
Organising Tourism Providers on Remote Touring Tracks as Geographically Distributed Teams

by

Greg Cartan

**B.A. (University of Queensland), B.Ed.Stud. (University of Newcastle),
Dip. Law. (Barristers and Solicitors Admission Board).**

**The Northern Institute
Charles Darwin University**



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Doctor of Philosophy**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Charles Darwin University, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Signed



September 2013

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The Abstract

This study explains the organisation of tourism providers on remote touring tracks (RTT) as geographically distributed teams (GDTs). The GDT framework adopted comprised seven elements: geographic dispersion, information and communication technologies (ICTs), team membership, cultural diversity, shared mindset, collaboration, and leadership. An inputs-processes-outcomes (I-P-O) model was adopted to configure the elements of the GDT framework and to highlight their dynamic and interdependent nature.

A case study research design was adopted. Two similar cases, the Gunbarrel Highway and the Oodnadatta Track were chosen. Data were collected using internet mediated research (IMR) and a field study involving interviews, on-site observations and documentation collation. The elements of the GDT framework were used as codes for classifying data. A cross case analysis provided an integrated picture of both sites.

The results present a rich description of the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs, characterised by remoteness, disconnectedness, and significant degrees of geographic dispersion. The results also indicated a nucleus of capability associated with each element of the GDT framework. This capability was underdeveloped but offered latent potential. Leadership emerged as a pivotal element. The utility of the GDT lens as a diagnostic framework and as a prognostic tool was affirmed.

This study makes important contributions to both theory and practice. The use of GDTs as a theoretical lens to better understand RTTs adds a fresh dimension to the analysis of remote tourism destinations. By conceptualising tourism providers as a team, the focus expands to encompass the synergy produced by the collective of tourism providers in addition to individual contributions. The study is of practical significance to tourism providers on RTTs, as it provides insight into the practical functioning of these destinations. It also identifies and classifies tourism providers, their locations and how they interact. These insights have the potential to assist tourism providers reflect on current practice and consider future possibilities.

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Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
ARIA	Accessibility/remoteness index of Australia.
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification.
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology.
Case study site	Refers to the physical location of the Gunbarrel Highway or the Oodnadatta Track, including the immediate surrounding environment that comprises the tourism experience.
CAZR	Centre for Arid Zone Research.
CRIC	Centre for Regional Innovation and Competitiveness.
CSIRO	The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.
DMO	Destination-management organization.
DSL	Digital subscriber line.
GBH	Gunbarrel Highway.
GDT	Geographically distributed team.
Geographically distributed team (GDT)	A team whose members use technology to varying degrees in working across locational, temporal, and relational boundaries to accomplish an interdependent task (Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004 , p. 808).
GDT framework	For the purposes of this research, comprises seven elements: geographic dispersion, ICT capability, team membership, cultural diversity, shared mindset, collaboration, and leadership.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions (*cont*)

Term	Definition
ICT	Information and communications technologies.
I-P-O model	The inputs (I) - processes (P) - outcomes (O) model is used to show the relationship between the elements of the GDT framework.
Organisation	An organization is a collective entity, comprising people who work together in some organized way to achieve common objectives (McShane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2013); tourism providers are organizations.
Organising	The process of establishing an organization; that organization may adopt a variety of structures, including a GDT.
OACDT	Outback Areas Community Development Trust.
OT	Oodnadatta Track.
POIs	Points of interest.
Proximity category	A ‘geographic’ dimension (Knoben and Oerleman 2006) used to identify the geographical nexus between the 4WD track on each case study site and tourism providers. The categories ‘close geographic’, ‘desert Australia’, ‘other Australia’ and ‘international’ were adopted.
R&D	Research and development.
RRMA	Rural, remote and metropolitan areas, geographic classification.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions (*cont*)

Term	Definition
RTTs	Remote touring tracks; tourism destinations located in remote regions, comprising various geographically dispersed points of interest which are connected by a defined 4WD track. The navigation of the track itself is an integral part of the tourism experience.
Remote regions	Also often referred to as the <i>desert</i> or the <i>outback</i> , they include arid and semi-arid lands, with low rainfall, extreme climate variability, which are isolated, have a lack of critical infrastructure, a tenuous economic base and low population density (Browne, Taylor & Bell 2008).
Team	Two or more individuals who interact and who may be representatives of organisations, who share common goals, are interdependent, and have mutual accountability (Ayoko & Callan 2010).
Tourism providers	Those individuals or groups that have a direct interest in the provision of the RTT tourism experience; they may have a part time or full time interest, may be located on, or close to, or some distance from the case study site. A tourism provider may adopt such organisational forms as a sole trader, a company, or be a public sector agency.
Track	The physical drive corridor which connects the points of interest within each of the case study sites; it binds the destination.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions (*cont*)

Term	Definition
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia.
4WD	Four wheel drive vehicle.
4WDer	A traveller who uses a vehicle (which can engage all four wheels) in areas inaccessible to conventional vehicles, and who are motivated by both the driving component of the trip as well as the enjoyment of the environment and particular points of interest (Narayanan & Macbeth 2009; Taylor & Prideaux 2008).
4WD tourism	Tourism “experiences that the consumer and supplier perceive as heightened in value by the use of 4WD vehicles.” (Taylor & Carson 2011, p. 226).

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

1.1 Introduction

This chapter firstly provides a brief overview of the study and then a statement of the specific research purpose and research questions. To provide background to the study, the reasons for the particular approach adopted and the theoretical context are then explored. Next, the practical and theoretical importance of the research is considered. The chapter then turns to methodological aspects of the study including details of the research design, a description of the two case studies used, and a discussion of the steps taken to mitigate researcher effect. The limitations of the study are then addressed. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the structure of the remainder of the thesis.

1.2 Overview

This thesis seeks to advance the understanding of a particular kind of tourism destination, remote touring tracks (RTTs) within Australia. The focus is on tourism providers associated with RTTs and in particular, how they are organised. For the purposes of this study tourism providers are defined as those individuals or groups that have a direct interest in the provision of the RTT tourism experience; they may have a part time or full time interest, may be located on, or close to, or some distance from the case study site. Individual tourism providers may adopt such organisational forms as a sole trader, a company, or be a public sector agency. Consideration of how the collective of tourism providers are organised on RTTs refers to the nature of the bonds and links between them and the extent to which they work together to achieve common objectives (McShane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2013).

The study adopts a specific framework as the analytical lens for this study: geographically distributed teams (GDTs). The GDT framework adopted for the study comprises seven elements: geographic dispersion, information and communication technology (ICTs), team membership, cultural diversity, shared mindset, collaboration, and leadership. An inputs-processes-outcomes (I-P-O) model is adopted to configure the elements of the GDT framework and to highlight their dynamic and interdependent nature (see Figure 1 below). This model has been described as “the dominant framework used in the study of teams” (Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004, p. 809; see also, e.g., Ayoko & Callan 2010).

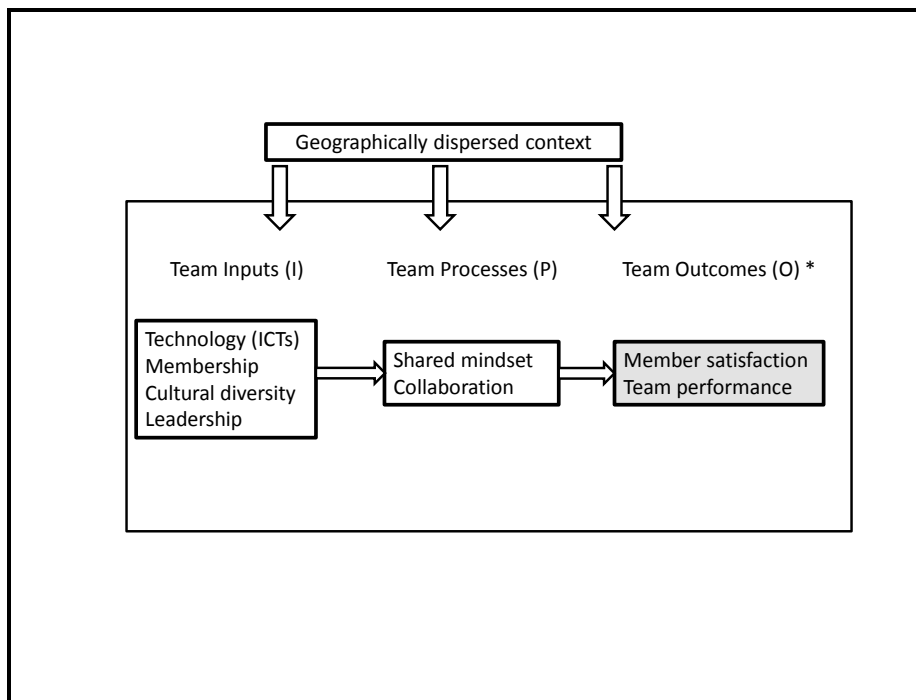


Figure 1: I-P-O model with elements of the GDT framework (adapted from Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004)

* **Note:** This study did not consider team outcomes. The two outcomes listed in this Figure are examples only drawn from the originating paper. For elaboration, see Section 1.10 below.

The GDT framework is offered as a fresh lens to analyse this important and complex tourism destination issue. As Saarinen (2007a; p. 41) suggests, “[c]hange is a constant feature in tourism”. These turbulent environments might benefit from different theoretical perspectives to fully appreciate their emerging complexities. This novel theoretical lens is applied to two case studies – the Gunbarrel Highway (GBH) and the Oodnadatta Track (OT). These are representative of RTTs, and both are recognised as iconic remote tourism destinations in Australia (Cartan 2009a).

1.3 Research Purpose and Questions

This study has a general research purpose, which is informed by seven specific research questions. The purpose of this study is to explain the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs as GDTs and to explore the implications. Each of the seven elements which comprise the GDT framework raises a specific research question (see Table 1 below). The study addresses each of these questions.

Table 1: Research questions

Research question	GDT element
1. What is the nature of geographic dispersion on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?	Geographic dispersion
2. What is the nature of information and communication technology (ICT) usage amongst tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?	ICT capability
3. What is the nature of the relationship between tourism providers and what are the implications for team membership of a GDT?	Team membership
4. What is the nature of cultural diversity on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?	Cultural diversity
5. What is the extent of a shared mindset between tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?	Shared mindset
6. What is the nature of collaboration between tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?	Collaboration
7. What leadership is evident on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?	Leadership

A further, more vicarious outcome of the study will be a contribution to the understanding of GDTs. This novel application of GDTs to the organisation of remote tourism providers will provide valuable insights into GDTs in a more generic sense.

1.5 Thesis Logic

As stated above, this thesis seeks to advance the understanding of a particular kind of tourism destination, RTTs. The focus is on the organisation of the collective of tourism providers in these destinations. The study adopts a specific structural framework as the analytical lens for this study: GDTs. There is some limited research directed specifically at RTTs from the tourism discipline (see Chapter Two for detailed discussion). Valuable theoretical insights were also gleaned from non-tourism specific research into the nature of remote regions in Australia, and from tourism specific research into destinations, touring routes, peripheral tourism and 4WD tourism. Whilst an identifiable body of literature (significantly in the management arena) was available on GDTs (also referred to as virtual teams), no applications had been made to remote tourism destinations. This necessitated a close review of that literature to determine the key GDT constructs appropriate for use in this study. These constructs were configured into the framework which formed the analytical lens for data gathering, data analysis and interpretation. The following points elaborate the chain of logic for the study, and each is addressed in this thesis:

1. Firstly, RTTs are located in a defining physical, economic and social environment, which influences their essential characteristics. Literature on remote Australian environments provided insight into these characteristics.

Research into tourism destinations, the nature of peripheral tourism, touring routes and 4WD tourism helped form a preliminary theoretical definition and description of RTTs as a tourism destination.

2. Secondly, the organisation of tourism destinations in general and RTTs in particular was considered. Only two previous studies (Cartan & Carson 2009 and Cartan & Carson 2011) have specifically considered the organisation of providers on RTTs. However, the organisation of tourism destinations in general, including some remote regions, has drawn the attention of researchers. Studies have adopted various theoretical perspectives, including networks, clusters and systems (see, e.g., Scott, Cooper & Baggio 2008). These have advanced the understanding of tourism destinations. However, the organisation of destinations has never been analysed using a GDT perspective. This perspective on organisation derives from the management discipline and was particularly apt given the dispersed nature of providers on RTTs and the fact that they share in the delivery of a common product and have the potential to share a common purpose. The GDT literature revealed seven key elements particularly appropriate to the RTT context, and these constituted the theoretical lens used in this study.
3. Whilst the literature on remote Australian environments is highly relevant to this study, precise information about tourism providers on RTTs was not available within the extant literature. This data was captured through two case studies. Extensive internet searches and field studies provided data on organisational numbers, type and location, the specific goods and services

provided, and the nature of the relationships between tourism providers.

When analysed through the GDT lens, this data provided a vivid account of the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs.

4. When interpreted against the backdrop of extant literature the data collected in this study provided valuable insights into the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs. Conclusions about what is happening and why were drawn and consideration given to the implications of this for tourism in these locations. It is important to note that the study did not attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices of providers within RTTs. The purpose was to describe and explain rather than assess. However, the application of the GDT lens created opportunities to surmise tentative future scenarios should tourism providers organise as a GDT. Further research more acutely focussed on issues of effectiveness will be required.

1.6 Importance of the Research

This study makes important contributions to both theory and practice. There have been frequent calls for more research to fill the knowledge gaps in the drive tourism field (see, e.g., Lohmann, Santos & Allis 2011). The current study addresses one such knowledge gap. It offers a novel theoretical insight into the organisation of tourism providers in remote destinations. The use of GDTs as a theoretical lens to better understand RTTs adds a fresh dimension to the remote tourism literature. By conceptualising tourism providers as a team, the focus becomes the synergy produced by the collective tourism providers in addition to individual perspectives. The use of a GDT framework consisting of seven elements, configured using the I-P-

O model, reflects the dynamic nature of tourism destinations, and provides multiple dimensions of analysis. This is the first study to explore this topic in this manner. The approach adopted may also be applicable in other tourism research. This study will also add to the extant literature on GDTs, as they have not been considered in this context.

Furthermore, the study will be of practical significance to tourism providers on RTTs which include owner/managers, local communities and government bodies. It will contribute to the understanding of the practical functioning of aspects of RTTs. It will identify and classify tourism providers, their locations and how they interact. These insights have the potential to assist tourism providers reflect on current practice and consider future possibilities. Applications include policy development, education, collaboration and leadership. Further discussion of these contributions to theory and practice is in Chapter Six.

1.7 Research Design

A case study research design was adopted for this research. RTTs are complex, contemporary, real life phenomena, with unclear boundaries, over which the researcher has little control. These situations are ideally suited to a case study research design (Dooley 2002; Gerring 2007; Yin 2009). In addition, case studies have been used extensively in the social sciences (Perren & Ram 2004), and notably in tourism research and in the study of GDTs (Carson & Macbeth 2005a; Greiner et al. 2004; Hardy 2003; Kirkman et al. 2002; Lee-Kelley 2006; Xiao & Smith 2006).

Two similar cases were chosen for this study, the GBH and the OT. Both were representative of their genre, providing the opportunity for strong cross case

data (Gerring 2007). A detailed description of each site is in Section 1.8 below. Both sites are iconic touring destinations, located in remote regions in Australia, and were selected according to specified criteria from a list of iconic remote touring tracks (Glover & Zell 2007). Whilst each track has distinctive assets they both exhibit an attractive mix of natural beauty (Prideaux & Coghlan 2011) featuring a “pristine environment, rare wildlife and different cultures” (Carson & Harwood 2007b, p. 1). Scott, Cooper and Baggio (2008) suggest that analysis of such destinations requires a consideration of all providers and their connectivities: a whole of destination approach.

Data for each case were collected in two phases (see Figure 2). The first was an extensive series of internet searches (Internet mediated research – IMR), and the second was a field study involving interviews, on-site observations and documentation collation. Two field trips were made to each site totalling approximately two months in duration. The data analysis was guided by the elements of the GDT framework. The elements of the framework were used as codes for classifying data. Phase 1 and 2 data for each site were analysed separately, then collapsed to form a composite picture of that site. Then a cross case analysis was conducted to gain an integrated picture of both sites. Details of data collection and data analysis are in Chapter Three.

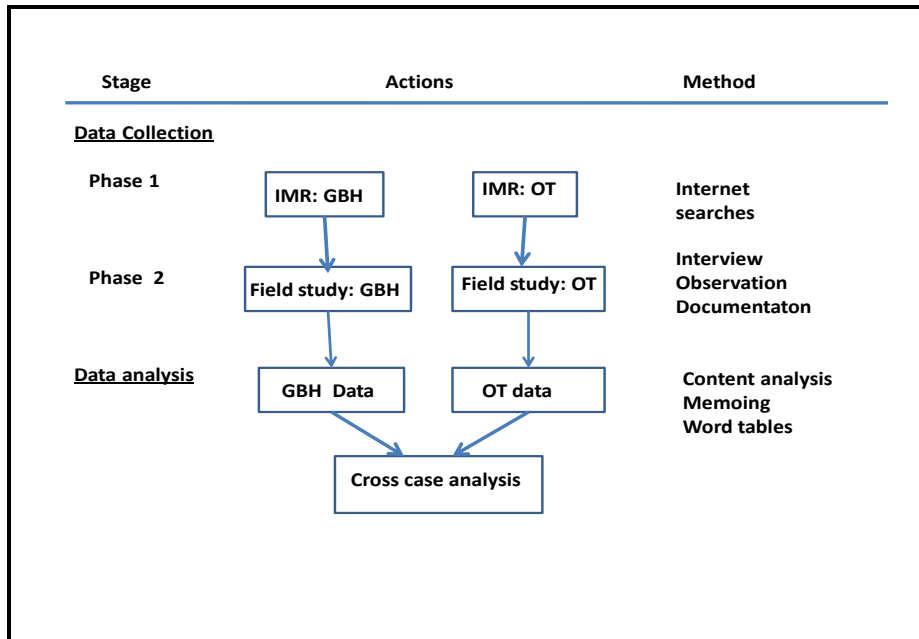


Figure 2: Research process

1.8 The Case Studies

The two case study sites are located in remote Australia (see Figure 3 below).

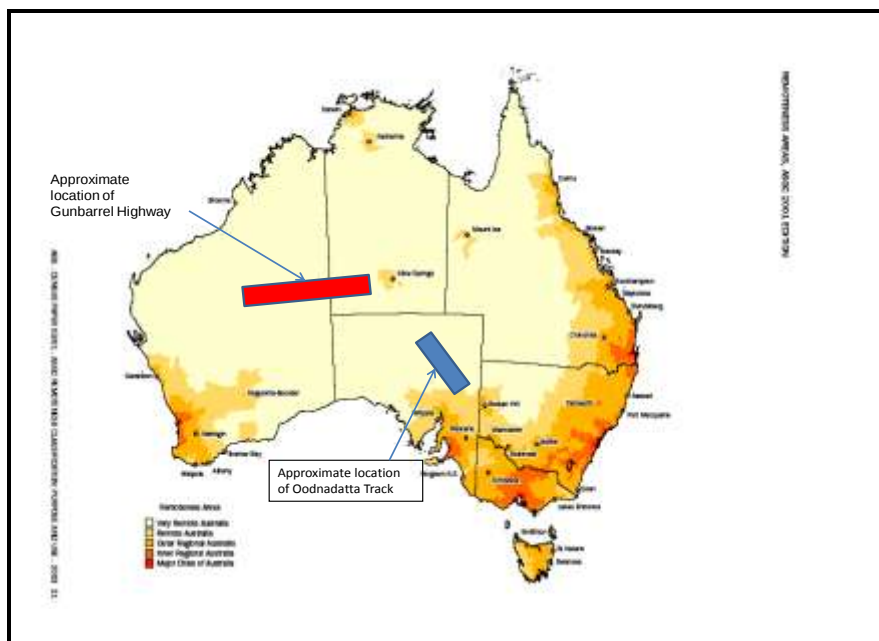


Figure 3: Approximate location of Gunbarrel Highway and Oodnadatta Track.

The GBH is comprised of a set of remote unsealed roads and tracks of varying quality totalling approximately 1,400 km between Yulara (which includes the Ayers Rock Resort) in the Northern Territory and Wiluna in Western Australia. These roads and tracks comprise three entities (the ‘new’ Gunbarrel Highway, the ‘old’ Gunbarrel and part of the Great Central Road), which as a collective are commonly referred to as the GBH 4WD tourism experience¹. There are several, albeit small, towns and communities located along or very near to the track, including Wiluna, Warburton, Docker River and Yulara (see Figure 4). Local populations include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

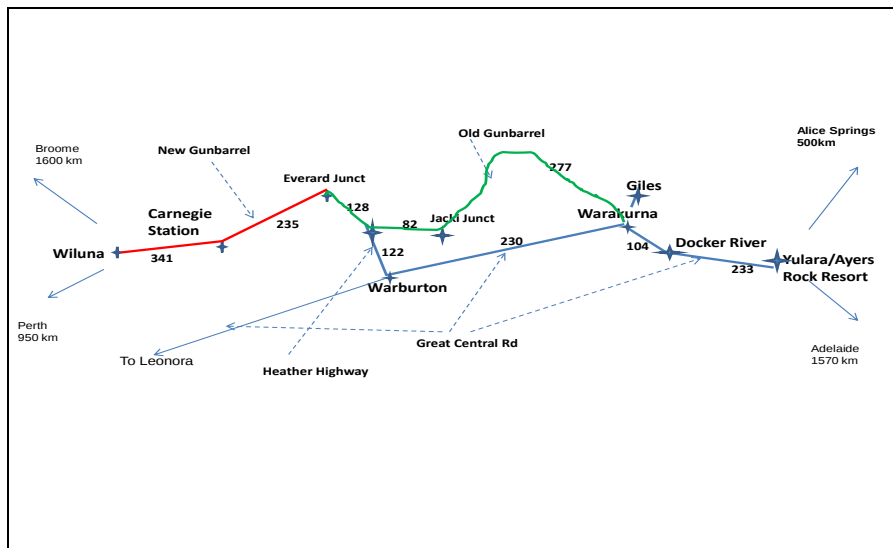


Figure 4: Mud map showing Gunbarrel Highway population centres and approximate distances.

The GBH is well recognised as one of Australia’s iconic 4WD experiences (Basham 2005; Cartan 2009b). The tourism value of the Gunbarrel Highway derives from both the desire to conquer the physical drive (Narayanan & Macbeth 2008) and

¹ At the time of data collection for this study the development of the Outback Way, a driving link between Winton in Queensland and Laverton in Western Australia was under consideration. Because the GBH overlaps only marginally with the Outback Way, and the future of that project was unclear at the time of this research, it was not considered in this study.

from a number of identified natural attractions and sites of interest along the way. Most notable of the attractions is the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park at the eastern end. The park contains Uluru (Ayers Rock), and the Olgas, both sites of international significance and is adjacent to the Ayers Rock Resort. There are other historical and cultural sites associated with European exploration and Aboriginal custodianship such as Lassiter's Cave and plaques related to the original construction of the road.

There are no statistics available regarding the number of visitors who travel the entire Gunbarrel Highway or the composition of the market. However, research into the 4WD market as a whole by Taylor and Prideaux (2008) suggests a likely range of users from independent, single vehicle touring parties to tag-a-long and other multi-vehicle groups. The bulk of the market is likely to be Australians travelling in Australia (perhaps 75%) and travellers in their own, rather than hired, vehicles. It is not known whether the profile of travellers on the GBH differs from the 4WD market generally.

The GBH has a number of characteristics which makes it of particular interest for this research. There has been a history of economic development in the immediate region, with a focus on mining and pastoralism. In addition to the basic population and physical infrastructure which might support product development, the track is subject to influences from a range of jurisdictional interests. Because it crosses the Northern Territory and Western Australia border, two state governments share control over some vital services such as police and road maintenance. There are also three local governments with jurisdiction over parts of the Track, along with two Aboriginal land councils and Parks Australia. All these agencies have interests in

fostering economic development and managing economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of such development. These factors add an interesting dynamic to the process of collaboration between tourism providers along the GBH.

The Oodnadatta Track (OT) is also situated in remote Australia and is frequently described as one of Australia's great 4WD desert tracks (Glover & Zell 2007). This track is well known to the 4WD fraternity and is frequently mentioned in 4WD publications (see, e.g., Cartan 2009c). The track itself comprises some 635 km of unsealed surface (see Figure 5) with extensive challenging corrugations, sections of rough rocks and stones, and is often impassable in wet conditions. Tourists are attracted largely by this type of driving experiences which are wrapped in the raw beauty of rugged outback landscapes (Lain & Waitt 2007; Narayanan & Macbeth 2009).

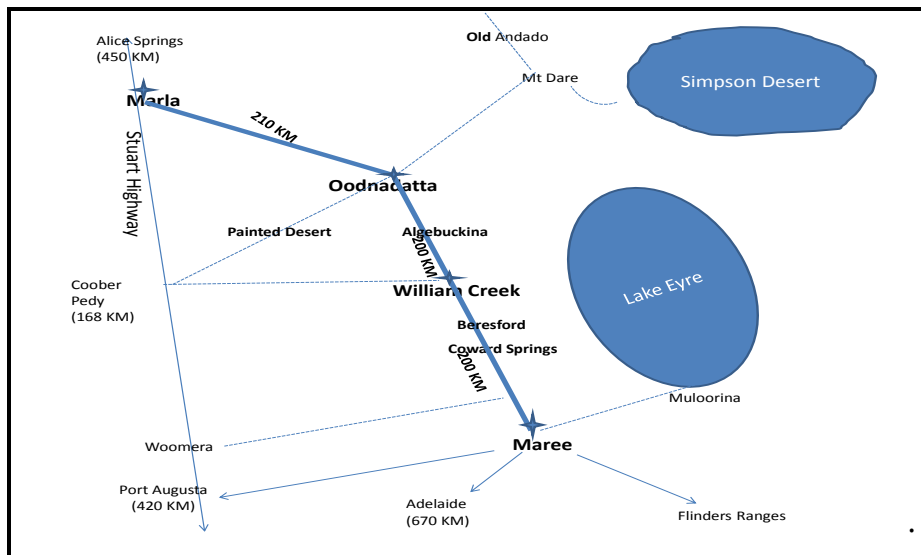


Figure 5: Mud map showing Oodnadatta Track population centres and approximate distances.

Along the OT, there are two small towns at Marree (population approximately 350) and Oodnadatta (population approximately 200), offering basic

supplies to travellers, fuel, and some accommodation. There are two other lesser populated areas at William Creek, consisting largely of an outback pub (population less than five), and at Coward Springs (population two), with its rustic bush campground and natural thermal spring. The northern extremity is Marla (population approximately 20), comprising hotel and camping accommodation and a motor vehicle service station, located on the Stuart Highway. In addition the OT winds through several large pastoral properties, some of which provide tourism experiences (for example the station at Muloorina – see Figure 5).

The OT comprises a variety of tourism attractions along its length. There are opportunities for bush camping, which appeals to many four wheel drivers, as this provides opportunities to exercise choice and independence, two important qualities for this genre of tourist (Prideaux & Coghlan 2011). It has a rich historical and cultural heritage. For example, the remains of many railway sidings (some restored) and heavy equipment along the Old Ghan railway line (Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd, 2001) are popular with tourists, as is the Aboriginal Culture Centre in Marree. However, the OT does not simply provide access to these assets but the drive itself is a definitive part of this extended destination (Prideaux & Coghlan 2011). Whilst these points of interest (POIs) could be accessed via several other gravel roads from the main highway, the typical visitor travels in a 4WD with the express purpose of experiencing the actual drive along the OT. The track connects a series of tourism POIs to create a destination with scattered tourism attractions, services and infrastructure.

The OT differs from the GBH in that it is subject to only one local government jurisdiction, the Outback Areas Community Development Trust (OACDT), and is located within a single state jurisdiction of South Australia. It does not experience the complexity of the GBH's multiple jurisdictions.

1.9 Researcher Effect

There is an inherent risk of researcher bias in qualitative research in general (see e.g. Gerring 2007; Gummesson 2005; Nash & Martin 2003), and case studies in particular (Yin 2009), which can result in a “tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions” (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 234). Indeed, Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that qualitative researchers “traffic in meanings” (p. 144). Furthermore, they maintain (p. 265) that there is a possibility of “biased observations and inferences” stemming from researcher effect. This study utilised a case study research design which is particularly prone to subjective interpretations which can influence outcomes (Gummesson 2000; Patton & Appelbaum 2003). Observation, a critical data source in this study, was a significant potential source of bias. Angrosino (2005) suggests this may occur through the choice of what is observed or the interpretation of those observations.

The potential for researcher effect in this study was heightened by the fact the researcher has an extensive experience of RTTs recreationally and professionally. He has 20 years personal experience of remote tracks and has travelled the two case study sites on many occasions. Professionally, he has written numerous articles for a widely distributed 4WD magazine (see, e.g., sample at Appendix One). Gummesson (2000) refers to this type of background “knowledge, insights and experience”, both

personal and professional, as researcher “preunderstanding” (2000, p. 15). This can act as a two edged sword. On the one hand it can help create rapport, help with access to sites and individuals, and help generate considered insights. This can save time, help oil the socialisation process and facilitate data acquisition. But it can also operate as a filter to block new information and in effect decrease the researcher’s sensitivity. Gummesson suggests that researchers must be able to use their preunderstanding but not be its “slave” (Gummesson 2000, p. 65). The risk is that prior experience can transform into prejudice and “one continues to dig in the same hole” (Gummesson 2000, p. 62).

Given this degree of ‘closeness’ to the research topic two strategies were put in place, to minimise both the inherent potential for bias and the impact of researcher preunderstandings. The first was the creation of and adherence to a rigorous research design. Chapter Three details the processes and protocols which were designed in the pursuit of objectivity and legitimacy. In particular, the process of triangulating multiple data sources acted as a validity check (Stake 2000).

The second strategy centred on minimising the potentially negative impact of the researcher’s preunderstandings. Patton and Appelbaum (2003) suggest that a key to this process lies within the researcher’s capacity for critical reflection. They argue that critical reflection requires an awareness of pre-established paradigms and viewpoints, and upon reflection, a willingness to be “open to new possibilities and new explanations” (p. 9). In a similar vein, Gummesson (2001) advocates reflection and introspection to ensure researchers are not “trapped by our own bias” (p. 46). An explicit appreciation of personal assumptions and biases decreases the likelihood of

them surreptitiously influencing behaviours and thought processes (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001). In the current study, the researcher made extensive use of memoing (Birks, Chapman, & Francis. 2008) during the data gathering and analysis processes to identify and then reflect upon the impact of preunderstandings.

Another measure to minimise the impact of researcher preunderstanding involved presentation of the core thesis concepts in scholarly and professional forums, and in peer reviewed publications (see, e.g., Cartan & Carson 2009, 2011). These facilitated the testing of ideas with academic peers and identifying possible bias. The third strategy involved the use of intermediaries (Gummeson 2000) which includes independent sources of knowledge and understanding that can assist the researcher to reflect in the search of greater clarity. For the current study individuals were accessed to create a greater awareness of the researcher's personal perceptions of 4WDing and 4WD tracks in particular. The researcher regularly consulted with a small group of carefully identified 4WD lead users. Narayanan and Macbeth (2009) use this type of expert or veteran in their study of the motivation of 4WDers. These discussions allowed the researcher to reflect on the opinions of informed others and also identify differences in perceptions between self and those others. By making these factors explicit the researcher was able to increase personal awareness of their impact on the study and reflect on the implications for the research design and implementation.

1.10 Delimitations

Whilst the study contributes to the understanding of tourism destinations it has a particular focus. It is concerned only with the organisation of a specific type of

destination, RTTs. In this regard it considered one aspect of the supply dimension of the tourism destination equation.

The study does not purport to offer a comparative analysis of a variety of RTT structural forms (networks, clusters, teams etc.). It recognises the valuable contribution of previous research adopting different perspectives to the structural analysis of destinations, but simply suggests that adopting a different analytical lens will provide insights. Accordingly it adopts a single lens to analyse those destinations, GDTs. It draws conclusions and offers insights moderated by the use of that lens.

The elements of the GDT framework are configured using an I-P-O team model. Whilst this model includes an outcomes component, the current study did not attempt to measure outcomes by formally evaluating the effectiveness of the provider structure in either case study. This is consistent with Yin's (2009) explanatory case studies which consider questions of 'how' and 'why'. Consequently, outcomes were not measured. This is an area for future research, which is discussed in Chapter Six.

There is a geographical delimitation to the study; the two case study sites are located in remote locations in Australia. This may limit the generalisability of the findings to other regions with different geographical profiles.

1.11 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured into six chapters:

Chapter One provides an overview of, and introduction to, the thesis.

Chapter Two reviews the literature relevant to this study. It provides a context for the case study sites by considering the general nature of remote regions. It highlights characteristics of those regions which might influence the providers of touring tracks. It then considers aspects of the tourism literature which might provide further insight into the nature of RTTs (tourism destinations, touring routes, 4WD tourism, and peripheral tourism). Having clarified the nature of RTTs the thesis then turns to the management literature to consider GDTs as an organising mechanism appropriate to RTTs. Analysis of that literature provided a GDT framework comprising seven elements that appeared particularly relevant to the examination of RTTs. That framework was configured using an I-P-O model to provide structure. Additional areas of management literature were reviewed to gain further insight into the nature of the GDT framework. For example, pertinent literature on leadership, culture and team membership was reviewed. The purpose was to provide the theoretical setting for the study, and to demonstrate how the research questions emerged from the literature.

Chapter Three details the research design of the study. It justifies the choice of a case study research design and details the application of that design to the current study. It identifies the criteria for case site selection and justifies the selection of two cases. The data collection process is described in detail. It consisted of two phases: an extensive internet search of each site, and field studies involving interviews, observation and document acquisition. Next, the data analysis process and tools were detailed. The elements of the GDT framework were used to structure the data analysis. For each case, the design required that data in Phases 1 and 2 be

collected and analysed separately. It was then collapsed to provide a composite view of each case. Then a cross case analysis was conducted to synthesise the data.

Chapter Four provides the results of the data analysis. The elements of the GDT framework were used as the theoretical lens for this data analysis and the results are tabulated in that form. This chapter is focussed on identifying the nature of the elements as represented in the cases. The chapter is presented in three sections. Firstly, the results of the GBH case study were offered. The IMR and field data were analysed and presented separately. These two data sets were then collapsed to provide a complete picture of this case. Secondly, the OT case data were analysed following the same procedure as with the GBH case. Thirdly, a cross case analysis was conducted to integrate the data from both cases; these were integrated to provide the data in a collated form. This approach provides data triangulation and results in clearly collated and tabulated data under each of the elements of the GDT framework.

Chapter Five discusses the findings from Chapter Four against the background of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. It considers each element of the GDT framework and the implications for the organisation of tourism providers at both case study sites. Using this framework this discussion explains the organisation of tourism providers, considers some possible explanations for that condition and offers some commentary on implications for the future. It addresses each of the research questions and draws conclusions about the two case studies based on the GDT analytical lens. Distinctions and similarities between cases are noted. The generalisability of these conclusions to other RTTs is considered.

Chapter Six provides a summary of the research process and highlights the key findings. It identifies the major theoretical and practical contributions of the study, and also its strengths and limitations. Some directions for future research are also identified.

1.12 Conclusion

The purpose of chapter 1 was to provide an introduction to, and an overview of, the study. The purpose of the study was to explain the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs as GDTs. This chapter explained the theoretical positioning of the study and identified the specific research questions. It discussed the choice of the case study methodology, how it was used to address these questions and both case study sites were described. The potential for researcher effect was noted and strategies to minimise this were considered. Delimitations were considered.

In Chapter Two, the relevant literature is reviewed. Research questions are developed from that literature review.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the theoretical setting for the study, to demonstrate how the research questions emerged from the relevant literature, and to provide a platform for the discussion of results in Chapter Five. This literature review draws on substantive bodies of research from the tourism and management disciplines. Also included is research which considers the general nature of remote regions and how the characteristics of those regions directly or vicariously influence the organisation of tourism providers because of their remote location.

This introduction will firstly provide a rationale for the use of each particular genre of literature.

2.1.1 The choice of literatures.

The purpose of the study was to advance the understanding of a particular type of tourism destination, RTTs. The emphasis was on the organisation of tourism providers in these remote destinations. The particular organisational lens for the study was GDTs.

This review begins by considering that body of literature which specifically considers the more general geographic, social and economic characteristics of remote Australia. As Hall and Saarinen (2010) stress it is important to identify the geographic boundary which constitutes the perimeter for tourism destinations because of the impact of that geography on that destination. This literature defines the remote region (Browne, Taylor & Bell 2008) and its physical environment (CSIRO 2011), identifies certain social conditions such as population and

employment (Moran & Elvin 2009), and canvasses such economically connected factors such as access to financial markets (Stafford Smith, Moran & Seeman 2008) and infrastructure (Abolhasan & Wright 2008). Finally, the allure of remote regions is mentioned (Huskey 2006). This literature was considered directly relevant to the current study because of the influence of that context on the nature of RTTs.

There is a genre of literature that explores tourism in what has been labelled ‘peripheral’ areas. For the purposes of the current study this literature was treated with some caution, for two reasons which could mitigate relevance, thus rendering much of this genre of literature not directly relevant to the current study. Firstly ‘remote’ might well fall outside the ambit of ‘peripherality’ or at least on the extreme outer edge of a continuum of peripherality (as suggested by Schmallegger, Carson & Tremblay 2010). Secondly, there are definitional challenges within the peripheral tourism literature (Brown & Hall 2000) which raise doubts with respect to pertinence. This review will consider only that subset of peripheral tourism literature that is expressly relevant to this study of remote tourism destinations.

As a destination, RTTs comprise ‘the track’ stretching over some considerable distance and multiple POIs connected to the track. This spatial configuration of the destination suggests a nexus with that genre of literature referred to as touring routes. Carson and Cartan (2011) suggest these are “specific types of destination systems in which the mode of transport serves as a shared focus of organisations and institutions” (p. 296). They also identify several success factors which are relevant to the current study: the management structure, collaboration, and innovation. The Oodnadatta track is given in their paper as an example of a touring

route. In an earlier paper, Cartan and Carson (2009) also conceptualised desert tracks as “a type of touring route” (p. 172). This research has considered multiple destination itineraries similar to those of the current study (Prideaux & Carson 2003). The touring routes literature was incorporated into this review.

There is a developing body of literature known as ‘4WD tourism’. The case studies are nested in geographically remote desert locations and so a 4WD vehicle is required to negotiate the terrain (Prideaux & Coghlan 2011). This paper identifies the Gunbarrel Highway (a case study in the current research) as an example of a 4WD destination. Carson and Taylor (2009) go so far as to suggest that the 4WD market might play a role in the economic development of desert communities but also caution that growing this market would be challenging. Taylor and Prideaux (2008) identify 4WD tracks as one form of touring route, while Lane and Waitt (2007) also refer to the use of 4WD vehicles for remote travel within Australia. The 4WD tourism literature was incorporated into this review.

The current chapter also reviews that management literature which provides insights into the nature of GDTs as an organisational form. Teams are one of the most widely researched topics of management and in the past decade, studies of distributed teams have “exploded” (Mathieu et al. 2008, p. 461). However, the specific application of GDTs to the tourism context has been quite limited (see, e.g., Matlay & Westhead 2005). For the purposes of this research, the GDT definition of Martins, Gilson and Maynard (2004, p. 808) was adopted: “teams whose members use technology to varying degrees in working across locational, temporal, and relational boundaries to accomplish an interdependent task”.

The broader management literature also provided insights into elements of the GDT framework including studies on leadership, culture and collaboration. This material is incorporated into this review.

2.1.2 The structure of this review.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows:

1. Firstly, it identifies the physical, social and economic context in which the case study sites are embedded.
2. Next, the general nature of remote tourism is explored.
3. Then the general nature of GDTs is elaborated.
4. The specific GDT framework which comprised the analytical lens for this study is explained.
5. Finally, each of the elements of the GDT framework is considered in some detail, drawing on research from both the tourism and management literature pools.

The research questions for this study are identified progressively throughout this review.

2.2 The Remote Regional Context

The focus of this study is on touring tracks located in remote regions in Australia (RTTs). Carson and Harwood (2007b, p. 19) assert that the “physical environment sets bounds and gives form to the tourism opportunity”. Given the very fact of remoteness is “[T]he most significant feature of remote destinations” (Carson & Harwood 2007a, p. 1), this section will describe the essential characteristics of the

remote environment in which the case study sites are embedded. It will also identify the more generic social and economic characteristics that can be attributed to RTTs, because of their remoteness. As Taylor (2002) suggests, a focus on “remote Australia is longstanding in regional analysis” (p. 2). The literature describing the characteristics of this geographic region has employed various categorisations: remote, very remote, arid, semi-arid, desert (Brown, Taylor & Bell 2008), even *outback* (National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism Pty Ltd 2005b; Stafford Smith 2008). This requires some explanation at the outset.

There are three major geographical remoteness classifications for Australia: the RRMA (Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas) classification, the ARIA (Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia) classification and the ASGC (Australian Standard Geographical Classification) remoteness areas classification. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2004) provides a useful description and comparison of each classification. For the purposes of the current study the distinctions between classifications are not critical. In each case the location of the case study sites can be described as ‘remote’ (RRMA), or ‘very remote’ (ARIA and ASGC, see Figure 6). Some literature has used the term ‘desert’ to identify certain regions and their characteristics. Browne, Taylor and Bell (2008) define desert as inclusive of both arid and semi-arid zones, which correspond closely to the ARIA classification of ‘remote’ and ‘very remote’. Other studies have used the term ‘outback Australia’ to describe the region under investigation (see for example Stafford Smith 2008; National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism 2005a). The review which follows draws from this range of literature, employing the terms *remote, very remote, arid, semi-arid, desert* and *outback*. For the purposes of this

study, the term ‘remote’ will be used when referring to the environment which provides the broad context of the two case study sites.

