaps between the event and tourism agencies. The city tourism agency was perceived to 'fill what was seen to be a bit of a gap in terms of capitalising or leveraging on the tourism potential to the city [of event]' (E1). Thus the existence of two or more agencies with an active role in event tourism appeared to optimise the ability to fulfil multiple event tourism roles.

Public sector influences on event tourism

Those influences within the public sector that affect the development of event tourism strategies represented a further theme explored. The importance of these influences was triangulated with a number of interviewee comments to draw conclusions about their impact on event tourism. The relative importance of seven different public sector influences previously identified in convergent interview data is shown in Table 1. Note that a Likert scale where 1 was 'Very Important' and 5 was 'Not important at all' was used to obtain these indicative ratings. The first of these influences, *competition with other public policy agendas* was important within most individual cases and this was reflected in the summary result for the six states (row 1). Primary reasons for this result were that recent or impending government elections had focused attention on police, health and education and that there was always some competition for resources in government. 'The lack of funds and competition between the big three....education health and police....make it a very, very competitive environment' (A5). By comparison, the average importance given to competition with other policy agendas in case D was attributed to the time span and related strength of event within that state's public policy agenda. 'Competition doesn't really come into it a lot...from [our] point of view, it's [event] now become sort of engrained' (D4). However, because each agency in this state had a set allocation of funds, competition for funds from other policy domains was also less important. 'We don't really compete with the others, because we have our own set budget...' (D5)

For the second public sector influence of *the Premier's priorities*, differences in importance existed across the states/territories. 'The Premier has trumpeted event wherever he has gone' (B3). 'He will have some influence

when he needs to, but he's not driven by it' (C2). That the Premier's priorities were seen to be important reflected a strong interest in event by Premiers in half of the cases. In turn, those cases that showed the Premier's priorities to be of average importance (cases A and E) and of very high importance (case B) reflected lower and higher levels of interest and leadership by the Premier in an event agenda. Illustrative comments for lower and higher levels of importance were: 'I don't think that the Premier gets down to the level of event....I think he's too busy' (A3) and '[the Premier's] obviously very keen on event because it gives him something good to talk about' (B2).

Bi-polar results or two distinct viewpoints in case E reflected different interpretations of the question. Interviewees who did not think that the Premier's priorities were an important influence cited his/her low level of interest in event relative to other policy domains. However, some interviewees who indicated a higher level of importance of the Premier's priorities justified their decision with comments about the Premier's limited interest in event. Thus it appeared that the Premier's priorities were an influence on event tourism that may have been of more than average importance in most cases. Reasons given by interviewees were the political status and economic benefits generated by major event. While there was no evidence of an interventionist approach to event tourism among current Premiers, there was a direction given to focus on regional event in a number of states (cases A, B and D). 'With [this Premier], the focus has shifted to regional [event]' (D4).

The third public sector influence of *other ministers' priorities* was seen to be less important across most cases (A, B, C and D). The summary result for all cases was that the ministers' priorities were of average importance in influencing the direction of event tourism. In those cases where their priorities were important (cases E and F), government ministers had more exposure to event decision making, albeit for event of different size and scope. Where case E had staged a mega-event that had involved the whole of government, case F had a small cabinet that participated in most event decisions. 'Because it's such a small Cabinet...they're all trying to support each other...they've got to see each other succeed....but obviously, they are all going to compete for their own portfolio' (F4). Nevertheless, the input of ministers to event tourism directions was acknowledged across most states. '[We] still put it [proposals] in front of

a Cabinet committee for final approval. So, he [the Premier] might like it, but then the rest of them don't' (D5). 'You're sort of subject to the whims of your minister which can include their personal contacts, people within their electorate' (C4).

The fourth influence, that of budgetary issues, was accorded the highest level of importance of all public sector influences across the six cases. Political interest in event impacts and the influence of Treasury on each agency's ability to resource event tourism strategies were reasons for the very high level of importance attached to this issue. In addition, a lack of resources to properly develop and implement event tourism strategy existed in some cases. 'The biggest thing in all of this is the resources in terms of money and people....how much does the political will of the State believe....because if we had more money and resources, you could probably do a lot more' (B6).