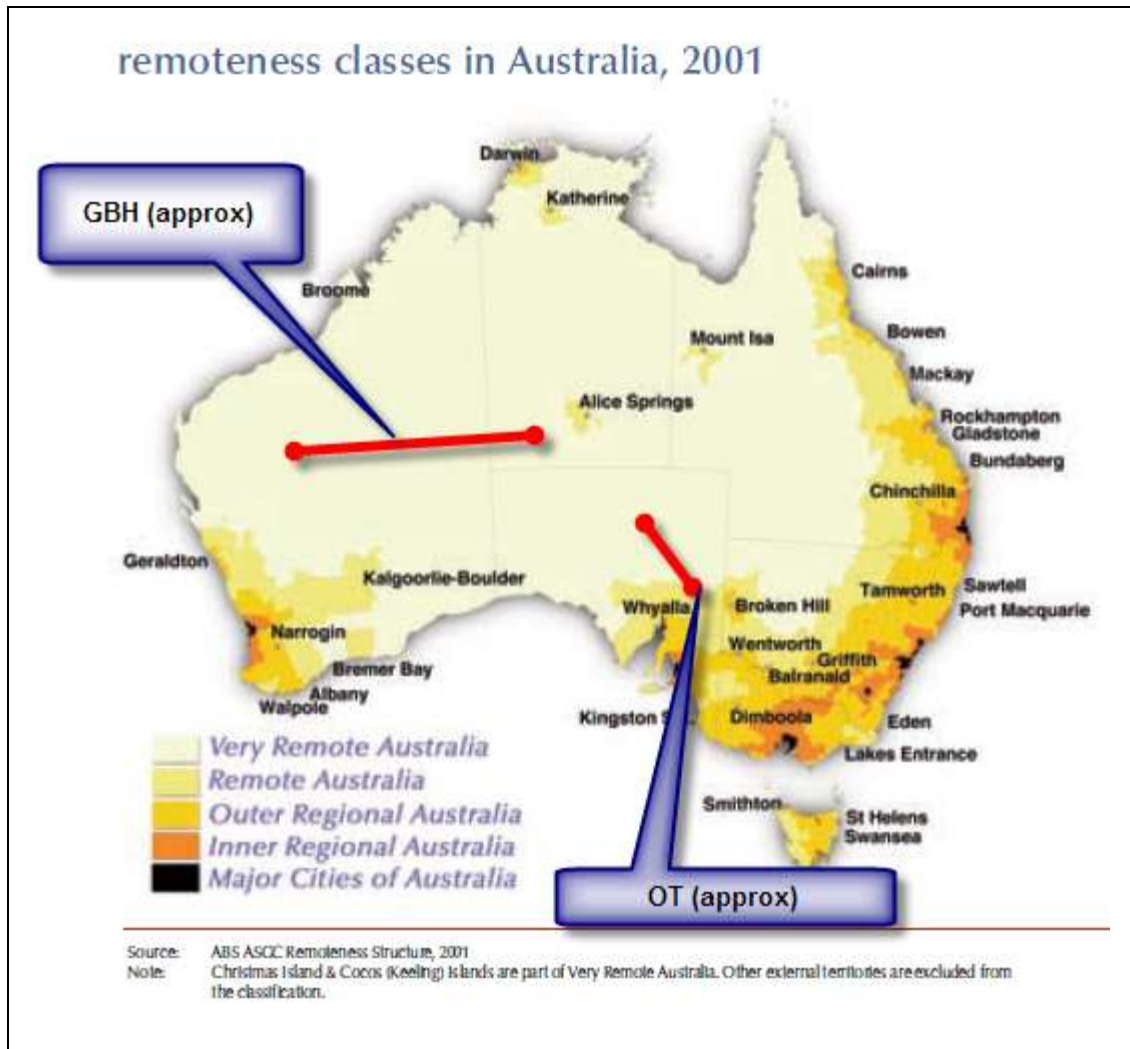


Figure 6: Australian Standard Geographical Classification of remoteness structure (Source: Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics 2006 p. 3).

2.2.1 The physical environment.

The CSIRO defines arid and semi-arid lands as “those remote and sparsely populated areas on inland Australia, defined by the presence of desert vegetation and land forms as well as by low rainfall” (CSIRO 2011, p. 1). Rainfall is below 200mm

per annum (ibid). Stafford Smith (2008) identifies climate variability as an important desert driver in his desert syndrome framework. This is described as including high and unpredictable variability in both rainfall and seasonality. A second and related desert driver is scarcity of resources, which includes low soil fertility and patchy natural resources (for example greening patterns and minerals). These locations will not sustain cropping or timber harvesting (CSIRO 2012) because of an “uncompromising environment” (p.1) of erratic rainfall, floods, droughts and infertile soil. Stafford Smith (2008) highlights spatial remoteness and isolation as features of the outback. The CSIRO (2012) describes this environment as possessing a diversity and uniqueness of plants and ecosystems. This literature indicates the case study sites are embedded in a harsh and uncompromising physical environment. It is characterised by isolation, low but unpredictable annual rainfall, variable seasonality, desert vegetation, low soil fertility and “patchy” natural resources.

2.2.2 The remote economy.

Population in remote areas is sparse, averaging 0.05 persons/km² (Brown, Taylor & Bell 2008), unevenly spread though communities and small settlements (Moran & Elvin 2009), and is highly mobile (Brown, Taylor & Bell 2008; McAlister et al. 2008; Stafford Smith 2008). There is a low population density even in regional towns which often act as service centres for remote regions (Brown, Taylor & Bell 2008). The high mobility is a function not only of traditional movements between communities and into regional towns, but also because of a temporary component of fly-in/fly-out workers and of tourists (Brown, Taylor & Bell 2008).

Associated with this unstable population base are significant staffing issues. There is a shortage of skilled labour and high labour costs (Stafford Smith 2008; Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel 2012). Stafford Smith (2008) identifies labour costs, turnover and lack of basic skills as major hurdles for remote businesses, and argues they also “struggle with critical mass” (Stafford Smith 2008, p. 11). Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams and Crowe 2008 describe these businesses as predominantly in survival mode, more concerned with the maintenance of day-to-day matters than considering innovations or other growth possibilities; further, they specifically identify a limited use of natural synergies and alliances between businesses to help overcome “the tyranny of isolation”(p. 187).

In terms of financial matters remote areas have been described as disempowered, with institutions in major population centres quite distant from remote regions often holding considerable power over these regions (Huskey & Morehouse 1992; Stafford Smith, Moran & Seeman 2008). These major population centres are often the hub for such services as banking, the nucleus for policy making and funding decisions, the source of essential services (e.g. health and education), and the destination for “profits from activities such as tourism [that] do not circulate locally but are exported to capital cities” (Stafford Smith 2008, p.8). Holmes (2002, p. 366) suggests that some remote commercial activities generate “substantial expenditure in source locations but with negligible benefits to most outback communities and landholders”, whilst Browne, Taylor and Bell (2008, p. 29) conclude that “economic linkages are externally-focussed”.

There is a small and somewhat tenuous economic base in remote regions comprising pastoralism, mining, government spending and tourism (Brown, Taylor & Bell 2008). CSIRO (2012) concludes that pastoral use is limited to cattle in the north and sheep in the south, that the land will not sustain cropping or timber harvesting, but there is some “Aboriginal subsistence activities”, tourism and mining (iron ore, gold, nickel, base metals, uranium). Stafford Smith (2008) refers to the volatility of these regions because of international trends and highlights fuel costs as an example. The sheer distance to markets is a significant economic cost (Brown, Taylor & Bell 2008). The combination of geographic remoteness and the above factors results in a shortfall of essential infrastructure (Carson & Harwood 2007a).

Basic transport infrastructure in particular is a feature with many unsealed roads (National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism Pty Ltd, 2005), limited air services and poor rail infrastructure. In particular road maintenance is often irregular, further exacerbating access difficulties. One outcome is a high cost of living and cost of community infrastructure, for example housing, water and energy services (Moore 2005). Another outcome is irregular deliveries and high transport costs which affects competitiveness and profitability (National Centre for Studies in Travel & Tourism, 2005), and can result in few product choices for consumers (Carson & Harwood 2007a). Information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in remote regions is also quite poor (Browne, Taylor & Bell 2008; National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism Pty Ltd, 2000). Abolhasan and Wright (2008) assert that ICTs in most remote Aboriginal communities is inadequate, with only 11% having public internet services, and wired technologies such as DSL and fibre optics are not viable.

Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams and Crowe (2008) report that some businesses make no use of information technology.

In sum, this literature indicates the case study sites are situated in harsh, remote, but visually inspiring desert environments, and as Huskey (2006, p. 152) suggests, geography “matters a great deal”. These environments are characterised by an unevenly spread and very mobile population. There is a shortage of skilled labour and labour costs are high. There is a capital leakage from remote areas, which are financially disempowered, are severely impacted by broad market fluctuations and have a tenuous economic base. There is a lack of basic infrastructure. Businesses struggle for success, in that they experience volatile conditions including fickle markets, uncertain supply of resources and questionable infrastructure. Many businesses are geographically dispersed and are separated by significant ‘hostile’ distances. They show little evidence of collaborative activities or for pursuing innovation.

This is the general milieu of conditions which are the context for the current study. In the words of Schmallegger, Carson and Tremblay (2010, p.132), “remoteness is insidious and omnipresent” and it strongly influences the behaviour of tourism businesses. In some cases these characteristics make them vulnerable, for example the lack of critical mass. But, in other ways some of these characteristics, such as isolation and natural beauty, are the very essence of their attractiveness as a tourism destination (White & White 2009). In this sense, remoteness is its own advantage (Nash & Marin 2003).

This review now considers that literature which directly addresses tourism enterprises in remote areas.

2.3 Tourism and Remote Touring Tracks

2.3.1 A cautionary note: Peripheral or remote?

The term peripheral tourism has been applied to a broad spectrum of environments which has raised definitional concerns amongst researchers (Brown & Hall 2000; Jansson & Müller 2007; Queiros & Wilson 2005; Sharpley & Roberts 2004). Botterill et al. (2000), suggest that not only are the lines distinguishing core from peripheral not clear, but that neither is peripheral a homogeneous entity. It is in fact a dynamic and complex construct. Scott (2000) refers to artificial peripheries, where defined regions are comprised of a variety of different peripheries. This is consistent with George, Mair and Reid (2009) who suggest that rural communities can be viewed on a continuum ranging from extremely remote to highly urban. Prideaux (2002) also sees degrees of peripherality determined by distance, accessibility, visitor perceptions and visitor numbers (see also Stuart, Pearce & Weaver 2005). Researchers also refer to rural tourism and farm tourism in discussions of peripherality (for example Jansson & Müller 2007). Gladstone and Morris (2000) categorise farm tourism as a category of rural tourism, which in turn is described by Nilsson (2000, p. 137) as “a form of peripherality”. Polo Peña and Frías Jamilena (2010, p. 36) affirm a “lack of consensus regarding rural tourism”. Much of the nature based, wilderness and eco tourism literature could also be subsumed under the banner of “peripheries” (see, e.g., Hall & Boyd 2005; Saarinen 2005; SÆÞórsdóttir, Hall and Saarinen 2011), as could polar tourism (see, e.g., Müller,

Lundmark and Lemelin 2013). What emerges from this literature is a patchwork of definitions, labels and stances of varying degrees of relevance with respect to the current study – terminologies include: remote, peripheral, peripheries, rural, farm, nature-based, wilderness, eco-tourism and urban fringe.

For the purposes of this study, these concerns bring into question the relevance of much of the peripheral literature to remote destination research. Schmallegger, Carson and Tremblay (2010) mount a strong argument that tourism destinations in remote regions are substantially different to traditionally defined peripheral regions and they face unique conditions and consequent challenges. They argue that the frequently cited core-peripheral model adopted by tourism researchers (see, e.g., Blackman et al. 2004; Hall, Birtwistle & Gladstone 2011; Müller & Jansson 2007; Pearce 2002; Prideaux 2002) is inadequate to explain remote destinations. They add the dimension of ‘disconnectedness’ to the two traditional elements that characterise peripheries (distance and dependence), and it is this which takes these regions beyond periphery. They define disconnectedness as “the fragmented and transient nature of social and economic linkages to the outside World” (p. 132).

This is consistent with Carson and Harwood (2007b), who also see that remote areas are geographically discrete and independent from their source markets, thus differentiating them from peripheral regions. Schmallegger and Carson (2010) lament the failure to distinguish between remote and peripheral tourism regions and call for a “research agenda to enhance the understanding of the ways tourism works in remote areas” (p. 216). They claim that tourism in remote regions has

differentiating features, requires discrete analysis and the application of appropriate conceptual frameworks. In their case studies of remote destinations in the Northern Territory, Buultjens, Wilde and Crummy (2011) argue that these types of tourism destinations face substantial additional challenges to those encountered in rural and peripheral areas; these challenges are associated with access, infrastructure, logistics and climate.

The critical factor is not so much whether remote is defined as outside the peripheral continuum (Schmallegger, Carson & Tremblay 2010) or on the outer perimeter of that continuum (George, Mair & Reid 2009). In terms of the impact on destinations the key issue seems to be that remote is significantly ‘different’; for example Vilkinas, Cartan and Saebel (2011, p. 38) suggest caution when applying the results from studies grounded in different geographical regions as they “may not be relevant to desert Australia”. For these reasons the peripheral tourism literature must be treated with caution. Those studies of tourism in peripheral areas which can be deemed ‘remote’ in accord with the discussions in Section 2.2 have been included in the remainder of this chapter.

2.3.2 Destinations, tracks, touring routes and 4WD vehicles.

The thread which binds each of the case study sites is what has been labelled a ‘track’. This term is in common usage in the popular literature directed to 4WD travellers. Examples include guidebooks, such as those produced by Westprint (see www.westprint.com.au), map sets, such as those produced by HEMA (see www.hemamaps.com.au), and driver education material, such as *Gregory’s 4WD Survival Guide* (Basham 2005) and 4WD magazine articles (see, e.g., Cartan

2009b). Typical of these types of challenging tracks are the remote Gary Junction Road and the Canning Stock Route (Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel 2011). These iconic 4WD tracks are frequently considered as part of an entourage of remote tracks referred to in the 4WD popular press (Cartan 2009a), including both the OT and the GBH.

In more scholarly research both the OT and GBH have been identified as desert tracks (Cartan & Carson 2009, 2011; Prideaux & Coghlan 2011). The track in a sense organises the destination (Hayes & MacLeod 2006). It is both an attraction in its own right and also provides access to desert environments and to specific POIs (Schmallegger 2011). Carson and Taylor (2008) suggest a need for these tracks to offer a diverse product, consisting of various routes and “many natural, cultural and heritage attractions” (p. 82).

Tracks, conceptualised this way, may be seen as a form of touring route (Taylor & Prideaux 2008) made up of a collage of activities and POIs (Denstadli & Jacobsen 2011). Hardy, Beeton and Carter (2005) talk of the dispersed nature of touring routes and identify another RTT, the Birdsville Track, as an iconic Australian touring route (see also, Hardy 2003). Route management has been identified as an important success factor for touring routes but has received limited attention from researchers (Hardy 2006). In their 2005 book chapter, Hardy, Beeton and Carter consider the need for innovation within touring routes and stress the importance of harnessing “human capital factors” (p. 96), particularly the product provider community, in the management of touring routes to ensure useful innovation. However, no comprehensive management structures or processes are identified,

although the need for cooperation and coordination has been recognised (Hardy 2006). The nature of these structures which involve a wide range of government and private sector stakeholders will impact on many of the other success factors identified by Hardy (2003), such as the marketing of the route, provision of infrastructure such as signage, sustainability of the assets and presentation of the experience.

Iles and Prideaux (2011), in their treatment of the Savannah Way as a themed touring route, distinguish between bottom-up and top-down systems of management. The Savannah Way began as a stakeholder initiative and emerged over time into a more formalised and industrialised entity through top-down interventions largely due to government funding. Both approaches have potential benefits and risks. The authors suggest that the former generates involvement and commitment but could also spark disputes. The latter comes with cash and associated tangible infrastructure, but might alienate local stakeholders because of loss of control and an overly political agenda. Some form of blended approach is suggested as worthy of experimentation and further research.

Conceptualised in this way tracks are a legitimate tourism destination. A destination has been described geographically as “the places which constitute the object of the trip”, where the visit is enacted (Lohmann & Pearce 2010, p. 267). Scott, Cooper and Baggio (2008) adopt a whole of destination approach to their Australian case studies. They see destinations as networks of interacting stakeholders which may or may not be colocated (for example the Great Ocean Road). Destinations are complex and dynamic entities (da Fontoura Costa & Baggio 2009;

Saraniemi & Kylanden 2011), requiring active stakeholder engagement in governance structures and action (Baggio, Scott & Cooper 2010). For the purposes of this study these tracks are treated as destinations.

When recognised as a single destination, an RTT must be presented and managed in a manner that adequately caters for the diverse motivations of the 4WD market. These motivations vary considerably (Denstadli & Jacobsen 2011) and include a complex mix of factors including social connections, experiencing of the 4WD vehicle and exploring (Prideaux & Coghlan 2011). Larson and Herr (2008) suggest that one motivator is simply the physical act of driving the vehicle in remote environments, and in particular where the drive itself is a test of skills and competence (see also Gyimothy & Mykletun 2004). For these travellers, there is a consuming sense of adventure. Greiner and Larson (2004, p. 4) in their study of the remote Gibb River Road suggest that the “adventure is just as important as the destination”. In fact many were attracted to “bad road conditions” (p. 18) as that heightened the driving challenge. The drive and hence the track is an integral part of the destination, not an adjunct to it. Indeed, Narayanan and Macbeth (2009) describe the journey itself as so important that it could be seen as a form of pilgrimage. The actual journey becomes the qualifier of the total experience. This highlights the need for the totality of the track to be managed and presented as an integrated experience. Questions of access, camping and infrastructure must be approached in a holistic fashion, necessitating a governance mechanism to facilitate this.

In addition to the vehicle, the track and the drive, the more general call of the desert is very strong (Taylor & Prideaux 2008); this includes a sense of solitude,

discovery, natural beauty and escape. This is described by Narayanan and Macbeth (2009) as a spectacular and awe inspiring experience involving a sense of stark isolation. Hardy and Gretzel (2011) found a similar element of self-actualisation describing people as doing their own thing in their study of recreational vehicle (RV) users (see also Hardy & Gretzel 2008). This sought after natural environment comprises authentic natural landscapes, with open space (Carson & Harwood 2007b), wildlife varieties and cultures (Carson & Harwood 2007a). Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011, p. 781) refer to this in the Norwegian context as “journey as a panorama”. In their paper on polar tourism Hall and Saarinen (2010) also emphasise the lure of remoteness, which includes anonymity and obscurity. These are actually heightened in the tourist mind by “challenges in accessibility’ (p.462).

However, remote travellers also seek specific POIs from their journey. For this market segment the track and vehicle become a conduit (Prideaux & Coghlan 2011; Taylor & Prideaux 2008) to, for example, places with heritage significance (Carson et al. 2009). Heritage includes natural (for example Uluru), Aboriginal (for example rock art), non-Aboriginal (for example colonists and pastoralists) and built elements (for example sidings along the Old Ghan Railway line). Coghlan and Prideaux (2009) found that heritage was an important motivating factor for remote tourists. These POIs are situated at various locations along the track, often separated by significant distance and across jurisdictional boundaries (Cartan & Carson 2009). This configuration again highlights the importance of a collective approach to the management of these destinations.

2.4 Geographically Distributed Teams

2.4.1 Why the GDT lens?

This study has adopted a particular theoretical lens to better understand RTTs. Whilst tourism researchers have frequently commented on the need for a more rigorous use of strong theoretical frameworks (Hall & Boyd 2005; Ruhanen et al. 2010), the use of a variety of theoretical frameworks for research purposes is well accepted. In some cases, the lens has provided the methodology for the research (for example network analysis) and in other studies it has provided applied tools which might offer practical guidance for stakeholders who are the object of the study. This latter orientation offers techniques to operationalise the outcomes of the study, as for example the need for and ways to improve networking. A range of studies use the following approaches: Carson and Macbeth (2005) employ the Systems of Innovation lens in tourism destinations (see also Doloreux & Dionne 2008; Iammarino 2005; Taylor & Carson 2011); Kauppila, Rajala and Jyrämä (2011) use sociograms for their case study on knowledge sharing in GDTs; Chauvet et al. (2011) and Romeiro and Costa (2010) utilise social networks in their research; Scott, Cooper and Baggio (2008) adopt network analysis for their study of tourism destinations; Friedel and Chewings (2011) employ a systems model (see also Leiper 2004; Seemann et al. 2008, Smith 2011); Baggio, Scott and Cooper (2010) utilise a complexity science lens; Kajanus, Kangas and Kurttila (2004) used scenario modelling in their study of culture in rural tourism; and Schmallegger (2011) combines a discussion of clusters and networking when considering innovation in the semi-remote Flinders Ranges (see also Baker & Kan 2011; de OC Fortes & de

Oliveira 2012; Martinus et al. 2005; Smith 2011; Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams & Crowe 2008; Todtling & Trippel 2005).

Each of these approaches has provided valuable insights and where there is a strong nexus with the current study their findings have been woven into the detailed discussion of the GDT lens and its application to RTTs (for example the elements of collaboration and leadership refer to Systems of Innovation studies). The GDT lens is not presented as a superior approach but rather a complimentary one. This is an alternative stance employing a different configuration of critical elements. The GDT framework has methodological relevance in that it provided a template for data analysis, and also applied relevance for stakeholders by offering teams as an organising, structural mechanism.

Further the GDT lens is appropriate for the study of RTTs for several strong reasons. Whilst this perspective of organisations derives from the management discipline, it seemed particularly apt given the geographically dispersed nature of providers on RTTs. Also as the literature suggests tourism providers share in the delivery of a common product, have a need to collaborate, and have the potential to share a common purpose.

The GDT lens offers “a framework for business cooperation”, which Smith (2011, p. 323) suggests is important for touring routes. There is a need for organisational structures that facilitate timely decisions and cooperation between stakeholders, especially those with competing interests (Blackman et al. 2004). Blackman et al. (2004) call for “organisational structures to monitor and control the quality of the tourist experience, the quality of the operator experience, and the

quality of the host environment” (p.67). The need for appropriate structures linking stakeholders is implicit in the above discussions. Many studies argue for the importance and extensive use of collaboration (for example, Lade’s 2010 study of destination clusters and networking) but offer little guidance on how to achieve this. GDTs are a form of organisation that facilitate collaboration and innovation, help nurture a shared mindset, and a sense of collective identity.

Further evidence of the need for an organising mechanism for destinations comes from Cawley and Gillmor (2008). They developed a model of integrated rural tourism as a “framework for managing [the] diversity of stakeholders and structures” that make up rural tourism destinations (p.317). They specifically identify the need for mechanisms which facilitate planning, management and control, and the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders. They stress the need for horizontal and vertical networking amongst stakeholders. The organising mechanism must also facilitate the establishment of acceptable power relationships (Blackman et al 2004). Scott, Cooper and Baggio (2008, p.176) also emphasise “the need to understand the way that destinations are organised”. Hardy, Beeton and Carter (2005) in their study of innovation in regional touring routes argue for a “non-systemic” approach which has as its focus “the human systems that create innovation” (p. 91). The GDT framework has the potential to provide this organising mechanism with a particular focus on the social system that comprises the ‘team’.

The GDT framework was adopted with a similar spirit as Friedel and Chewings (2008, p.27) who use a systems framework in an attempt to gain insights from a tourism study in central Australia; their aim was to determine the contribution

of a participatory systems dynamics model. Whilst their approach had limited success, they did conclude that “a greater focus on the interrelationships amongst partners and sharing knowledge through structured processes” would be effective. GDTs have the potential to achieve this.

Another pointer to the value of the GDT framework comes from Hall, Müller and Saarinen (2009) who emphasise the need for coordination between a wide range of stakeholders in the delivery of tourism product. They suggest it is an important role for government. This thesis suggests this might be a role that is owned collectively by the stakeholder GDT.

Finally, GDTs have not been considered as an organising mechanism for tourism providers in remote destinations. In fact, GDTs have factored in very few tourism studies (see, e.g., Matlay & Martin 2009), which might be an indicator of inappropriateness or possibly a lack of appreciation of the potential application. This study explored the utility of the GDT framework to remote destinations.

This review now turns to a detailed review of GDT literature and an analysis of each element of the chosen framework. Each element will incorporate both tourism and GDT literatures.

2.4.2 The nature of GDTs.

This section will firstly consider the definition and general application of GDTs. A framework comprising seven essential dimensions of GDTs is then detailed. The benefits and challenges associated with the creation and management

of GDTs will then be identified. The choice of the GDTs as a theoretical lens will be addressed.

Teams in various settings (sporting, social, organisational) have been the subject of extensive research (see, e.g., Bell & Marentette 2011) and literature reviews over many years (see, e.g., Cohen and Bailey (1997), Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006), and Mathieu et al. (2008). Kozlowski and Bell (2003, p. 334) define teams as "collectives who exist to perform organisationally relevant tasks, share one or more common goals, interact socially, exhibit task interdependencies, maintain and manage boundaries, and are embedded in an organisational context". Particular studies have explored for example, leadership in teams (Burke et al. 2006), the impact of culture on service quality (Gibson 2003), customer satisfaction (Schneider et al. 2005) and cooperation within teams (Johnson et al. 2006). Whilst there has been some research critical of teams (see, e.g., Allen & Hecht 2004; Corderoy 2004), from an applied perspective teams formed for a commercial purpose have proved particularly useful, with entities frequently utilising teams as a driving force to how they organise. For example, senior management teams (Barrick et al. 2007; Lubatkin et al. 2006; Menz 2012), middle management teams (Bunderson & Sutcliffe 2002), consulting teams (Carson, Tesluk & Marrone 2007), nursing teams (Gibson 2003) and research teams (Gibson & Gibbs 2006) have attracted the interest of researchers and practitioners.

One emerging form of team, where members may not be colocated and who rely for contact on information communication technologies (ICTs) to achieve task objectives, has evolved in more recent times (Kratzer, Leenders & Van Engelen

2006). These teams have been labelled in a variety of ways. They have been called virtual teams, virtual intercultural teams, geographically distributed teams, distributed teams, dispersed teams, electronically dependent teams, computer mediated distributed teams and dynamic teams (discussed, for example, in Gibson & Gibbs 2006 and Connaughton & Shuffler 2007). Polzer et al. (2006) assert that these labels are all describing the same phenomenon and that the literature makes no real attempt to discern differences in these nomenclatures. For the purposes of this research, the term *geographically distributed teams* (GDTs) will be employed (see also Hinds & Bailey 2003 who use this terminology). This label seems to best capture the particular application explored in this research - remote tourism tracks.

There is strong evidence to suggest a notable trend toward increased usage of GDTs (Chudoba et al. 2005; Economist Intelligence Unit 2009; Hinds & Bailey 2003; Kirkman & Mathieu 2005; Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004; Mathieu et al. 2008; Rapp et al. 2010; Staples, Hulland & Higgins 1999; Staples & Webster 2007). Bell and Kozlowski (2002, p. 15) assert that “there has been an increasing emphasis on far-flung, distributed ‘virtual’ teams as organising units of work”. They provide the structural mechanism to connect “geographically, temporally and functionally dispersed” individuals to collectively address a common objective (Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004, p. 806). Kanawattanachai and Yoo (2002) report that as many as 60% of professional employees will work in virtual teams by 2004². These forms of work organisation have been studied in a variety of settings (see Table 2 below).

² This widely cited data is drawn from a report by the Gartner Group, a private commercial research group. Original documentation could not be accessed for this study, because of cost factors.

Table 2: Examples of settings for GDT studies.

Setting	References
Multi-national/multi-cultural context	Connaughton & Shuffler 2007
Research and development	Kratzer, Leenders & van Engelen 2006
High technology industries	Chudoba et al. 2005; Kirkman et al. 2006
Automotive industry	Bal & Teo 2000
Education sector	Hardin, Fuller & Davison 2007
Travel industry	Kirkman et al. 2002
Software industry	Hoegl, Ernst & Proserpio 2007
Innovation in multiple industries	Gibson & Gibbs 2006
Telecommunications industry	Lawley 2006
High technology industries	Chudoba et al. 2005; Kirkman et al. 2006
Automotive industry	Bal & Teo 2000
Education sector	Hardin, Fuller & Davison 2007
Travel industry	Kirkman et al. 2002
Software industry	Hoegl, Ernst & Proserpio 2007
Innovation in multiple industries	Gibson & Gibbs 2006
Telecommunications industry	Lawley 2006

However, whilst there is growing commercial use of GDTs and a corresponding level of interest from researchers, there is also a strong sentiment that more research is needed (Bell & Kozlowski 2002; Kauppila, Rajala & Jyrämä 2011; Mathieu et al. 2008; Staples, Hulland & Higgins 1999).

Within the tourism industry, teams and GDTs in particular have been subjected to limited scrutiny. Hu, Horng and Sun (2009) considered the impact of a team culture on service innovation performance and new service development in 35

international hotels. They conclude that a strong team culture is a factor “that enables the sharing of knowledge to drive innovation” (p. 47). Team culture is defined as including a shared, simple set of rules, expectations and assumptions, which form the basis of member interactions, and a common sense of identity.

Kirkman et al. (2002) studied the impact of virtual teams at Sabre Inc an online travel site. These teams use web-based technologies including email, telephone, video conferencing and video conferencing to develop interdependence between members and hence increase profitability. The challenges for these teams included building trust, the need for leadership intervention and team building, overcoming a sense of isolation, training in team membership skills and using multiple performance measures. They conclude that GDTs at Sabre Inc improved customer service but also that it was a “difficult assignment” (p.77).

Matlay and Martin (2009) and Matlay and Westhead (2005) researched entrepreneurship in GDTs of e-entrepreneurs within the European tourism industry. Matlay and Westhead (2005, p. 297) reported that when using GDTs: "sustainable competitive advantage is achieved through team dynamics and collective contributions towards a common strategy and/or entrepreneurial goal". Building on this initial study, Matlay and Martin (2009) point specifically to higher profits in these teams, which they claim are attributable directly to enhanced collaborative strategies.

Whilst there is little agreement on how best to define GDTs (Fiol & O'Connor 2005), it is clear that they are an iteration of traditional teams and so share many of their characteristics (Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004). Thus, a starting

definition would include the characteristics of traditional teams such as that put by Kozlowski and Bell (2003, p. 334):

“collectives who exist to perform organisationally relevant tasks, share one or more common goals, interact socially, exhibit task interdependencies, maintain and manage boundaries, and are embedded in an organisational context that sets boundaries, constrains the team, and influences exchanges with other units in the broader entity”.

Many of these characteristics have in fact also been specifically researched within the context of GDTs. For example Hinds and Bailey (2003) look at conflict; Kirkman and Mathieu (2005) the antecedents of virtuality; Kratzer, Leenders, and Van Engelen (2006) creativity; Malhotra, Majchrzak, and Rosen (2007) leadership; Hinds and Mortensen (2005) shared identity; Lawley (2006) trust, and Connaughton and Shuffler (2007) culture. These studies seem to suggest that although these qualities might be similar in both GDTs and traditional teams they may well have a different significance and/or be displayed in vastly different fashions in each context.

In addition to these common characteristics, others differentiate GDTs because they are teams within a particular context. The concept of virtuality has frequently been used to describe teams within this context. Unfortunately, the term virtuality has not been used consistently across various studies. Kratzer, Leenders, and Van Engelen (2006) suggest that virtuality is determined by physical proximity, modality of communication, task structure and coordination. Kirkman and Mathieu (2005) identify dependence on virtual tools, media richness, and the synchronicity of member exchanges. A virtuality index was developed by Chudoba et al. (2005), to better understand components of virtuality. From their study at Intel, the authors

identified three overarching dimensions: team distribution, workplace mobility and variety of practices (the latter is about “the process of working virtually” p. 296). Not surprisingly, Gibson and Gibbs (2006, p. 453) suggest that the term *virtual* has been used loosely, but conclude that there is a “continuum of virtuality”. Others (Bell & Kozlowski 2002; Chudoba et al. 2005; Connaughton & Shuffler 2007; Griffith, Sawyer & Neale 2003; Kirkman et al. 2004; Kirkman & Mathieu, 2005; Kratzer, Leenders & Van Engelen 2006) also support the view that there are degrees of virtuality, and that teams can be more or less virtual rather than simply, virtual or not.

Whilst the extent of virtuality existing in GDTs might be moot (see particularly Arling 2007; Kirkman & Mathieu 2005), the weight of opinion indicates there is a requirement for a degree of geographic dispersion (see, e.g., Gibson and Gibbs 2006; Chudoba et al. 2005) and a reliance on technology mediated communications to cross boundaries such as “geography, time and organisation” (Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004, p. 807). Staples and Webster (2007; p. 68) draw the rather strong conclusion that “virtual team members are typically more reliant on information technology for communication”. Both of these defining characteristics will be discussed in some detail below in Section 2.5.

A further five elements (in addition to dispersion and use of technology) were identified for inclusion in the GDT construct for this study: team membership, cultural diversity, shared mindset, collaboration, and leadership. Each of these elements features strongly in the GDT literature and has high relevance to RTTs. Each will be discussed in detail in Section 2.5.

In the next section, the specific GDT framework which constituted the analytical lens for this study is further explained. The use of the I-P-O model to configure the elements of the framework is also addressed.

2.4.3 GDT framework and I-P-O model.

The inputs-processes-outcomes I-P-O model was adopted to show the relationships between the elements of the GDT framework and to capture their dynamic nature. Martins, Gilson and Maynard (2004, p. 809) assert that the I-P-O model "is the dominant framework used in the study of teams" and that it offers a reliable mechanism for "organising and integrating the literature" on GDTs (see, e.g., Ayoko & Callan 2010; Gaudes et al. 2007; Mathieu, Gibson & Ruddy 2006; Mathieu et al. 2007). The approach adopted by Martins, Gilson and Maynard (2004) defines inputs as the resources available to the team, and processes as the mediating events that convert inputs to outcomes. Here team outcomes refer to both issues of personal satisfaction and quality of product and service. For example, culturally diverse team members experience a shared mindset within the team, and as a result have greater personal satisfaction and the team performs more effectively.

Whilst the I-P-O model has been subject to scrutiny and modifications suggested (see, e.g., Mathieu et al. 2008), it remains a core analytical tool for examining teams. It has also been utilised (with some modifications) to better understand sustainable housing in remote Aboriginal communities (Seemann et al. 2008). In this research, the I-P-O model is adopted as an organising template to categorise and connect the elements identified (see Figure 7 below). These elements are consistent with those identified by Martins, Gilson and Maynard (2004) in their major review of GDT

literature. One anomaly in the Martins, Gilson and Maynard (2004) is their treatment of leadership. It is identified in their I-P-O model as an input but is also referred to as a moderator. Further it receives only passing comment within the paper except to say it is an area for additional research. In this study it will be treated as an input for the purposes of data collection and analysis, and its role reviewed in Chapter Five.

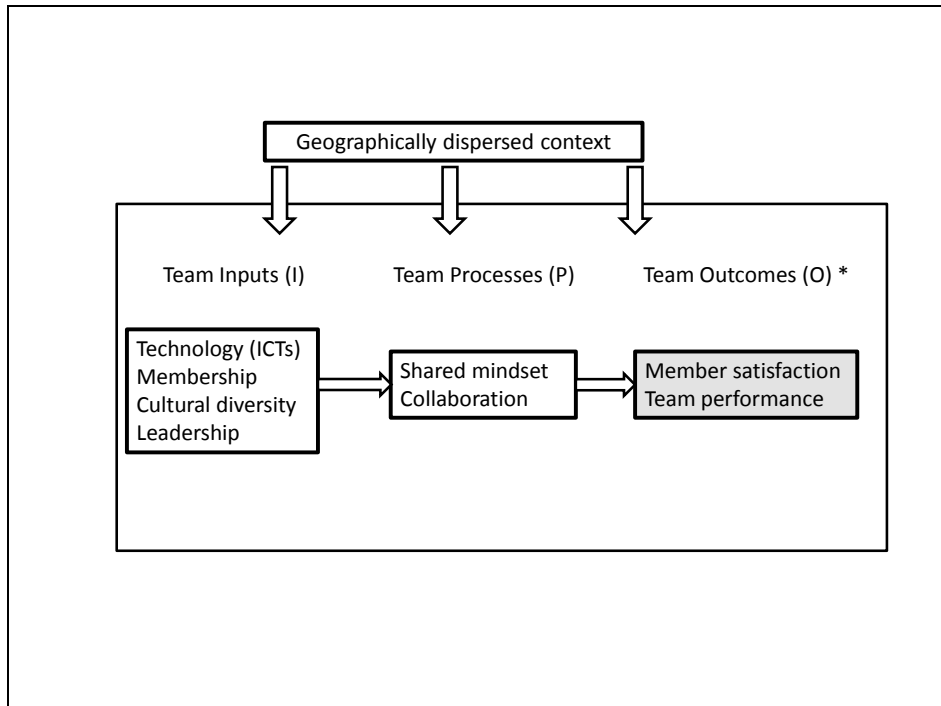


Figure 7: I-P-O model of GDT functioning (adapted from Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004).

*** Note:** This study did not consider team outcomes. The two outcomes listed in this Figure are drawn from the originating paper, and are included as examples only.

Examination of the outcomes dimension of the I-P-O model further highlights the relevance of GDTs to the study of RTTs. The literature suggests a range of outcomes are possible from effective GDTs. At an organisational level, GDTs have shown benefits. Matlay and Westhead (2007, p. 35) found that GDTs made up of entrepreneurs from the tourism industry produced “higher than average profit

margins”. This is consistent with Cascio’s (2000) assertion that GDTs can offer higher profits, better productivity, reduced costs and improved customer service. He further suggests that GDTs are particularly useful in “service-and knowledge-oriented, dynamic” industries (p. 83). Specific advantages at this level include savings of time, travel costs, ability to draw on expertise, more flexible resource allocation and quicker customer response times (Cascio 2000). Kirkman et al. (2002) research of 65 teams in an international organisation concluded that customer service has improved as a result of the formation of cross functional, GDTs (referred to by the author as virtual teams), and market share increased.

Research has also suggested that GDTs can prove beneficial in other ways. Gassmann and von Zedtwitz (2003) suggest that because access to expertise is not geographically bound, the potential for knowledge capture is significant. Kauppila, Rajala and Jyrämä (2011) use the term knowledge activists to capture this role of knowledge sharing across boundaries in GDTs. Gibson and Gibbs (2006) point out that a central component of the innovative process in a team environment is the enhanced capacity to create and acquire knowledge. Knowledge management in turn could improve the quality of decision making in a more general sense (Malhotra, Majchrzak, et al. Rosen2007). Matlay and Westhead (2007) see that competitive advantage will flow from this process of converting data to knowledge. The type of heterogeneity within GDTs can enhance creativity and innovation within the team (Gibson & Gibbs 2006; Lawley 2006), and there is no need for collocation of team members (Malhotra, Majchrzak & Rosen 2007). One particular advantage is that the pace of innovation can be accelerated (Peters & Manz 2007). As discussed above, enhanced collaboration on broader issues is also a potential dividend from GDTs

(Hoegel et al. 2007). Employing a GDT structure can produce positive outcomes and processes. Table 3 below provides a summary.

Table 3: Potential beneficial outcomes from GDTs.

Beneficial outcome	Reference(s)
Better access to diverse expertise	Cascio 2000; Hinds & Bailey 2003; Peters & Manz 2007
Greater flexibility and more dynamic responses to challenges	Gibson & Gibbs 2006; Peters & Manz 2007
Higher profits	Cascio 2000; Matlay & Westhead 2007
Improved productivity	Cascio 2000
Reduced costs (e.g., travel)	Cascio 2000
Improved customer service (e.g., response time)	Cascio 2000; Kirkman et al. 2002
Increased market share	Kirkman et al. 2002
Greater knowledge capture	Gassmann & von Zedtwitz 2003; Hardin, Fuller & Davison 2007
Better at converting data into knowledge	Gibson & Gibbs 2006; Kauppila, Rajala & Jyrämä 2011; Matlay & Westhead 2007
Improved decision making	Malhotra, Majchrzak & Rosen 2007
Enhanced creativity and innovation	Gibson & Gibbs 2006; Lawley 2006; Malhotra, Majchrzak & Rosen 2007; Polzer et al. 2006
Accelerated pace of innovation	Peters & Manz 2007
Enhanced collaboration	Hoegel 2007; Peters & Manz 2007

This is not to suggest that GDTs are a panacea for the coordination of dispersed human resources. To realise these positive outcomes, GDTs also confront certain challenges which may derail their efforts. Lau and Murnighan (1998)

introduced the concept of faultlines into the theoretical discussions of diversity within groups. This is a useful concept to highlight some of the risks associated with GDTs. They define faultlines as “hypothetical dividing lines that may split a group into subgroups based on one or more attributes” (p. 328). These attributes might be demographic (such as gender or age) or non-demographic (such as values or personality) or based on geographic distribution of members (Crampton & Hinds 2005). Typical faultlines might be generated by “many attributes, including demography, skills, personality, and values” (Lau & Murnighan 2005, p. 646). Faultlines or *fractures* can affect the development of groups, the formation of subgroups, levels of intra-group conflict, and power distribution (Lau & Murnighan 1998). Strong faultlines have also been shown to have strong influence over group processes and outcomes and must be actively managed (Lau & Murnighan 2005; van Knippenberg et al. 2011).

In their study of 45 GDTs, Polzer et al. (2006) found that faultlines increased conflict and reduced trust. They also introduce geographic location, defined as “the physical context that surrounds and separates members” (p. 688), as a potential faultline source, making the concept highly relevant to GDTs. They suggest that polarization within groups and an us-and-them mindset are more likely to occur when different subgroups within GDTs are colocated at various sites (p. 681). Molleman’s (2005) study found that faultlines adversely impact on team performance and that the impact is greater when team autonomy is high; a finding particularly relevant to GDTs.

Mathieu et al. (2008), after a comprehensive review of team effectiveness research for the years 1997-2007, report that the strength of faultlines has a negative correlation with group processes, effectiveness of communication, conflict, cohesion and integration of members. Li and Hambrick (2005) further extend the use of faultlines to situations when there are representative factions in the team; a situation frequently encountered with GDTs. Commitment to team objectives, rather than factional objectives, loyalty to team members, and trust could be prejudiced by competition from factional interests. Chudoba et al. (2005) argue that conflicting priorities and loyalties could result from the “presence of different functional and business concerns” (p. 285) among team members. Cascio (2000) suggests that the geographic distribution of team members heightens the potential for threats to team effectiveness.

At an individual level members might feel isolated, because of a lack of face-to-face interaction. This, in turn, might result in low levels of trust within GDTs and, as Kirkman et al. (2002) points out in a qualitative study of an international travel business, trust is one of the major challenges of virtual teams (see also Martinus et al. 2005). Peters and Manz (2007) see trust as a substitute for traditional means of command and control, making it an important antecedent to the effective functioning of GDTs. Indeed, they argue that virtual collaboration is highly dependent on the level of trust. Trust in this context includes trust in each member’s technical competence, in each member’s motivations, and in the institution (based on the norms and rules of that institution).

Other potential challenges associated with significant geographic distribution are identified by Kirkman et al. (2002) as a loss of synergy between team members and feelings of detachment. These conditions could be exacerbated by the potential for internal conflict which Hinds and Mortensen (2005) suggest is prevalent and difficult to manage in GDTs. They suggest that GDTs experience higher levels of conflict than traditional teams, and this can result in lower levels of performance, decreased satisfaction and commitment.

The above challenges associated with the social dynamic of the GDT highlight the crucial role of the team leadership function. This makes the challenge of ensuring an appropriate leadership calculus most important. Malhotra, Majchrzak, and Rosen (2007) found that dispersion created enormous leadership challenges. Indeed Hoegel et al. (2007) assert that not only are leadership tasks more difficult, leadership effectiveness might well reduce with distributed teams. In a study of innovation in GDTs, Gibson and Gibbs (2006) identify several leadership functions which have a direct impact on innovation, including coordination, monitoring, creating a shared vision and communication richness. Leadership effectiveness is a high risk factor and will be discussed further below.

The use of enabling technology is a core feature of GDTs, and because of this may also be a source of threat. Indeed, in their study of self-efficacy for teamwork in GDTs Staples and Webster (2007) conclude that electronic communication technologies “relates to most of the outcomes for virtual teams” (p. 89). The potentially high set-up and maintenance infrastructure costs have been identified as a barrier to the use of appropriate communications technology (Cascio 2000; Matlay &

Westhead 2007). Gibson and Gibbs (2006) hypothesised that factors such as a lack of non-verbal communication reduced communication richness which, in turn, negatively impacted on innovation. Research affirms the risk of providing inappropriate technology and the lack of capability in the use of that technology (Kirkman et al 2006; Matlay & Westhead 2007; Staples & Webster 2007). Items such as take-up and maintenance costs, and inadequate knowledge and skills are important constraints to the adoption of information and communication technologies (Chapman 2002).

The research discussed above has identified some potential threats to the operation of GDTs. These potential threats are summarised in Table 4 below. As can be seen by comparing Tables 3 and 4, to some degree GDTs could be seen as a two-edged sword. Some of the critical elements not only offer pathways to success, but also hold the seeds of failure if not carefully managed.

Table 4: Potential threats to GDTs.

Potential challenges	References
Development of faultlines	Lau & Murnighan 1998; Li & Hambrick 2005; Molleman's 2005; Polzer et al. 2006
Feelings of isolation & detachment	Cascio 2000; Kirkman et al. 2002
Low levels of trust	Kauppila, Rajala & Jyrämä. 2011; Kirkman et al. 2002; Peters & Manz 2007
Conflict	Hinds & Bailey 2003; Hinds & Mortensen 2005
Inappropriate leadership	Gibson and Gibbs 2006; Hoegel et al. 2007; Malhotra Majchrzak & Rosen 2007
Insufficient training	Kauppila, Rajala & Jyrämä 2011
Technology shortfalls	Cascio 2000; Chapman 2002; Gibson and Gibbs 2006; Kirkman et al 2006; Matlay & Westhead 2007; Staples & Webster 2007

It is important to note that the case studies undertaken in the current study did not attempt to evaluate the outcomes of current practices of providers within RTTs. The theoretical outcomes discussed above were accepted as legitimate possibilities. The purpose of this study was to describe and explain rather than assess (Yin 2009). However, the application of the GDT lens created opportunities to surmise tentative future scenarios. Further research more acutely focussed on issues of effectiveness will be required.

In the next section, each of the elements of the GDT framework is considered in some detail, drawing on research from both the tourism and management literature pools.

2.5 The Seven Elements of the GDT Framework

This section considers each of the seven elements of the GDT framework. For each element, it firstly reviews the appropriate GDT literature and then considers the relevant remote and tourism literatures. This process identifies the research questions pursued in this study. The elements considered are: geographic dispersion, ICT capability, team membership, cultural diversity, shared mindset, collaboration and leadership.

2.5.1 Geographic dispersion.

Geographically distributed teams literature.

One of the most frequently cited defining qualities of GDTs is some degree of geographic dispersion between team members. In fact, Chudoba et al. (2005)

conclude that distance is implicit in all definitions of GDTs and is, in fact, “the nexus of all conceptualisations of virtual teaming” (p. 282). Gibson and Gibbs (2006), and Staples and Webster (2007) specifically refer to the need for geographic dispersion. Hinds and Mortensen (2005) talk about teams in which “members are located at significant distances from one another” (p. 291), Malhotra, Majchrzak and Rosen (2007) refer to geographical distribution, and Cascio (2000) argues that geographically dispersed membership is an essential component for such teams.

Staples and Webster (2007) use geographic dispersion as the differentiating factor between three types of teams. They suggest there are traditional teams with all members colocated. Hybrid teams which could, for example, consist of a sub-group of four members colocated at one site and five other members independently located over a larger geographic region; together, the nine individuals constitute the GDT. In the third category, all members are dispersed. Kirkman and Mathieu (2005), taking a slightly different approach, recognise that the usual approach is to include the element of geographic dispersion, but contend that it is not a necessary prerequisite. They suggest that members can be colocated, provided they are utilising virtual tools in furtherance of common objectives (discussed in the following section). The fact that some members can be colocated is echoed by Connaughton and Shuffler (2007), who suggest that distribution or proximity ought be seen as a sliding scale, and not dichotomous (see also Hoegl, Ernst & Proserpio 2007). In other words, for GDTs there exists a continuum of virtuality (Gibson & Gibbs 2006) where some members can be distributed and others colocated.

Other literature.

The presence of a degree of geographic dispersion is consistent with both the tourism-specific and generic-remote literatures. For example, Doloreux and Dionne (2008) observe that remote regions are characterised by significant distances between communities (see also above at Section 2.2). In their study of success factors for businesses in desert Australia, Vilkinas, Cartan and Saebel (2011) give the example of Kunawarritji, a small community located on the Canning Stock Route, a remote touring track in Western Australia. They highlight the isolation of this community (p.5): “The closest regional towns are Marble Bar (600 kilometres to the west) and Alice Springs (1,463 kilometres to the east)”.

Schmallegger (2011) particularly notes the extent of population dispersion in remote regions and that one implication of this is a low critical mass which affects the capacity to develop infrastructure. Prideaux and Coghlan (2011) also refer to the “substantial distances that separate many of the most attractive tourism resources” (p. 248) which can cause problems for tourism providers, particularly access issues for travellers. The need for a 4WD to traverse these regions, and the requisite degree of self sufficiency can dramatically impact traffic flows. Referring to Sami tourism in northern Sweden, Müller and Pettersson (2001, p.17) highlight the impact of these types of remote environments: “the geographical and operational isolation hinder any coordinated promotion of the destination area”.

Conclusion.

GDTs cater for a membership that is drawn from a continuum of dispersed locations. Whilst dispersion of members is the norm, it is not an essential element.

There are some tourism studies detailing the nature of dispersion in remote regions but this literature does not provide specific details of the nature of dispersion of tourism providers within the identified case study sites. The current research will determine the nature and implications of dispersion along the OT and GBH sites.

Research question 1:

What is the nature of geographic dispersion on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?

2.5.2 Information and communication technologies

Geographically distributed teams literature.

A second frequently cited defining dimension of GDTs is the use of virtual tools or information and communications technologies (ICTs) to connect team members (see, e.g., Chudoba et al. 2005; Duarte & Snyder 2006; Staples, Hulland & Higgins 1999; Staples & Webster 2007). Indeed, Kirkman and Mathieu (2005) argue that GDTs exist even where members are colocated, provided they are utilizing virtual tools. Polzer et al. (2006) go so far as to suggest that for GDTs, there is a need for a “heavy reliance on computer-mediated communication” (p. 680) as a means of maintaining intra group communication and off-setting the effects of fractures caused by geographic dispersion. The technology employed enables the geographically dispersed members to “work together through electronic means with minimum face-to-face interaction” (Malhotra, Majchrzak & Rosen 2007, p. 60). Griffith, Sawyer and Neale (2003, p. 280) suggest that ICTs can facilitate the movement of “individual level knowledge into organisationally accessible repositories”.

Packalen (2008) argues for the use of ICTs such as emails, forums, message boards, chat-rooms, video-conferencing and internet broadcasts, as the key thrust for the establishment of virtual collaborative networks. He concludes that ICTs can enable collaboration and develop entrepreneurship and new business opportunities amongst heterogeneous, geographically distributed entities.

Kirkman et al. (2006) also identify emails, teleconferences and video conferences as tools to assist communication within GDTs. Kanawattanachai and Yoo (2002) go further and suggest that ICTs if effectively employed can be used to build group trust; they suggest video conferencing as a means of reducing “the sense of both physical and psychological distance” (p. 210). Specific commercial products (such as Microsoft Sharepoint) have also been identified as a means of enhancing collaboration for virtual innovation projects (Precup et al. 2006). Whilst the extent of reliance on technology is moot it seems clear there must be a degree of electronic dependence within GDTs (Gibson & Gibbs 2006); Staples and Webster (2007) caution that appropriate equipment and training in its use is a vital ICT success factor. Kirkman et al. (2006) also highlight the importance of training and technological support within GDTs.

Other literature.

ICTs are important for the delivery of tourism experiences in remote regions (Polo Peña & Frías Jamilena 2010). Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams and Crowe (2008) suggest they can mitigate the negative impact of vast distances and in particular have a critical role in developing clusters and networks within desert Australia. They employed video conferencing teleconferencing and email to help desert-based

businesses network to become more competitive. Buhalis and Main (1998) also cite the importance of ICTs in facilitating such business arrangements as partnerships, networking and cooperation (see also Polo Peña & Frías Jamilena 2010). Martinus et al. (2005) refer to this as collaborative commerce (C-commerce) which they describe as “the coming together of collaborators using IT to exploit opportunities as they arise” (p. 14). Ali and Carson (2011) identify potential applications for geographically remote businesses, including information storage, enhanced communications between businesses and with institutions (e.g. banking) and governments. They mention the use of websites, emails, wireless technologies and the use of social networking tools (e.g., Facebook and Twitter). In a recent survey, Vilkinas, Cartan and Saebel (2011) found that the owner managers of desert businesses identify, in particular, internet and email access as essential to the conduct of their enterprise. This is consistent with the findings of Sharma and Carson (2002) who highlight the usefulness of ICTs to develop indigenous tourism particularly in remote regions.

Despite the obvious importance of ICTs to remote tourism, the quality and utilisation of this infrastructure is poor. The authors of an NCST & T 2005 study conclude that remote areas are “under-serviced by ICT infrastructure” (p. 26) and that extensive training and education will be required in the benefits and use of ICTs. Sharma and Carson (2002) also identify skill levels as a challenging issue, as is infrastructure costs and a reticence in some cases within individuals to collaboration. Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams and Crowe (2008) point out that in some instances, there are still many businesses “without a computer or with slow dial-up internet access” (p. 194).

Conclusion.

ICTs are an essential feature of GDTs. They play a critical role in connecting team members, enhancing in particular the capacity to collaborate and share knowledge, and building a sense of belonging. The role of ICTs in remote regions for both tourism and non tourism purposes is well recognised. Comment has also been made on the limited availability and low levels of take-up of ICTs in remote regions. However, there is no specific reporting on the two case study sites (apart from the author's own published studies), nor any detailed exploration of the use of ICTs as an enabling tool to connect tourism providers within the case study sites.

Research question 2:

What is the nature of information and communication technology (ICT) usage amongst tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs

2.5.3 Team membership***Geographically distributed teams literature.***

Whilst some team members may be colocated (Kirkman & Mathieu 2005), this is not essential for GDTs thanks to technology usage. As a consequence, a much deeper and broader pool of human resources becomes available, providing opportunities for diverse and cross functional membership (Malhotra, Majchrzak & Rosen 2007). GDT members are frequently drawn from different organisations (Chudoba et al. 2005; Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004), and may simultaneously be members of multiple teams (Mathieu et al. 2008). Peters and Manz (2007) also talk of the capacity to access team member contributions from a variety of sites, thus opening the possibility of a fluid team composition. Members might for example be

included on a permanent basis if their capability was core to the team's purpose or on a temporary basis for short-term needs. This type of fluid membership is a salient feature of GDTs (see, e.g., Cascio 2000; Gibson & Gibbs 2006; Kirkman et al. 2004). Whilst Gibson and Gibbs (2006) warn that not all GDTs are dynamic in this fashion, they frequently do demonstrate, and certainly have great potential to benefit from, this type of flexibility.

This type of membership versatility is associated with high workplace mobility (Chudoba et al. 2005) and flexible structural arrangements. Members may occupy positions that are core to the operation of the team or more peripheral to it (Matlay & Westhead 2007). Core members are intimately and regularly involved with the activities of the team while peripheral members have a less central role to play and might be called on to participate on a temporary basis. Both core and peripheral members might also have other significant interests and time demands (often generated by other requirements of their business).

Other literature.

In the remote tourism setting there have been frequent calls to engage the “entire system with its collective of stakeholders” (Schmallegger, Taylor & Carson 2011, p. 396). Baum and Hagan (1999), for example, call for coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders (public, private, tourism providers) in peripheral tourism destinations; so do Greiner et al. (2005) in their case study of tourism in the remote Carpentaria region of Australia.

In particular, there is a strong call for the specific involvement of local communities (Friedel & Chewings 2008; Prideaux 2002; Sharpley & Roberts 2004),

via partnerships (George, Mair & Reid 2009; Hegarty & Przezborska 2005; Moore 2005) and collaborations (Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel 2012). As Saarinen (2007b) suggests, communities need a voice as an important stakeholder. Similarly, Queiros and Wilson (2005) in their case study of Mkambati Nature Reserve South Africa, stress the importance of active participation of the local community in both planning and management of the destination. Saarinen (2011a) makes similar observations in his study in Namibia. He identifies a disconnect between communities and tourism development, citing low participation, control and empowerment. Community involvement is seen as critical to strategic tourism development. This form of active involvement not only enhances the tourism experience, but also provides the opportunity for local communities to have more influence over the manner of their engagement with tourists, and the distribution of the rewards from tourism activity (Saarinen 2011b).

Yuco Pty Ltd (2003) in their study of tourism on the Gibb River Road (itself an iconic touring track) called for mechanisms that allowed for extensive community involvement in regional planning. They identified a diversity of community stakeholders (including pastoralists, Aboriginal communities and local organisations), also service agencies (government, store managers and teachers for example) and visitors (e.g. tourists and tour operators). Whilst each of these diverse stakeholders has an interest in tourism, that interest might be central to their enterprise (for example tour operators) or might be more peripheral (e.g., pastoralists). Beames (2003) in research into the wine tourism industry explains that for many growers tourism is a secondary or even tertiary dimension to the overall business, and so only demands a partial, or part time, involvement from the business.

Whilst this current research affirms the need for stakeholder involvement that caters for various degrees of interest in tourism, these studies offer little by way of mechanisms to achieve this. In addition, as discussed in section 2.2 above, remote regions are characterised by a very mobile population and workforce. This creates a need for flexible engagement mechanisms which cater to permanent and temporary participation.

Conclusion.

Because of their potential to draw on a geographically distributed membership base, through the use of computer mediated communications, GDTs have access to a diverse and flexible team membership pool which might be engaged on a part time and/or full time basis. Members may be dispersed or colocated. This capability fits with the requirements of tourism providers on RTTs. There is a diversity of stakeholders with interests in the provision of remote tourism, and as discussed above these stakeholders are geographically dispersed. There is a compelling need for engagement with and between these stakeholders, particularly local communities. Some stakeholders have a variety of agendas, with differing degrees of emphasis on tourism. This would dictate a core or peripheral interest in tourism. However, the literature does not define the general nature of these tourism interests, nor does it address the specific stakeholder connections on the GBH or OT. Further, whilst there is recognition of the need for some interdependent behaviours, processes to achieve this, such as teamwork, within this context have not been addressed.

Research question 3.

What is the nature of the relationship between tourism providers and what are the implications for team membership of a GDT?

2.5.4 Cultural diversity

Geographically distributed teams.

Another element of the GDT framework is a diversified culture. Within teams the nature of cultural diversity might emanate from member differences associated with nationality, race, functional speciality, or home organisation style and values (Erez & Gati 2004; Gibson & Gibbs 2006). Connaughton and Shuffler (2007) comment on the “complex, multifaceted nature of culture” and suggest that it “includes ethnic, racial, gender and other demographic characteristics as well as collectives or groups with which an individual may associate” (p. 395). Commonly used dimensions to identify cultures include *demographics and functionality* (Mathieu et al. 2008), *norms, philosophies, language* (Baba et al. 2004), *values* (Chudoba et al. 2005; Maznevski & Chudoba 2000), *history and experiences* (Cogburn & Levinson 2003), *national cultures* (Wright & Drewery 2006) and patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving (Gibson & Gibbs 2006). Chudoba et al. (2005) particularly highlight the importance of values, because of their role in shaping perceptions, establishing decision criteria and influencing interpersonal relationships.

GDTs exhibit a distinctive, robust cultural mix. Given GDTs frequently bring together individuals from different organisations, backgrounds, locations, professions and nationalities they can develop a very complex and heterogeneous culture.

Members' relationships are affected by their individual frames of reference; priorities and objectives; work backgrounds and styles; and common mindset. This will have an impact on collective expectations and behaviours, team outcomes and processes.

Gonzales (2010) suggests that diversity could generate virtuous or viscous cycles within organisations resulting in growth or decline. For example, GDTs often comprise several subcultures (Workman 2005) which may or may not be aligned. Consider a GDT comprised of several colocated members, with a strong corporate parent culture which might be at odds with other individuals within the team drawn from different locations, organisational teams or other relational boundaries (Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004). This type of scenario might create internal faultlines. Van Knippenberg et al. (2011, p. 327) argue strongly for the need for "shared objectives [to] attenuate the effects of diversity faultlines". Crampton and Hinds (2005) highlight the risk of ethnocentrism in this situation; they argue for ethnorelativistic learning (where differences are recognised and valued, and empathic behaviour is the norm) to overcome the impact of faultlines caused by cultural differences. Lau and Murnighan (1998) also highlight the risk of increased conflict in heterogeneous groups and the attendant threats to overall group cohesion (Lau & Murnighan 2005). Such differences can be accentuated where individuals join the team representing other groups or interests. In such cases, the group might split into factions with the risk of increased emotional conflict, task conflict and potentially "behavioural disintegration" (Li & Hambrick 2005, p. 795).

Stahl et al. (2010) also identify increased conflict as an outcome for diversity in teams, but interestingly to a lesser degree when members were dispersed rather

than colocated. Distributed teams had greater social integration. The authors suggest this may be caused by team members either wishing to avoid adopting radically different positions because of their dispersion, or because culturally diverse members recognise the need to be “more attentive to cultural diversity” (p. 704).

Diversity has been shown to enhance creativity (Polzer et al. 2006). Creativity in diverse teams has a strong connection to successful innovation and has been linked to creativity and improved problem solving capability (Bassett-Jones 2005). These authors argue that for diversity to produce these benefits there needs to be a strong collectivist orientation with common goals and commitment within the team, as well as effective leadership. These factors will be discussed further in Sections 2.5.5 and 2.5.7 below.

Other literature.

The need for wide ranging engagement with stakeholders in remote tourism destinations has been discussed above. Typical of the diversity of stakeholders were those identified by Cawley and Gillmor (2008, p. 324): “tourists, tour operators, owners and managers of tourism businesses, providers of resources for tourism, institutions involved in pertinent policy and planning, and host community members in destination areas”.

There is strong evidence to suggest that these stakeholders are heterogeneous in nature (Breidenhann & Wickens 2004; Nilsson 2000). Hardy and Beeton (2001) argue that destinations comprise diverse stakeholders and that their perceptions are heterogeneous. This research recognised the existence of diverse interests and the need to integrate those interests in some way. Murray and Graham (1997, p. 523) talk

of the need for the principle of “inclusion and mutual respect” between diverse stakeholders. However, in remote environments connecting stakeholders is not easy. Müller and Huuva (2009) refer to the need for cooperation between indigenous and non-indigenous tourism providers, but conclude that this can be “difficult since it required time and regular contact, which [it] was sometimes difficult to maintain” (p. 124). These studies highlight the importance of an organising structure or mechanism that can encourage this higher order synthesis.

The nature of the diversity identified in remote regions is extensive. For example, the Yuco (2003) study of the Gibb River Road identified a diversity of community stakeholders. These stakeholder groups represent quite different cultural groups and, as Schmallegger (2011) found, the existence of barriers separating groups such as pastoralists and tourism providers was not uncommon.

This diversity extended to differences within stakeholder groups (Hardy 2006). Hardy points out that within the tourist market itself, segments must be expected; for example in her work, the recreational vehicle (RV) market is identified as a discrete segment. Other studies have identified the seniors (Prideaux 2002), caravanning (Prideaux & McClymont 2006) and 4WD (Taylor & Prideaux 2008) segments. There is also a significant diversity amongst enterprises. Martinus et al. (2005) identifies important differences between small to medium enterprises based on factors such as staffing levels, structure, attitudes, innovation capacity, and business experience.

The case study sites for the current study were also spread over multiple political and administrative jurisdictions. Hall, Müller and Saarinen (2009) argue that

these formal boundaries become blurred in these types of remote tourism destinations. Cultural differences between remote communities and between communities and non-Aboriginal stakeholders were also identified by Cartan and Carson (2009) in their study of the GBH. They found these differences to be important factors influencing the levels of cooperation and collaboration around the GBH.

Conclusion.

GDTs frequently exhibit a complex and heterogeneous culture. They comprise individuals from different organisations, backgrounds, locations, professions and nationalities. This diversity can result in positive outcomes such as greater creativity and innovation, and a broader diverse knowledge base but there are attendant threats. These include the potential for conflict and the existence of faultlines. Stakeholders in remote tourism destinations are heterogeneous, and the need to recognise and engage with diverse stakeholders is acknowledged in the tourism literature. However, there has been scant research into the implications of neither cultural diversity for providers on RTTs nor how to harness the power of those differences. The ability of GDTs to harness the power of diversity seems compatible with the need to engage the diversity of providers in these remote destinations.

Research question 4.

What is the nature of cultural diversity on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?

2.5.5 Shared mindset

Geographically distributed team literatures.

Because of their potential to draw on a geographically distributed membership base, through the use of computer mediated communications, GDTs are most likely to be characterised by a flexible team membership and a diversified culture. This degree of membership flexibility and diversification leads to issues surrounding the shared mindset of members.

As discussed above, members of GDTs are often geographically dispersed and so have minimal face-to-face communication, they may also have notable cultural differences across a large stakeholder group and a somewhat fluid team membership. In these conditions, it becomes critical to nurture a key requirement for teamwork, a shared mindset (Hinds & Mortensen 2005). This involves the need to cultivate a strong sense of identification within GDTs (Joshi, Lazarova & Liao 2009). In her case study into virtual team innovation in a mobile communications business, Lawley (2006) points to the need for members to be connected to, and reliant on each other through a common framework and shared objectives. She warns of the perils of “disenfranchised people” (p. 16). Bal and Teo (2000) also identify the role of shared values and trust in establishing a common mindset.

The quality of teamwork is identified by Hoegel et al. (2007) as an effectiveness factor in their study of 145 virtual teams in the software development industry. Their conceptualisation of teamwork includes such items as mutual support and information sharing, cohesion, commitment to the team and goals that are clear and accepted. Staples and Webster (2007) support this approach and include such

requirements as *clear objectives* and *standards*, and *developing team spirit* in their best practice items for GDTs. A shared identity and shared context are identified by Hinds and Mortensen (2005) as two factors moderating the relationship between dispersion and conflict. In teams high on these factors, members see themselves as similar to each other, with a broadly positive mutual disposition, and have access to the “same information and share the same tools, work processes, and work cultures” (p. 293). Webster and Wong (2008) use the term *shared identity* to describe the necessary cohesiveness in GDTs.

Peters and Manz (2007) identify shared understanding as an important antecedent to virtual collaboration. They see this factor to be similar to the concepts of shared mental models and collective mindset and to be much more than just common objectives. It requires that members have a clear understanding of the team’s strategic direction, of the roles all members play and the expertise they contribute, and of individuals’ wants and expectations. The outcomes are a greater awareness of the collective good, a willingness to work toward that, better cooperation, and more motivated team members. This is similar to Chudoba et al.’s (2005) requirement of a smooth working relationship consisting of a tacit appreciation of team needs and requirements.

Trust between members is also a factor in developing a shared mindset. The study by Gibson and Gibbs (2006) asserts the need for a psychologically safe communication climate to enable innovation in GDTs. This involves “support, openness, trust, mutual respect and risk taking” (p. 462) as factors which contribute to the development of a shared mindset. Kanawattanachai and Yoo (2002) also

highlight the importance of trust in GDTs stressing the strategic importance of trust building and its ongoing maintenance.

Other literature.

There is a risk in the development of tourism destinations with multiple dispersed stakeholders that they will operate from separate agendas (Nash & Martin 2003). Greiner et al. (2005) conclude that stakeholders tend to act independently in ways that reflect their own interests, instead of “seeking to influence the tourism product and regional profile” (p. 50). In her study of tourism in the Flinders Ranges, Schmallegger (2011, p. 29) alludes to the consequences of disparate agendas: “[there] was sometimes confusion over competences and responsibilities among various organisations”. Nash and Martin (2003) also identify the risks of working toward separate agendas. Smith (2011, p. 334) argues that it is critical that touring routes stakeholders “could be defined by a shared geography of interest”.

Several tourism studies have identified characteristics of a shared mindset as identified above, but have not generally configured them into the more complex construct discussed above. For example, Hall et al. (2009) refer to the need for a shared purpose, and Saarinen (2007b, p. 103) identified the need to consider the “values, preferences and needs” of communities within tourism destinations. Saarinen (2007a, p.42) applies the term ‘social capital’ to capture the requisite mutuality between destination stakeholders which is characterised by cooperation and trust. He stresses the need to agree mutual benefits, and involve a wide range of community interests. Similarly, Schmallegger (2011) stress the importance of destination stakeholders being of one mind and seeing themselves as part of a

collective, with common interests. This connotes an explicit willingness to recognise and value the needs of other stakeholders, to share information, ideas and opportunities, and to commit to a form of higher order objectives that embrace the needs of all stakeholders, as well as their own. In their study of tourism in remote Australia, Friedel and Chewings (2008) refer to the existence of these characteristics as a shared mental model of tourism.

The desirability of shared goals between stakeholders has been identified by many studies. Romeiro and Costa (2010, p. 88), and Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams and Crowe (2008) argue that stakeholders need a strong commitment to collective objective(s), while Benson and Blackman (2011) advocate the presence of a commitment by stakeholders to shared common goals, with the expectations that “intuitive working relationships could emerge” (p. 1146). Saxena’s (2006) case study of tourism businesses also identifies common goals and shared values as important factors in relationship building. Saxena warns (p.275) that this can be a time consuming even arduous process, but that it must be seen as an essential “long-term life-supporting course” for stakeholders, rather than a quick fix. Effective relationships are seen to offer the potential for more effective problem solving and decision making, greater certainty, learning opportunities and self-sustaining innovation. However, these relationships are dynamic, not static, and could be anywhere on a continuum from collaborative to confrontational. For this reason, relationships require careful management and constant attention (see also Cawley & Gillmor 2008) if the overriding team ethos is to be one of cooperation, rather than competition (Briedenhann & Wickens 2004). The role of team leadership in this will be discussed below at Section 2.5.7.

Other studies have identified the threats to collaboration of stakeholders adopting destructively divergent mindsets (Beesley 2004; Hardy et al. 2005). Buultjens, Wilde and Crummy (2011) see that smooth working relationships are a necessary prerequisite for effective collaboration and this requires a commitment between stakeholders at both the individual and organisational levels; a relationship characterised by high levels of trust and reciprocity, “give and take” (p. 339). Beesley (2004) takes a more operational view and identifies the need for mutually agreed core values and operating principles. Hardy et al. (2005, p. 95) identify potential threats to establishment of the type of common mindset required for effective collaboration between stakeholders. They note the natural tendency for competition between providers, and “historic animosities and simple lack of appreciation on (*sic*) interdependence”; but if stakeholders engage with “mutual support and encouragement” collaboration will be encouraged to the benefit of regions.

In their study of the Gibb River Road, Greiner and Larson (2004) recommend the establishment of collaborative arrangements such as partnerships. They stipulate that stakeholders need a preparedness to participate and cooperate. This positive mindset to engage is no doubt a critical antecedent to the success of collaborations regardless of the particular structure employed. Greiner et al. (2005) identify multiple stakeholders on the Gibb River Road, with diverse driving interests. Host communities might focus on the impact of tourism and increasing numbers, pastoral lessees with damage to property, tourism providers with access, and tourists with freedom to free-bush camping. These sometimes competing motivations form barriers to the creation of a common mindset. Structures or processes that meld

disparate priorities and objectives into overarching purpose are required for effective collaboration.

Conclusion.

Extant research recognises the importance of a shared mindset within teams, a priority within GDTs. It is the emotional glue which binds and in part helps overcome the tyranny of distance. Some essential elements are common objectives, shared values, trust, mutual support, shared identity and shared understanding. A shared mindset is a critical factor in mitigating the challenges GDTs face such as dispersion and diverse cultures. There is also recognition of the need for common ground between stakeholders involved in remote tourism destinations. For example it is seen as a useful substitute for competition and self interest, and a means of improving collaboration. This requires a connection between stakeholders underpinned by trust, shared objectives, and a sense of community. These outcomes might not come easily and might require an investment of considerable time and effort. However, there has been no deep exploration of these issues, of how they might fit into a comprehensive framework for understanding aspects of tourism destinations. Nor has there been any explicit study of the two case study sites in the current study.

Research question 5

What is the extent of a shared mindset between tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?

2.5.6 Collaboration

Geographically distributed teams literature.

Huxham and Vangen (2005) define collaboration as “any situation in which people are working across organisational boundaries towards some positive end” (p. 4). Such boundary spanning arrangements have been shown to offer a significant potential for competitive advantage (Dyer & Singh, 1998), because they provide access to a wide range of resources. For example, they have been employed in the search for vertical integration, gaining access to supplies, achieving economies of scale, cost sharing, and access to scarce human competencies (Chiesa & Toletti 2004). Because of their flexibility, collaborative arrangements have been utilized in a wide range of settings and industries, including for example biotechnology (Chiesa & Toletti 2004), resource management (Bidwell 2006), the non-profit sector (Guo & Acar 2005), and health care (Cramer, Atwood & Stoner 2006).

The process of collaboration may be operationalised through a variety of configurations (Gray & Wood 1991; Guo & Acar 2005; Hibbert, Huxham & Ring 2006), including loose arms-length amalgams, highly structured joint ventures, or clusters (Martin & Sunley 2003; Porter 1998). GDTs are a structure that is highly appropriate to nurture collaborative processes. Kratzer, Leenders, and Van Engelen (2006) go so far as to suggest that in very broad terms the prime objective of GDTs is to generate superior outcomes through the process of collaboration despite the spatial distribution of members. Matlay and Westhead (2007) argue that collaboration has shown to be profitable in GDTs, and that it is a sound strategy for growing market share. In a case study at Orange, Lawley (2006) describes how successful

collaborative processes resulted in superior knowledge management. Precup et al. (2006) identify the importance of collaboration in successful research GDTs.

Collaboration within GDTs demands a functioning level of interdependence between team members (Mathieu et al. 2008). Stewart, and Barrick (2000, p. 137) define interdependence as the “extent to which team members cooperate and work interactively to complete tasks”. In their study of innovation in 44 research and development teams Kratzer, Leenders, and Van Engelen (2006) also highlighted the importance of interdependencies on collaboration and communication within GDTs. Peters and Manz (2007) also assert that members in GDTs must construct dependencies if they are to successfully collaborate. They conclude that an essential condition for interdependence (and hence collaboration) are high levels of trust and a sense of shared purpose between team members. Du Chatenier et al. (2009) identify numerous factors influencing collaborative knowledge creation in open teams, including leadership, social cohesion and reciprocal commitment.

Other literature.

Lohmann and Nguyen (2011) identify the importance of collaboration and broad-based consultation in the destination planning process. They argue for a holistic approach to destination development. The need for greater collaboration between tourism stakeholders in remote areas is also frequently acknowledged (see, e.g., Hall & Boyd 2005; Schmallegger 2011; Scott, Cooper & Baggio 2008). In their review of several case studies of peripheral regions (including remote), Blackman et al. (2004) develop a tourism systems framework consisting of the management processes of planning, organising, leading and controlling. They identify effective

collaborations as a dominant success factor. This involves connecting stakeholders through various mechanisms including associations, cooperative partnerships and strategic alliances. Cartan and Carson (2011) emphasise the need for collaboration between stakeholders in the management of touring routes. They argue that these routes are often dynamic in that they have a fluid composition and so the collaboration must be flexible but structured in a manner that promotes long term commitment, have a strategic perspective, and also function in a way that offers a valued experience to users. These authors have also identified the importance of collaboration between stakeholders for RTT destinations (Cartan & Carson 2009). They argue that the remote nature of these tracks, the dispersed POIs and relatively modest traffic flows necessitate collaboration, not competition. The National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism (2005b) also identifies collaboration as an important factor in cross border cooperation and as a mechanism for effectively managing tourism destinations, through resource sharing and information exchange.

Whilst collaboration is no doubt important to tourism destinations, it is not widely adopted in some remote regions. Cartan and Carson (2009) highlight the lack of collaboration on the GBH: “There appears to be little advantage taken of potential opportunities to diversify the market through collaborative arrangements” (p.169). In their later study of the OT, Cartan and Carson (2011) also saw limited evidence of collaboration. The factors mitigating against greater collaboration include cultural differences, low levels of trust, historic animosities, and perhaps a lack of appreciation of its long term strategic value. They suggest that collaboration is more likely to occur between organisations that are geographically dispersed because they are not competing in the same local marketplace. Smith (2011) also affirms the

importance of distance when seeking cooperation on touring routes, because of the perception of other providers as non-competitors. Breidenhann and Wickens (2004) argue for a collaborative mindset that recognises the interdependence between stakeholders “in which they realise that they are competing with other destinations and not with each other” (p. 201). Kauppila, Rajala and Jyrämä (2011) argue that this approach would empower stakeholders, another essential for collaboration.

A significant outcome of improved collaboration is innovation. The collaboration – innovation nexus has been identified in remote tourism destinations (see, e.g., Carson & Taylor 2006a, 2008; Schmallegger 2011; Taylor & Carson 2011). Indeed, Prideaux (2002, p. 386) suggests that a destination needs to be able to “periodically re-invent itself” from time to time. Schmallegger, Taylor and Carson (2011) and Schmallegger (2011) also argue strongly that tourism in outback regions suffers from low levels of innovation. Destinations have failed to diversify and rejuvenate in part because of stakeholder dispersion and geographic isolation. In their case study of innovation systems in peripheral areas, Doloreux and Dionne (2008) also identify proximity of stakeholders as a barrier to innovation along with a lack of infrastructure, critical mass and organisational thinness which they define as “the absence or low level of cluster dynamics development, of support infrastructure and of specialized services” (p. 263). They conclude that an important step in nurturing innovation is to recognise the importance of the central role of local institutions. They call for more research into the configurations and organising structures to facilitate complete stakeholder engagement.

Conclusion.

The importance of the collaborative process is widely recognised in the GDT literature. GDTs offer a way to enhance collaboration between dispersed team members. There is a well defined need to collaborate within remote tourism destinations but its value has not been fully harnessed. GDTs might offer a suitable organising mechanism, appropriate to the remote tourism context, and that would enhance collaboration and its attendant outcomes.

Research question 6.

What is the nature of collaboration between tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?

2.5.7 Leadership***Geographically distributed teams literature.***

Leadership is an important factor in team functioning (see, e.g., Chauvet et al. 2011; van Knippenberg et al. 2011). The role of the GDT leader is particularly challenging because it involves managing the offshoots of virtuality if full benefits are to be drawn from the GDTs (Kratzer, Leenders, & Van Engelen 2006). Webster and Wong (2008), Duarte and Snyder (2006), and Lawley (2006) also stress the importance of effective leader interventions in developing teamwork in GDTs. Hoegel et al. (2007) suggest that the GDT leadership function is more challenging, than with colocated teams, with issues such as information sharing between members and commitment requiring particular attention in virtual environments. In addition, there may be limited, if any, face-to-face contact, there is a need for members to

work independently, tasks require voluntary cooperation and, often there is a greater degree of diversity within the team.

With these types of characteristics, the leadership task becomes different from that of the traditional team leader. (Hoegl, Ernst & Proserpio 2007; Malhotra, Majchrzak & Rosen 2007). GDT team members must be more self-managing rather than closely supervised in a hands-on, vertical leadership fashion. Self management implies a degree of empowerment which, Peters and Manz (2007) argue, is appropriate to GDTs rather than conventional leadership. The link between empowerment and effectiveness has been a theme in GDT research. Kauppila, Rajala and Jyrämä (2011) argue that empowerment enhances leadership flexibility, and Rapp et al. (2010) found empowerment had a positive impact on virtual sales teams.

It has been argued that a shared approach to leadership, or distributed leadership, is appropriate in these types of team environments (see, e.g., Currie, Lockett & Suhomlinova, 2009; Peters & Manz 2007). Team leadership has traditionally taken the form of individual leadership (Currie, Lockett & Suhomlinova 2009) delivered by a designated person. Ensley, Pearson and Pearce (2003, p. 334) refer to this as “vertical leadership” or “hierarchical leadership, where a specified leader directs all group activities, feedback, and rewards”. Whilst this form of top down, command and control approach to leadership may well be appropriate in many contexts, there is evidence to suggest that GDTs might require a different approach. Mathieu et al. (2008, p. 451) suggest that when leadership is shared “team-level leadership emerges from members’ collective knowledge, skills, and abilities”. Millward, Banks and Riga (2010) note that this type of leadership has proved

effective in self-governed teams. In this context team leaders must develop reflexive skills enabling them to review their own performance in an ongoing process of internal self-moderation. This is consistent with argument by Vilkinas, Cartan and Seabel (2012) that leaders in remote environments must possess behavioural complexity. These leaders must be flexible and able to perform multiple and at times paradoxical roles in response to dynamic environmental stimuli; this requires the ability to learn and adapt (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001). In the long term, this process helps build collective self-efficacy and improved team performance.

One particular form of shared leadership appropriate to GDTs is distributed leadership. Distributed leadership has also been described as shared, democratic, devolved, participative and collaborative (see Currie, Lockett & Suhomlinova 2009, for a summary of this literature). It is particularly relevant in pluralistic environments “characterised by diffuse power and divergent objectives, and where complexity of issues lies beyond the capacity of any individual leader” (p. 1739). Currie, Lockett and Suhomlinova (2009) further suggest there is a continuum of distributed leadership types, ranging from strong, where there is no designated leader, through to weak where a formal leader retains final control but team members engage heavily in problem solving and contribute to decision making (see also Solansky2008). For the purposes of this research, and to achieve clearer definitional focus, it is important to more clearly differentiate between the strong and weak ends of the continuum. The ‘weak’ cluster of behaviours of the continuum will be specifically referred to as participative leadership. In an earlier paper Currie and Lockett (2007) distinguish participative leadership as a separate approach, rather than as part of distributed leadership continuum. In this approach the team displays elements of collegiality,

where members contribute and participate in decision making, but the leader is still “a first among equals” (p.349). Gillespie and Mann (2004) also highlight the need for leaders to consult widely and encourage participation.

Distributed leadership embraces those behaviours more suited to the strong end of Curry and Lockett’s (2007) continuum. Bal and Teo (2000, p. 210) make the observation, “the role of the virtual team leader needs more than just a single leader [L]eadership is continuously rotated from member to member”. Katzenbach and Smith (1997) also suggest that the leadership role could float between members contingent on the issue and expertise within the team. This view sees the entire team performing the functions of the leader, including those responsibilities associated with team maintenance such as motivation, communication, support, feedback and decision making, as well as more task related functions, requiring for example production or marketing expertise. This is a “conceptualisation of leadership wherein team members are empowered and leadership responsibilities are shared” (Ensley, Pearson & Pearce 2003, p. 334).

Distributed leadership has been shown to produce positive team outcomes. In broad terms it has been shown to enhance team performance (Carson, Tesluk & Marrone 2007; Ensley, Pearson & Pearce 2003; Peters & Manz 2007), and is, in fact, a stronger predictor of team effectiveness than unitary leadership (Ensley, Pearson & Pearce 2003, p.333). Mathieu, Gilson and Ruddy (2006) found that teams whose members are psychologically empowered can impact positively on performance and customer satisfaction. Katzenbach and Smith (1997) also concluded that distributed leadership can produce more effective teams. This is in part because the team

develops a robust self-efficacy and team members create what Ensley, Pearson and Pears (2003, p.334) call “a team climate of interdependent reinforcement”. Solansky (2008) reports that distributed leadership has the potential to generate high levels of confidence, job satisfaction, commitment, shared identity and a common sense of purpose within team members. Katzenbach and Smith (1997) and Ensley, Pearson and Pearce (2003) identify positive outcomes as greater commitment to purpose, collective vision and group cohesion. Peters and Manz (2007) also argue that within the context of GDTs conventional leadership is not appropriate and if empowered, team members can operate as self managed teams capable of strong collaboration.

In summary for the purposes of this study, three styles of leadership have been identified: traditional, participatory and distributed. Distributed leadership empowers teams and is suited to GDTs. It potentially offers significant benefits over traditional and participatory styles.

Other Literature.

Leadership in remote regions and particularly remote tourism destinations has not received a great deal of attention from researchers (Benson & Blackman 2011; Blackman et al. 2004). However, the available research does consistently note the importance of leadership in remote destination management (see, e.g., Benson & Blackman 2011; Nash & Martin 2003; Prideaux 2002). In some cases, this is because of the remoteness itself (for example the difficulty of attracting skilled leaders), and in other cases it is linked to the need to respond to these conditions (for example, the need to collaborate as identified by the National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism (2005b)).

National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism (2005b) argue for strong leadership and co-ordination to champion outback tourism. Blackman et al.(2004) also highlighted the importance of strong leadership particularly in remote tourism destinations. They described the role of the leader as motivating, giving direction and also providing a developmental role with staff through education and training. This is consistent with a traditional leadership approach. They suggest leadership in remote peripheral areas is a high risk factor because this type of leader-champion with requisite expertise or experience may not exist locally and it could be very difficult to attract an appropriately skilled person to these types of locations.

Benson and Blackman (2011) conducted a case study of a volunteer tourism venture based in England with two sites on islands in Indonesia. The focus of the study was on distributed leadership, which involved sharing leadership responsibility between members of a group. These leaders act as a bridge connecting various stakeholders and promoting common understanding (see also Timperley2005). They concluded that distributed leadership has the potential to “enable faster and more effective change through collective responsibility and responsibility” (p. 1148). They suggest that this form of leadership has potential in the tourism industry where small firms are dispersed but can be harnessed to improve performance through a commitment to a collective purpose. However, they warn that the benefits of this form of leadership network will be harder to achieve “the more complex and disparate the elements of the organisation” (p.1148).

A recent survey of owner-managers and managers of desert businesses, many of which had a tourism dimension, identified effective leadership as a significant

success factor (Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel 2011). Most important was the capacity of leaders to demonstrate behavioural complexity, which refers to the ability to perform a variety of sometimes paradoxical roles in response the varying environmental demands. This implies a flexible, adaptive leadership style. However, this research did not otherwise differentiate styles of leadership.

It is clear from earlier discussions that collaboration in various forms (e.g., networks) is an important component for businesses in remote regions. The importance of leadership in the collaborative process has been widely recognised and suggestions made recommending particular styles of leadership. Baker and Kan. (2011) stress the critical role of leadership and argue that it is of a different form in networked organisations. In their case study of geographically separated networked organisations they identify leadership as an important performance factor. They argue for participative leaders, with a holistic perspective, who are good communicators, capable of empowering members. This was particularly important when cultural differences were evident because of the need to cultivate shared values. They suggest the need for more organic leadership in networks. Avery (2005) refers to this approach as distributed leadership. George, Mair and Reid(2009) call for a facilitative style of leadership, which they suggest is particularly appropriate for stakeholder engagement. In a study of collaboration in regional tourism clusters and networks in Australia, Lade (2010) concludes that strong leadership was “one of the preconditions for successful cluster development” (p.659). Elbe et al.(2009) also argue that destination-management organisations (DMOs) need to adopt a leadership responsibility for developing networks and co-operative activities. Their references to the need for a “facilitation strategy” and “voluntary co-operation” (p.286) are

consistent with the participative style of leadership outlined above. Importantly they stress the need for that leadership to be recognised as legitimate by stakeholders and based on an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Whilst their conclusion that a DMO should play this role might be challenged, their description of leadership role is defensible.