A Treasury review of the budgetary commitment to event was underway in various states/territories. In light of budgetary constraints, the need to educate Treasury about the dynamic nature of event strategies was emphasised. 'Treasury, until recent times, could not understand why we couldn't tell them, "This is the budget that we need and we'll be able to stick within that budget' (B8). 'I think over a period of time, he [the Treasurer] has appreciated what event do bring in' (C5). A focus by Treasury on the methods used to determine the projected economic impacts of event exerted further budgetary pressure in some states (cases A and E).

In turn, this emphasis on achieving more accurate assessments of the financial outcomes of event was reflected in the perceived importance of the dominance of economic criteria in assessing agencies' performance. While the cross-case result showed this influence to be important, the dominance of economic criteria was seen to be a very important influence on event tourism in some cases (cases A, C and E). In particular, the different bases used for economic reporting across the states/territories complicate the agency's task of acquiring resources. For example, states that adopt more stringent formulas for calculating economic impact can hamper their ability to acquire their own government's support to compete for event. 'The pendulum has swung too far and it's now impeding the agency's capacity to compete for event' (A1). Government pressure to perform on financial

criteria was also a perceived threat to an agency's ability to continue to manage and develop a stable of event. 'It has become a bit of an unnecessary burden...pressures on keeping budgets, keeping event running at a very high level...but the expectations continue to grow in terms of output and outcome in terms of attracting visitors' (C6).

The sixth influence or the need for public accountability with event was also found to be important in the cross-case results. However, the wording of the item as 'a greater need for public accountability with event' meant that this issue was given 'average importance' in half of the cases (B, D and F). Some interviewees felt that accountability for event was important, but there was no greater need for accountability with event more than other government investments. 'I think there are issues of public accountability that you have anyway, but it's not more important than for other activities' (B1). In addition, a perception of limited public interest in event tourism strategies and government funding for event existed in some cases. 'I don't think that the public really care that much' (D3). 'I think it's about the feel good factor and I don't think that anyone worries that much about how much it costs' (D7).

An emphasis on accountability to government for resources acquired and expended by event agencies was given more importance than the public accountability of event. Here, comparisons were drawn between the government accountability of agencies for their event management activities versus the accountability of event sponsored by agencies. The need for sponsored event to demonstrate outcomes to sustain their funding was an example of how agencies were already publicly accountable. 'For events that they own and run, it [accountability] is very important, but for event that they fund, I think it is already being accountable' (B3). Hence public accountability for event investment was viewed as both the public's interest in government expenditure on event and the agency's accountability to government for its use of public funds. The latter was seen to be a more important influence on event tourism strategies.

Table 1 Importance of different public sector influences on event tourism within cases and for all cases

Cases Influence	A	B	C	D	E	F	All
1. Competing policy agendas	Important (2.1) N	Important (1.9) S	Important (2.3) N	Average (3.2) N	Important (1.5) S	Important (2.0) N	Important (2.2)
2. Premier's priorities	Average (2.9) N	Very Important (1.5) C	Important (2.2) N	Important (2.0) N	Average (2.7) BP	Important (2.1) S	Important (2.2)
3. Other ministers' priorities	Average (3.1) N	Average (2.6) N	Average (2.8) N	Average (2.5) N	Important (2.5) N	Important (2.3) S	Average (2.6)
4. Budgetary issues	Very Important (1.5) S	Very Important (1.1) C	Very Important (1.3) C	Important (2.2) S	Very Important (1.5) S	Important (1.5) S	Very Important (1.5)
5. Pre-occupation with economic criteria	Very Important (1.0) C	Important (1.8) N	Very Important (1.3) S	Important (1.7) S	Very Important (1.3) S	Important (1.8) S	Important (1.5)
6. Need for public accountability	Important (1.6) S	Average (2.5) BP	Important (1.8) S	Average (3.0) BP	Important (1.6) S	Average (2.6) N	Important (2.2)
7. Need to have event as attractions	Important (1.6) S	Important (2.1) N	Important (2.2) N	Very Important (1.2) C	Important (2.2) N	Average (2.5) N	Important (2.0)

Notes: Number in brackets is the mean score within each case and for all six cases.

Likert scale was 1 = Very important, 2 = Important, 3 = Average importance, 4 = Not very important, 5 = Not important at all.