Previous discussions also highlighted the need for greater innovation in remote regions, a process which also calls for effective leadership. For example, in their study of systems of innovation in remote tourism destinations Schmallegger, Taylor and Carson. (2011) identified the importance of strong leadership to harness destination capabilities. Carson and Taylor (2008) also refer to the role of entrepreneurs to drive innovation (see also Carson & Jacobsen 2005), while Taylor and Carson (2011) identify the need for visionary leadership in the search for innovation in desert tourism destinations.

In sum, leadership has been identified as an important factor in the development of remote tourism destinations. However, the research in this field is not extensive. Whilst there has been some recognition of the potential for distributed leadership, the approach that has received most mention as the style of leadership appropriate to this environment is described as *facilitative*, *flexible* and *participative*. This approach is consistent with the description of participative leadership adopted above.

Conclusion.

Leadership is an important element in the effectiveness of GDTs and in the development of remote tourism destinations. Distributed leadership is an approach

which has been explicitly explored in GDTs but there has been very limited explicit application to remote tourism destinations such as RTTs. There has been no consideration of RTT providers configured as a team which functions with a distributed leadership approach. Literature dealing with remote tourism destinations does encourage in broad terms a facilitative, flexible and participative approach to leadership.

Research question 7.

What leadership is evident among providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the theoretical context for the study, and has identified the research questions to be addressed in this study. The review firstly considered literature addressing the more general nature of remote regions and how these environments impact on those residing, working or engaged in enterprise in those regions. Both case studies are embedded in remote environments. The review then considered tourism specific research into the nature of peripheral and remote tourism, touring routes and 4WD tourism. Next, literature exploring GDTs was considered. This included a discussion of the nature of GDTs and each of the specific elements of the GDT framework adopted for this research. The tourism specific research was applied to each element of the framework. Adoption of the I-P-O model as the organising mechanism for the elements of the GDT framework was addressed.

The following chapter details the research methodology adopted in this study. The use of a case study design, as well as data collection and data analysis tools are presented

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The case study was adopted as the research method for this thesis. This form of research method is ideally suited to the type of complex, contemporary issues explored in this study (Gerring 2007). Also the use of the GDT lens as the core theoretical proposition which defined the underlying structure for data gathering and analysis is desirable for case study research. As Yin (2009, p. 130) argues: “The propositions would have shaped your data collection plan and therefore would have given priorities to the relevant analytical strategies”. This methodological approach provided the necessary scope to directly address the core research purpose of this study, i.e., *to explain the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs as geographically distributed teams (GDTs)*, and each of the specific research questions.

Two case studies were used, the GBH and the OT. These employed multiple data gathering methods and forms of data analysis³. An overview of the data collection and analysis process is shown in Figure 8.

This chapter firstly justifies the choice of the case study method (Section 3.2.1). It then describes each stage of the research design and provides an explanation of the nexus between those stages as applied to the current study (Section 3.2.2). It then offers a rationale for the choice of each case study site (Section 3.3). Next, a detailed discussion of the data gathering process is described (Section 3.4). Finally, data analysis techniques are described (Section 3.5).

³ A small portion of the methodology description in this chapter is drawn from the author’s published paper, ‘Local engagement in economic development and industrial collaboration around Australia’s Gunbarrel Highway’ by Cartan & Carson (2009).

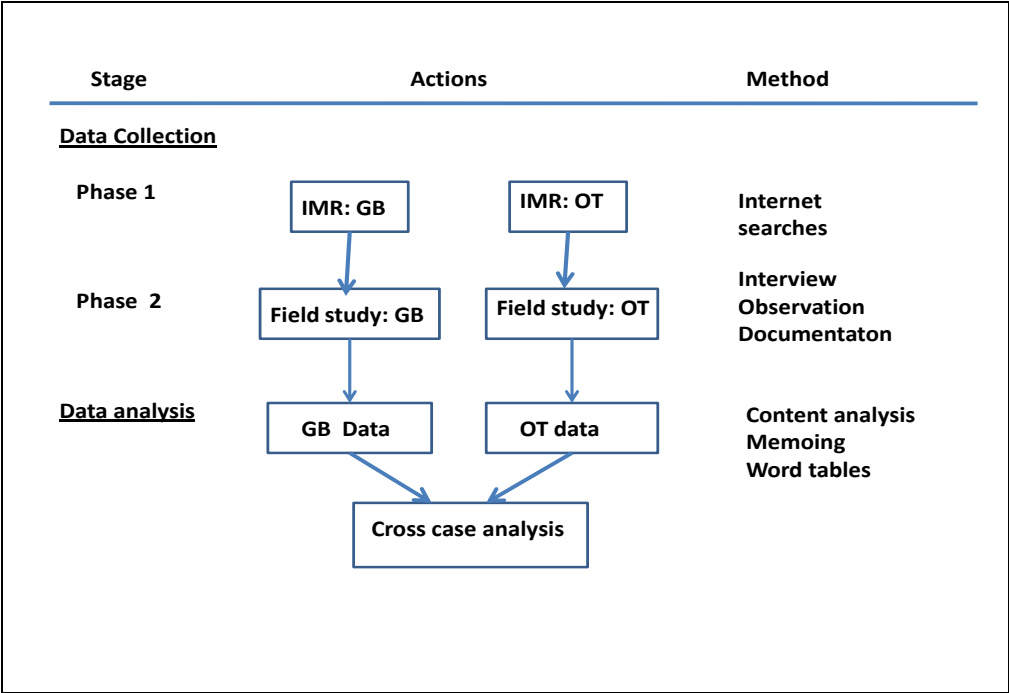


Figure 8: Research process.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Choice of the case study research design.

Research questions such as those identified for this study, which attempt to explain complex contemporary scenarios, particularly lend themselves to a case study research design (Yin 2009). Gering (2007, p. 63) stated that “case studies enjoy a natural advantage” in these types of studies. Dooley (2002, p. 338) has suggested that the case study, as a research strategy, is appropriate “to explore contemporary phenomena and the associated contexts that are not clearly evident”. He also proposed that case studies are particularly suited for very complex scenarios requiring a “detailed contextual analysis” (p. 335).

Yin (2009) identified specific criteria to assist in determining the suitability of case study design for particular studies. His approach argued that case studies are appropriate when:

- the investigator has little control over events
- the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon
- the situation is a real life context.
- the situation is a "complex social phenomena" (p. 4).
- "the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident" (p. 18).

Each of these criteria was applied to the current study in Table 5 below. An examination of the table supports the choice of a case study methodology.

Table 5: The appropriateness of the case study methodology.

Criterion	Applied to the current study
Control	There was no active change intervention or manipulation of behaviours or events by the researcher in this study
Contemporary	The focus was on current and future practices and as such was on a contemporary phenomenon.
Real-life	RTTs are a real-life tourism destination comprising multiple stakeholders
Complex	Extant research on enterprises in remote regions (e.g., Greiner et al. 2004; Yuco 2003) confirmed the complexity of social, economic and governance factors at play in locations such as the GBH and OT.
Boundaries	The boundary of the case was unclear both geographically and in terms of stakeholder involvement. Whilst some entities were clearly within the case bounds in terms of their role and location (for example those providers of tourism services geographically located on the GBH or OT) the relationship of others was problematic (e.g., 4WD tour operators based away from the GBH or OT).

In addition, the case study is a well regarded methodology in a broad spectrum of the social sciences (Perren & Ram 2004), particularly the two core

theoretical areas canvassed in this study – tourism and geographically distributed teams. Case studies have been adopted for “the treatment of a wide range of themes and topics in tourism research” (Xiao & Smith 2006, p. 742; see also, e.g., Brown & Hall 2000; Carson & McBeth 2005a; Greiner & Larson 2004; Hall, Müller & Saarinen 2009; Hardy 2006; Lohmann & Pearce 2012; Prideaux & Carson 2011; Yuco 2003). The case study also features as a research method to examine GDTs (see, e.g., Kirkman et al.’s 2002 study of virtual teams at Sabre Inc, and Lee-Kelley’s (2006) case study of virtual teams in the IT industry).

Given this evidence, the case study method was considered as an appropriate choice of research design for the current study. Two case study sites were selected. The rationale for these selections is discussed in some detail in Section 3.3.

3.2.2 A positivist case study approach.

The methodological approach to this study was guided by positivist assumptions, consistent with the philosophical approach to case studies adopted by Yin (2009) and Eisenhardt (1989). These positivist assumptions are reflected in the current study as demonstrated by the following factors:

1. The research design was clearly articulated at the outset, and included the specification of the research questions, the units of analysis, and the methods adopted. It also adopted a clear deductive pathway to the research findings. This application of a defined design logic is consistent with the approach adopted by Yin (2009).

2. The intention in this study was not to test or develop theory (see, e.g, approach of Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007), but rather use existing theory to explain and understand a given contemporary situation. Yin uses the term explanatory case, rather than exploratory or descriptive (Yin 2003).
3. The study was heavily embedded in existing literature, with a core theoretical framework developed at the outset to guide data collection and analysis.

3.2.3 Overview of research design

Research design may be defined as the “logical model of proof”(Nachmias & Nachmias 1992, cited in Yin 2009, p. 26) that traces a clear line from the research questions, through the data collection and the data analysis stages, and ends with the rational and defensible conclusions of the study (see Figure 9). Yin (2009) refers to this as creating a blueprint for the research that allows the reader to trace the evidentiary process. A brief overview of this process as it applies to this thesis is set out below.

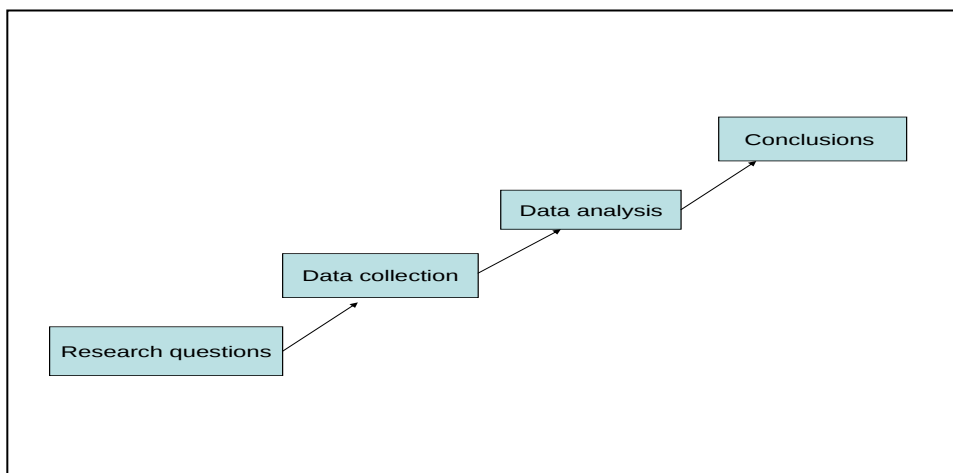


Figure 9: Research design stages.

Research questions.

In this study, the research question and sub-questions emerged from the literature and were clearly articulated prior to data collection (see Chapter 2).

Data collection.

The study drew upon a variety of data sources to address these questions. Yin (2009) argues that several sources of data are commonly used in the development of case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artefacts. Gerring (2007, p. 68) states that the case study “should not be defined by a distinctive method of data collection”, and that a variety of data sources are appropriate. Similarly, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) stress the need for “recursive cycling” through multiple data sources highlighting the importance of the extant literature as part of the mix. Such variety of data sources adds to the richness of the case and helps to ensure that a broad swath of issues is canvassed, with the aim of completeness (Yin 2009). It also provides opportunities for ensuring construct and internal validation by confirming the accuracy of data and conclusions through the process of triangulation (Stake 2000). Yin (2009, p. 115) describes this as adopting a corroboratory mindset seeking to develop “converging lines of enquiry” and Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that multiple data sources are the hallmark of case studies provided the various sources are blended through the process of analysis to create an integrated understanding of the “puzzle” (p. 544).

The data from each case study site were collected over two phases:

- **Phase 1:** Internet mediated research (IMR) was conducted for each case.

- **Phase 2:** Field work involving interviews, observation and document acquisition was conducted on each case study site.

In Phase 1, IMR was employed to acquire data from each case study site. The purpose was to build a critical understanding of the nature of tourism activity associated with the GBH and OT, and also to inform the GDT elements identified in Chapter 2. Data that was considered relevant but extraneous to those elements, was also retained and used to develop a rich contextual description of the case study sites.

Phase 2 was a field study at each case study site. Both case study sites were visited twice over a 12-month period (2007/2008). Relevant tourism providers were interviewed at each case study site. Also, direct observations were made of both case study sites, and relevant documentation was collected. In addition, other key tourism providers were interviewed at locations some distance from the case study site (for example in regional centres). Each of these data collection phases is described in detail in Section 3.4 below.

Data analysis.

The elements of the GDT framework were used as a template to analyse this data. In Phase 1, the IMR data were collated, coded and categorised, and trends identified. This data were also used to inform start-up decisions about the approach to Phase 2. In Phase 2, within-case interview data were analysed using content analysis. In similar fashion, documentation and researcher observations were coded, categorised and integrated into the interview data mix. Phase 1 & 2 data were then integrated for each case study site. Finally, cross case synthesis was achieved with

the use of word tables to search for commonalities and fresh domains. Each of these data analysis phases is described in detail in Section 3.5 below.

Conclusions.

The final stage of the research design is the conclusions that are drawn from the study. Yin (2009, p. 38) holds that analytic rather than statistical generalisations are a valid outcome from case studies: “here previous theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the study.” In this research, the GDT factors were used to generate analytic generalisations, or as Gerring (2007, p. 7) suggests, “insights”, that were founded in the empirical case study data. The conclusions from this study will be addressed in depth in Chapter 5 (Discussion). These conclusions address the research questions and have clear and identifiable links to the case study data.

3.3 Choice of case study sites

Two similar cases were chosen for this study. Gerring (2007, p. 88) argued that “purposive non-random selection procedures” are appropriate in the selection of cases and that random sampling cannot be applied to case studies. Cases are chosen because they are representative or typical of their genre. He acknowledged that representativeness cannot be totally assured, but it is sufficient to show there is a high “probability” (p. 96) of similarity, and argued that cross case data from like cases is particularly strong.

The two cases for this study were representative of RTT destinations in remote regions. They were chosen from a list of 10 remote 4WD tracks listed in Glover and Zell’s (2007) publication, *Australia’s great desert tracks: Anne Beadell*

Highway, Birdsville Track, Canning Stock Route, Gunbarrell Highway, Oodnadatta Track, Strzelecki Track, Tanami Track, Old Ghan line, The Gary Junction Highway and the Simpson Desert Tracks. As recommended by Yin (2009) each track was considered against a set of operational criteria to determine its suitability for the current study. (The criteria are listed in Table 6 below).

Table 6: Criteria for selection of case study sites.

Criterion	Comments/question
Remote location	Is the case study site geographically based in its entirety in a remote region?
A variety of resident groups	Is there a diversity of resident stakeholders connected to the case study site, including aboriginal people, non-aboriginal people, businesses, and pastoralists?
A variety of tourism providers along the track	Are there several tourism providers geographically located within the case study site thus providing some variety?
Discreet and accessible start and finish points	Are the geographic extremities of the case study site discrete and identifiable (e.g., by a town or community), thus providing a clear sense of case study site identity? Are the extremities accessible, thus facilitating access by a broad range of tourists?
Iconic – recognizable	Does the case study site have a high profile likely to attract 4WD traffic by virtue of its iconic status?
Notable attractions	Are there a variety of POIs within the case study site?
A genuine remote tourism experience.	Does the case study site offer a remote tourism experience including a variety of driving conditions and opportunities for bush camping?
Food, fuel & water supplies	Are basic commodities available within the length of the case study site, thus ensuring that case study site traffic is not limited to a small number of hard core independent travellers?
Facilities	Are basic facilities (e.g., camping & showers) available within the case study site?
Researcher logistics	Is it practical for the researcher to access the case study site?

The criteria emerged from the underlying purpose of the research which was to explore a particular type of tourism activity in a particular type of environmental context. It was also informed by the researcher's experience of travelling in and writing about these regions (Cartan 2009a), as well as the practicalities of accessing these remote case study sites..

The GBH and the OT were chosen because they exhibited a "good fit" with each of the requisite characteristics. The other tracks did not exhibit a similar degree of fit. A detailed description of the research "fit" of the GBH and OT is in Appendix Two.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Phase 1: Internet mediated research

Although the use of the Internet for scholarly research purposes is a relatively recent phenomenon it has achieved significant and growing support (see, e.g., Evans 2007; Hewson et al. 2003; Tingling, Parent & Wade 2003). It offers some distinct advantages including notable cost and time efficiency, and easy access to large and diverse data sources (Hewson et al. 2003). These characteristics were compelling for the study due to the geographically remote location of the case study sites and the need to canvass a potentially diverse commercial and social network of linkages connected to the case study sites.

A variation of IMR, described by Taylor (2005), was used to identify tourism providers with an interest in the case study sites, and the nature of their involvement.

The Google search engine was used because it is “by far the most popular, handling 46.2% of all search queries” (Evans 2007, p. 24).

The IMR involved three integrated search strategies. Firstly, the search term “Gunbarrel Highway” or “Oodnadatta Track” was entered into www.google.com.au. The second phase of the IMR involved a process referred to by Taylor (2005) as “snowballing” (see also Nash & Martin 2003). This is a similar process to that described by Graebner (2004) to identify informants for his case study on mergers and acquisitions. For the current study, this facilitated the identification of additional resources by following the URLs which are provided on the pages which have just been accessed (Taylor 2005, p. 90). These secondary and tertiary links identified additional organisations and this strategy was continued until no new organisations were identified.

In the third and final phase of the IMR, additional Google searches were conducted using POIs within the case study sites. These included names of towns, communities and points of touristic interest that were listed on a detailed 4WD map of each case study site produced by HEMA Maps (2006). This step acted as a safety net to ensure the capture of any relevant items not identified by the initial broad search term. The snowballing technique employed in Phase 2 above was adopted to identify additional secondary and tertiary links from these primary links. Table 7 below provides details of the IMR search terms. A total of 35 primary POI searches were conducted for both case study sites.

Table 7: IMR search terms.

Gunbarrel Highway	
Wiluna	MangiRockholes
Granite Peak Station	Warburton
Glenayle Station	Warakurna
Carnegie Station	Giles Weather Station
MungilliClaypan	Docker River
Geraldton Bore	Lasseters Cave
Everard Junction	Kata Tjuta
Mt Beadell	Yulara
Camp Beadell	Uluru
Beadell Tree	Uluru-Kata Tjuta NP
Oodnadatta Track	
Marree	William Creek
Muloorina Station	Peake Historic site
Lake Eyre	Algebuckina
Curdimurka	Oodnadatta
WambaKadarbu Mound Springs	Painted Desert
Conservation Park	
Coward Springs	Arckaringa Station
Beresford	Marla
Strangways	

For each phase of the IMR the returned content was scanned and manually filtered until significant repetition of returns indicated a satisfactory coverage of the target population. Each of the URLs identified as important was then examined to identify the following data.

- The name of the organisation linked to the case study site and a description of its primary purpose (e.g. travel agent, 4WD magazine, book seller, vehicle hire, grocery sales or Shire Council). The generic term *organisation* refers to a ‘group of people who work interdependently towards some purpose’ (McShane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2013, p. 564), and who may be configured in a variety of structural forms including sole traders, partnerships, corporations and government agencies.
- A general classification of the type of activity carried out by the organisation. Organisations which acted as commercial tourism facilitators and agents, such as tour organisers, travel agents, accommodation brokers and travel media, were classified as ‘tourism intermediary’. ‘Tour operator’ included those organisations offering group tours by coach, mini bus or 4WD. Organisations which offered some tourism services but were primarily targeting local markets (such as community stores) were classified as ‘tourism ancillary’. ‘Core tourism’ organisations were predominantly or entirely tourism related, for example, caravan parks. ‘Administering government’ organisations included elected government bodies and the economic development and natural resource management agencies associated with them. Those government funded organisations specifically charged with tourism marketing and promotional responsibilities were classified as ‘tourism marketing agency’. There were also ‘consumer groups’ which included motoring organisations and 4WD recreation clubs.
- The proximity of the organisation to the case study site. The physical location of each organisation was of particular interest because it offered some

perspective on the location of the relevant economic activity and hence the source and destination of cash flows. Knobben and Oerleman's (2006) 'geographic' proximity dimension was used as a basis for identifying the geographical nexus between the case study site and each organisation. Organisations located on the GBH or OT or in locations and population centres directly adjacent were deemed to be in 'close geographic' proximity. The second classification was 'desert Australia' which included desert locations not immediate to the case study site, such as the town of Alice Springs (some 450 km from the eastern end of the GBH). The third and fourth categories were 'other Australia' (i.e. non-desert) and 'international'.

The research also considered the nature of the relationships between the various organisations. Indicators of the attitude of stakeholders toward collaborative activity, particularly its utility and potential were also sought. Details of each URL which was subject to the above detailed examination were entered onto an IMR data form (see Figure 10 below).

IMR: Track Search Data Primary link:..... Number: Search date:..... URL:..... Organisation: Primary business:..... Contact: Location: Description of site content: Organisation Classification: Commentary:.....

Figure 10: IMR data from for each URL subjected to detailed examination.

For the GBH case study site, the generic search (conducted in 2007) using the term ‘Gunbarrel Highway’ produced 17,500 results. The returned content was scanned and manually filtered to ensure that the URLs were in fact connected with the case study site. The filtering process continued until a significant repetition of returns indicated a satisfactory saturation of the target population. Saturation was reached when the process did “not bring any new information to light” (Boeije 2002, p. 393). A total of 120 URLs were filtered; this was the saturation point. Of these, 63 were, after close scrutiny, deemed to be relevant to the research questions. This number included some “snowballing” from initial returns. In addition, the 20

individual POI searches produced some 28,228,983 returns in total, of which 600 (including some snowballing) were reviewed for connection to the research questions and until saturation occurred. Of these, 39 URLs were deemed of value to the research. In total, 102 URLs were subject to detailed analysis (see Table 8 for details).

Table 8: Summary of IMR search for GBH.

Search summary	Generic	POIs	Total
Number of URLs/locations	17,500	28,228,983	28,246,483
Results reviewed	120	600	720
Detailed examination	63	39	102
Total scrutinised	63	39	102

For the OT case study site, the generic search (conducted in 2008) using the term ‘Oodnadatta Track’ produced 53,000 results. The returned content was scanned and manually filtered to ensure that the URLs were, in fact, connected with the case study site. The filtering process continued until a significant repetition of returns indicated a satisfactory saturation of the target population. This involved a review of 110 URLs, this was the saturation point. Of these, 42 were, after close scrutiny, deemed to be relevant to the research questions. This included some “snowballing” from initial returns. In addition, 15 individual searches were conducted using the key POIs located on the OT (refer to Table 7). This produced some 1,273,622 returns in total, of which 515 (including some snowballing) were examined for connection to

the research questions and until saturation occurred. A more detailed exploration of 57 URLs exhausted the search (for details, see Table 9).

Table 9: Summary of IMR search for OT.

Search Summary	Generic	POIs	Total
Number of URLs/locations	53,000	1,273,622	1,326,622
Results examined	110	515	625
Detailed exploration	42	57	99
Total scrutinised	42	57	99

3.4.2 Phase 2: Field data

The field study involved travel in a 4WD vehicle along both the GBH and OT on two separate occasions over a 12-month period (2007/2008). The HEMA Maps Australia's great desert tracks maps (HEMA Maps 2006) were used to identify the locations of major tourism POIs along the GBH and OT. In addition to these specific POIs the actual drive along each case study site was also considered part of the tourism experience and the driving conditions were noted at various locations. Also, various features that reflected the essence of the remote tourism experience were observed and noted (for example, bush camping sites and places of unusual visual appeal). The field data were gathered through interviews, direct observation and documentation.

Interviews

Interviewing is the most commonly used data collection method in qualitative research (Polkinghorne 2005). In particular, case study research interviews often provide a crucial source of rich empirical data (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007). Fontanna and Frey (2000) also affirm the central role of interviewing in qualitative research. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with tourism providers located both on the case study site and off-site.

A semi-structured interview approach was adopted (Fontanna & Frey 2000), because of the exploratory nature of the study. This required that the researcher provide gentle guidance on broad areas of interest and use open-ended questions. This semi-structured approach provided greater flexibility to capture the complexity of motivations, behaviours and relationships of the interviewee. Minimal, flexible structure and careful non-directive prompting provided subjects every opportunity to “tell their stories in their own words” (Fassinger 2005, p. 160). The aim was to gain maximum understanding of the complex whole whilst minimising the imposition of predetermined constructs “that may limit the field of enquiry” (Fontanna & Frey, 2000, p. 653). Polkinghorne (2005, p. 142) described this as a conversation involving “a give-and-take dialectic”.

In-depth interviews were undertaken because it was anticipated that “different individuals or groups involved in the same line of enquiry have complicated, multiple perspectives” on the issues under investigation (Johnson 2001, p. 105). Further, Johnson recommended the use of in-depth interviews for qualitative research where interviews hold deep understandings of issues which require more than cursory

common sense interpretations. This approach to interviewing has been used frequently in tourism research (see, e.g., Lane & Waitt 2007).

For the GBH case study 22 interviews were conducted. These were drawn from nine different geographic locations of which 12 were in the regional towns of Alice Springs ($n = 10$), Laverton ($n = 1$) and Wiluna ($n = 1$) and the remaining 10 were at locations on the case study site. Table 10 provides details of those interviewed, the nature of their role and their location.

Table 10: GBH interviewees.

Identifier	Category(s) of interviewee	Location
GBH1	Government employee	Warburton
GBH2	Community representative	Warakurna
GBH3	Community representative	Warburton
GBH4	Tour operator	Alice Springs
GBH5	Tourism agency	Alice Springs
GBH6	Tourism operator	Alice Springs
GBH7	Tourism operator	Alice springs
GBH8	Aboriginal elder	Alice Springs
GBH9	Government employee	Alice Springs
GBH10	Tourism operator	Ross River*
GBH11	Tour operator	Alice Springs
GBH12	Community representative	Docker River
GBH13	Tourism development	Alice Springs
GBH14	Tourism operator	Yulara
GBH15	Tourism operator	Yulara
GBH16	Government employee	Alice Springs
GBH17	government employee	Warburton
GBH18	Government employee	Warburton
GBH19	Tourism agency	Laverton
GBH20	Government employee	Alice Springs
GBH21	Tourism operator & Pastoralist	Carnegie Station
GBH22	Tourism operator	Wiluna

* While Ross River is not on the GBH case study site, the tourism operator conducts business in the case study site.

For the OT case study 22 interviews were conducted. These included interviewees from 12 locations of which six were from the state capital of Adelaide ($n = 4$) and the regional centres of Port Augusta ($n = 1$) and Coober Pedy ($n = 1$). The remaining 16 were from locations along the case study site. Table 11 provides details of those interviewed, the nature of their role and their location.

Table 11: OT interviewees.

Identifier	Category of interviewee	Location
OT1	Pastoralist & Tourism operator	Pastoral Station
OT2	Tourism operator	Marree
OT3	Tourism agency	Marree
OT4	Tourism operator	Marree
OT5	Tourism operator	Marree
OT6	Community representative & Government employee	Marree
OT7	Tourism operator	Marree
OT8	Community representative	Marree
OT9	Pastoralist	Pastoral station
OT10	Pastoralist	Pastoral station
OT11	Tourism operator	on-site location*
OT12	Tourism operator	on-site location*
OT13	Tourism operator	Coober Pedy
OT14	Tourism operator	on-site location*
OT15	Tourism operator	Oodnadatta
OT16	Tourism operator & Aboriginal elder	Maree
OT17	Tourism operator	on-site location*
OT18	Tourism consultant	Adelaide
OT19	Community representative	Adelaide
OT20	Tourism agency	Adelaide
OT21	Tourism agency	Adelaide
OT22	Government employee	Port Augusta

*To preserve anonymity, locations cannot be identified.

Sautter and Leisen (1999) suggest that tourism researchers should attempt to consider all those who have a legitimate interest in the tourism system under consideration. These potential informants could be drawn from a wide range of sources including individuals, small and large commercial organisations, government agencies, communities, or special interest groups (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997; Phillips, Freeman & Wicks 2003). Hardy and Beeton's (2001) guiding criteria for identification of stakeholders not located in the bounds of the case study site was that they have a meaningful connection with or interest in the tourism dimension of the research undertaken. This connection might be in the form of a commercial interest, a statutory responsibility, or a cultural link.

For the current study, informants were identified primarily through the IMR. Some were also identified through the interview process using Graebner's (2004, p. 753) "snowball sampling" technique. Those interviewed represented a cross section of interests in tourism on the GBH & OT (see Tables 10 & 11 above). Potential informants likely to have only a minimum impact (Phillips, Freeman & Wicks 2003) on the case study sites were ignored. The number of interviewees was also circumscribed by the practical constraints of availability and physical access.

Questions were asked about general economic activity, current tourism activities, the nature of relationships with others both on and off the case study site and what the future might hold for tourism within the case study site. Because of the approach to the interviews (ie semi-structured and in-depth), some questions asked (see, e.g., on-site questions 1,2, 3 & 9) were quite general in nature to both put the interviewee at ease and also to gain generic background information relevant to the

general purpose of the study (ie the organisation of tourism providers and the implications). Other on-site questions were used as a lead-in to more specific areas of interest. For example, question 9 (threats to business) led to a discussion on the use and availability of ICTs (Research question 2). Or, question 7 (collaboration) led to commentary on the distances between tourism providers (Research question 1). These follow-up discussions were prompted by, either the interviewee or the researcher and provided a comfortable pathway, legitimised by the interviewee, to the research questions. The specific questions used in both the on-site and off-site interviews are presented in Table 12 below. A sample interview consent form and participant information sheet is at Appendix Three.

Table 12: Interview Questions.

Questions for Field Study (on-case study site)
1. Tell me about your business. 2. What are the strengths of your business? 3. Do you see any threats to your business? 4. What types of experiences do you offer tourists? 5. What do you think tourists look for on the Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track? 6. How does your business fit into the Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track overall? 7. What sort of connections/collaborations do you have with other providers on the Oodnadatta Track or outside? 8. What does the future hold for tourism on the Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track? 9. How could your business be improved? What would need to change? 10. Any other comments?
Questions for Field Study (off-case study site)
1. What is your opinion of the Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track in terms of tourism activity? 2. Do you see the Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track as “systems” or as a series of independent experiences? 3. What types of experiences does the Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track offer tourists? 4. What do you think 4WD'ers look for on the Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track? 5. What does the future hold for tourism on the theGunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track? 6. How could Gunbarrel Highway/Oodnadatta Track be improved? What would need to change? 7. Any other comments?

Note. These were semi-structured interviews and these opening questions were intended as discussion starters and led to a variety of follow-up questions. Depending on the flow of the interview the sequence or content varied.

Direct observation

Records of observational data were made using a dictaphone and/or camera.

Of particular interest were existing tourism related activity, tourism facilities and infrastructure, and indicators of any potential or current tourism development.

As the observational data largely took the form of physical artefacts (such as roads, road signs, buildings, tourist attractions) rather than behaviours and human

interactions the types of issues highlighted by Angrosino (2005) (such as objectivity, ethics and intrusion) were not pertinent to this study. The observations described in this study can with a degree of confidence be recorded in an objective fashion, and as such relied upon as reasonably objective data for the purposes of triangulation (Gummesson 2000; Modell 2005) and drawing conclusions or independent assertions. Yin (2009, p. 110) has argued the importance of this type of data in case studies, and particularly their potential to “add new dimensions for understanding either the context or the phenomenon being studied.” He also recognises the value of photographs from case study sites. See Appendix Four for sample photograph register. Table 13 below contains a list of the locations visited.

Table 13: Locations visited on the GBH and OT.

Gunbarrel Highway (GBH)*	
Wiluna	MangiRockholes
Granite Peak	Warburton WA
Glenayle	Warakurna WA
Carnegie Station	Giles Weather Station
MungilliClaypan	Docker River
Geraldton Bore	Lasseters Cave
Everard Junction	Kata Tjuta
Mt Beadell	Yulara / Ayers Rock Resort
Camp Beadell	Uluru
Beadell Tree	Uluru-Kata Tjuta NP
Oodnadatta Track (OT)**	
Marree	William Creek
Muloorina Station	Peak Historic Site
Lake Eyre	Algebuckina
Curdimurka	Oodnadatta
WambaKadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park	Painted Desert
Coward Springs	Arckaringa Station
Beresford	Marla
Strangways	

Note: * Locations sequenced geographically west to east.

** Locations sequenced geographically south to north

Documentation

Documentation is seen as a critical data source in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Yin 2009), and is commonly employed in tourism case studies (see,

e.g., Xiao 2006). A wide range of documentary data was used in this study. These were sourced on the case study site at public venues, from interviewees, public record data bases, and the Internet.

These data were used for a variety of reasons. Apart from adding a valuable contribution to each of the individual GDT elements, it also at times opened new lines of enquiry (e.g., from an unpublished report), or identified new informants (e.g., from a local advertising brochure), or new potential 4WD tourism initiatives (e.g., from a Council submission), or allowed confirmation of earlier tentative conclusions through a process of triangulation (e.g., from a promotional compact disc). A sample of the document register is at Appendix Five.

Memoing

During the data collection process frequent use was made of memoing. Although memoing is most commonly associated with grounded research it is appropriate to all qualitative research (Birks, Chapman & Francis 2008). Memos are conceptual notes made by the researcher to capture initial interpretive ideas at the time of the primary analysis (Martin & Turner 1986; Miles & Huberman 1994). However, Birks, Chapman and Francis (2008) argue that memoing can be used at various stages of the research process (not only analysis), to “record ideas, musings, and reflections” to clarify thinking. It enables the researcher to better engage with the data. In the data collection process, memos were used to provide additional objective context to the data. For example, a photograph taken of an item of signage to Lassetter’s cave on the GBH included a memo identifying the exact location, and other contextual information such as “This is one of three clearly posted signs

pointing to Lassetter's cave on the GBH." This memo was "tagged" to the photos for retrieval purposes. The memo template is at Appendix Six. Memoing was also used in the data analysis and will be mentioned below in that context.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Overview

The data from each case was initially analysed separately and then cases were compared. Within each case, the IMR data and field data were analysed separately and then collapsed. The IMR data were configured in two ways: into a table providing details of the type of organisations and their proximity to the case study sites, and also analysed and coded using the seven elements of the GDT framework. The field data comprised interviews, direct observations and documentation which were coded using the seven elements of the GDT framework. The IMR and field data for each case were collapsed to form a composite view of that case. When the analysis for each case was completed, a cross case analysis was conducted to merge the data.

3.5.2 Phase 1: IMR data

As discussed above at 3.4.1, details of each URL which was subject to detailed examination were initially entered onto an IMR data sheet (see Figure 10). The information from this data was used in two ways. Firstly, the data sheets were collated into a table categorising each organisation by type and proximity to the case study site. A final summary table was produced to show frequencies for each category (see Table 14). This provided details of the type and location of activity associated with each URL.

Table 14: IMR analysis form.

Classification	Proximity				Totals
	Close geographic proximity	Desert Australia	Other Australia	International	
Tourism intermediary					
Tour operator					
Ancillary (tourism non-core)					
Tourism (core)					
Administering/government					
Consumer group					
Tourism marketing agency					
Totals					

Secondly, the data were then coded and sorted using the elements of the GDT framework as a template: geographic dispersion, use of enabling technology, membership, culture, collaboration, shared purpose and leadership. Insch, Moore and Murphy (1997) suggest that the use of predetermined codes for data analysis in this manner is an appropriate process in qualitative research (see also Yin 2009).

3.5.3 Phase 2: Field data

The sources of field data comprised interviews, direct observations and documentation. Each interview was transcribed into a Microsoft word document. Details of all field observations were tape-recorded and commentary transcribed into a Microsoft word document. Each document was reviewed and relevant quotations and annotations were tape-recorded and transcribed into a Microsoft word document. This process, which is further described below, created a common format for the data and facilitated analysis.

As mentioned above, extensive use was made of memoing at the time of the primary collection. These memos contained extensive interpretative commentary which gave depth to the data (Birks, Chapman & Francis 2008). In the data analysis stage, these initial memos were used as an aid to interpretation. Additional memos were also generated throughout the data analysis stage. For example memos were used to make notation of patterns and links within the data (Punch 2005), or to link impressions of photographs and other artefacts with interview data, to record differences and similarities between interviewee observations. These memos were also recorded as Microsoft word documents and integrated with the relevant primary sources. For example, one interview transcript included the comment “this is pretty tough country” and a memo was created that noted a link to specific photographs of the environment, and to field notes commenting on the nature of the country. Collectively these memos helped ensure that both manifest and latent data was captured and that analytical observations were not “lost” and were available for analysis (Elo & Kyngas 2008).

The data were then coded using the elements from the GDT framework. Deductive content analysis was adopted for this process. Elo and Kyngas (2008, p. 107) describe content analysis as a process of exploring the data by “distilling words into fewer related categories” in order to arrive at valid inferences. For this study, the categories were based on the GDT framework which is consistent with a deductive content analysis approach which draws on existing theoretical knowledge (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). A categorisation matrix (Elo & Kyngäs 2008) was developed to code the data (see Table 15 below and related explanation).

Table 15: Sample electronic data format.

Identifier: I_OT_1_owner	
Code	Interview / document / observation
Leadership	1. There's no-one really in charge of tourism around here.
Collaboration	2. I talk with that group a lot.
Collaboration	3. We're pretty independent here.

In the above table, the heading is *I_OT_1_owner* meant this was an interview (I), which was conducted on the Oodnadatta Track (OT), with interviewee number one (1) and the person was the owner of the organisation. The format comprised two columns. The right hand column was used to sequentially record each important element of that data (for example in the first row of the example above the interviewee comment: “There’s no-one really in charge of tourism around here.”). The left hand column was used for coding purposes: in Row 1, the comment related to the leadership element of the GDT. This coding provided a primary interpretation and sorting of the data using the elements of the GDT framework. Using the codes,

like items, were then clustered and reviewed with a view to identifying patterns within and across codes (Miles & Huberman 1994). Suddaby (2006, p. 636) argues that this process of data analysis helps lift the “data to a conceptual level”. These tables were then used to produce a consolidated statement of results for each element of the GDT framework firstly for the IMR data and secondly for the field data.

3.5.4 Integration of data

The data for each case study were consolidated to produce a comprehensive analysis for each case. Firstly, the contextual IMR data (geographic proximity and organisational type) was summarised. Secondly, a summative analysis of IMR and field data for each element of the GDT framework was produced. Thirdly, a further summary was produced to identify the extent of triangulation (see, for example, Hardy 2005) between IMR and field data. This summary was in the form of word tables (Yin 2009) that identified the key IMR and field findings for each GDT element and the consistency between them. These three consolidations produced a detailed analysis of each case study site as seen through the GDT lens. This was followed by a cross case analysis.

A cross case synthesis was carried out to aggregate the findings from both cases. Yin (2009, p. 160) suggests that word tables allow the researcher to draw meaningful “cross case conclusions”. The word tables developed for each case were used as the basis of the cross case synthesis and “formulated meanings across cases” (Nowell et al. 2006, p. 34). A final set of tables (one for each of the GDT elements), was produced consolidating the data from both cases and identifying “cross-case patterns” (Dubé & Paré 2003, p. 619).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a rationale for the use of a multi-case study research design for this study. It then detailed the key dimensions of the data collection process. These were IMR, in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation and documentation. Next, the data analysis tools were discussed. These were basic statistical analysis, content analysis, memoing and word tables. The following chapter details the results of these analyses.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides the results of the GBH and OT case studies. Following the methodology described in Chapter 3, each case study is reported separately. Within each case the IMR data and the field data are initially reported separately and then collapsed to provide a composite view of that case. At the conclusion of the chapter, a cross case analysis of the data from both cases is presented.

The IMR data were sourced from the IMR data sheets described in Chapter 3 (Table 14). This data included the URL, organisation name and location, nature of business activity, description of website content and connections to tourism activities. This data provided a valuable contextual view of each case study site. Data were firstly analysed to determine the geographic proximity of activities to each case study site and secondly to identify the type of organisation involved. Thirdly, the data were explored through the lens of the GDT framework. Elements of the framework discussed are as follows: geographic dispersion, ICT capability, team membership, cultural diversity, shared mindset, collaboration, and leadership.

The field data are also presented through the lens of the elements comprising the GDT framework. Two field trips were made to both case study sites. Each involved travelling over the physical length of each case study site as well as visits to informants in Adelaide and Alice Springs. The data sources were interviews, direct observation and documentation.

4.2 Reporting These Results

Certain reporting conventions have been adopted, because of the nature of this data collection.

1. The IMR data collection involved a large number of URLs. The in-text citation adopted is, for example, Warakurna Roadhouse 2007. Given the large number of websites and the fact that they were cited on more than one occasion for different purposes, repetitive in-text citation has not been adopted. However, all URLs cited have been incorporated into the reference list at the conclusion of the chapter. Also, because a large amount of this data was collected in 2007/2008, some of these links are now broken. To maintain the integrity of the original data, these original links have been retained as the 'point-in-time' record of the searches.
2. Documentation acquired during the field trips which is identified in this chapter uses the in text citation: 'GBH Doc X'. A table of all documents cited is included at Appendix Seven.
3. Photographs taken during the field trips which are incorporated into this chapter are listed at Appendix Eight. The table identifies the photo, its significance, where it was taken and the date taken.
4. During the course of this study, some organisations have changed their name. For example, the *Outback Areas Community Development Trust* (OACDT) has been renamed the *Outback Communities Authority*. For consistency, the title used at the time the data was collected has been adopted and retained.
5. Small sections of the results described in this chapter are draw from the current researcher's published paper, 'Local engagement in economic development and industrial collaboration around Australia's Gunbarrel Highway, Cartan & Carson (2009).

4.3 Case 1: Gunbarrel Highway

4.3.1 IMR data

As discussed in Chapter 3, 102 GBH websites were examined in detail. The IMR provided firstly, a contextual description of tourism-related activity associated with the GBH and, secondly, insights into the elements of the GDT framework. The contextual description was gleaned from the IMR analysis sheet described in Chapter 3 (see Table 14). A summary of GBH findings is given in Table 16 below.

Table 16: GBH-IMR analysis sheet showing proximity and classification of organisational type.

Classification	Proximity				Totals
	Close geographic proximity	Desert Australia	Other Australia	International	
Tourism intermediary	1	-	21	15	37
Tour operator		2	19	-	21
Ancillary (tourism non-core)	3	1	9	-	13
Tourism (core)	10	-	-	-	10
Administrating/government	7	1	4	-	12
Consumer group	-	-	6	-	6
Tourism marketing agency	-	1	2		3
Totals	21	5	61	15	102

This contextual data provided insights on the geographic proximity of organisations to the track. The largest proximity category was ‘other Australia’, containing approximately 60% ($n = 61$) of organisations identified in the GBH-IMR. Types of organisations included many engaged in direct tourism activities, such as tour operators and car rental companies, travel agencies and marketing organisations,

along with 4WD clubs and government departments with various natural resource management and community development interests (see, e.g., Great Divide Tours 2006). Approximately 20% of organisations ($n = 21$) were in the second largest proximity category, 'close geographic' proximity. Half of these were in population centres at the extremities of the Track (Wiluna to the west and Yulara to the east). These two centres supported hotels, caravan parks, supermarkets, fuel stations, Shire Council offices and some dedicated tourist facilities (see, e.g., Ayers Rock Resort 2007). Along the 1,400 km that comprise the body of the Track, commercial tourism-related activities were restricted largely to three roadhouses (offering fuel, basic supplies and camping areas) and two tourist POIs at Giles Weather Station (Giles Weather Station 2007) and an art gallery at Warburton (Tjulyuru Regional Arts Gallery 2007).

The third most populous proximity category was 'international', with approximately 15% of organisations ($n = 15$). All of these were in the tourism intermediary classification and included many multinational travel agencies, such as Wiki Travel, Lonely Planet and Yahoo! Travel (see, e.g., Lonely Planet 2007). The fourth and final proximity category was, 'desert Australia', which captured the remote desert regions of central Australia but not within 'close geographic' proximity to the Track. Five organisations, including tour operators, an Aboriginal art dealer, the Central Australia Tourism Industry Association (the Northern Territory tourism marketing agency; Tourism Central Australia 2012) and the Central Land Council, were in this category (see, e.g., Central Land Council 2007). All were located some distance from the eastern extremity of the Track in Alice Springs.

The GBH-IMR-data provided information on organisational type. The largest classification of organisation type was ‘tourism intermediary’ with 36% of the organisations ($n = 37$). These were commercial organisations that facilitate tourism in general and 4WD tourism in particular. This facilitation took the form of travel agencies and specialist tour organizers (for example Lonely Planet), and travel media (for example 4WD magazines) reporting travel experiences of tracks such as the GBH and also advertising 4WD vehicles and equipment. It also included many travel services organisations offering transport, accommodation (see, e.g., Hotel.com.au 2007) and literature/information. These organisations all fell within the ‘other Australia’ or ‘international’ categories. Many of these used a track related word (e.g., Gunbarrel) merely as a search ‘hook’ with very little direct connection to the region itself.

The second largest category was ‘tour operator’ with 20% of organisations ($n = 21$). These organisations conducted a variety of 4WD tours (mostly tag-a-longs) and some coach companies which catered for the backpacker and adventure travel markets. Some tours also catered for special market segments such as bird watchers, motorcyclists and cyclists. All operators offered tour options packaged around either a specific destination (e.g., the Flinders Ranges or the Simpson Desert) or an iconic 4WD track (the GBH) or combination of tracks (eg GBH and Canning Stock Route). There were none who had the GBH as their only destination. Most GBH tours were advertised using brief itineraries mentioning POIs along the track (see, e.g., Outback Tours 2006). There were some examples of relationships between tour operators and organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH. However, in the main the packages highlighted the history, natural desert beauty and 4WD experience dimensions of the trip rather than commercial attractions or products. There were no

tour operators located in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the Track and only two in ‘desert Australia’ (at Alice Springs).

The third largest organisation type was in the ‘tourism-ancillary’ category which comprised 13% of the population ($n = 13$). These organisations engaged in tourism services but as a non-core function of their activities. Within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the Track these included the Wiluna Hotel and the Giles Weather Station, and in the broader Australian context included a diverse range of organisations such as Hema Maps, and several car rental companies (see, e.g., Action Hire Car 2007).

The fourth largest group considered was ‘administering government’. It totalled approximately 12% of organisations ($n = 12$). These were publicly funded bodies which performed a significant regulatory role and staff were government employees. These organisations included Shire Councils, Police, National Parks and the Central Lands Council. Most of these were located in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track. The Wiluna Shire website supplied information about the region that was helpful for travellers (Shire of Wiluna 2007). These organisations used the track label, and had independent websites but displayed no direct commercial orientation, except for the Shire business directory. Within the resource management category the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park website had a wealth of information dealing with the region surrounding Yulara and the eastern end of the track (Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park 2007). The Central Land Council, located in Alice Springs, and the Department of Indigenous Affairs, located in Perth, had websites providing information about travel on the Track and detailing procedures for the acquisition of entry permits to indigenous lands. This latter function is critical

for travellers as the track passes through areas requiring access permits. The Department of Indigenous Affairs website allowed for online application of these permits (Department of Indigenous Affairs 2007).

The fifth largest category with 10% ($n = 10$) of organisations was classified as ‘core tourism’, although most combined their tourism activity in a minor way with some other form of local commercial interests. All of these were in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the Track. For example Carnegie Station offered discrete tourism services providing a camp ground with facilities, fuel and limited supplies for tourists. These services were provided within the context of a working cattle station. Roadhouses at Docker River, Warakurna, and Warburton service tourist and local needs with a major emphasis on tourism (see, e.g., Warakurna Roadhouse 2007). Some of these organisations did not have their own websites but were identified from other websites (see, e.g., Carnegie Station which was identified from ExplorOZ 2007a). However, the Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre at Warburton did have a strong web presence, which included product information, access details and availability of local services such as accommodation and fuel (Tjulyuru Regional Arts Gallery 2007). Similarly the more developed towns at the extremities of the Track offered a greater range of services to tourists, including hotels and caravan parks.

The sixth most populous category of organisation (less than 6%; $n = 6$) were categorised as ‘consumer groups’. These were 4WD clubs (see, e.g., Internet Landrover Club 2007) or motorists associations that provided travel information to members about recent trips to the area, indicating POIs and the availability of services and POIs. All were located in ‘other Australia’.

The final category was government funded ‘tourism marketing agencies’ (approximately 3%; $n = 3$) The Western Australian Government tourism website made brief reference to the GBH as a destination and some individual locations (Tourism Western Australia 2007). There did not seem to be any active commercial links from the website. The Central Australian Tourism Industry Association website (which is affiliated with the Northern Territory government) made no direct reference to the GBH but did provide information and services about Yulara, and in particular the Ayers Rock Resort, on its eastern extremity (Tourism Central Australia 2012).

Next, the GBH-IMR data were examined using the GDT framework as the analytical lens. Each element of the framework is considered separately.

The GBH-IMR lens on geographic dispersion: There were degrees of geographic dispersion in evidence. Organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track were located at various points over the 1400 km between Wiluna and Yulara. For example the Ayers Rock Resort at Yulara was some 336 km from the Warakurna Roadhouse, and 1091 km from the Carnegie Station facility. Other organisations were closer, for example, the Docker River Campground was some 104 km from Warakurna. There was also some co-location of organisations such as within the town of Warburton; however these were located at separate locations within the town. Further from the track, but within desert Australia, organisations were located in Alice Springs (some 443 km from the GBH), and in Kalgoorlie (534 km away). Again, whilst some of these organisations were co-located within the town, they were at separate locations. Some organisations were more distant again from the track, located in Perth, Adelaide and some rural towns. Finally, some

internationally based organisations had connections with the track. These organisations were identified from several sources (see, e.g., ExplorOz 2007a).

The GBH-IMR lens on enabling technology: For those websites within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH evidence of ICT was varied. Those websites associated with the Ayers Rock Resort at the eastern end of the GBH had quite sophisticated capability, including for example online booking facilities and interactive websites (see, e.g., Ayers Rock Resort 2007). Some communities and government bodies also had sophisticated websites, for example The Wiluna Shire, WA Police and the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire (see, e.g., Ngaanyatjaraku Shire, 2007). Smaller organisations such as the Wiluna caravan park simply provided contact details. Some organisations, for example the Docker River Community, identified through other searches, did not have their own websites.

Organisations in the remaining proximity categories utilised a variety of communication options. Some websites contained descriptive information and an email link to such organisations as the Warakurna Roadhouse. Others contained sophisticated capabilities, including online bookings for accommodation and car rentals, commercial transactions such as purchasing maps, 4WD magazines and discussion forums (see, e.g., ExplorOz 2007). Websites for government agencies (eg Tourism Western Australia 2007) provided extensive information and other services through sophisticated websites. Some smaller tour operators not in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH relied primarily on email communication with some links to other websites and others were more interactive (see, e.g., Beadell Tours 2006).

The GBH-IMR lens on team membership: Diverse and complex connections were identified between organisations with an interest in the track. Organisations showed varying degrees of interest in the tourism agenda. The importance of each organisation's activities to tourism was varied. The following examples are instructive.

Several organisations in 'close geographic' proximity' to the GBH were engaged in tourism activity on a full time basis and as a core dimension to their interests. These included Ayers Rock Resort, Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre, Uluru Express and Wiluna caravan park (see, e.g., Uluru Express 2007). Other organisations in 'close geographic' proximity had a full time but more peripheral connection with tourism. For example the Carnegie Station campground, Shire Councils and government agencies had significant non-tourism responsibilities such as pastoralism, local government and environmental protection respectively. The Giles Weather Station had a primary concern with meteorological matters but provided limited visitation access for tourists.

The Giles Weather Station is a fully functioning meteorological observation station based at Warakurna Community. Visitors can schedule a tour of the station and view the daily release of the observation balloon.

(Source: Warakurna Roadhouse 2007)

In the 'Desert Australia' category, some organisations had a peripheral connection to the GBH in terms of the total agenda of their own organisation. For example the Central Lands Council based in Alice Springs issued access permits but had a much wider interest in aboriginal issues. However the issue of permits and associated access issues were very important to tourism activity on the track.

In the 'other Australia' proximity category many organisations exhibited a temporary but recurring connection to the track, but it was a core part of their agenda. Examples are Hema Maps and Brumby Rentals had a small portion of their products connected to the GBH, but it was an important dimension of their activity (see, e.g., Hema Maps 2007). Similarly, the tourism intermediaries and consumer groups referred to the GBH in the context of much broader interests. Tourism marketing agencies in both Western Australia and the Northern Territory had a permanent and core interest in the GBH, but also had a much broader range of responsibilities. Tour operators were connected in an intimate fashion with the GBH for the duration of specific tours but only temporarily and assumed a more remote connection when engaged in other activities, such as tours to other locations.

Travelling along the Gunbarrel Highway to Warburton, we visit Lasseters Cave, Docker River and Giles Meteorological Station.. From Warburton we pass the Len Beadell Tree and Len Beadell Memorial along the Gunbarrel Highway making our way to the Carnegie Station Homestead. Here we spend the night where a shower and basic stores are available.

Via the Carnegie Station Track we make our way to the Wellington Ranges where we bush camp for the night. The next day we arrive in Wiluna where we stock up with supplies. We spend the night in the campground before leaving Wiluna the next morning and starting the Canning Stock Route section of the tour.

(Source: Adventure Tours Australia 2007)

Those websites classified as international predominantly performed the general functions of a travel agency (e.g. bookings), and had only a peripheral and temporary connection to the track: examples include Frommers, Hotel.com and Lonely Planet (see, e.g., Lonely Planet 2007).

The GBH-IMR lens on culture: Evidence of a diversity of organisational cultures could be gleaned from the presentation on and content of websites. Many websites, particularly those of the government agencies and booking agents had sophisticated websites which reflected a strong corporate culture (for example see Figure 11 below).



Figure 11: Department of Indigenous Affairs WA (2007).

These were large organisations with formal structures and significant infrastructure. Many of the organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity or ‘desert Australia’ categories displayed a more modest website (see, e.g., Warakurna Roadhouse 2007). Further, the links from these websites were to ‘local’ organisations such as caravan parks and roadhouses often run by owner managers, where a more intimate business culture was evident. A diversity of organisational type was evident, (large corporations, government agencies, medium and small enterprises), and organisational purpose (for example, tourism marketing, local government,

aboriginal affairs, accommodation, fuel and food supplies). For example see the Shire of Wiluna website in Figure 12 below.

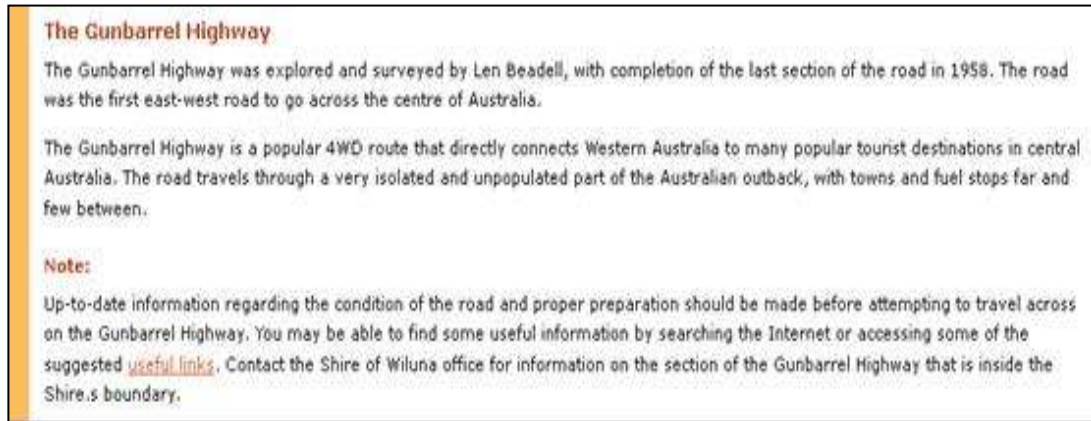


Figure 12: Shire of Wiluna (2007).

There was also evidence of distinctly aboriginal and western cultures. Many websites within Australia represented organisations which had significant roles to play within the aboriginal community (for example Department of Indigenous Affairs, WA, Central Lands Council and the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire). Others offered products and services that focussed heavily on aboriginal culture and heritage, for example Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre, Aboriginal Art online and Anangu Tours (see Figure 13 below).

Also, many other websites highlighted the ‘aboriginal cultural experience’ dimension of their product, for example Ayers Rock Resort and Direct4WD. Many other websites reflected a more western culture particularly tourism intermediaries and ancillary organisations such as A.B.C. Maps (A.B.C. Maps 2007). Some tour operators also reflected a more western culture (see e.g., Guest 4WD 2007).



Aboriginal Uluru Tour (with transfers)
 This is one of the most famous tours of Uluru. On this small group tour you enjoy sunrise, a restaurant breakfast overlooking Uluru and the Liru Walk with an Aboriginal guide and interpreter. On the famous Liru Walk you will retrace the path of the Liru Ancestors through the bushland near Uluru. Hear the tragic fate of Lungkata (Blue Tongue Lizard Man), who is still lying at the base of Uluru. See demonstrations of ancient bush skills such as making kiti (bush glue), making fire the traditional way and carving wooden tools with only a sharpened stone. Learn the art of spear throwing and piti carrying.

DEPARTS FROM AYERS ROCK RESORT HOTELS: One hour prior to sunrise **WALK LENGTH:** an easy 2 kilometre walk **TOUR DURATION:** 4.5-5hrs **INCLUSIONS:** All transfers, tea and coffee at sunrise viewing, continental breakfast at Ininti Cafe, Aboriginal guide and language interpreter, spear throwing **SPECIAL OFFERS:** Please quote code in comments box when booking to receive relevant offer.

Figure 13: Anangu Tours (2007).

The GBH-IMR lens on shared mindset: Many websites (see, e.g., ExplorOz website in Figure 14 below) described the GBH as a single entity with a consistent and strongly defined geographically boundary. Tour operators, referred to the ‘Gunbarrel’ experience and trip reports on consumer group websites reported the experience of travelling the GBH (see, e.g., Internet Landrover Club, 2007). Many of these websites refer to the GBH as a specific destination, which reinforced the sense of public identity and geographic boundary. They consistently referred to the same start and finish point of the GBH (Wiluna and Yulara) and the same key POIs along the way. This rhetoric suggests an identifiable destination comprising agreed components, an appropriate focus for a shared mindset.

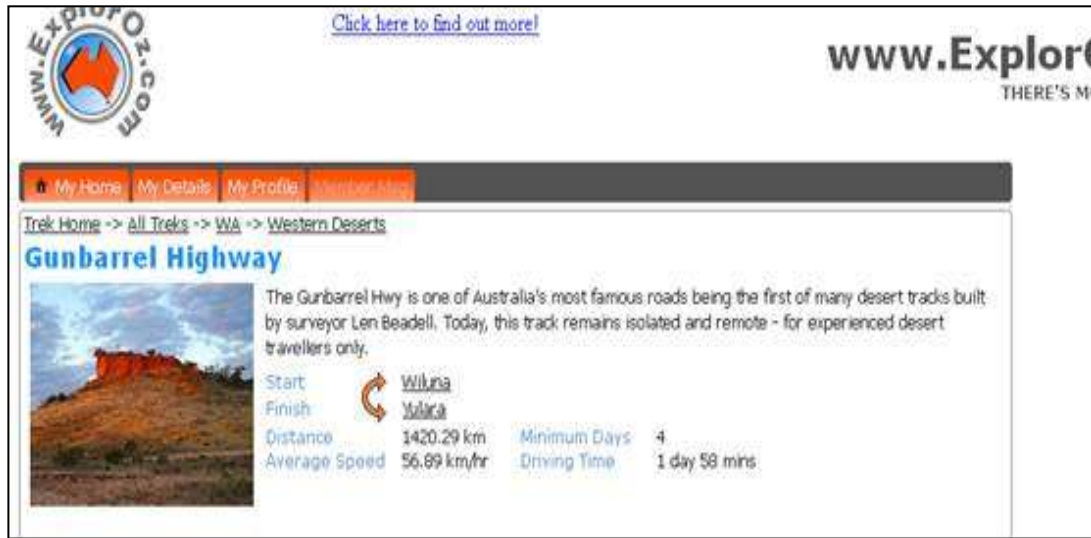


Figure 14: ExplorOz (2007a).

Whilst there was some sense of geographic identity associated with the GBH, other websites placed more emphasis on components of the GBH which were associated with particular interests. For example the Shires addressed issues only within their geographic boundaries, and the GBH was mentioned in passing if at all (see for example Shire of Wiluna 2007). Similarly, the Ayers Rock Resort website highlighted only Uluru and Kata Juta locations. From this perspective the GBH is presented more as a collection of contiguous but separate spaces with a somewhat more tenuous and complex boundary.

The stated purpose guiding the websites was also mixed. Many websites had as a common thread the promotion of tourism to some degree. For some, such as the tour operators, tourism marketing agencies and intermediaries, tourism was their primary or sole purpose, although this was obviously not limited to the GBH in most circumstances (see, e.g., Wikitravel 2007). The Shire websites had content which was mainly concerned with services to constituents, but also some components promoting tourism. For example the Shire of Wiluna reported road conditions, mentioned the GBH and local tourism attractions. Ngaanyatjaraku Shire similarly

referred to the Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre as a tourist attraction. Government agencies had varying priorities. For example the Central Lands Council's primary focus was on the interests of aboriginals with respect to land, but was concerned with tourism through the issue of access permits; as was the Department of Indigenous Affairs WA. See Figure 15 below from the Central Lands Council website showing a broad range of activities including the issue of travel permits.



Figure 15: Central Lands Council (2007).

Whilst the promotion of tourism was a purpose spread across many organisations with varying degrees of emphasis, there was no evidence that it was in fact an explicitly shared purpose, nor a purpose which extended to the GBH as an entity. In this sense there was no evidence of a sense of community or overt connection between organisations, despite the fact that these organisations referred to the GBH in a way which provided a form of umbrella identity that had the potential to bind organisations. Rather than a common purpose, the purpose could be described as similar but coincidental and varying in strength.

The GBH-IMR lens on collaboration: There was some evidence of collaboration of a non commercial nature mainly with government agencies, but very little that involved commercial interests. In 'close geographic' proximity to the GBH,

government agencies such as the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire and the Shire of Wiluna provided links and information about locations and organisations within their geographic bounds (see Figure 16 below for example of Wiluna Shire).

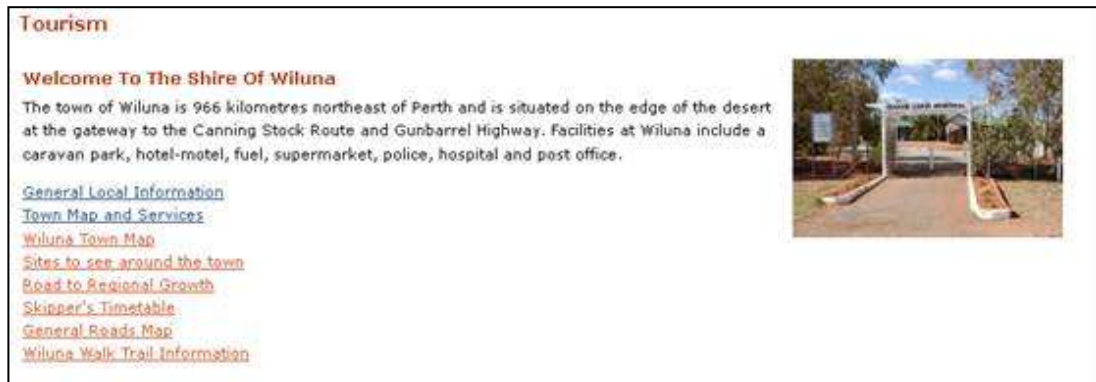


Figure 16: Shire of Wiluna (2007).

The Ayers Rock Resort website predominantly promoted its own products but had links to other tourism organisations such as Kings Canyon Resort, but none of these were located on the GBH. In the ‘desert Australia’ proximity category, The Central Australian Tourism Industry Association collaborated with the Ayers Rock Resort acting as its agent for tourists, but had no other connections to the GBH (Tourism Central Australian 2012).

In the ‘Other Australia’ category, there was minimal evidence of collaboration within the tour operator classification, although the tours did utilise some commercial services during their tours such as accommodation and attractions. Some websites had links to other commercial organisations (see, e.g., Figure 17 below), but none were connected directly with the GBH.

Connie and Mick have their own [detailed website](#) to visit if you'd like to join them in their extensive travels over Len's Roads and on other remote tracks in Australia's vast Outback.

You might also want to visit some websites devoted to outback travel, communications and other sites of interest.

For Bushphone plus the HF radio direct dial telephone network and Bushtelegraph HF radio network for 4WD enthusiasts, go to [Reid's Radiodata](#).

The primary role of the [Australian National 4WD Radio Network](#) is to provide safety orientated HF radio communications for travellers in remote areas.

Also of interest is the [The Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council](#). The ANFWDC is the peak recreational 4WD organisation in Australia.

Figure 17: Beadell Tours (2007).

Many ancillary and intermediary organisations (for example travel agencies) provided extensive links to locations and organisations within the GBH but these were merely providing information to prospective clients and there were no obvious commercial connections. In the 'international' proximity category, most websites displayed no direct collaborations with respect to the GBH with the exception of for the Ayers Rock Resort. Many intermediaries offered booking services for Ayers Rock Resort (see, e.g., HolidayCity 2007). Links to other locations on the GBH were sparse.

The GBH-IMR lens on leadership: Leadership activity was evident but was circumscribed by each organisation's particular spheres of interest. Whilst there was

leadership directed at a broad range of activities, tourism leadership on the entire GBH was not notable.

Within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH leadership was restricted to bounded sub-regions within the GBH, rather than relating to the GBH as a totality. The various Shires deliver a leadership role. The Shire of Wiluna declares a leadership role in the delivery of services and facilities over the 184,000 km² Shire land at the western end of the GBH (Shire of Wiluna 2007). Services include road maintenance, promotion of local business activity and advice to tourists (including for example weather conditions). In a similar vein the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire in Western Australia covers 159,948 km² including ten aboriginal communities, and provides leadership roles in the provision of services in fields such as health, local works, recreation, road maintenance, youth and social justice (see Figure 18 below).

Parks Australia and Anangu people have a participative leadership relationship for the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. Statutory responsibilities include maintenance of Anangu culture and heritage, environmental conservation and visitor enjoyment and education.

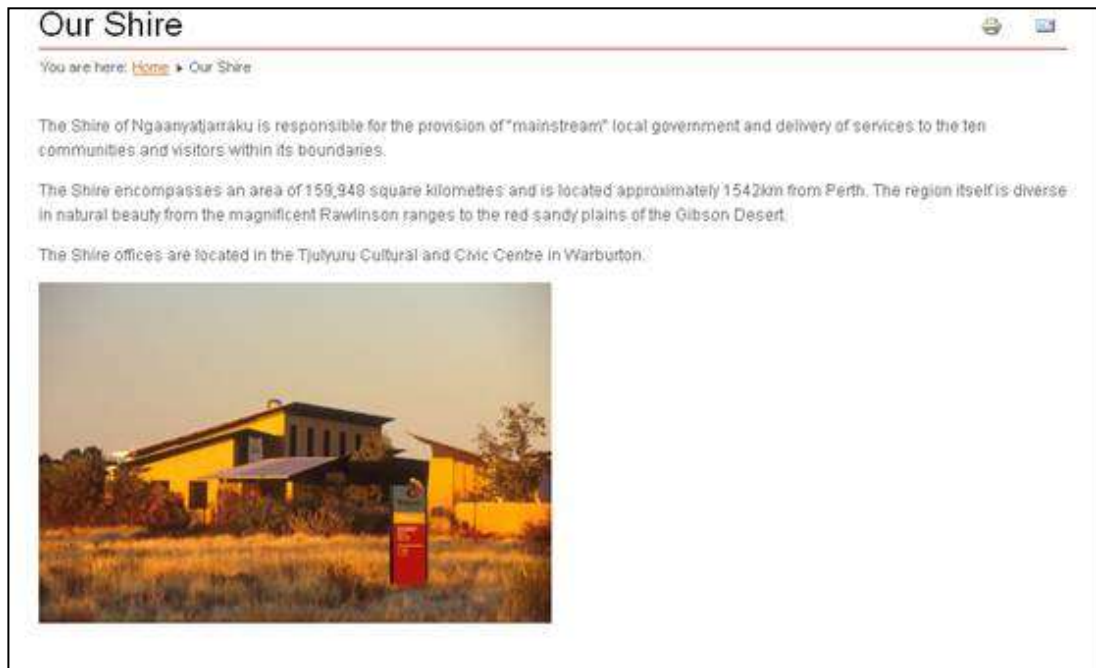


Figure 18: Ngaanyatjaraku Shire (2007).

From within the 'desert Australia' proximity category, two websites provide evidence of leadership activity. The first website was that of the Central Lands Council (CLC). The CLC plays an important leadership role promoting aboriginal rights in southern areas of the Northern Territory, including the eastern portion of the GBH. The legislative functions of the Council include providing a voice for aboriginal people, assisting with land management, economic development, improving service delivery, resolving land disputes and managing a permit system for access to aboriginal lands. It represents aboriginal communities within the Northern Territory and at a strategic level works in a participative fashion (see Figure 19 below).



Figure 19: Central Lands Council (2007).

The second website was Tourism Central Australia, the website for the Central Australian Tourism Industry Association. The Association is representative of government and industry, and performs an important leadership function with respect to tourism research, marketing and promotion of tourism within the Northern Territory. Their capacity to fund certain initiatives also strengthens that role. The Board takes decisions in a participative fashion over a range of issues (see Figure 20 below). However, there was no evidence of an interest in the entire GBH as a tourism destination; the focus was limited to their State jurisdiction.



Figure 20: Tourism Central Australia (2012).

In the ‘other Australia’ proximity category, Tourism Western Australia has a leadership role in the promotion of that state, including the GBH region, as a tourist destination. Activities include marketing, tourism planning, provision of funding support, policy development, and niche product development (e.g., 4WD tourism). As a focal point for the tourism industry in Western Australia, WA Tourism clearly plays a leadership role (Tourism Western Australia 2007). The focus is on the WA section of the GBH, rather than its entirety. The Northern Territory government tourism organisation plays a similar regional role to that of Tourism Western Australia. Its purpose is to provide direction and support for the NT tourism industry (Tourism NT 2012), which involves leadership within the industry. The Western Australia Department of Indigenous Affairs has a legislative responsibility for matters relating to indigenous heritage, services, Native Title and Lands Trust issues. The issue of permits to enter Aboriginal lands is part of the portfolio. The area of

responsibility includes the Goldfields Region in which the GBH is located. There was no evidence of leadership from the ‘international’ proximity category.

4.3.2 Field data

The GBH-field lens on Geographic dispersion: Varying degrees of geographic dispersion were observed between organisations engaged in tourism related activities in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH. Some organisations were collocated in small towns and others separated by significant distances (see Figures 21, 22 & 23 below).



Figure 21: Depicting GBH isolation: 100 km west of Ayers Rock Resort (Photograph: Cartan).



Figure 22: Indication of GBH distances: 157 km east of Warburton (Photograph: Cartan).



Figure 23: Campground, store and workshop at Warakurna on GBH (Photograph: Cartan).

At the eastern extremity of the GBH, some 450 km from the nearest regional town of Alice Springs, Yulara and the Ayers Rock Resort offered an extensive array of tourism products, including accommodation and tours. Most of these form part of the Voyagers corporate organisation (Doc_GB3_Ayers Rock Resort – History Snapshot). At the western end of the GBH (a 1365 km journey from Yulara) was the small town of Wiluna, which hosted several organisations connected with tourism including a hotel, roadhouse, accommodation, caravan park and small supermarket. Whilst these were collocated (within the same small town) they were completely separate organisations. The community of Docker River, 232 km west of Yulara, offered a community store and campground to tourists (both owned by the community). A further 104 km west is the community of Warakurna which had a campground and roadhouse. The Giles Meteorological Station, which conducts tours of the premises for tourists, was 3 km north of Warakurna. Another 230 km to the west was the community of Warburton which had some tourist facilities (roadhouse, cabins, caravan park), and is the location for the Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre. These organisations have strong connections to the community. Another 485 km west was the Carnegie Station facility, which comprised some tourist facilities including a campground, cabins, fuel and some supplies, and operated as an adjunct to major cattle interests. Wiluna was a further 341 km to the west. There were also scattered POIs within the GBH but these were not inhabited. Examples included Geraldton Bore, Lasseter's Cave and Mt. Beadell. The harsh physical terrain of this environment and the variable driving conditions on the unsealed track accentuated the physical separation of these locations.

In the 'desert Australia' proximity category, the town of Alice Springs (450 km to the east of the GBH) was the location of several organisations which were

connected to the GBH. These included tour operators, the Central Lands Council and a tourism agency. The town also acted as a tourism hub with many shuttle services to Yulara and in particular Uluru. In the ‘other Australia’ proximity category, Tourism NT was based in Darwin, some 1900 km north of Yulara and Tourism WA was headquartered in Perth approximately 966 km from Wiluna.

The GBH-field lens on enabling technology: Within the immediate precinct of the Ayers Rock Resort extensive enabling technology was available. This included mobile phone coverage, broadband internet connection, video conferencing, Skype and satellite TV (Informant GB13). The reservation system, marketing and other commercial activities such as purchasing and ordering relied heavily on these technologies.

Communities at Warburton and Warakurna had ADSL broadband through fibre optic lines which enabled emails, internet access, Skype and “patchy” video conferencing (Informant GB1). Mobile phone coverage was available at Warburton; one informant expressed frustration with the extent and quality of services here (Informant GB3). The roadhouse and camping facilities at both Warburton and Warakurna used email facilities for reservations but no other technologies. Informant GB12 indicated that Docker River “had nothing” in terms of enabling technologies. Public phones and satellite television were available. Carnegie Station campground had phone and email access (Informant GB21).

At Wiluna ADSL, mobile phone coverage and Foxtel services were available (Informant GB22). For tourism related activities, organisations generally relied on email although for other commercial transactions such as ordering they also sometimes interacted online (Informant GB22).

Organisations in Alice Springs had extensive enabling technology including mobile phone coverage, broadband internet connection, video conferencing, Skype and satellite TV and Foxtel. Many made extensive use of internet based technology for interactions such as reservations (Informants GB6 & GB4), but others were limited to a website that provided information and then required email or phone contact.

The GBH-field lens on team membership: Some organisations located in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH were intimately connected to, and involved in, significant tourism activities. Examples include those associated directly with the Ayers Rock Resort, caravan parks, hotels, roadhouses and the Cultural Centres. Although some of these organisations attracted trade other than tourists (for example hotels and roadhouses also service their local communities), they had a permanent and core interest in tourism. Other organisations located on the GBH had less of a focus on tourism. The Weather Station at Giles for example, provided tourists with access to historical artefacts and a small window of time to tour their facility. Several Shires located within the GBH had a permanent interest in tourism, but it was not their exclusive nor core interest. However the importance of these organisations to the tourism trade was significant. Relevant functions included road maintenance, management of local infrastructure, and control of access to lands, and facilities included provision of camping areas and roadhouses.

Several government agencies, although not located within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH, had a permanent interest in it, but it was not their sole, nor core interest. The Central Lands Council in Alice Springs for example played a key role in managing tourist traffic through the administration of the permit system (see

Appendix Nine for sample permit containing entry and transit conditions). Informant GB13 discussed the merits of developing aboriginal tourism initiatives, but also indicated that the interests of the organisation were much broader than simply tourism (see GBH Document 16). The NT tourism marketing agency had broad core responsibility to promote tourism activity and was particularly active in promoting the Ayers Rock Resort but there was little evidence (apart from mention in one brochure, GBH Document 18) of interest in the GBH as an entity. In fact GB12 described how the NT government agency responsible for promoting tourism, in an attempt to develop the 4WD market, insisted on limiting track identification to those within its borders (for example the Binns Track and Docker River to Kintore), rather than promoting a potentially steady flow of traffic across state borders. Likewise, the Alice Springs based tourism agency offered advice and brochures for 4WDing activities within the state which specifically included the Ayers Rock resort but made no mention of the GBH to the west. As one counter officer at a tourist information centre in the Northern Territory remarked in response to a casual enquiry from the researcher about the GBH – “Where’s that?” The Western Australian tourism marketing agency produced brochures which detailed portions of the GBH within its general promotion of self-drive 4WD touring routes (GBH Document 5), but made no significant mention of the GBH. Whilst the interest in tourism was a core concern, in this case the relationship to the GBH was peripheral.

Both the Federal and NT governments have an interest in the environmental matters associated with the Uluru-Kata-Tjuta national parks, which includes the management of tourism impact. This relationship was permanent and core. The role of the Police encompassed the full range of law and order issues within the GBH. These extended to some tourism related activities associated particularly with traffic,

permit compliance and general public behaviour. This relationship to the GBH could be defined as peripheral and permanent.

The GBH-field lens on culture: This section presents the field data results that pertain to the culture dimension of the tourism-GDT framework. As discussed in Chapter 2 GDTs cater to a mix of cultures. The field study revealed a diversity of cultures within and associated with the GBH. These were based on organisational and racial differences.

In terms of organisational culture there was evidence of a cultural mix. For example, there were differences between small and larger organisations, government and non-government entities, and between those entities based in regional towns and those in communities.

Many organisations were quite small, run by either owners or appointed managers, very informal in style, with little evidence of routine processes and procedures (for example the Warakurna Roadhouse). Some of these were managed on behalf of Aboriginal communities and serviced those communities (with for example fuel and food) as well as tourism traffic (for example the Docker River store and Warburton Roadhouse). These organisations were heavily reliant on the owner/manager (sometimes a husband and wife team). Dress was generally very casual, oriented toward outdoor physical work and the workplace office was rather unstructured (see, e.g., Figure 24 below: Carnegie Station facility ‘office’).



Figure 24: Carnegie Station office and shop (Photograph: Cartan).

Larger organisations such as Voyages at the Ayers Rock Resort presented a more corporate image, with employees in uniforms, or neat casual dress, and operated within defined guidelines and policies. The working environment was tidy and uncluttered. The offices of the Wiluna Shire offices presented in a similar fashion. Similarly, government agencies such as the Central Lands Council, Tourism NT, and some organisations in Alice Springs such as the Aurora Hotel were larger organisations, structured more along bureaucratic lines. Work attire was more formal, offices crisp and tidy, individuals filling specialised roles and decisions formed within policy and legislative guidelines. The Government agency in Adelaide presented a similar culture.

As an example of the relative informality of organisations in these remote locations the interviews for this research were conducted in such locations as, chatting over the bonnet of a 4WD (Informant GB18), beside a campfire (Informant

GB1) and sitting on a concrete slab under a veranda (Informant GB3). For example see Figure 25 below.



Figure 25: The 4WD bonnet ‘office’ (Photograph: Cartan)

The GBH passes through several parcels of aboriginal lands (for example the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire) and associated communities (for example Warburton). Also along the GBH is a pastoral property (Carnegie Station) with non-aboriginal owners, and privately owned lands and organisations in and around Wiluna. The Voyages Ayers Rock Resort has a complex management arrangement with both indigenous and non-indigenous components. Many of the tourist offerings at the Resort are focussed on aboriginal culture, for example the Anangu Tours (GBH Document 7). There are two aboriginal cultural centres along the GBH – the Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre at Warburton and the Cultural Centre in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

The above examples provide indicators/evidence of the variability in organisational and racial cultures associated with the GBH.

The GBH-field lens on shared mindset: Most informants, regardless of proximity or organisational classification, recognised the term GBH and during the course of interviews indicated an awareness of its location and general dimensions. The extremities of Wiluna and Yulara (particularly the Ayers Rock Resort) were also well recognised although the specific communities and POIs within the GBH were not universally recognised. Those more intimately involved directly in tourism functions such as tour operators and tourism development activities displayed a more intimate understanding of the GBH including road conditions (for example Informant GB10) and significant POIs (for example Informant GB5). Others with a broader interest than just tourism, such as Shire officers, whilst recognising the larger geographic boundary that is the GBH, saw sub-boundaries within it which paralleled Shire and jurisdictional boundaries. One informant (Informant GB2) used the terms “us” and “them” in a way that indicated divisions within the external boundary. Informant GB14 (a tour manager) suggested that although some organisations were within the boundary of the GBH and benefited from that flow of tourist traffic, “they only see the Gunbarrel as ‘out there’ and don’t use it to promote their own business.” Another tourism provider at the western end of the GBH (Informant GB22) recognised the importance of the track, “‘cause it’s what people want to drive and it’s what brings them to me. But I don’t know much about the other end to be honest.” Whilst there was a degree of perceived common identity defined by the geography of the GBH, this was not strong. Most providers identified more strongly with smaller parts of the GBH associated with tourism or non-tourism interests.

Informants also indicated that they had some interest in tourism on the GBH. Therefore there was a thread of common purpose connecting informants. However the strength of that thread varied considerably. Those informants directly involved in providing tourism related activities, such as tour operators, marketing agencies and tourism intermediaries, displayed a vigorous interest in the GBH from a tourism dimension: "it's a great place to take a tag-a-long, but the track's a bit rough" stated one tour operator (Informant GB10). Whilst these organisations often also had other tourism interests, such as tours to other locations, there was still a vital interest in the GBH. Whilst several tourism organisations (eg Ayers Rock Resort) saw tourism as a central purpose, that purpose was not strongly connected to the GBH but rather to their own smaller, localised, geographic footprint. For example the extensive portfolio of documents supplied by the Ayers Rock Resort made no mention of the GBH.

Other organisations with a portfolio of responsibilities broader than tourism, indicated competing and sometimes conflicting purposes. For example, whilst the Central Lands Council saw tourism development as a potential source of revenue for communities along the GBH they also sought to restrict tourism traffic (through a permit system) that might in any way negatively impact on those communities. The Wiluna Shire was active in promoting local organisations to tourists and highlighting its location as the "start of the Gunbarrel Highway" (Informant GB22). The Shire also recognised the importance of its road maintenance program to tourism traffic. Another Shire saw tourism activities flowing from the GBH as a minor part of their overall purpose. Tourism was something to be utilised as a minor revenue stream for constituents but not a current, nor potential, matter of interest (Informant GB3). Two individual communities showed enthusiasm for developing tourism initiatives and

elevating its significance within those communities (Informants GB2 & 12).

Informants operating ancillary organisations were committed to tourism along the GBH but again that commitment varied depending largely upon the extent to which tourism trade impacted on their specific interests.

Whilst the promotion of tourism was a commonly stated purpose, albeit of varying degrees of intensity, it was not explicitly shared among informants. In this regard there was no evidence of a sense of community between organisations, despite the fact that these organisations referred to the GBH as the conduit that guided the tourism flow of tourism traffic. Rather than a common purpose, the purpose could be described as similar, but coincidental, and of various strengths.

The GBH-field lens on collaboration: This section presents the field data results that pertain to the collaboration dimension of the GDT framework. When asked about the importance of collaboration as a tool for assisting tourism the overwhelming response was positive. A tour operator (Informant GB10) suggested, “collaboration is the key to success”. While the benefits of engaging in collaborative practices were recognised and espoused, there was, with two exceptions, little evidence of collaboration in practice. As one CEO (Informant GB12) stated, referring to other organisations on the Track, “We don’t have much to do with each other”. This was consistent with researcher observations. There was very little physical evidence of commercial collaboration between organisations located in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the Track. For example there was no cross advertising of facilities available at other locations along the track and there was no interpretative or road signage of a consistent nature to identify the Track.

One exception was at the Ayers Rock Resort (based in Yulara), where a range of tourism offerings from a number of organisations were bundled around the core attraction of Uluru and Kata-Tjuta. Many of these were under the organisational umbrella of the Resort managers, Voyages (for example the accommodation and restaurants) but others were independently owned organisations (for example Uluru Camel Tours, PHS Helicopter Services, Ayers Rock Scenic Flights, and Anangu Tours). A high degree of collaboration was evident between these organisations with respect to their activities in the vicinity of Uluru and Kata-Tjuta but there were no connections with other locations on the GBH. Various publications and brochures available to tourists at the Ayers Rock Resort provided evidence of this (see for example GBH Documents 1 and 2). Voyages collaborate with “the local aboriginal community to develop and enhance local business opportunities” (GBH Document 12, p.3). In a similar vein the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is jointly managed by the traditional owners of the lands and the federal government.

There was only limited evidence of commercial collaboration between tour operators and local communities. In one example a community permitted a tour operator access to their lands with small groups of 4WD vehicles (Informant GB2). This arrangement was based on personal contact rather than any significant exchange of commercial interests.

There was then a definitive gap between perceptions of utility of collaboration and application in practice. Reasons for this gap were explored with interviewees and some barriers to the process of collaboration were identified. Language was seen as a major obstacle, as explained by one Informant (GB12) ‘we only cooperate with others with a similar language’. When clarifying this statement

the interviewee suggested that language was really symptomatic of a more fundamental issue. Where there was limited historical or cultural connection between people and organisations there would be little likelihood of working together for commercial outcomes. For example, one government employee (Informant GB1) suggested that there would be very little likelihood of collaborative arrangements between people of the Ngaanyatjarra Communities (near Warburton) and those from Docker River, who have a closer affinity with people from the Pitjantjatjara Lands.