Letters beside the numbers refer to distribution where N = normal, S = skewed, BP = bi-polar and C = consensus

For the final public sector influence listed in Table 1, most cases viewed the perceived need for event in their state alongside other tourist attractions as an important issue (cases A, B, C and E). The very high level of importance placed on this issue in case D underscored the need for event in the absence of tourism icons. Compared with all other cases, this state's use of event as a tourism marketing tool has been deliberate and longstanding. 'Historically, we don't have theme parks and things, so the event strategy was a key part of our approach' (D4). Conversely, the average importance of this item in case F was a reflection of the secondary role played by event in

drawing tourists to this state. 'Event help in profiling the destination, but they don't have a significant influence in terms of increasing visitation' (F3).

Some additional public sector influences were seen to impact upon event tourism included the perceived risk profile of governments, public opinion, government imperatives to regionalise event investment, and finally, political pressure to utilise major public venues.

CONCLUSION

This investigation has produced new insights to links between government purposes for event investment, the organisational arrangements for event tourism in different Australian states/territories and, the emphasis given to different event tourism strategy arenas by public sector event agencies. Tourism was among multiple purposes of event investment and it has not been a clearly expressed priority of government in all states. Three types of organisational arrangements that featured separate event and tourism agencies as well as merged and mixed arrangements were identified. Multiple purposes for event investment (tourism, economic, social or others) were mostly linked with separate organisational arrangements for event development and tourism. In contrast, where tourism was the primary impact sought, the public sector event and tourism agencies had merged and therefore, intra-agency relationships had become pivotal. Because the roles of agencies in the four strategy arenas of event acquisition, development, management and tourism marketing varied across the States and Territories, the value of intra and inter-organisational relationships to develop more comprehensive event tourism strategies was made apparent by the study. The different institutional structures did appear to create some variation in agencies' abilities to optimise those relationships across event and tourism organisations.

Notably, these qualitative observations about the linkages between government purposes for event investment, organisational arrangements for event tourism and the roles and activities of public sector event agencies have several important implications. Firstly, there has been no deliberate attempt to the authors' knowledge to consider how these linkages might be enhanced to further the tourism outcomes of event. There are varying degrees of clarity about the importance of tourism impacts of event other desired impacts and indeed, these priorities may change over time. Merged organisational arrangements (event and tourism operatives under the one roof) and mixed arrangements (formal intra and inter-organisational linkages) appear to provide for a more concerted attempt at event tourism strategy making. In the absence however of any ongoing review of those arrangements that optimise tourism outcomes, some states/territories will inevitably have a less structured and unified approach to strategy making and potentially little cognisance of the benefits that different organisational arrangements may offer. Currently, there is greater emphasis on event

acquisition than development in some public sector agencies and here, overall economic goals often take precedence over tourism. If a comprehensive event tourism strategy is however seen to emerge from a dedicated analysis of the optimum mix of event acquisition, creation, development and promotion of event to tourism markets, then most Australian states/territories remain developmental in their strategy making.

A complicating factor that impedes this integrated analysis can be the organisational arrangements themselves. For example, a corporatized event agency with limited linkage to a state tourism department or authority is unlikely to have a mandate for that analysis. Accordingly, the organisational arrangements (deliberate or otherwise) for event tourism impact upon the ability of different states and territories to adequately prepare strategies and achieve success in this domain. These results demonstrate the need for some reflection by government leaders and agency managers about how well their event investment purposes, including those directed at tourism, link with the institutional structures created to satisfy those purposes.

This study found that seven public sector influences of a political and economic nature were pertinent to event tourism strategy making. Among these influences, budgetary issues and economic criteria in assessing agency performance were most important. New influences identified by interviewees were governments' risk profiles, the focus on regionalisation of service delivery and the need to utilise public venues. These findings make an important contribution to the event literature, but they also offer a generic checklist for event agency managers to consider in furthering their management practices. For example, a focus on economic impacts in an event agency's performance criteria can in some cases be accompanied by irregular communication or an unstructured relationship with tourism bodies. A greater awareness of these public sector environmental influences on an agency's engagement in event tourism strategy making can be a platform to determine how particular influences may be minimised or maximised to further the tourism outcomes of a state/territory's event. Consequently, a periodic review by government practitioners of the relevance of the public sector influences noted in this study and their perceived impact on event tourism strategy in their state or territory is recommended.

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