Another obstacle was a strongly held concern about the impact of increased tourism on the environment: “I’m concerned about impact on the land” (Informant GB2). This concern was aimed not only at direct damage to the physical environment but also to the possible implications for sensitive cultural locations. In a more general sense there were uncertainties related to general lifestyle implications of increased tourist traffic flows: “I’m not sure about their [the community’s] compatibility with visitors” (Informant GB18).

Several interviews were conducted with representatives of government agencies specifically charged with promoting tourism in the region of the Track. These interviewees also affirmed the merits of collaborative action but they too suggested some obstacles to that process. One official suggested that “the system is not supportive of tourism” (Informant GB13). She provided as an example the need to acquire multiple permits to travel the Track and the existence of strict camping restrictions which were seen as a deterrent to some 4WD travellers. Also the existence of a somewhat complex territorial governance boundaries applying to the GBH which included several shires, two state governments, a federal government, and two land councils often proved cumbersome to collaboration. The practical

logistics of achieving collaborative arrangements with this variety of stakeholders with such diverse interests often displayed what one Informant referred to as “a strong silo mentality” (Informant GB1). These structures and processes also provided many “opportunities to veto tourism initiatives” (Informant GB1).

Despite these concerns, most interviewees easily identified a range of possible collaborative initiatives that could be instigated and developed from within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the Track. Examples provided included guided tours to special sites, aboriginal cultural experiences, guest speakers, eco-tourism, accommodation, and interpretative signage. Interestingly, these were invariably perceived and described as independent initiatives taking advantage of the natural flow of 4WD traffic rather than as part of a coordinated whole of system effort to develop a GBH-based industry through collaborative action (for example comments from Informants GB17, GB12, GB2). An example of collaboration was the Central Australian Tourism Industry Association which has a wide range of membership. This organisation is based in Alice Springs, but interestingly has no representatives from the GBH.

A very small number of interviewees saw little merit in any form of activity (collaborative or otherwise) that promoted 4WD tourism. One senior official indicated very strongly that tourism collaboration was not necessary. His words of “why bother” (Informant GB3) reflected his opinion that 4WD related tourism revenue was not only disproportionate to the effort required but also less important than other revenue streams, notably additional government resources in the form of grants and infrastructure.

The GBH-field lens on leadership: This section presents the field data results pertaining to the leadership dimension of the GDT framework. As discussed in Chapter 2, a distinction is made between traditional leadership which sees the function of leadership embodied in one person, participative leadership which is more consultative in style, and distributed leadership in which the function is shared between members of the team or group (Currie, Lockett & Suhomlinova 2009).

There was evidence of traditional leadership within separate organisations (for example Informants GB4, GB6, GB7, GB10, GB11 & GB22). These individuals managed the strategic and operational aspect of their organisation including staffing, accounting, purchasing, marketing and product delivery. Some were owner/managers with few employees (for example a self employed tour operator) and others represented larger enterprises such as a resort and a large transport company. In each case the leadership focus was on the organisation.

There was evidence of traditional leadership centred in and focussed on sub-regions within the GBH, created for example by State borders or Shire boundaries. These related to both tourism and non-tourism issues. The Shires each had responsibilities to “run the local government functions within our lands” (Informant GB2). Document GB15, a Community Business Plan, outlined the vision, objectives, activities, outcomes and organisational capability for that organisation. The Ngaanyatjaraku Shire governance model is participative in that some ten Communities share in decision making through a Council: ‘Everyone has a say in the big picture issues’ (Informant GB3).

In addition to Shires some individual communities had leadership groups dealing with matters of local concern such as tourism development (see for example

GBH Document 16 which outlines a detailed plan for the growth of tourist initiatives). These ‘groups’ adopted a participative leadership model but not distributed leadership. Traditional leadership roles were also evident in the internal management of the Ayers Rock Resort (Informant GB15), another discrete sub-region within the GBH. However, a participative style was evident at a strategic level with the interaction with indigenous and government stakeholders regarding the surrounding areas of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. Traditional leadership was also evident in some government organisations such as within the Department of Indigenous Affairs WA and the Central Lands Council.

Other government organisations had leadership roles with respect to specific issues such as policing, indigenous affairs, or the environment. These were also bounded within sub-regions, by for example state boundaries, and no single organisation exercised leadership which extended over the entire GBH. The government tourism marketing agencies were primarily concerned within their state or territory boundary but they did briefly describe the GBH as a 4WD experience (for example GBH Document18).

There was no evidence of over-arching leadership for the GBH as a totality. No individual, group or formally constituted body suggested they might be positioned to take on a formal leadership role.

In summary, no evidence of traditional leadership was found that dealt with either the administrative or tourism related activities of multiple organisations within the GBH as a totality. No one person or organisation could be identified as either legitimately possessing, purporting to possess or informally adopting a position of leadership with respect to tourism. There were examples of participative leadership

in practice (for example the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park), but there were no examples of distributed leadership.

4.3.3 Combined Gunbarrel Highway IMR & Field data

In this Section, the results from the GBH IMR and field studies are combined. It reports only the key themes from the data. This provides a composite snapshot of the GBH, highlights the extent of triangulation between IMR and field data, and offers clarity on the key issues. For each element of the GDT framework comparative summaries are displayed in table form. Each table identifies the extent of congruence between the IMR and field data by using the categories “yes”, “no”, “partial”. The IMR data identifying organisational type and proximity has no directly corresponding category of field data and is presented as contextual data.

The contextual GBH lens on geographic proximity and organisational type: This data firstly provided an indication of the location of organisations associated with tourism on the GBH (geographic proximity). Approximately 20% of organisations were in the ‘close geographic’ proximity category, 60% in ‘other Australia’, 15% were ‘international’ and 5% in ‘desert Australia’.

The most common form of organisational type was tourism intermediary (37%), most of which were located in other Australia and International categories. Tour operators comprised 21% of the population with 90% located in the other Australia category. Ancillary organisations with tourism as a non-core part of their activities comprised 13% of the population with 70% in the ‘other Australia’ proximity category. The next most populous organisational type was administering government (12%) with the majority located in the close geographic and ‘other Australia’ proximity categories. All core tourism organisations (10%) were located in

‘close geographic’ proximity. Consumer groups (6%) and tourism marketing agencies (3%) were the least represented.

The combined GBH lens on geographic dispersion (see Table 17): A holistic view of the GBH tourism providers indicates high dispersion in many cases. Within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track, the distances between providers, the harsh physical environment and in particular the relatively slow driving conditions due to the nature of the track, accentuated the degree of geographic dispersion. However, there were exceptions.

Table 17: The combined GBH lens on geographic dispersion.

IMR	Field	Triangulation		
		Yes	No	Partial
Organisations were dispersed amongst all proximity categories: close, desert Australia, other Australia and international	Organisations were dispersed in both proximity categories of close geographic and desert Australia.			X
Within the close proximity category a mix of various organisational types were distributed to several locations along the GBH	Within the close geographic proximity category a mix of various organisational types were distributed to all inhabited locations along the GBH.	X		
The dispersion patter was not uniform along the track	The dispersion pattern was not uniform.	X		
There was some collocation of different organisations at the same geographic location	There was some collocation of different organisations at the same geographic location	X		
	The physical terrain accentuated the extent of dispersion		X	

Many inhabited locations within ‘close geographic’ proximity of the track were home to co-located providers. There was some co-location in the other proximity

categories, for example Alice Springs. A mix of organisational type was evident across the dispersion spread. There was no identifiable pattern to the dispersion of organisations.

The combined GBH lens on enabling technology (see Table 18): Some form of enabling technology was available at all inhabited locations. The extent of ICT infrastructure varied between organisations. Government agencies usually had quite sophisticated ICTs.

Table 18: The combined GBH lens on enabling technology.

IMR	Field	Triangulation		
		Yes	No	Partial
Communication technology available at all websites	Communication technology available at all inhabited locations visited	X		
Variable degrees of sophistication – government and larger commercial were more sophisticated and smaller organisations less so.	Variable degrees of sophistication in ICTs utilised by providers.			
Larger corporate tourism organisations used ICTs for an extensive range of commercial enhancements but with smaller organisations this was limited		X		
	Some frustrations with the standard of infrastructure in remote locations.		X	
Use of ICTs between Tourism providers along the track was minimal	ICT enhanced communication between Tourism providers along the track was minimal	X		

Shires and councils were more limited in their use of ICTs. Larger corporate tourism organisations used ICTs for an extensive range of purposes aimed at servicing

tourists. Smaller organisations had much less sophisticated ICT infrastructure. Use of ICTs as an interactive tool between tourism providers was limited

The combined GBH lens on membership (see Table 19): The importance of tourism to providers varied markedly. For some, particularly in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track, tourism was a critical and core component of their organisation. More frequently tourism was part of a more diverse and complex portfolio.

Table 19: The combined GBH lens on membership.

IMR	Field	Triangulation		
		Yes	No	Partial
For some organisations GBH tourism was a core interest, and for others it was more peripheral	For some organisations, particularly in close proximity to the track, tourism comprised a core interest. For others tourism was a less important component of their portfolio. Organisations in other proximity categories displayed multiple agendas.	X		
The role played by some organisations was critical to tourism activity within the GBH, but for others their role was more peripheral.	The role played by some organisations was critical to tourism activity within the GBH, but for others their role was more peripheral.	X		
There was no correlation between how important tourism was to individual organisations and how important their activities were to tourism on the GBH.	There was no correlation between how important tourism was to individual organisations and how important their activities were to tourism on the GBH.	X		

Some organisations performed roles which could be described as critical to tourism on the GBH, such as the issuing of permits or the provision of services in strategically remote locations. However some of these high impact organisations did not view tourism as a high priority. Most providers however, whilst contributing to

GBH tourism in some way, occupied a more peripheral role in the delivery of the tourism experience. There was no notable correlation between the importance of tourism to specific tourism providers and the impact of those tourism providers' activities on GBH tourism.

The combined GBH lens on culture (see Table 20): The IMR and field results confirm the existence of notable cultural diversity. There was a variety of organisational types with their idiosyncratic cultures, based on a variety of factors, including size governance, purpose, activity and location. There was also evidence of both aboriginal and European cultures. This racial mix was most notable in 'close geographic' proximity to the track and also in desert Australia. It was also evident across organisational type.

Table 20: The combined GBH lens on culture.

IMR	Field	Triangulation		
		Yes	No	Partial
Evidence of a diversity of cultures related to organisations and to race	Evidence of a diversity of organisational and racial cultural mix	X		
Org culture – various – differences in strength, size, purpose, governance, sophistication & formality	Org cultures – various – differences in strength, size, governance, location, sophistication & formality	X		
Racial cultures – evidence of both aboriginal and European cultures.	Racial cultures – evidence of aboriginal presence and of European cultures	X		
	Racial mix within various organisational cultures		X	

The combined GBH lens on shared mindset (see Table 21): Whilst the GBH was a well recognised tourism entity, there was no evidence of a strongly shared mindset amongst providers. Whilst tourism was generally seen as important,

providing a faint thread of common purpose amongst providers, this was not connected to the GBH as an entity, but rather focused on localised interests. Most organisations indicated interests other than tourism, and at times tourism did not seem to be given high priority. Rather than a shared mindset, the mindset could be described as similar but coincidental.

Table 21: The combined GBH lens on shared mindset.

IMR	Field	Triangulation		
		Yes	No	Partial
The GBH was recognised as a single entity, with agreed POIs	GBH has strong geographically bound identity;	X		
Many providers indicated multiple interests, usually localised.	Providers generally indicated a stronger affinity with localised interests than with the entire GBH	X		
Tourism on the GBH was a purpose shared by all	Tourism on the GBH was a purpose shared by all	X		
The strength of that interest in tourism varied	The strength of that interest in tourism varied	X		
Providers indicated interests other than tourism	The extent of that purpose was circumscribed by provider self-interest.	X		
No evidence of an explicitly shared mindset between providers	No evidence of an explicitly shared mindset between providers	X		

The combined GBH lens on collaboration (see Table 22): Apart from a small number of providers, collaboration was seen as a useful process to develop tourism. There was no evidence of collaboration directed at the entirety of the GBH. There were some isolated instances of collaboration limited to specific locations, or activities. These were evidenced by both formal and informal arrangements. Whilst opportunities for collaborative initiatives were identified, significant barriers to the collaborative process were highlighted.

Table 22: The combined GBH lens on collaboration.

IMR	Field	Triangulation		
		Yes	No	Partial
	Collaboration seen as important by most as a means of developing tourism and offering benefits		X	
No evidence of collaboration involving entire GBH	No evidence of collaboration involving entire GBH	X		
Indications of potential collaboration, within proximity categories and involving various organisational types.	Some (not extensive) evidence of isolated collaboration; limited to discrete locations, adopting both formal and informal arrangements			X
The nature and extent of collaboration could not be confirmed			X	
	Opportunities for collaboration were identified		X	
	Significant barriers to developing collaboration were identified		X	

The combined GBH lens on leadership (see Table 23): Neither the IMR nor field data provided evidence of any form of leadership on tourism related matters that applied to the GBH as a totality. There was no evidence of any form of distributed leadership amongst tourism providers. There was evidence of traditional leadership within organisations of various sizes, for sub-regions within the GBH, and for specific purposes within sub-regions. There was also some evidence of participative leadership.

Table 23: The combined GBH lens on leadership.

IMR	Field	Triangulation		
		Yes	No	Partial
No leadership for tourism on GBH as a totality	No leadership for tourism on GBH as a totality	X		
	Evidence of traditional leadership activities within organisations – tourism & non-tourism; Small and large organisations		X	
Traditional forms leadership within geographically bounded areas	Evidence of traditional leadership within discrete bounded sub-regions - tourism & non-tourism	X		
Traditional leadership for a purpose/issue was evident within bounded sub regions	Evidence of traditional leadership roles on specific issues within bounded sub-regions	X		
	Evidence of participative leadership within discrete bounded sub-regions - tourism & non-tourism		X	
	Evidence of participative leadership roles on specific issues within bounded sub-regions		X	
No evidence of distributed leadership	No evidence of distributed leadership within the GBH	X		

4.3.4 Conclusions

There was a high degree of triangulation between IMR and field data in the GHB case. Broadly speaking: there is significant dispersion between many providers; ICTs are available but the quality is questionable and the usage amongst providers is variable, with low uptake in regions in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track; the importance to providers varied markedly and was not related to the importance of the individual provider to the tourism agenda; there was a diversity of organisational and crucial mix amongst providers; there was no evidence of a common mindset amongst

providers for the provision of tourism experience on the GBH; collaboration was seen as important but there was limited evidence of activity; there was no evidence of leadership for the GBH as an entity but there was evidence of traditional forms of leadership in circumscribed settings.

4.4 Case 2: the Oodnadatta Track

4.4.1 IMR data

As discussed in Chapter 3, 99 OT websites were examined in detail. A summary of findings is at Table 24 below. The IMR provided firstly a valuable contextual description of tourism-related activity associated with the OT (see Table 14, Chapter 3) and, secondly, insights into each of the elements of the GDT framework.

Firstly, the IMR sought contextual data on the geographic proximity of organisations to the track. The largest proximity category was, ‘other Australia’ (ie not located in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track nor in other remote desert regions), containing approximately 68% (n=67) of websites identified in the OT-IMR. Types of organisations included tour operators, tourism intermediaries such as travel agents, ancillary providing for example maps and 4WD magazines, consumer groups such as 4WD and motoring clubs, and government agencies concerned with for example environmental matters (see, e.g., Australian 4X4 2007). The second largest proximity group was ‘international’ with approximately 14% of organisations (n=14).

Table 24: OT-IMR analysis sheet showing proximity and classification of organisational type.

Classification	Proximity				Total
	Close geographic proximity	‘desert Australia’	Other Australia	Inter-national	
Tourism intermediary			26	11	37
Tour operator	3	2	13		18
Ancillary (tourism non-core)	4	3	10	2	19
Tourism (core)	2	1	1		4
Administrating / government		2	5		7
Consumer group	1		11	1	13
Tourism marketing agency			1		1
Total	10	8	67	14	99

These comprised tourism intermediaries such as travel agencies, and ancillary such as booksellers (see, e.g., InfoHub 2007). Approximately 10% of organisations (n=10) were categorized as being in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the Track. These included core tourism (such as camping facilities, tour operators), and ancillary (such as hotels; see, e.g., Coward Springs 2007). The fourth and final proximity category was “‘desert Australia’”, which referred to the remote desert regions of central Australia but not within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track. This category comprised 8% of organisations (n=8) and included tour operators, a 4WD rental organisation and government agencies (see, e.g., Ossies Tours 2008). These were located in the regional towns of Coober Pedy, Alice Springs and Port Augusta. To

summarise the organisations were spatially dispersed within the geographical bounds of the OT, in regional centres near to the OT, across Australia and internationally.

Secondly, the IMR sought contextual data on organisational type. The IMR identified 37 tourism intermediaries (37%). These were commercial tourism facilitators and agents, such as tour organisers, travel agents, accommodation brokers and travel media (see, e.g., Swagabouttours 2008). The data revealed travel agencies and specialist tour organizers, and travel media (for example 4WD magazines) reporting travel experiences of tracks such as the OT and also advertising 4WD vehicles and equipment. It also included many travel services organisations offering transport, accommodation (see, e.g. Plan Book Travel 2007) and information. These organisations all fell within the ‘other Australia’ or ‘international’ categories. Many of these used a track related word (eg. Oodnadatta track) as a search term, but provided little information or offered services specifically related to the track or the region within the website itself. For example tourstogo (2007) ‘hooked’ onto the search term ‘Oodnadatta Track’ but there were no specific offerings related to the OT.

The second largest organisation type was ancillary with 19% of organisations (n=19). Organisations included hotels, car rental agencies, book sellers, map producers and the organisers of special events such as horse racing. All geographic proximities were represented with the majority (n=10) located within ‘other Australia’. These organisations offered some tourism services but were also strongly servicing other markets. For example Maps Downunder sold a range of maps including one for the OT (see, Figure 26 below).



Figure 26: Maps Downunder (2007).

Tour operators comprised 18% (n=18) of organisations. These organisations offered for example a variety of 4WD tours (mostly tag-a-longs), bus tours, an indigenous tour experience, and tours by aircraft (see, e.g., Wrightsair 2007). Some tours catered for special interest groups such as cyclists, backpackers or those seeking an outback station experience. A common approach was to offer several tour options packaged around either a specific destination (such as the Flinders Ranges or the Simpson Desert) or an iconic 4WD track (such as the OT) or combination of tracks (such as OT and Birdsville Track). There was only one tour operator who had the OT as their only destination (Arabunna Tours 2007). These tours varied from a one day customised itinerary to a comprehensive seven day package (see Figure 27 below).

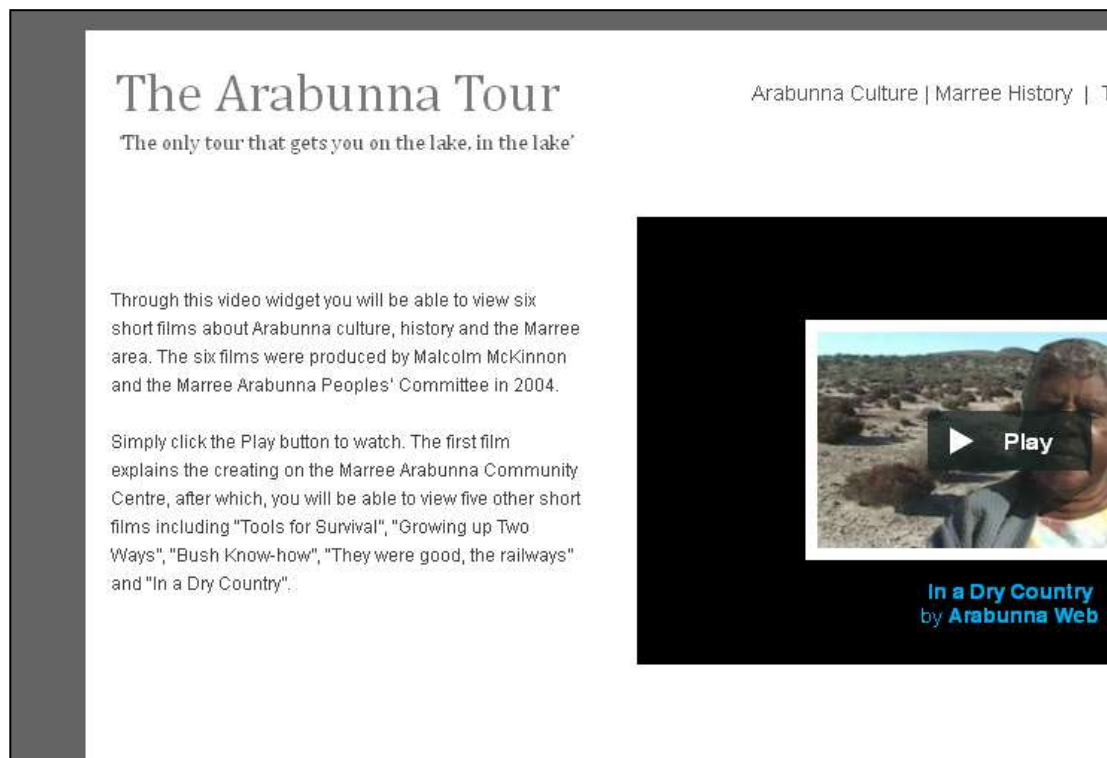


Figure 27: Aranbunna Tours (2007).

Most OT tours were advertised using brief itineraries mentioning POIs along the track. The packages highlighted the history, natural beauty and 4WD experience dimensions of the trip rather than commercial attractions or products (see Figure 28 below, Red Earth Expeditions, 2007).

Red Earth Expeditions

The Oodnadatta Track, Mt Dare and Coober Pedy loop

Tour dates – this tour operates on demand and requires a minimum number of vehicles to start. Price is A\$2150 per vehicle (two occupants)

Travelling the Oodnadatta Track will give you a special set of memories associated with this historic route. Join us to experience the remoteness and harsh beauty of this part of the country, understand the hardships endured by our pioneers and have a drink at the most remote pub in the world. Take the opportunity to fly over the incredible spectacle of the secret painted hills and explore the opal capital of the world. Join us on a water tour that follows in the wake of Matthew Flinders. This self-catered tag-along tour is suitable for appropriately equipped 4WD and SUV/AWD vehicles and off-road caravans and campertrailers.



Itinerary inclusions and features

Figure 28: Red Earth Expeditions (2007).

There were three tour operators located in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the Track and two in ‘desert Australia’, at Alice Springs and Coober Pedy.

Approximately 72% (n=13) of these organisations were located in ‘other Australia’.

Consumer groups comprised 13% (n=15) of organisations within the IMR. These were 4WD clubs or motorists associations that provided information to members about recent trips to the area, indicating POIs and the availability of on-track services (see, e.g., Internet Landrover Club 2008). With two exceptions (see, e.g., Lake Eyre Yacht Club 2008) all were located in ‘other Australia’.

Approximately seven % of organisations (n=7) were classified as administrating government. These organisations included elected government bodies and economic development and natural resource management agencies associated

with them. Five of these were located in ‘other Australia’ and two in ‘desert Australia’. Activities included local government functions, environmental activities, heritage activities and road services (see, e.g., Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, 2007).

There were four core tourism organisations (four %) although some combined their tourism activity with some local commercial interests. For example the Pink Roadhouse (2007) provided hot food, general store, accommodation, mechanical repairs and post office to local residents and to tourists at Oodnadatta. Two organisations were in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track (see, e.g., Coward Springs 2007) and one each in ‘desert Australia’ and ‘other Australia’. There was one tourism marketing agency returned (one %). This was based in ‘other Australia’ (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2007).

Next, the OT-IMR data were examined using the GDT framework as the analytical lens.

The OT-IMR lens on geographic dispersion: There were degrees of geographic dispersion in evidence. Organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track were located at various points over the approximately 637 km between the extremities - Marree and Marla (see, e.g., ExplorOz 2007b at Figure 29 below).

↑ Driving Directions	
	Distance
Marla to Oodnadatta Tk & Oodnadatta - Hamilton Tk	190.3 km
Oodnadatta Tk & Oodnadatta - Hamilton Tk to Six Mile Creek Floodway	9.16 km
Six Mile Creek Floodway to The Angle Pole Memorial	1.37 km
The Angle Pole Memorial to Oodnadatta	7.1 km
Oodnadatta to Mt Dutton	45.32 km
Mt Dutton to William Creek	163.52 km
William Creek to Irrapatana Siding	20.08 km
Irrapatana Siding to Strangways Springs	15.45 km
Strangways Springs to Beresford Railway Siding	13.82 km
Beresford Railway Siding to Coward Springs	26.14 km
Coward Springs to Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park	13.87 km
Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park to Curdimurka	28.5 km
Curdimurka to Bopeechee	32.87 km
Bopeechee to Marree	69.93 km
Marla to Marree	637.43 km

Distance is GPS recorded driving distance (not straight line), Direction is straight line from start to end, Time is calculated from

Figure 29: ExplorOz (2007b).

Further from the track, but within ‘desert Australia’, organisations were located in Cooper Pedy (168 km from the OT) and Port Augusta (205 km from the OT). Again, whilst some of these organisations were co-located within these towns, they were at separate locations. Organisations located in Adelaide and some rural towns were more dispersed from the track. Finally, some internationally based organisations had connections with the track (see, e.g., figure 30 below).



Figure 30: IgoUgo (2007).

The OT-IMR lens on enabling technology: The use of enabling technology for those websites within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT was quite limited. One organisation which was identified through other searches did not have their own website. Most websites were not interactive (no online booking service available), and contact with organisations was invited via email. Some websites did display links to other websites. Websites were simple in design and there was no evidence of any degree of sophistication within websites (see, e.g., Pink Roadhouse 2007). Most organisations in the other proximity categories engaged more sophisticated communication technologies. They contained capabilities such as online bookings for accommodation and car rentals (see, e.g., Macdonnellranges.com 2008), commercial transactions such as purchasing maps, real-time mapping websites (see for example MapsPlus 2008), and consumer discussion forums. Websites for government agencies provided extensive information and other services through

sophisticated websites (see for example South Australian Tourism Commission 2007). Some smaller tour operators not in 'close geographic' proximity to the OT relied primarily on email communication (for example Ossies Tours 2008).

The OT-IMR lens on team membership: Organisations displayed diverse and complex connections with tourism on the OT. Organisations showed varying degrees of interest in the tourism agenda. The importance of each organisation's activities to tourism was varied. The following examples are instructive. Several organisations were permanently located within the OT and could be considered central to the tourist dimension of the OT, for example commercial campgrounds and hotels (for example William Creek Hotel 2007). The connection of some organisations to the OT was more temporary in nature, for example those representing major one-off events such as the great cattle drives and horseracing and rodeos (see, e.g., William Creek Races 2007). Another example was special interest tour operators who were connected in an intimate fashion with the OT for the duration of a tour but only temporarily and assumed a more remote connection when engaged in other commercial interests (see, e.g., Remote Outback Cycle Tours 2007). However, other tour operators who dealt exclusively with the OT had a permanent and core connection. Government agencies dealing with matters such as tourism (South Australian Tourism Commission 2007), transport (Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure 2007) and local government (Outback Areas Community Development Trust 2007) had a permanent/continuing interest in the OT, but it was not their exclusive interest. The nature of their interest (tourism road safety and local government) could be described as core. Many organisations, particularly those performing the general functions of a travel agency (e.g. bookings), had only a peripheral and temporary connection to the track. These were

frequently located in the ‘other Australia’ and ‘international’ proximity categories. Another example of peripheral and temporary connection to the OT was several organisations in the consumer group classification such as caravaners (see, e.g., Figure 31 below).

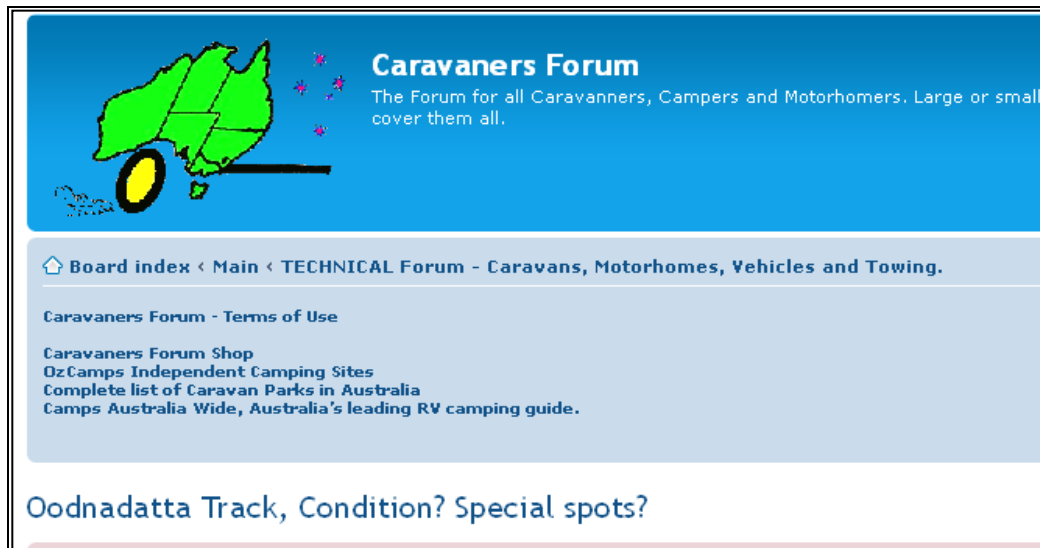


Figure 31: Caravaners Forum (2007).

The OT-IMR lens on culture: Evidence of a variety of organisational cultures could be gleaned from the websites. Many websites, particularly those of the government agencies and booking agents had sophisticated websites which reflected a strong corporate culture (see, e.g., figure 32 below, South Australian Tourism Commission 2007).

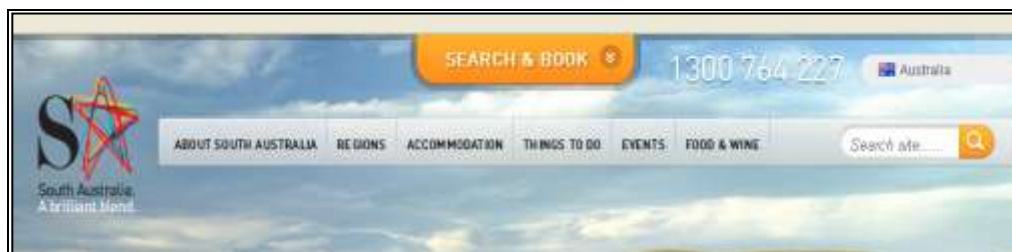


Figure 32: South Australian tourism commission (2007).

Other similar commercial websites included the lonely planet and Google books (see, e.g., Google Books 2007). These presented as large organisations with formal structures and significant infrastructure. In contrast, many of the organisations in 'close geographic' proximity or in 'desert Australia' displayed a simple website. These organisations presented in a more personal and intimate fashion, were much smaller in size, evidencing a more informal culture (see, e.g., Figure 33 below, Coward Springs 2007). Also on the Coward Springs website a diversity of organisational type (large corporations, government agencies, medium and small organisations), and organisational purpose (for example tourism marketing, local government, aboriginal affairs, accommodation, fuel and food supplies) was evident.

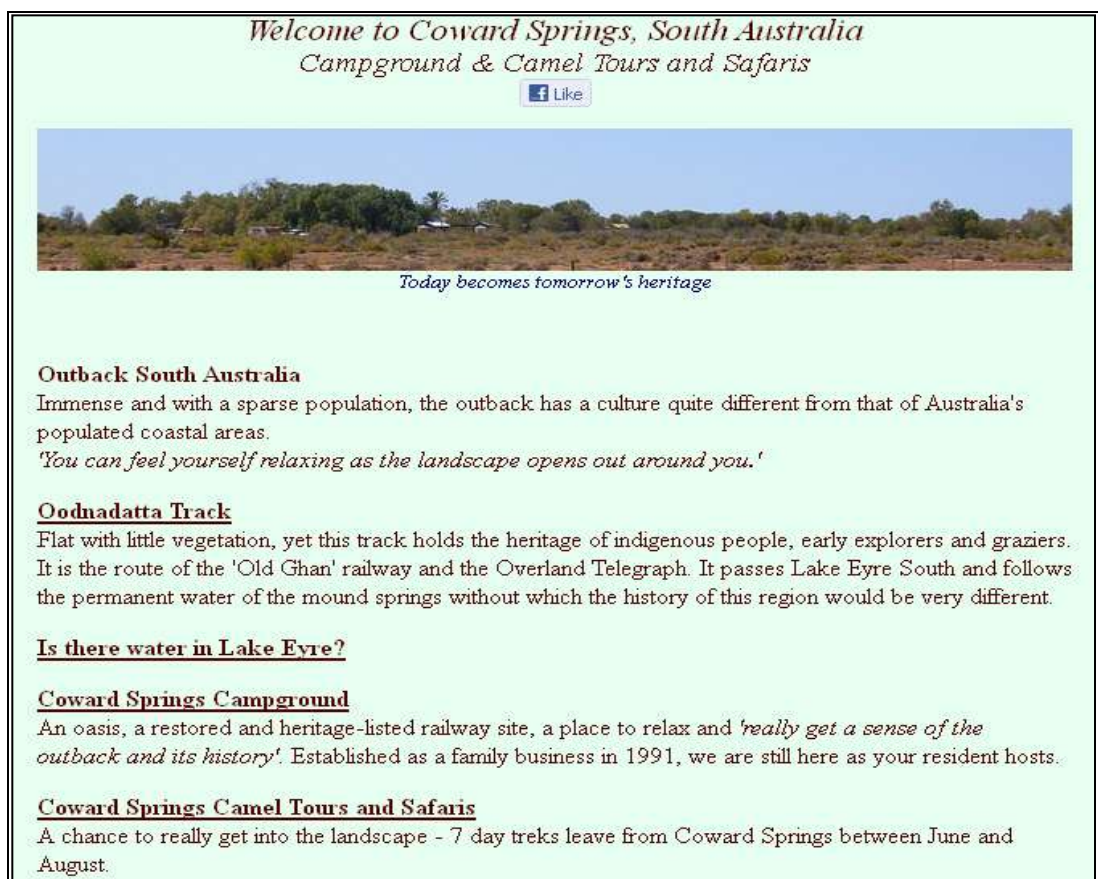


Figure 33: Coward Springs (2007).

Afghan, aboriginal and European cultures were in evidence on the OT. One aboriginal tour website promoted aboriginal cultural tours and experiences, and there was also some reference to aboriginal heritage specifically in and around Marree and Oodnadatta (see for example Figure 34: promoting the Reg Dodd cultural tour).



Figure 34: Arabunna Tours (2007).

The OT-IMR lens on shared mindset: The OT has a consistent and strongly defined identity associated with its geographic location. Most websites referred to the OT as an entity and as a specific destination: 'The ultimate outback adventure, it's all on the Oodnadatta Track' (William Creek Hotel 2007). The mapping websites in particular reinforced the sense of geographic boundary (see Figure 35).



Figure 35: Bonzle.com (2008).

The many detailed descriptions of the OT, from commercial organisations, consumer groups and discussion forums, consistently refer to the same start and finish point of the OT (Marree and Marla) and the key POIs. From the perspective of the tourist accessing the OT, the boundaries were clearly defined geographically and the POIs were consistently identified.

The promotion of tourism within the OT was at least in part the purpose of each of the organisations from all proximity categories. For some organisations with tourism as their core interest and who operated exclusively within the OT, tourism promotion was their primary purpose. For example the Coward Springs campground website proclaims;

“Oodnadatta track: Flat with little vegetation, yet this track holds the heritage of indigenous people, early explorers and graziers. It is the route of the 'Old Ghan' railway and the Overland Telegraph. It passes Lake Eyre South and follows the permanent water of the mound springs without which the history of this region would be very different.”

Coward Springs (2007)

However, most organisations displayed multiple purposes through their website. For example tour operators who offer tours to several different locations, travel agencies who take bookings for a variety of destinations, and consumer groups who provide assistance and information on a range of topics (see for example Internet Landrover Club 2008b). In some cases connection could be described as marginal, as for example with Wikipedia and Google books (see, e.g., Google Books 2007). Also government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Heritage and the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure clearly had agendas other than tourism, although there was a tourism dimension to their stated purpose. For example the latter organisation amongst its services provided road conditions for the OT. Whilst the promotion of tourism was a purpose spread across many organisations, there was no sense of community or explicitly shared purpose in this regard. Interestingly, many websites referred to the OT in a way which provided a form of umbrella identity that had the potential to bind organisations. Rather than a common purpose, the purpose could be described as similar but coincidental.

The OT-IMR lens on collaboration: There was some evidence of collaboration between organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT. Most websites provide links to and contact details for other organisations located within or near to the OT (see, e.g., Pink Roadhouse 2007). In the ‘desert Australia’ proximity category approximately half of the organisations showed some evidence of collaboration through links to other websites, for example Figure 36 below.

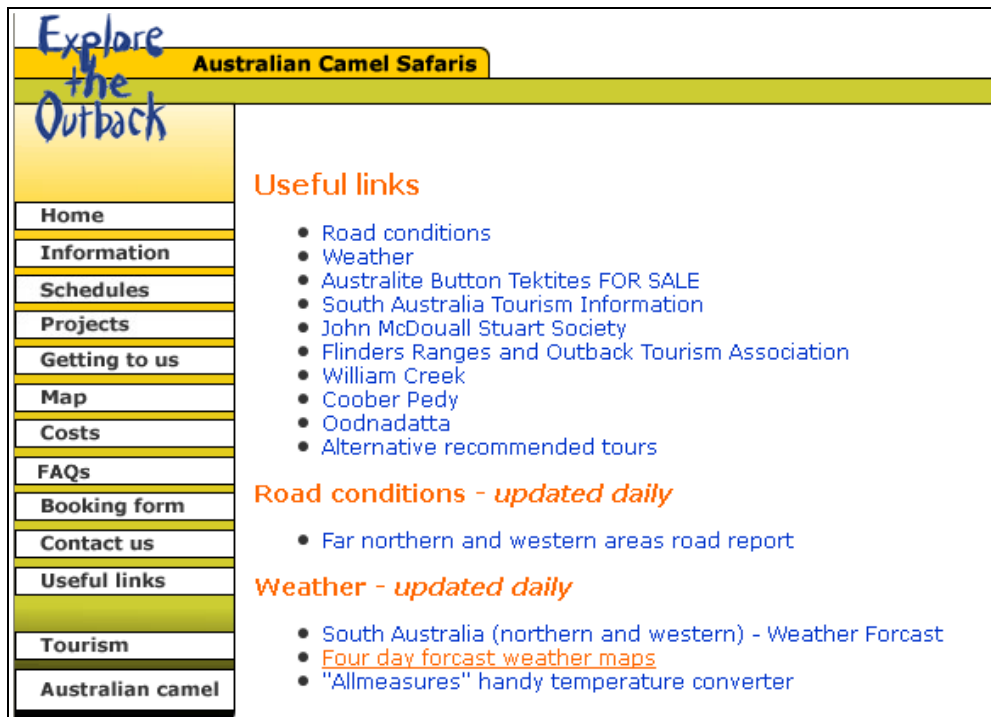


Figure 36: Australian Camel Safaris (2007).

It is unclear whether the links from these two proximity categories are commercial, gratuitous, or even negotiated. Many national and international organisations (for example travel agencies) provided extensive links to locations and organisations within their websites but most of these were merely providing information to prospective clients and were not commercial in nature. There were some limited exceptions where the agency managed bookings on behalf of the organisation (see, e.g., Great Aussie Holidays, 2008).

The OT-IMR lens on leadership: There was some evidence of traditional and participative leadership on the OT but no evidence of distributed leadership. There were many examples of leadership focussed on the individual interests of tourism providers but there was little evidence of leadership trying to work with people across organisational/cultural/spatial boundaries toward tourism on the OT in

its entirety. The data reported below provides examples of the types of leadership in evidence on the OT and the circumstances in which it is exercised.

Within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT, there was evidence of leadership activity related to the specific interests of tourism providers, but not for the OT as an entity. Many individual providers demonstrated traditional leadership in the pursuit of their organisational objectives. For example the owner of the Pink Roadhouse controlled a multifaceted enterprise (see Figure 37 below).



Figure 37: Pink Roadhouse (2007).

From within the ‘desert Australia’ proximity category two examples of leadership require some explanation. The first website was that of the OACDT (Outback Areas Community Development Trust 2007) which has a statutory

responsibility to provide services of a local government nature to 80% of South Australia's outback regions. The functions of the Authority include community services, developmental grants, and facilitation of communications. To discharge this responsibility the Trust adopts a leadership role. The website states that the OACDT will work collaboratively with constituents and act as an advocate on their behalf. This suggests a participative approach to leadership when dealing with the Trust's constituency. The OT falls within the geographic boundaries managed by the OACDT. Whilst it might be assumed that tourism initiatives be included in these stated functions, there was no overt statement on the website claiming a leadership responsibility in this area. The more general local government responsibilities mentioned above were clearly a priority. This was an example of participative leadership but the extent to which it includes tourism is unclear.

The second website was the Port Augusta office of the Department of Environment Water and Natural Resources (2008) whose statutory responsibilities include nature conservation. That office adopts a leadership role for matters connected to these responsibilities within the OT. For example it provides infrastructure such as a boardwalk at the Wamba Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park and controls tourism access to Lake Eyre National Park. This leadership role clearly extends to managing the tourism – conservation interface at various locations on the OT. However, the Department was concerned with only that single dimension of tourism and did not extend to the broader tourism agenda. There was no explicit evidence relating to the style of leadership adopted.

From the 'other Australia' proximity category, the South Australian Tourism Commission (2007) website reflected a leadership role with respect to tourism in

South Australia. The commission performed functions including tourism research, marketing and promotion. They also had the capacity to fund certain tourism initiatives. Whilst the OT falls within this geographic boundary, there was only minor reference to tourism initiatives at that destination. Other government departments with specific expertise and legislative authority, had traditional leadership roles associated with tourism on the OT. For example the Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure (2007) could be expected to adopt occasional leadership functions with respect to road safety and maintenance, including road closures and safety warnings (see, e.g., Figure 38).

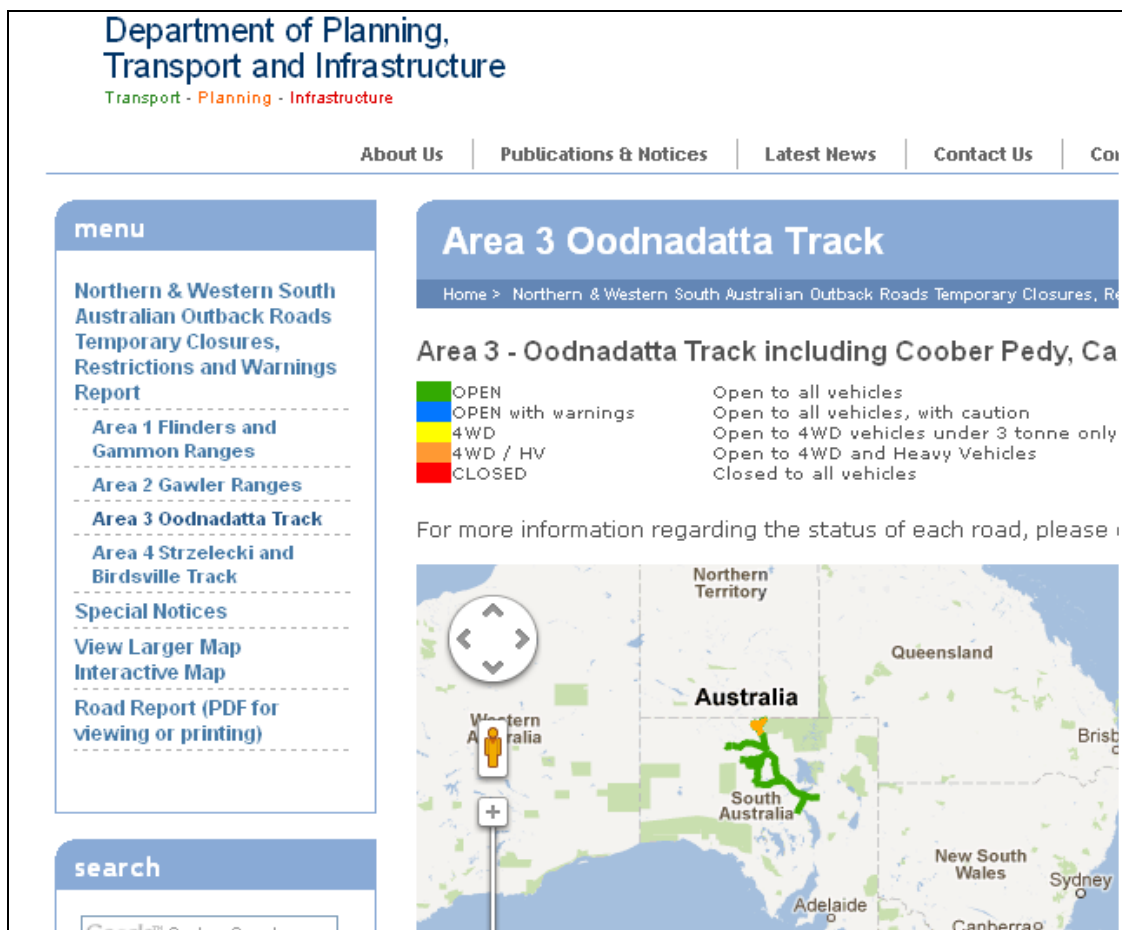


Figure 38: Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure (2007).

The final proximity category is 'international'. There was no evidence of leadership from tourism providers with respect to the OT from this category.

4.4.2 Field data

The OT field lens on Geographic dispersion: The field data revealed varying degrees of geographic dispersion between organisations engaged in tourism activities in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT. Some were co-located in small towns and others separated by significant distances. At the southern extremity of the track the town of Marree hosted several organisations connected with tourism including a hotel, roadhouse, accommodation, caravan parks and a tour operator. Whilst these were co-located (within the same geographic region) they operated independently of each other in that they were separate organisations with discrete interests. The camp ground of Coward Springs is 127 km north of Marree on the Oodnadatta Track, and a hotel and accommodation located at William Creek a further 72 km north. Another 199 km to the north is the township of Oodnadatta, with a roadhouse, accommodation and hotel. A further 208 km to the north-west at the northern extremity of the OT is Marla with roadhouse, small supermarket, accommodation and a caravan park (see for example Figure 39 below).

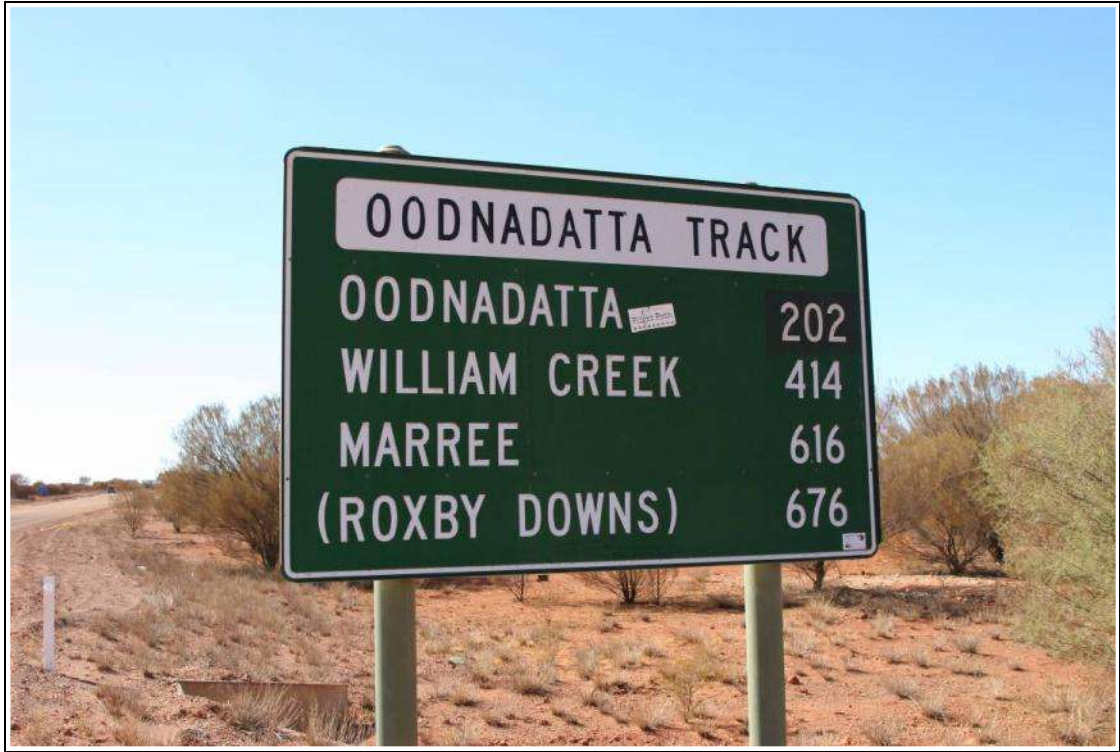


Figure 39: OT signage indicative of dispersion between inhabited centres (Photograph Cartan).

Some remote pastoral stations located close to the OT also had an interest in tourism, for example Muloorina (50 km from the track) which provides accommodation, camping and access to Lake Eyre, and Arckaringa (86 km off the Track) which also has accommodation and camping, and access to the Painted Desert. There are also scattered POIs within the OT of cultural, environmental or historical significance, for example the Algebuckina Historical Site, the Wamba Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park and the abandoned Curdimurka railway siding. The harsh physical terrain of this environment and the variable driving conditions on the unsealed track surface accentuate the physical separation of these locations (see, e.g., figures 40 and 41 below).



Figure 40: Indicative of dangerous terrain (Photograph Cartan).



Figure 41: Indicative of dangerous driving terrain (Photograph Cartan).

In the 'desert Australia' proximity category the town of Coober Pedy, 165 km west of William Creek, was the location of several organisations which were connected to the OT. These included motels, caravan parks, supermarkets and one tour operator who offered regular tours to the OT. Located in Port Augusta, some 392 km south of Marree were two government agencies (the OACDT and the parks management function of the Department of Environment Water and Natural Resources) which had specific statutory responsibilities within the OT. There was also a tour operator within Port Augusta. Within Port Augusta and Marree

organisation were co-located (ie geographically very close) but they functioned independently of each other in that they were separate organisations with discrete interests. In the regional centre of Alice Springs 660 km north of Marla one tour operator was identified promoting the OT as a destination. In the ‘other Australia’ proximity category, the South Australian Tourism Commission was based in Adelaide some 700 km south of Marree.

The OT field lens on enabling technology: Within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT all organisations indicated they had access to and made some use of basic facilities such as mobile phone, email and the internet: for example the quite isolated pastoral stations, the William Creek hotel, small organisations in Marree and Oodnadatta and Coward Springs camp ground. These were rather rudimentary ICTs but did facilitate some marketing and other commercial activities such as purchasing (Informant OT15). The Rural Transactions Centre at Marree offered internet access to tourists (Informant OT3). There was no evidence of more sophisticated use of ICTs as a communication tool between organisations (such as Skype) within ‘close geographic’ proximity, nor did they use more sophisticated tools to do with tourists such as interactive online reservation systems. A network of UHF (ultra high frequency) repeater towers enhanced the capacity to communicate via UHF:

“UHF is still a very common form of public communication in the Outback. The system is used by emergency services, the police and pastoralists – the latter for important daily station management and stock mustering tasks.”

(Flinders Ranges, Eyre Peninsula & outback South Australia 4WD Tracks & Repeater Towers, OT Document 22).

Each tower has a transmit radius of approximately 30 km which tourists are able to use in an emergency. One tour operator (Informant OT13) used the UHF to order food for his passengers from the Oodnadatta Pink Roadhouse prior to arrival (see Figure 42).



Figure 42: Tour operator approaching the Pink Roadhouse (Photograph Cartan).

Organisations located in the ‘desert Australia’ and ‘other Australia’ proximity categories had access to more sophisticated ICTs. For example the SA tourism commission in Adelaide indicated they had access to a broad range of enabling technology including high-speed internet connection and video conferencing (Informant OT20). Similar services were also available to the OACDT (Informant OT23) in Port Augusta. In Coober Pedy, mobile phone coverage, internet connection, Skype and satellite TV and Foxtel were available and used to enhance commercial operations in many instances (Informant OT13; OT Document 7).

The OT field lens on team membership: Several organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT existed primarily for tourism purposes. They provided such facilities as camp grounds (at Coward Springs), caravan parks (at Marree) and accommodation (at Marla). See for example Fig 43 below.



Figure 43: Coward Springs campground (Photograph Cartan).

These organisations had an intimate and permanent connection with tourism. Three tour operators were located within the OT and were important providers of the tourism experience. They acted as a magnet and conduit for visitors to the OT, often accompanying small groups for each tour. For example one tour operator (Informant OT13) was heard on the UHF car radio booking 10 meals for his entourage at a roadhouse. Informant OT16 conducted cultural and environmental tours of up to seven days in duration. Informant OT11 provided camel tours as a supplement to their camp ground activities: “we’re mainly tourism; I’ve also got a bit of a date farm out the back”. These organisations could be described as having a core and permanent relationship with the OT.

Other organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity had a permanent relationship with the OT but tourism was not their primary focus. These organisations included hotels (at Marree, William Creek and Oodnadatta), community groups (for example the Marree and Oodnadatta progress associations), community stores and fuel supplies (for example at Oodnadatta and Marree) and pastoral stations. For example Informant OT14 described how his pastoral station operated several small cabins and a camp ground “on the side” as a small cash flow stream in conjunction with their cattle interests: “we don’t promote it much; in fact we’ve run out of brochures!”

Several organisations located in the OT were more temporary in nature. They were associated with major events such as the Camel Cup (racing) and the Oodnadatta and William Creek gymkhana style events. These organisations were ‘activated’ each year for these events and then lay dormant for periods of time. Whilst some tourists attended these events a large percentage of patrons are from local areas. These organisations could be described as temporary and non-core with respect to tourism within the OT. In a similar vein, the Great Australian Cattle Drive was the temporary organisation that managed this major tourism event within the OT. Whilst it was temporary it existed primarily for tourism purposes.

Tour operators not located in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT saw it as one aspect of a portfolio of activities that contributed to their income stream. They were interested in initiatives that promoted the OT as a destination as this might have a positive impact on their commercial interest. They were particularly concerned with access to POIs and especially exclusive access to places which might differentiate their product from other tour operators. For example Informant OT13

negotiated a special access arrangement with one pastoralist for his tours. He claimed this as an important “value added” arrangement. Their relationship to the OT could be described as core but temporary.

Several government agencies, although not located in ‘close’ proximity to the OT had a permanent interest in it, but it was not their exclusive interest. The OACDT, located in Port Augusta, had local government style responsibilities for several local communities in outback South Australia (excluding Maralinga and Pitjantjatjara Lands), including five within the OT (OT Document 12). These responsibilities included the development of infrastructure that could affect tourism. Transport SA and Department of Environment and Natural Resources were also located in the ‘other Australia’ proximity category, but both had a permanent interest in tourism dimensions within the OT. The nature of that interest could be described as core in that they influenced accessibility (i.e. the condition of roads and access to environmental POIs). The South Australian Tourism Commission had no presence within ‘close’ geographic proximity to the OT but did have a permanent and core interest in the tourism activities within it (for example Informant OT20 had a responsibility to engage in tourism research in outback areas including the OT).

The OT field lens on culture: The field study revealed a variety of organisational and racial cultures within and associated with the OT. A diversity of organisational cultures was evident: small and larger organisations, and government and non-government. Many organisations were small in size run by owner managers; these organisations had an informal style, with little evidence of routine processes and procedures. These organisations were heavily centred around the owner manager (sometimes a husband and wife team). Dress was generally oriented toward outdoor

physical work and the workplace office was somewhat unstructured. For example Informant OT7 (see Figure 44) held one commercial meeting in the café area of his establishment and engaged with employees and suppliers during the course of meeting.



Figure 44: Office, shop, service station and interview location, in Marree (Photograph Cartan).

Informant OT11 had an office in an outdoors covered area and wore thongs. In contrast the government agencies were large organisations, structured more along bureaucratic lines. Work attire was more formal, offices crisp and tidy, individuals filling specialised roles and decisions formed within policy and legislative guidelines. For example the interview with Informant OT21 was conducted in a high rise building in Adelaide, in a private meeting room which was tidy and comfortable. The informant was dressed in dark suit and procedures were quite formal.

There was also a racial mix evident in both Oodnadatta and Marree. Both towns had a significant aboriginal population. Marree was home to the Arabunna People's Centre showcasing cultural and heritage displays. Cultural tours were

conducted from this Centre. Informant OT16 made the statement: “We gotta make tourists more aware of our culture. It’s very fragile like the environment”. The Deerie aboriginal community also had a presence in Marree. In addition there was a significant Afghan community in Marree, but there was little evidence of major involvement in tourism activities. In Oodnadatta the aboriginal population had family ties to the Aranda, Antakarainnja, Loritja and Pitjantjatjara peoples. They had a strong presence in the town including some commercial interests such as the store and hotel, both of which catered for tourism activity.

The OT field lens on shared mindset: The term OT was widely recognised by informants, and there was general agreement as to the POIs within the OT (see for example OT Document 14). Tourist activity along the OT was widely regarded as an asset to the region. For example,

“It's a phenomenal asset”

(Informant OT13).

“you won't find a better tourism site”

(Informant OT16).

Tourism was not the exclusive interest of informants, even those involved in directly providing some tourism services in ‘close’ geographic proximity to the track. For example one informant (OT15) was keen to provide his accommodation facilities to those involved in mining initiatives within the region and to service local communities. Informant OT16 described his objective is to increase the awareness of his culture. One pastoralist (Informant OT1) suggested that while tourism was sometimes seen as “a necessary evil” it was essential in their efforts to diversify

revenue streams which traditionally have relied on cattle and at times sheep. This informant stated,

"We don't charge for our camping facilities at the moment but we do need to branch out, and I can see plenty of opportunities."

(Informant OT1).

Other informants were more antagonistic toward tourism: for example Informant OT10, a pastoralist, indicated

"we won't tolerate bloody 4WD'ers on our land; if we see any we'll stop 'em and have 'em arrested."

(Informant OT10).

In this sense different priorities were evident particularly amongst those informants in 'close geographic' proximity to the track who pursued multiple agendas.

There was a diversity of view about the value of the OT as a tourism destination as an entirety. The term OT was used by many organisations to promote their tourism interests, and they recognised the importance of promoting the OT as a "drawcard" (Informant OT20). There was a recognition that individual interests could benefit from the general flow of tourism traffic. However, some informants whilst happy to benefit from any general promotion and increased traffic flow, were primarily (if not exclusively) concerned with their own interests. For example Informant OT1 who provides tourism stopover facilities stated "I'm really not very interested in the OT." Similarly, Informant OT17 stated "I'm not really sure what is along the OT."

In contrast, some did see the connectedness of the individual POIs, in addition to a localised focus:

“What most people don't realise is that the Oodnadatta Track is actually 50 to 60 km wide when you consider all the types of activities that have occurred over the years from rail to explorers to aboriginal trade routes. The whole thing is important to us”

(Informant OT13).

On the OT, tourism providers did not demonstrate a shared mindset with respect to tourism. Their interest in tourism for the OT could be described as similar, but coincidental, and of various strengths.

The OT field lens on collaboration: Collaboration was seen by most informants as important to current and future tourism initiatives. There were no negative reactions to the idea of collaboration and many informants were overtly positive about the benefits:

“with collaboration the sky could be the limit”

(Informant OT5).

“we definitely need to collaborate and consult with people”

(Informant OT22).

Informant OT5 provided an example of the potential benefits of greater collaboration:

“We could bulk buy stuff if they banded together and shared costs; everyone would benefit”

(Informant OT5).

There were some specific current examples of collaboration within the OT. For example a tour operator and a pastoralist worked together to extend the OT tour into the pastoral property. The money paid by the tourists to the pastoralist was

donated to charity (Informant OT9). There was also some collaboration between organisations in the delivery of the gymkhana and racing events within the OT (Informant OT9). The Rural Transactions Centre in Marree actively promoted a local tour operator and cultural centre (Informant OT3). Another provider in Marree recommended people to the hotel at William Creek and also to the Pink Roadhouse at Oodnadatta (Informant OT7). One informant suggested that the Deerie and the Arabunna aboriginal peoples tended to work together at times (Informant OT4). None of these examples evidenced any formal agreements or reciprocal commercial arrangement. The nature of many of these connections is consistent with the words of Informant OT11:

“I have no formal links with other people in the region but we do have casual phone conversations”

(Informant OT11).

Documentation distributed by the OACDT indicated its commitment to a collaborative modus operandi. It stated that it will achieve its organisational vision by, “continuing to build strategic partnerships and effective working relationships with outback communities” (OT Document 12).

Whilst the above examples indicated some collaborative activity it could not be described as “extensive”. There were data to suggest that collaboration was not pervasive and might be difficult to establish (Informant OT8). In some cases this was due to a general lack of interest in the activities of other organisations and individuals outside the immediate sphere of interest of some informants:

“there’s not much (collaboration) occurring at the moment and not much likely to happen”

(Informant OT4).

“There is no collaboration in the town between people”

(Informant OT5).

“the XX (name withheld) organisations in the town are particularly uncooperative and not willing to collaborate in any way at all and very difficult to deal with”

(Informant OT15).

“I’m not sure what’s down the Oodnadatta track” –

(Informant OT17).

This sentiment was particularly evident in the management of community events:

“In terms of the work done for the races itself it’s the same old crew that contribute each year and do all the work; and it’s only a few people that get involved”

(Informant OT9).

“only a very few are community minded people; therefore all the work seems to fall on a few and this explains why not a lot gets done. There are some big projects in the wings waiting to happen but it’s a matter of getting enough support and man power to them to make them work”

(Informant OT3).

Informant OT5 talked about the “lethargy” that many individuals showed towards collaborating in these types of events. This form of criticism was also extended to local organisations who benefited financially from these events and who should, according to some, make a greater contribution to their management:

“Not even those (organisations) involved in tourism will tip in. The Camel Cup for example is not supported by business”

(Informant OT3) italics added.

One hurdle to the development of collaborative ventures was the sensitive nature of some personal relationships that had evolved over the years. The fact that inhabited locations within the OT had very low populations and were in isolated locations at times created very intent

“the tensions within the town and rivalries stop things getting done”

(Informant OT8).

“collaboration is very bad; because of personalities and differences of opinion; it just doesn’t happen; everyone works for themselves”

(Informant OT3).

“there are groups in Marree who are constantly fighting and bickering and it is difficult to work with them”

(Informant OT4).

At times the cause of personal tensions stemmed specifically from competing commercial interests rather than personality differences. Competition for a limited and seasonal market was more typical than collaboration:

“There's a whole heap of people nibbling at the pie; instead of banding together and taking on the whole cake”

(Informant OT5).

“There's too much accommodation in town; it only fills 3 times a year which means we're carrying a lot of overheads for not much return for a lot of the year”

(Informant OT7).

“There's too much accommodation in town and near town for non peak periods. The more accommodation means the fewer dollars each of us can take out of the cake. This means less for each of us in Marree”

(Informant OT2).

Competing commercial interests seem at the heart of the attitude of most pastoral organisations to collaborative activities within the OT. There was limited engagement. Most of these organisations severely restricted tourist access to their properties because of the potential damage to property and interference with stock. In some cases access was banned totally:

“As I said there's no 4WD access to our place. If they come on then we'll stop 'em dead and call the police”

(Informant OT10).

Informant OT4 suggested the cemetery is symbolic of the types of divisions within the town. Observations at the cemetery showed a large open space which was neatly divided into 3 separate areas: Afghans, Aboriginals and whites. Each area was some distance from the others.

In addition, collaboration was more likely to occur between organisations at some distance from each other as this was less likely to involve direct competitors. When asked about collaboration, one informant observed,

*“Yes, but not with people who are located close by; they’re competitors;
but collaboration with people more at a distance would be quite useful; that
might be down in the Flinders or somewhere like the Barossa”*

(Informant OT1).

The OT field lens on leadership: This section presents the field data results that pertain to the leadership dimension of the GDT framework. As discussed in Chapter 2, a distinction is made between traditional leadership which sees the function of leadership embodied in one person, participative leadership which is more consultative in style, and distributed leadership in which the function is shared between members of the team or group (Currie, Lockett & Suhomlinova 2009).

Many providers did demonstrate traditional leadership function with respect to their own organisations (including Informants OT1, OT2, OT4, OT7, OT10, OT11, OT 13 and OT16). For example Informant OT15 managed a multifunction organisation, with up to six staff (and a high turnover as many work on six week contracts). Because of the difficulty acquiring skilled labour this informant personally engaged in and supervised a building maintenance and expansion program. In another context, the organizing and staging of two gymkhanas required a leadership function. As explained by Informant OT9 this involved both traditional and participative leadership; it required controlling an organizing committee, fundraising, engaging local assistance to conduct the events, promotion, catering, and fostering involvement from potential contributors. These events were managed by steering committees representing diverse interests and so a participatory process of engagement was required at times, although as described by Informant OT9 “most people don’t do much; it falls back on a few who drive things along.”

Several informants perceived a lack of leadership that spanned the tourism related activities along the entire OT. Their concern was that no one person or organisation could be identified as actively adopting a position of leadership with respect to tourism for the OT as a whole. Even in areas where there was a co-location of organisations, there was no evidence of leadership bridging those organisations within that confined geographic area. Lack of leadership in this domain is evidenced by the comments of two informants, who suggested the need for some form of overall leadership,

“I think that that proper management needs to be put in place to look after the interests of the track. This needs somebody in the area paid by the government and with the responsibility of maintaining and promoting tourism”

(Informant OT16).

“if you did promote it (ie tourism), it would need somebody full time or nearly to manage it”

(Informant OT14 italics added).

It was suggested by Informant OT5 that the South Australian Tourism Commission take a more active leadership responsibility to promote and develop some aspects of tourism along the track. For example, several comments were made about the need for interpretative and directional signage within the OT

“They should put signage on places in the town for tourists to better appreciate them; for example there’s an old Tom Kruse truck which is not far away, with wheels falling off, and that’s an example of something that could have been better preserved”

(Informant OT6).

“Signposts are needed on the track itself”

(Informant OT5).

“Why don’t they erect some road side stops along the way. Just a simple metal structure with a tin roof to provide some shade in parking”

(Informant OT15).

Further, many informants indicated an expectation that leadership should be provided for the OT by specific government agencies. This was frequently raised by respondents in the context of the responsibility to provide additional funding for projects. Many informants indicated that leadership on this limited range of issues was in fact expected but not forthcoming in some instances. For example some form of lead role was expected from Transport SA with respect to the safety and development of the track:

“The Department of Road Transport (sic) haven’t spent a great deal of money developing the infrastructure for tourism along the track – especially on road maintenance and signage”

(Informant OT9).

“At the moment there are only 2 teams doing road maintenance; there used to be 5, which is causing the road problem at the moment”

(Informant OT13).

“the road surface needs to be kept reasonably safe for driving”

(Informant OT6).

One informant was very supportive of tourism development by “someone else” who “should lead the way and spend more money on the place” (Informant OT1). This informant was referring to the South Australian Tourism Commission.

The South Australian Tourism Commission did produce written material relating to aspects of the OT (see, e.g., OT Document 26 promoting South Australia 4WD experiences; OT Document 3 promoting the Oodnadatta Track – String of Springs; and OT Document 27 promoting South Australia Flinders Ranges & Outback). Informant OT21, from the Commission, indicated that the Commission adopted a collaborative approach to these types of projects. This indicated a participative leadership role in promoting some dimensions of tourism on the OT. However, apart from these documents no evidence was found of the South Australian Tourism Commission providing leadership by engaging extensively and regularly with tourism providers over the entire OT.

The Department of Environment and Heritage espoused a leadership role with respect to the conservation of South Australia’s “natural and cultural heritage”, although it was unclear what type of leadership was adopted. For example the Department promoted the responsible use of locations such as Lake Eyre and the Wamba Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park within the OT (OT Document 30). Departmental signage at these locations, designed to inform and to control behaviours, also indicate leadership responsibilities. As put by one informant,

“the protective work that’s been done by National Parks is a good thing to preserve and protect the area but still allows tourists to see it”

(Informant OT4).

There was also some evidence of tourism related leadership from the OACDT. The OACDT was seen by informants as responsible for the provision of infrastructure (Informants OT22 & OT6), signage (Informant OT15) and general funding (Informants OT5 & OT16). The OACDT declared a leadership responsibility

for the region and encouraged participation in that it “fosters a collaborative approach to improved outcomes [and] leadership within the outback areas” (OT Document 13, p. 5). Whilst the OACDT claimed a wide range of responsibilities (including tourism), a detailed tourism agenda was not evident. It had an operational leadership responsibility in the provision of local community services, works programs, grants and loans, and development projects (OT Document 13, p.33). Whilst the OACDT did engage in the more general promotion of tourism, for example by sponsoring publications such as OT Document 2, this was not extensive.

In summary, no evidence was found of traditional leadership with respect to tourism on the OT as a totality. The extent to which one person or tourism provider could be identified as adopting a position of leadership with respect to tourism was moot. There were some examples of participative management in practice (for example the OACDT) but there were no examples of distributed leadership.

4.4.3 Combined Oodnadatta Track IMR & Field data

In this section the results from the OT IMR and field studies are combined. It reports only the key themes from the data. This provides a composite snapshot of the OT, highlights the extent of triangulation between IMR and field data, and offers clarity on the key issues. For each element of the GDT framework comparative summaries are displayed below (Tables 25-31). Each table identifies the extent of congruence between the IMR and field data by using the categories “yes”, “no” and/or “partial”. The IMR data identifying organisational type and proximity has no directly corresponding category of field data and is presented as contextual data.

The contextual OT lens on geographic proximity and organisational

type: This data (see Table 24 and related discussion above) firstly provided an

indication of the location of organisations associated with tourism on the OT (geographic proximity). Approximately 10% of organisations were in the 'close geographic' proximity category, 68% in 'other Australia', 14% were 'international' and 8% in 'desert Australia'.

The most common form of organisational type was 'tourism intermediary' (37%), most of which were located in 'other Australia' and 'international' categories. Tour operators comprised 18% of the population with 72% located in the 'other Australia' category. Ancillary organisations (with tourism as a non-core part of their activities) comprise 19% of the population with 10% in the 'other Australia' proximity category. Consumer groups (13%) were predominantly in the 'other Australia' proximity category. The next most populous organisational type was administering government (7%) with all organisations located in the 'desert Australia' and 'other Australia' proximity categories. The core tourism organisations (4%) were located in 'close geographic' proximity, 'desert Australia' and 'other Australia'. Tourism marketing agencies (1%) were the least represented.

The combined OT lens on geographic dispersion: There were degrees of geographic dispersion in evidence in all proximity categories. Each inhabited location within ‘close geographic’ proximity was home to at least one organisation and in some cases co-located organisations. There was a mix of organisational type amongst these organisations and there was no identifiable pattern to the dispersion of organisations. The dispersion was accentuated by the harsh physical conditions. There was a significant distance between many organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity, and those in other proximity categories.

Table 25: The combined OT lens on geographic dispersion.

IMR	FIELD	TRIANGULATION		
		Yes	No	Partial
Geographic dispersion was in evidence across all proximity categories	Geographic dispersion was in evidence in across the proximity categories of, close geographic, ‘desert Australia’, ‘other Australia’.			X
Within close geographic proximity a mix of various organisational types were located along the entire OT	Within close geographic proximity a mix of various organisational types were located along the entire OT	X		
There was some geographic co-location of organisations; however, these were at independent locations	There was some geographic co-location of organisations; these operated independently of each other	X		
	The physical environment accentuated the dispersion of organisations in close proximity to the track			X

The combined OT lens on enabling technology: The extent of ICT infrastructure varied between organisations. Within ‘close geographic’ proximity some form of enabling technology was available at all inhabited locations. The technology was rudimentary, and there was little evidence of employing these technologies as an interactive tool between organisations in this category. In the ‘desert Australia’ and ‘other Australia’ proximity categories more sophisticated technologies were in evidence. Government agencies and larger corporate style organisations displayed more sophisticated technologies.

Table 26: The combined OT lens on enabling technology..

IMR	FIELD	TRIANGULATION		
		Yes	No	Partial
ICTs were available at all websites	ICTs were available at all inhabited locations visited			X
Within close geographic proximity the use of enabling technology was limited	Within close geographic proximity enabling technology was available but rudimentary			X
Organisations in other geographic proximity categories engaged more sophisticated enabling technology	In the desert Australia and other Australia proximity categories more sophisticated enabling technology was evidence			X
	Frustrations expressed at the standard of ICTs in some close geographic proximity locations		X	
Use of ICT between providers was limited	The use of ICT between tourism providers within close geographic proximity was limited	X		

The combined OT lens on membership: The importance of tourism to tourism providers varied markedly. For some, particularly in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the track, tourism was a critical and core component of their activities. More frequently tourism was part of a more complex portfolio assuming various degrees of significance. Some organisations performed roles which could be described as essential to tourism on the OT, such as the provision of services in strategically remote locations and access to cultural sites. Most providers however, whilst contributing to OT tourism in some way, occupied a more peripheral role such as conducting occasional tours. There was no notable correlation between the importance of tourism to specific organisations and the impact of those organisations activities on the OT.

Table 27: The combined OT lens on membership.

IMR	FIELD	TRIANGULATION		
		Yes	No	Partial
The importance of OT tourism to organisations in all proximity categories was varied; for some it was a core or even exclusive part of their interests; for others it was less significant	The importance of OT tourism to organisations in all proximity categories was varied; for some it was a core or even exclusive and ongoing part of their activities. For others it was less significant and not their primary focus	X		
The importance of individual providers to the delivery of tourism on the OT was varied; for some their contribution was essential, and for others it was not critical	The importance of organisations to the delivery of tourism on the OT was varied; for some their contribution was essential, and for others it was not critical	X		
There was no correlation between how important tourism was to individual organisations and how important their activities were to tourism on the OT	There was no correlation between how important tourism was to individual organisations and how important their activities were to tourism on the OT	X		

The combined OT lens on culture: There was evidence of a diversity of organisational cultures. Differences could be distinguished on a number of criteria including their size, formality, structure, governance, type, and purpose. For example a large bureaucratic government agency in Adelaide could be contrasted with a sole trader operating in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT quite isolated from other inhabited areas. There was evidence of European cultures across all proximity categories, and also of Aboriginal and Afghan cultures within ‘close geographic’ proximity to the OT.

Table 28: The combined OT lens on culture.

IMR	FIELD	TRIANGULATION		
		Yes	No	Partial
Evidence of organisational and racial diversity	Evidence of organisational and racial diversity	X		
A variety of organisational cultures was evident, based on size formality structure, type and purpose	A diversity of organisational cultures was evident, based on size formality structure, type and purpose	X		
Both aboriginal and European cultures were evident	Both aboriginal and European cultures were evident in close proximity to the track	X		
	There was evidence of Afghan culture, particularly in the Marree region		X	

The combined OT lens on shared mindset: The OT is a well recognised and strongly defined tourism entity. Providers were concerned with the promotion of tourism within the OT, and made use of that identity. Most were primarily concerned with their own localised interests; in many cases these interests were tourism and non-tourism in nature. The majority of tourism providers saw tourism on the OT as an asset to the region, but some saw it as undesirable. There was no evidence of a shared mindset amongst organisations. Rather than a common purpose the purpose could be described as similar but coincidental.

Table 29: The combined OT lens on shared mindset.

IMR	FIELD	TRIANGULATION		
		Yes	No	Partial
The OT has a strongly defined identity and was consistently described in similar terms	The OT was widely recognised with generally agreed POIs.	X		
The promotion of tourism was a purpose of each organisation; for some it was their prime purpose and for others it was more minor	The promotion of tourism was a purpose of each organisation; for some it was their prime purpose and for others it is less significant.	X		
	There were significantly different degrees of enthusiasm for tourism, most informants saw it as an asset to the region		X	
	Many informants recognise the importance of the OT as an entity but most were primarily concerned with their own interests.		X	
There was no evidence of a shared mindset in the promotion of tourism on the OT	There was no evidence of a shared mindset in the promotion of tourism on the OT	X		

The combined OT lens on collaboration: Most organisations saw collaboration as a positive process for the development of tourism. There was no evidence of collaboration involving the entire OT. Although there were some examples of collaborative activity this was limited to specific locations or activities. Most collaborative activity was informal. Considerable barriers to collaboration were identified.

Table 30: The combined OT lens on collaboration.

IMR	FIELD	TRIANGULATION		
		Yes	No	Partial
No evidence of collaboration involving entire OT	No evidence of collaboration involving entire OT	X		
Some evidence of collaboration in all proximity categories	Some evidence of collaboration between organisations but not extensive			X
The extent and nature of collaboration was not clear	Collaboration usually informal and not commercial			X
	Collaboration was seen in a positive light by most organisations		X	
	Barriers to collaboration were identified		X	

The combined OT lens on leadership: There was evidence of traditional forms of leadership by individuals within their own organisations. Some providers evidenced leadership with respect to specific functions within the OT, for example environment management, and roads. The development of some dimension of tourism was amongst the portfolio of responsibilities for many providers. The extent to which any tourism provider adopted a leadership role with multiple tourism providers over a broad range of issues within the OT was unclear. There was some evidence of participative leadership but no evidence of distributed leadership.

Table 31: The combined OT lens on leadership.

IMR	FIELD	TRIANGULATION		
		Yes	No	Partial
Individual providers evidenced traditional forms of leadership activity within their own organisations	Evidence of traditional forms of leadership by individuals within their own organisations	X		
There was evidence of leadership activity with respect to specific functions within the OT.	Evidence of leadership with respect to specific functions within the OT	X		
No evidence of distributed leadership	No evidence of distributed leadership	X		
	Some evidence of participative leadership within the OT		X	
No evidence of tourism leadership for the track as an entity	Conflicting evidence of tourism leadership for the track as an entity	X		

4.4.4 Conclusions

The IMR and field data revealed a high level of triangulation. Those items showing partial levels of consistency were items identified in both the IMR and field data, but because of the in-depth techniques of the field data, additional dimensions were identified in that phase. Those items which showed triangulation were items which internet searches were unlikely to reveal (for example attitudes held within organisations) but which became evident with the closer examinations made possible by the nature of the field study. There were no inconsistencies between the IMR and field data.

4.5 Cross case analysis: Combined Gunbarrel Highway and Oodnadatta Track data

In this section a cross case analysis combines the combined GBH and OT data, highlighting consistencies and differences. It firstly reports the more general contextual data (proximity and organisational type) and then addresses each of the elements of the GDT framework.

4.5.1 The contextual GBH and OT combined lens on geographic proximity and organisational type

As is evident from Table 32 below there was a notable degree of consistency between the GBH and OT in terms of proximity and organisational type. This indicated that the tracks were similar in many respects, but there were two important differences.

Table 32: Combined GBH and OT analysis sheet showing proximity and classification of organisational type.

Classification	Proximity (GBH/OT)				Totals
	Close geographic proximity	Desert Australia	Other Australia	Internatio nal	
Tourism intermediary	1/0	0/0	21/26	15/11	37/37
Tour operator	0/3	2/2	19/13	0/0	21/18
Ancillary (tourism non-core)	3/4	1/3	9/10	0/2	13/19
Tourism (core)	10/2	0/1	0/1	0/0	10/4
Administering / government	7/0	1/2	4/5	0/	12/7
Consumer group	0/1	0/0	6/11	0/1	6/13
Tourism marketing agency	0/0	1/0	2/1	0/0	3/1
Totals	21/10	5/8	61/67	15/14	102/99

There were considerably more core tourism organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH (n=10) than to the OT (n=2). Also there were 7 administering/government organisations on the GBH and none on the OT. In total there was approximately twice the number of organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH than to the OT. The organisational type classification data was consistent with these results in that, in total, there were more core tourism and administering government organisations associated with the GBH than the OT.

Whilst there were other differences between the GBH and OT, this was mainly due to the low total numbers involved. Whilst the total numbers in the ‘other Australia’ category were similar, there were slightly more tour operators associated with the GBH and more consumer groups with the OT. There were more consumer groups connected to the OT. Similar numbers of organisations in the ‘desert Australia’ and ‘international’ proximity categories were evident.

4.5.2 The combined GBH and OT lens on each element of the GDT framework

This section considers each element of the GDT framework through a combined GBH and OT lens.

The combined GBH/OT lens on geographic dispersion

There were notable degrees of geographic dispersion in evidence in all proximity categories. There was a significant distance between many organisations in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH and OT. The harsh physical environment and in particular the relatively slow driving conditions due to nature of the tracks, accentuated the degree of geographic dispersion. However, there were exceptions.

Many inhabited locations within ‘close geographic’ proximity of the GBH or OT were home to co-located providers. There was no identifiable pattern to the dispersion of organisations and there was a mix of organisational type amongst these organisations.

The combined GBH and OT lens on enabling technology

The extent of ICT infrastructure and usage varied between organisations. Within ‘close geographic’ proximity some form of enabling technology was available at all inhabited locations. However, the technology was in most cases

rudimentary (with the exception of the Ayers Rock Resort), and there was little evidence of employing these technologies as an interactive tool between providers. Many of these were small organisations and there were often frustrations expressed at the standard of ICT infrastructure and associated government investment.

In the ‘desert Australia’ and ‘other Australia’ proximity categories, more sophisticated technologies were in evidence. Government agencies and larger corporate style organisations displayed similar technologies.

The combined GBH and OT lens on membership

The importance of tourism to providers varied markedly. For some providers, particularly in ‘close geographic’ proximity to the GBH or OT, tourism was a critical and core component of their organisation. More frequently providers pursued a more complex portfolio with the tourism dimension assuming various degrees of significance. In some cases it was not a high priority.

The importance of individual providers to the provision of the tourism experience varied markedly. Some providers performed roles which could be described as essential to tourism on the OT, such as the provision of services in strategically remote locations and accessing cultural sites. Most providers however, whilst contributing to GBH or OT tourism in some way, occupied a more peripheral role such as conducting occasional tours, and were not crucial to the provision of the experience. Whilst there was no notable correlation between the importance of tourism to specific organisations and the impact of those organisations activities on the tracks, some high impact organisations did not view tourism as a high priority.

The combined GBH and OT lens on culture:

Notable cultural diversity existed on the GHB and OT. There was evidence of a diversity of organisational cultures. Differences could be distinguished on a number of criteria including their size, formality, structure, governance, type, and purpose. Compare for example the culture of a large bureaucratic government agency in the 'other Australia' proximity category to that of a sole trader operating in 'close geographic' proximity to the track. There was also evidence of both Aboriginal and European cultures which was most notable in 'close geographic' proximity to the track and also in 'desert Australia'. This cultural diversity was also evident across organisational type. There was evidence of Afghan culture within 'close geographic' proximity to the OT.

The combined GBH and OT lens on shared mindset:

Most providers shared a concern for the promotion of tourism within the GBH and OT. They recognised the strength of the GBH and OT labels and made use of that identity to promote their own interests. This provided a faint and somewhat disjointed thread of common purpose amongst providers. These interests were sometimes geographically bound (a particular location), and at other times limited by function (e.g. road maintenance). For some providers the promotion of tourism was their prime purpose and for others it is less significant. However, whilst most saw the GBH and OT as assets to their regions, some considered them undesirable.

There was no evidence of a strongly held and shared mindset amongst organisations forged around the entirety of the tracks, despite the GBH and OT high recognition factors. Their mindset could be described as similar but coincidental.

The combined GBH and OT lens on collaboration:

Most organisations saw collaboration as a positive process for the development of tourism. There was no evidence of collaboration involving the entire GBH and OT, although there were some isolated examples of collaborative activity limited to specific locations or activities. Most collaborative activity was informal and considerable barriers to collaboration were identified.

The combined GBH and OT lens on leadership:

There was some evidence of traditional and participative leadership on the GBH and OT but no evidence of distributed leadership. Traditional leadership was evident within organisations of various sizes, for sub-regions within the GBH and OT, and for specific purposes within sub-regions. Participative leadership was identified within sub-regions of the GBH, for the entire OT and for specific purposes at both the GBH and OT. Whilst the development of tourism in some way was amongst the portfolio of responsibilities for many providers, there was no evidence of any form of leadership on tourism related matters that applied to the GBH in its entirety. On the OT two providers espoused leadership in tourism matters but the extent of this was contested.

4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of chapter 4 was to present the results of the GBH and OT case studies. The data for each case was derived from an IMR and field studies. The cases were firstly reported separately and then combined using a cross case analysis. Data was analysed to determine the geographic proximity of activities to each case study site, to identify the type of activity involved, and then explored through the lens of the GDT framework. In Chapter 5 these results will be discussed.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The guiding purpose of the research was to explain the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs as GDTs. A GDT framework was developed comprising seven elements which were configured using an I-P-O model (Figure 1). Each element of the model generated a specific research question (Table 1).

This chapter firstly addresses each research question in turn. The key elements of the results and the literature are merged in the discussion of each research question to explore the findings within the context of previous research. Secondly, discussion of these separate questions is integrated through use of the I-P-O model to both provide a summary of the discussion and to more fully reflect the dynamic and interdependent nature of the elements. This approach helps build a holistic picture of the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs as GDTs.

5.2 The research questions

5.2.1 Research Question 1: Geographic dispersion

Research question 1.

*What is the nature of geographic dispersion on RTTs and
what are the implications for GDTs?*

Geographic dispersion is an important factor in this study for several reasons. Firstly it is an essential ingredient of GDTs. Secondly it is the element which defines the environment of the I-P-O model adopted for this study. Lastly, it is intimately connected with the notion of remoteness which is a key component of RTTs.

The GBH and OT comprised tourism providers dispersed across all geographic proximity categories: ‘close’, ‘desert’ ‘Australia’, ‘other Australia’ and

‘international’. The extent of dispersion varied, with some tourism providers colocated within the same town or city, and others separated by large distances. This is consistent with Chudoba et al. (2005) who see some degree of dispersion at the core of GDTs. The very essence of GDTs is to provide a means of connecting team members who otherwise, because of their geography, might not be able to work together. Furthermore the spacial configuration of GBH and OT tourism providers indicate a fit with Kirkman and Mathieu (2005) who suggests that some team members may be co-located. The continuum of virtuality suggested by Gibson and Gibbs (2006) applied to the GBH and OT. Degrees of proximity were evident such that distribution can be seen as existing on a sliding scale and not dichotomous (Connaughton & Shuffler 2007).

The nature of the distribution also invites comment. In ‘close’ geographic proximity many tourism providers were separated by substantial distances. The impact of these distances was exacerbated by other factors such as the remote location, the physical nature of the terrain, the driving conditions and available infrastructure. Physical contact between many tourism providers was not a simple matter. These conditions are consistent with those identified in previous research and of descriptions of remote regions (see, e.g., Doloreux & Dionne 2008; Prideaux & Coghlan 2011; Schmallegger 2011; Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel 2011).

Such a mix of factors creates a dilemma for tourism providers on the GBH and OT. On the one hand they offer significant challenges. Accessibility and comfort factors can adversely affect tourism numbers, whilst remoteness impacts on issues such as labour costs and turnover, the capacity to innovate, and distance from markets. These challenges are consistent with previous research which highlights

similar remoteness-induced threats (see, e.g., Browne, Taylor & Bell 2008; Stafford Smith 2008; Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams & Crowe 2008). On the other hand, this same remoteness is fundamental to the GBH and OT tourism experience. White and White (2009) and Nash and Marin (2003) see this remoteness and natural beauty as essential to the tourism experience. As Huskey (2006) and Schmallegger, Carson and Tremblay (2010) suggest, geography is extremely important and strongly influences tourism in remote areas. It would seem that the very factors that attract a segment of the tourism market mitigate against developing and expanding that market. This paradox is at the core of remote tourism.

The dispersion across other geographic proximity categories also highlighted issues worthy of note. One interesting dimension to this dispersion was the location of government agencies. The Federal and State agencies were usually located some distance from the site itself – for example Alice Springs is some 500km from Ayers Rock Resort and Adelaide is approximately 680 km from Marree (refer to Figures 4 & 5, at Section 1.8). Stafford-Smith (2008) affirms this is typical of remote regions and has implications for the locus of decision making. For example the results show that some tourism providers were disenchanted with many government decisions and the fact that decision makers were somewhat removed from the region. This feeling of disconnect is consistent with the Schmallegger, Carson and Tremblay's (2010) proposition that remote destinations are different to traditionally defined peripheral regions, and in part that difference is due to what they call 'disconnectedness', which is founded in fragile and tenuous linkages to the outside world.

In summary, geographic dispersion is an influential feature of the GHB and OT. Differing degrees were evident across proximity categories. The flow on from

the type of geographic dispersion identified in this study had significant impact on tourism providers and more generally on the GBH and OT as destinations. In particular this dispersion limits the capacity of tourism providers to work together to ameliorate the impact of these conditions. This is consistent with previous research. However this form of geographic dispersion is core to the remote tourism experience; again this supports previous research. Finally the geographic dispersion identified in this study is consistent with that required of a GDT. This suggests that, based on the outcomes of this first research question, GDTs could be an appropriate organisational form for tourism providers. However, as discussed below, this type of geographic dispersion in remote regions has significant implications for the other elements of the GDT framework.

5.2.2 Research Question 2: ICTs

Research question 2

What is the nature of information and communication technology (ICT) usage amongst tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?

ICTs are an important factor in this study for two reasons. Firstly they are the prime tool used by GDTs to enhance teamwork and as such they are a critical element of the I-P-O model. Secondly, they can mitigate the impact of geographic dispersion in the remote setting of the GBH and OT by enhancing connectivity between tourism providers. They also help facilitate positive outcomes from the other GDT elements.

The results indicated that ICTs were available to tourism providers on the GBH and OT. However, there were significant differences in the nature of that ICT infrastructure and its usage by tourism providers. Whilst all tourism providers were

connected with some form of enabling technology, there was a diversity of sophistication in those ICTs and, importantly, limited use of them as a tool to enable connectivity for tourism purposes. GDTs employ ICTs to enhance interaction between team members; for example as suggested by Precup et al. (2006), to enhance collaboration.

Within ‘close’ geographic proximity to the GBH and OT in particular, there were notable differences in ICT usage by tourism providers. At some locations only quite basic levels of electronic communications were in evidence. Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams and Crowe (2008) and the National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism (2005a) have also lamented the poor ICT capability in remote areas. The current results show that many tourism providers engaged in the face-to-face delivery of the tourism experience within ‘close’ geographic proximity relied predominantly on telephone, email and internet browsing. These tools were mainly used for personal and general organisational purposes (for example ordering supplies). They facilitated tourism activity by providing information to tourists about the goods and services available and in some cases included the capacity to make bookings. However, there was very little evidence of a pattern of connectivity between tourism providers, even using these basic tools, to systematically enhance the tourism experience. Previous research has identified the importance of ICTs to deliver tourism experiences in remote regions (Polo Peña & FríasJamilena 2010; Taylor, Ffowcs-Williams & Crowe 2008), and to improve commercial efficiencies in remote regions (Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel 2011). The data shows that many of the GBH and OT tourism providers have not embraced the opportunities ICTs provide.

However at other 'close' geographic proximity locations, more capability was in evidence. An example of enhanced ICT capability was the Ayers Rock Resort which utilised a sophisticated online booking facility and also had significant internal IT infrastructure to support its activities. The shire administrations were also quite well supported with IT infrastructure for commercial purposes. This infrastructure included mobile coverage, fibre optic cabling and some rudimentary video conferencing abilities. However, even with this more sophisticated technology, very little was directed toward enhancing the entirety of the GBH and OT as tourism destinations nor at embracing connectivity between multiple tourism providers. This reflects an underutilised use of ICTs as a tool to enhance connection between providers. These tourism providers are not significantly leveraging ICTs, in the manner suggested by Martinus et al. (2005) who talks of collaborators using IT to exploit opportunities.

In the other proximity categories (for example 'desert Australia' and 'other Australia'), more sophisticated technologies were the norm. Many of these organisations were larger, and located in areas well serviced with ICT infrastructure (for example, government agencies and tourism intermediaries in locations such as Alice Springs, Port Augusta, Perth and Adelaide). These tourism providers had the capacity to connect electronically with each other and with tourists. However, again, whilst they did connect with tourists there was quite limited reciprocal activity designed to connect tourism providers as a collective.

In general terms the results identified ICT activity that could be described as reciprocal between individual tourism providers and their tourist markets. However, the use of this technology to connect providers within the GBH and OT was minimal

(for example personal phone calls and emails). One contributing factor to the low level of usage was the capacity of the broadband network where delays and drop outs were common place. Figure 45 represents the predominant type of ICT enhanced (tourism related) connectivity typically found on the GBH and OT, regardless of the technical capacity of tourism providers. There was some connection amongst individual tourism providers but this was infrequent and ad hoc. This pattern of usage shows little evidence of employing ICTs to facilitate communication between tourism providers, (as suggested by Malhotra 2007), or enhancing knowledge (Griffith, Sawyer & Neale 2003; Kauppila, Rajala & Jyrämä 2011), or developing trust (Kanawattanachai & Yoo 2002).

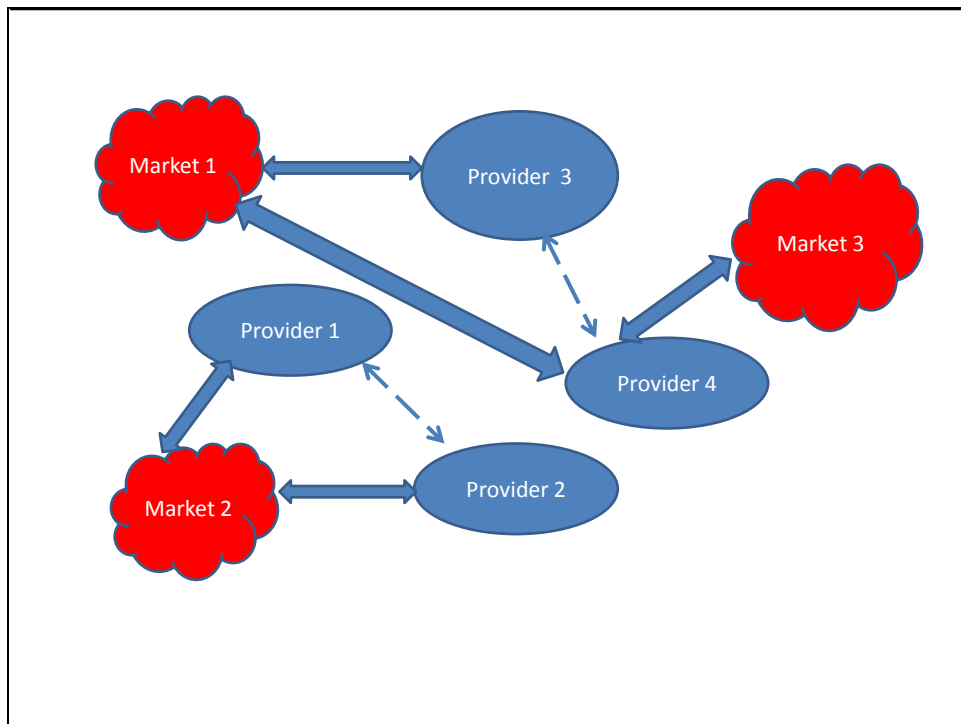


Figure 45: ICT enhanced interactions.

The results also show that both the availability and usage of ICTs is only marginally adequate, for tourism providers to function as a GDT, particularly in ‘close’ geographic proximity to the sites. ICT usage on the GBH and OT did not

significantly ameliorate some of the limitations associated with the geographic dispersion of tourism providers, in particular their limited capacity for face-to-face contact. Previous research is clear that the use of ICTs is critical to the functioning of GDTs (see, e.g., Cascio 2000; Chudoba et al. 2005; Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004; Staples & Webster 2007), and can be seen as a major input in the I-P-O model (Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004). For tourism providers on the GBH and OT to function as a GDT, more substantial use of ICTs would need to occur. Perhaps the main benefit would be, as suggested by Malhotra, Majchrzak and Rosen (2007) and Polzner et al. (2006), to connect providers with a form of electronic face-to-face contact with the aim of developing a sense of interdependence.

However it is not essential that the ICT infrastructure be complex, nor overly sophisticated. As Gibson (2006) and Arling (2007) suggests the extent of reliance on technology is moot. Whilst the current level of technological infrastructure on the GBH and OT is only marginally capable of servicing a GDT at a rather basic level (for example with appropriate software to create websites for member interaction, webcams, teleconferencing, and even group based email connection), it was available to all tourism providers and could be used to connect tourism providers working as a GDT. Some enhancement of this infrastructure (eg widely available videoconferencing) might be necessary to fully leverage this capability. This leverage could include, as Packalen (2008) points out, collaboration, entrepreneurship, and new business opportunities, amongst heterogeneous, geographically distributed entities. Equally important, is the willingness of tourism providers to engage with each other via the technology. This requires a mindset that recognises the importance of this form of engagement, and the skills to undertake the processes. The fact that many smaller tourism providers expressed frustration at the

standard of ICTs suggests that they see the utility of and are keen to engage with ICTs.

The question of skills raises the need for some form of program to enhance general capability which might involve training and other forms of support such as mentoring. Staples and Webster (2007) and Krikman et al. (2006) argue that tourism providers need the skills to operate advanced technologies. The current level of technical skills is not clear but most likely would need to be developed. The skills resident in some tourism providers who already have access to the technology for other purposes could be leveraged to the benefit of other GDT members.

In summary ICTs were available on the GBH and OT, but were not extensively utilised to connect tourism providers. Enhanced ICT capability requires both improved infrastructure and usage by tourism providers. For tourism providers to organise as a GDT, ICT capability needs to be improved. ICT usage is a vital input in the I-P-O model, and as discussed below significantly impacts each of the other GDT elements.

5.2.3 Research Question 3: Team membership

Research question 3

What is the nature of the relationship between tourism providers and what are the implications for team membership of a GDT?

Team membership is an important factor in this study for two reasons. Firstly, to function effectively a GDT must have an appropriate membership. These team members are those essential to attend the team's purpose and this means they provide the requisite knowledge skills and abilities to produce desired outcomes on the GBH and OT. Secondly, broad engagement with stakeholders is an important aspect of

remote tourism destinations. The identification of tourism providers for the GBH and OT, and a mechanism for connecting them, is an important contribution to understanding RTTs. GDTs are a way to make this connection.

The results of this study indicate a large number and diverse range of potential GDT members. These members are drawn from the tourism providers identified for the GBH and OT. They were from various locations (in fact from all geographic proximity categories) and diverse backgrounds, and they reflected a variety of interests. GDT research affirms the value of membership from a strong and diverse talent pool drawn from various locations, organisations, and personal backgrounds (see, e.g., Chudoba et al. 2005; Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004; Peters & Manz 2007). As Malhotra, Majchrzac and Rosen (2007) suggest, this type of broad talent pool is a positive feature of GDTs because it allows access to resources not available to traditional colocated teams. In addition to providing specific skills, team membership also facilitates opportunity for the engagement and participation of various stakeholders within the GDT context. The potential membership identified was appropriate for a GDT.

Whilst this broad range of potential GDT members identified in the study is positive in terms of inclusion and engagement, it also raises a concern. Some providers were intimately involved with tourism on the GBH and OT whilst others were more peripheral. This suggests the need for some mechanism for identifying those tourism providers who are core or essential to the functioning of a GDT and those who might engage in a less intense fashion. Previous research also suggests that member contribution may vary; it may be core to the operation of the team or more peripheral to its needs depending on expertise and input (Matlay &

Westhead2007). This core and peripheral distinction provides an opportunity to filter membership by identifying those tourism providers who might be core to the functioning of a GDT, and therefore essential members. The involvement of other tourism providers might be desirable but peripheral. Gibson and Gibbs (2006), Cascio (2000) and Matlay and Westhead (2007) suggest that GDT members can engage with varying degrees of intensity depending upon their interest in the team. The discussion which follows makes a distinction between the importance of tourism to individual tourism providers, and the importance of the contribution made by individual tourism providers to tourism on the GBH and OT. This distinction provides a form of weighting to membership. It is presented in the form of a matrix (see Table 33) and is discussed more fully below.

Table 33: Tourism GDT membership matrix sample.

		Is tourism important to the provider?	
		No	Yes
Is the tourism provider's contribution important to the GBH or OT	No	<i>Cell 1</i> Peripheral / not essential <i>(e.g. Booksellers International booking agencies)</i>	<i>Cell 2</i> Desirable / not essential <i>(e.g. William Creek Hotel, tour operators)</i>
	Yes	<i>Cell 3</i> Core/essential / reluctant <i>(e.g. Pastoralists Giles Weather Station)</i>	<i>Cell 4</i> Core/ essential / enthusiastic <i>(e.g. Central Lands Council Ayers Rock resort)</i>

Those tourism providers in Cell 1 are of marginal importance to the GBH and OT, and it is of minor interest to them as such they are peripheral to GDT functioning. Their membership is not essential. In Cell 2 tourism on the GBH and OT is important to tourism providers but their input is not critical to the GBH and OT, and their involvement in a GDT could be described as desirable but not essential. Tourism providers in Cell 3 are important to the GBH and OT but those tourism activities are not of high importance to them. The challenge with this group of tourism providers is that their involvement in a GDT is essential, but they may be reluctant to contribute because it is not a high priority. In Cell 4 the involvement of these tourism providers is essential because tourism is important to the provider and also the provider's activities are important to tourism on the GBH and OT.

The results indicated that the importance of tourism to tourism providers and therefore the subsequent intensity of connection with the GBH and OT varied considerably. For many tourism providers on the GBH and OT tourism was a core interest, and for others it was more fringe. Some tourism providers were solely engaged in tourism activities which were exclusively and directly related to the GBH and OT on a full-time basis. Their overwhelming concern was with tourism matters connected to the sites and as such would have a core and full-time GDT standing. For example at the OT site, Coward Springs Campground and on the GBH the Ayers Rock Resort. For other organisations GBH and OT tourism was a major ongoing interest (for example the Central Lands Council, and the OACDT) but it was not their exclusive interest. These organisations could however also be classified as having a core and full-time GDT standing because of the importance of the tourism agenda to them. For yet other tourism providers tourism was of less importance, indicative of a more peripheral team membership. Examples of these tourism

providers include some pastoral stations (for whom as Beames (2003) suggests tourism is a secondary concern), and the Giles Weather Station. Many tourism providers from the 'other Australia' and 'international' proximity categories could be classified as peripheral (see, e.g., bookstores and tourism booking agencies).

Another dimension of the team membership element was the importance to the GBH and OT of participation by particular tourism providers. Some tourism providers by virtue of their activities could be described as essential to tourism on these tracks, and their engagement in a GDT would be essential. For the GDT to be effective these tourism providers must participate. For example the Central Lands Council issues access permits on the GBH and hence their involvement in a GDT would be critical. However, tourism per se is not the sole interest of that organisation. In one sense it could be seen as having competing interests involving for example the maintenance of Aboriginal culture, and environmental protection.

Other organisations were important because of their geographic location within the site rather than the role played. Because of the remote nature of these tracks the provision of goods and services such as fuel, food and shower facilities must be strategically located as it is essential for some travellers. Due to the distances involved and the limited carrying capacity within vehicles these goods and services must be acquired en route. It is conceivable that a location such as Warburton on the GBH, if made unavailable to tourists, could significantly affect tourism traffic because some would require for example fuel, fresh supplies, or desire to use the shower facilities. This is not so evident on the OT. There is no permit system, and whilst some organisations might negatively affect the tourism experience by not participating or withdrawing services (for example the William Creek Hotel) the

impact of this would be minor compared with the GBH example above because of the distances involved.

Categorising tourism providers in this manner highlights some of the challenges associated with GDTs. As mentioned above the GDT must have an appropriate membership mix. Cell 1 is straightforward in this regard: these tourism providers do not require membership nor are they needed as members. With Cell 4 members their motivation is strong and they are an important to the GDT; clearly they are core to the functioning of the GDT and would be willing participants.

The status of Cell 2 type members is more complex. For example, should they have equal standing to Cell 4 members? Should there be a tiered membership? Would the sheer potential numbers of Cell 2 members make a GDT unworkable? However, it seems desirable to include these tourism providers in the process so that they do not become alienated. With Cell 3 tourism providers the issue is to encourage participation even though that might not be of a high priority to the individual provider. Their input is important but their motivation might not be strong.

Whilst the GDT literature considers the benefits of diverse team membership (see, e.g., Gibson and Gibbs (2006), it does not consider the non-participation of critical members. Perhaps it could be argued that this type of team member flexibility is in fact a double edged sword? The question raised is 'Can a GDT function if key players refuse to participate, or offer only token participation?' This could be an important issue for the GBH and OT. It is possible as suggested by Matlay and Westhead (2007) that some members could be part-time on a casual basis and as such could be available to participate when certain issues arise. Temporary and peripheral membership also implies the capacity to add new members from time to

time for specific purposes and for limited periods – for example connections with specific suppliers, transport opportunities, vehicle manufacturers, special promotions for particular events, specific infrastructure projects, or, for matters relating to the environment or road infrastructure, the relevant government agencies would participate.

These different types of team membership, whilst offering obvious advantages, might raise concerns. For example, will some members have more formal and informal influence than others? A related matter is the power of veto. Some tourism providers, for example associated with the issuing of permits, access to pastoral lands, or environmental restrictions, would be able to veto decisions regardless of a strong support for a particular agenda issue. For example greater access to popular POIs on the GBH and OT could be well supported by many tourism providers but vetoed by say the Central Lands Council, even though the Council is only one member of the GDT. Power inequalities would need to be addressed for the team to function harmoniously.

By identifying potential GDT members, the study has in effect also nominated the key stakeholders of the GBH and OT. Research into tourism destinations identifies the need to involve a wide range of stakeholders (Schmallegger, Taylor & Carson 2011) particularly local communities (Friedel & Chewings 2008; Prideaux 2002; Sharpley & Roberts 2004). Even those who engage in tourism as a secondary dimension of their commercial interests should have the opportunity to be involved (Beames, 2003). The engagement of this comprehensive range of stakeholders, through the mechanism of a GDT would satisfy this well established principle of engagement. Categorising these stakeholders according to

the matrix outlined above also provides an opportunity to identify those tourism providers with a very strong nexus with GBH and OT tourism and those whose involvement is less critical.

In summary, the nature of tourism providers on both sites provides a close fit to the GDT element of team membership. Organisations could participate on a part-time or full-time basis, offering collectively a comprehensive mechanism for involvement in the tourism dimension of each site. The importance of tourism to each organisation is one factor moderating involvement in a GDT, and the other is the nature of that organisation's activity in terms of its importance to tourism. Involvement as members of a GDT also provides a mechanism to engage with diverse stakeholders of the GBH and OT destinations.

Whilst these results provide the basis for a flexible team membership consistent with that experienced in GDTs (see, e.g., Gibson & Gibbs 2006), the extent to which these provider organisations actually do connect in a meaningful way is somewhat moot and will depend largely upon their collective mindset with regards to tourism on the GBH and OT. This element of the GDT framework is discussed below. There are also some significant cultural differences evident between the provider organisations, which has the potential to impact their team membership role and participation. This also will be discussed further below.

5.2.4 Research Question 4: Cultural diversity

Research question 4

*What is the nature of cultural diversity on RTTs and
what are the implications for GDTs?*

Cultural diversity is an important factor in this study for two reasons. Firstly, it has the potential to be a positive input within a GDT by providing diverse expertise, enhancing creativity, innovation and knowledge capture. Secondly, diversity can also produce dysfunctional outcomes such as faultlines and associated conflicts. These outcomes must be recognised and managed, if the potential benefits within a GDT are to be realised.

In the current study, cultural diversity was considered on two dimensions: organisational and racial. The results showed an extensive presence of both dimensions of cultural diversity on the GBH and OT. There was evidence of a diversity of organisational cultures discernible on a number of criteria including size, formality, structure, governance, type, and purpose. This diversity of organisational culture extended to organisational purpose. Some organisations such as tour operators and those offering goods and services direct to tourists, had tourism as their major interest and saw growth in that respect as a prime concern. Others had multiple agendas, and saw tourism as something that needed to be balanced and managed along with for example culture, heritage, or environmental concerns. These potentially conflicting interests raise questions about the ability and willingness of tourism providers to work within a team environment such as a GDT as discussed below. Also in evidence was racial diversity, reflecting Aboriginal, Afghan and European cultures.

Research has shown that GDTs are a suitable vehicle to harness the benefits of cultural diversity of this type (see, e.g., Connaughton & Shuffler 2007; Erez & Gati 2004; Gibson & Gibbs 2006). Specifically, diversity can provide better access to diverse expertise (see, e.g., Cascio 2000; Hinds & Bailey 2003; Peters & Manz 2007), creativity and innovation might be enhanced (see, e.g., Gibson & Gibbs 2006; Lawley 2006; Malhotra, Majchrzak & Rosen 2007; Polzer et al. 2006), and knowledge capture in teams is improved (see, e.g., Gassman & von Zedtwitz 2003; Hardin, Fuller & Davison 2007). However there was little evidence of diversity producing these types of outcomes in the current research.

The quite limited positive implication of cultural diversity on the GBH and OT derived almost by default; from its mere existence rather than any deliberate use of it by tourism providers to enhance the tourism experience. Research has affirmed the tendency for diversity amongst stakeholders of tourism destinations (Breidenhann & Wickens 2004; Cawley and Gillmor 2008; Hardy and Beeton 2001; Nilsson 2000). By conceptualising the GBH and OT as destinations comprising multiple POIs the existence of cultural diversity is, as Carson and Taylor (2008) suggest, a positive feature of the tourism experience. Heritage is an important part of desert tracks (Carson et al. 2009) and the stark contrasts between POIs reflecting Aboriginal, Afghan, colonist or pastoralist heritages is a feature of the GBH and OT. This according to Coghlan and Prideaux (2009) is an important motivating factor for remote tourists. The organisational diversity experienced by tourists is also an attractive part of the outback experience. The physical conditions and services of the Oodnadatta Pink Roadhouse and the William Creek Hotel were in stark contrast to those of organisations in ‘other Australia’ and ‘international’ proximity categories. This experience of is an integral part of the GBH and OT destinations.

There were however only limited examples of tourism providers working together to actively leverage cultural diversity (an exception was the case with some Aboriginal tours at Ayers Rock Resort). This indicates that capitalising on diversity is possible although not fully realised. There were opportunities to leverage from cultural tourism on both the GBH and OT. Cultural tourism is an attractive feature of remote regions (Coghlan & Prideaux 2009). Afghan heritage could be utilised for tourism purposes. For example a cultural centre based in Marree would complement the existing Aboriginal cultural centre. This new centre could be associated with tours perhaps emphasising the cameleering past. On the GBH there were opportunities to access additional POIs because of their natural beauty or cultural significance. Cultural educational tours could also be considered.

This failure to leverage the potential of diversity could be attributable to a number of factors. In the current study this diversity was, in some cases quite radical and was accompanied by differences of values (as suggested by Chudoba et al. 2005), frames of reference (as suggested by Martins, Gibson & Maynard 2004) and perceptions. These often merged to produce sharply differing worldviews or mindsets. For example a large, city based, formalised, hierarchal organisation concerned with multiple and varied agendas was substantially different to a sole trader operating on the GBH and OT with no staff, intuitive processes, limited cash flows and experiencing the challenges associated with remote organisations. Again, the mindset of a tour operator based in 'other Australia' was different to that of the Central Lands Council. At face value this diversity on the GBH and OT is a resource with the potential for positive impact by addressing recognised concerns in remote areas such as a lack of innovation, and the need for skills. However, there was only minimal evidence in the data to indicate this was occurring.

Also, the cultural differences were compounded by the general remote geographic context of the GBH and OT. The POIs were situated at various locations along the track, often separated by significant distance and across jurisdictional boundaries (see also Cartan & Carson 2008). For example on the GBH there was no single cultural Aboriginal voice. Separate Aboriginal groups were defined by legislative boundary in the form of local shires, state boundaries or by differences between communities. The GBH was spread over multiple political and administrative jurisdictions. Hall, Müller and Saarinen (2009) argue that these formal boundaries become blurred in this type of remote tourism destination. Cultural differences within and between remote communities, and between communities and non-Aboriginal tourism providers were also identified by Cartan and Carson (2009) in their study of the GBH. They found these differences to be important factors influencing the levels of cooperation and collaboration around the GBH. The data showed a similar disconnect on the OT, with for example significant cultural differences between Aboriginal groups at different parts of the track and also with respect to 'close' geographic proximity tourism providers and those in the 'other Australia' proximity category.

In addition to these idiosyncratic influences on the GBH and OT there were diversity related challenges inherent in GDTs regardless of context. As discussed above, diversity in GDTs offers potential benefits, but it has often proved difficult to harness and to manage. Kirkman et al. (2002) identify feelings of detachment, Peters and Manz (2007) talk of low levels of trust, and Hinds and Mortensen (2005) see conflict in GDTs. The results of the current study confirmed these characteristics within the GBH and OT. There was conflict and a lack of trust in evidence on both the GBH and OT, both at an individual level and also between groups of tourism

providers. One example was the lack of trust and degrees of frustration expressed by tourism providers in ‘close’ geographic proximity to the GBH and OT with respect to government agencies. Another was the cautious stance taken by some communities toward each other. The stark differences in organisational culture between these tourism providers might have contributed to these perceptions.

Due to the factors discussed above, the results indicated a scenario broadly consistent with the type of faultlines caused by cultural differences that are identified by Crampton and Hinds (2005). Previous research indicates that faultlines increase the risk of conflict in heterogeneous groups and threaten cohesiveness (Lau & Murnighan 1998). This was the case with the GBH and OT. Such differences can be accentuated where individuals join the team representing other groups or interests. This was precisely the case on the GBH and OT with many tourism providers having multiple and sometimes conflicting agendas (for example the Central Lands Council, environmental agencies, and Shires). Some remote tourism providers were at times critical of the motives and priorities and behaviours associated with the larger non-remote organisations. In such cases, a GDT might split into factions with the risk of increased emotional conflict, task conflict and potentially “behavioural disintegration” (Li & Hambrick 2005, p. 795).

To summarise, the cultural diversity identified on the GBH and OT has the potential to produce positive outcomes. Some minimal benefits were evident but no deliberate initiatives were evident to harness these benefits. More striking was the evidence of negative outcomes from diversity. This suggests considerable barriers exist toward a more comprehensive and effective use of diversity. When viewed as an input within the I-P-O model cultural diversity offers potential to make a positive

contribution to the processes (P) within a GDT. By interacting positively with other elements such as common mindset, collaboration and leadership, both the inherent benefits of diversity in GDTs and the latent potential of the diversity identified on the GBH and OT, might be enhanced.

5.2.5 Research Question 5: Shared mindset

Research question 5

What is the extent of a shared mindset between tourism providers on RTTs and what are the implications for GDTs?

A shared mindset is an important factor in this study for two reasons. Firstly, for a GDT to function its members must have a sense of identity and shared sense of purpose. In the I-P-O model this shared mindset is a process (P) that mediates the conversion of inputs (I) to outcomes (O). Secondly, tourism providers engaged in a common tourism venture require a shared mental model to draw them together.

The results indicate a mindset amongst most tourism providers directed towards aspects of tourism on the GBH and OT, but there was little evidence of a mindset embracing the GBH and OT as total destinations. It is a particularly important dimension of GDTs because members must have a shared sense of purpose (Lawley 2006) and a collective mindset (Peters & Manz 2007). The need for a shared mental model of tourism has also been identified (Benson & Blackman 2011; Friedel & Chewings 2008; Hall, Müller & Saarinen 2009; Schmallegger 2011).

Whilst a small number of tourism providers (e.g., some pastoralists and individuals in remote communities) showed no enthusiasm for the GBH and OT as tourism destinations (because of competing, higher priorities), most had a positive attitude toward tourism. However, in most cases the tourism mindset of tourism

providers was geographically bound and directed to a particular portion of the GBH or OT. Their interest was only in their particular campground or community or hotel for example. Their focus and effort were on parts of the sites rather than the entire site, reflecting their particular interests. Interestingly many of these tourism providers (particularly those with a direct tourism interface such as tour operators) recognised the importance of the GBH and OT as an entity but only valued the label to promote their own bounded geographic or economic interests. The challenge in this case for an effective GDT is to convey the significance of actively promoting the entire GBH and OT as a tourism destination.

Another layer of complexity is to be found wrapped in the multiple agendas of some tourism providers. Nash and Martin (2003) warn this is a distinct risk for dispersed tourism destinations. Schmallegger (2011) also points to the dangers of disparate agendas. Some tourism providers performed a variety of functions, some of which could mitigate a commitment to a strong tourism common purpose on the GBH and OT. One example was the Central Lands Council who influences tourism activity through the issue of permits. But it also has a responsibility for many other aspects of Aboriginal wellbeing, some of which might be served by limiting tourism activity. Those agencies charged with environmental responsibilities also have a similar type of conundrum. Multiple obligations could result in multiple mindsets and potentially a diluted commitment to tourism on the entire GBH and OT. This would limit the effective functioning of a GDT.

Another challenge arises from the need for tourism providers to be members of multiple teams and perhaps divided loyalties. They are members of a 'home' organisation (be they part of a large corporation or a sole trader) which implies

certain loyalties, but they would also be members of the GDT which because it is a team requires another set of loyalties. At times team members might experience this type of conflict of loyalties. What's good for the GBH and OT might not be a perfect solution for, say, the Ayers Rock Resort. Tourism providers require cognitive complexity (of the type described by Vilkinas, Cartan & Seabel 2012), so they can see themselves as independent but also as team members. There was little evidence of this mindset amongst tourism providers along the GBH and OT. This highlights the need for specialist training and focussed effort in the formative stages of a GDT.

These factors produced a somewhat disjointed thread of common purpose amongst tourism providers. The extent of commitment to tourism on the GBH and OT was variable. Even where commitment was high it was not a commitment to the entire GBH and OT, including the other tourism providers, even though the GBH and OT were often seen as an asset to their regions. There was not a strong sense of connection between tourism providers, nor a sense of community. There were no common objectives or goals to bind disparate tourism providers. Geographic dispersion and cultural diversity (as discussed above) were also seen to reinforce barriers to this sense of community and common purpose.

Despite these complexities, there is potential for developing the requisite shared mindset for a GDT. As Smith (2011) argues this potential must be realised because it is imperative that touring route stakeholders in particular share a geography of interest. The GBH and OT have a high recognition factor and are strongly defined tourism entities. Hence a geographically bounded and recognised focal point is already present. This is supported by the results which indicate most (but not all) tourism providers recognised the GBH and OT. Further, most tourism

providers already espouse a focus on tourism. The challenge for a GDT is to expand the tourism focus of tourism providers to the entire GBH and OT. This might not be such a big step because many tourism providers, especially those in ‘close’ geographic proximity to the tracks with a direct tourism interface (e.g. roadhouses and tour operators) already recognise the importance of the label to promote their own interests. One pathway to a more broadly focussed and shared mindset could be to encourage tourism providers to recognise that their own interests are served by engaging in promoting the entirety of the GBH and OT. This active involvement might produce greater personal benefit than the vicarious benefit from a more passive evolution of the GBH and OT labels.

Another factor encouraging adoption of a common mindset relates to the geographic dispersion of tourism providers. Because of the remoteness of the GBH and OT there will only ever be a small number of organisations in ‘close’ geographic proximity. Their collective voice is not strong in the general market place and hence the need to engage with others (perhaps further afield) as team members. If tourism providers become team members with a collegiate mindset and a belief that reciprocity will provide mutual benefit, then a foundation for a GDT exists. This could over time result in the type of positive psychological climate that Gibson and Gibbs (2006) assert enables innovation in GDTs. This climate is characterised by openness, trust and mutual respect and contributes to the development of a shared mindset. Whilst this does seem a challenging and time consuming task (as suggested by Saxena 2006) it is an essential one that requires careful and constant attention over the long term (Cawley & Gillmor 2008). The challenge, as Beesley (2004) and Hardy, Beeton & Carter (2005) suggest, is how to focus and where possible

harmonise, destructively divergent mindsets. Two GDT elements which can influence this are discussed below: leadership and collaboration.

It must be borne in mind that a common mindset refers to tourism on the GBH and OT as an entity. However, it does not require a common mindset on all issues. The mindset is the glue that provides a motivation to engage in a search for common ground and general direction. Both the GDT and tourism literature assert the importance of a shared mindset but both also caution that this can be difficult to achieve. The tourism mindset on the GBH and OT was evident but marginal. This provides the basis for a functioning GDT with appropriate intervention.

5.2.6 Research question 6: Collaboration

Question 6

*What is the nature of collaboration between tourism providers on RTTs and
what are the implications for GDTs?*

Collaboration is an important factor in this study for two reasons. Firstly, as a process (P) in the I-P-O model that converts inputs (I) to outcomes (O) it is a vital enabling ingredient for GDTs. Secondly, because of their spatial configuration and lack of critical mass, tourism providers in remote destinations could benefit from collaboration.

The results of the study affirm the importance of collaboration to the GBH and OT. There was widespread recognition of the importance of collaboration and the potential it offered. However, collaborative activity requires more than a positive attitude. There were in fact, only limited examples of collaboration between tourism providers on the GBH and OT, and examples were directed to specific locations (e.g., Ayers Rock Resort) or specific events (e.g., Gymkhanas). Some tourism providers

offered referrals to other tourism providers, but these were informal and unstructured rather than evidence of commercial arrangements. Interestingly these types of examples of collaborative activity did not act as a catalyst for more consistent efforts to collaborate. The reasons for this low take-up require exploration.

The literature identifies several threats to the development of collaborative behaviour, including the existence of faultlines (Lau & Murnighan 1998; Li & Hambrick 2005; Molleman 2005; Polzer et al. 2006), low levels of trust (Peters & Manz 2007), technology shortfalls (Matlay & Westhead 2007; Staples & Webster 2007), and low levels of interdependence (Kratzer, Leenders & van Engelen 2006; Peters & Manz 2007). These threats were in evidence on the GBH and OT. Examples include: low trust levels between some government agencies and some tourism providers, and between some individual tourism providers in 'close' geographic proximity to the GBH or OT; faultlines between some communities; low recognition of the need for interdependence because of insular perspectives; and modest usage of ICTs. At times these issues were compounded by intense negative personal relationships nurtured over long periods and also cultural differences involving language differences and geographic dispersion. These factors not only offer some explanation for the low levels of collaboration but also constitute the not insubstantial barriers to enhancing collaboration.

Other factors also contributed to the low levels of collaboration on the GBH and OT. Many tourism providers in 'close' geographic proximity adopted a highly competitive stance toward other providers. Some were, however, more willing to work with others provided they were geographically distant. Smith (2011) identifies the importance of distance to potential collaborators on touring routes. Those further

afield are not seen as competitors and hence more attractive collaborators. Another hindrance to collaboration was the diversity of priorities and objectives evident amongst tourism providers, for example the Central Lands Council, community regional councils, small tour operators, and government agencies all worked to different priorities. These types of tourism providers must find common ground and engage in means of reconciling differing world views if they are to function as a GDT. This is similar to the argument of Breidenhann and Wickens (2004), who argue for collaborators to adopt a shared mindset concerning their shared destination.

This potential for conflict has been identified as emanating from divided loyalties driven by pre-existing concerns and loyalties attached to their home organisation (Chudoba et al. 2005). Other tourism providers (rather than adopting strong positions on issues) were quite lethargic in terms of tourism, and were content with the status quo. They saw no reason to actively engage in collaborative activities. This might simply be explained, as suggested by Cartan and Carson (2011), as a lack of appreciation of the strategic value of engagement. Another possible explanation for this posture is the expectation raised on several occasions that the government should be responsible for tourism related initiatives. This was particularly the case with respect to marketing the GHB and OT, and infrastructure items such as road maintenance.

These results are consistent with previous research of remote destinations. Collaboration has consistently been identified as important to remote destinations (see, e.g., Hall & Boyd 2005) and particularly so for Australian conditions (Cartan & Carson 2009; The National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism 2005b; Schmallegger 2011). Much of this research also laments the lack of collaboration in

these environments (see, e.g., Cartan and Carson 2011), and in particular, one consequence of this: low levels of innovation (see, e.g., Carson & Taylor 2006a, 2008; Prideaux 2002; Schmallegger, Taylor and Carson 2011). There were limited examples of innovative initiatives on the GBH or OT.

In summary, there was strong support for collaboration by tourism providers and its benefits generally recognised. This support offers a foundation for collaborative behaviour within a GDT. However examples of collaborative activity were limited. Reasons for this disconnect were varied and pose serious challenges for a functioning GDT. Given the importance of collaboration to the pursuit of superior outcomes in GDTs, and its potential contribution to remote tourism destinations, enhanced collaboration between tourism providers on the GBH and OT is essential. As discussed below, appropriate leadership could facilitate collaboration.

5.2.7 Research Question 7: Leadership

Research question 7:

What leadership is evident among providers on RTTs and

what are the implications for GDTs?

Leadership is important in this study for three reasons. Firstly, as an element of the GDT framework it interacts with other inputs (I) and contributes to team processes (P). Secondly, this study adopts a particular form of leadership, distributed leadership, which requires careful consideration. Thirdly, the impact of leadership on tourism destinations has been recognised as important.

In the current study there was very little explicit recognition from tourism providers of the importance of leadership. This is interesting because there was evidence from the literature suggesting that leadership is important in both GDTs

(see, e.g., Duarte & Snyder 2006; Hoegl, Ernst & Proserpio 2007; Lawley 2006; Webster & Wong 2008) and for tourism destinations (see, e.g., Benson & Blackman 2011; Nash & Martin 2003; Prideaux 2002; Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel 2011).

Despite the limited recognition of the value of leadership in the current study, the results clearly raise issues which affirm the importance of definitive leadership. Each of the framework elements discussed above requires some active intervention to realise their potential. For example, providers, as GDT members, need to be encouraged and trained in the use of ICTs. The actual team structure and membership requires monitoring to ensure the correct mix. The benefits of cultural diversity may not flow naturally, and the team leadership needs to be active to deal with for example potential faultlines and ensure conflict is minimised. The development of a common mindset among members would require careful nurturing, another leadership role. Finally, whilst collaboration is recognised as important, interventions are necessary to promote this behaviour. The sheer geographic dispersion in such a remote environment suggests the need for some form of coordinating, leadership input. Each of these responsibilities is an appropriate leadership function. Leadership was an under acknowledged but nevertheless very important requirement for an effective GDT on the GBH and OT.

A discussion of leadership on the GBH and OT must consider both the type of leadership and the purpose to which it is directed. In Chapter Two, three leadership styles were identified: traditional leadership which sees the function of leadership embodied in one person, participative leadership which encourages engagement and collegiality and distributed leadership in which the function is shared between members of the team or group (Currie & Lockett 2007; Currie, Lockett & Suhomlinova 2009; Ensley, Pearson & Pearce 2003). There was evidence

of traditional and participative styles within the GBH and OT. For example many providers exhibited traditional leadership within their own organisation furthering individual agendas. In some cases these agendas included their tourism interests but, as discussed above, did not extend to tourism for the GBH and OT in their entirety. The focus of these leadership efforts was bounded by function and/or region.

There was some evidence of participative leadership. In some cases, such as community gymkhanas, this was bounded by region and was not specifically tourism centric. In other cases participative leadership effort was directed toward specific geographically bounded tourism interests such as the process of stakeholder engagement associated with the Ayers Rock Resort. In other cases, such as the OACDT, participatory leadership initiatives extended to the entire OT. However, this leadership dealt with a broad range of interests some of which might be seen as competing with tourism (e.g., community development). The tourism dimension of the OACDT leadership was not significant. The South Australian Tourism Commission also adopted a participative leadership style with respect to tourism on the OT but initiatives seemed sporadic and not widely endorsed. No provider demonstrated participative leadership directed toward a comprehensive array of tourism issues over the entire GBH. There was no evidence of distributed leadership on the GBH and OT.

This description of leadership on the GBH and OT has significant implications for tourism providers. The results affirm the importance of leadership to the GBH and OT as a tourism destination. However, when conceptualised as a GDT, distributed leadership with its heavy emphasis on empowerment and shared responsibility for leadership (Ensley, Pearson & Pearce 2003; Peters & Manz 2007),

is highly valued within the literature. The absence of this leadership style on the GBH and OT can be explained by a range of factors. No-one has seen the need or attempted to initiate a GDT configuration to organise providers. The cultural diversity, trust issues and lack of common purpose run counter to the natural evolution of distributed leadership; they create major hurdles. In these circumstances this style of leadership would more likely need to be the consequence of a planned strategy than incrementally emerge by chance. However, if the issues identified in these results can be addressed and even some of the benefits mooted in the literature be realised (e.g., more innovation [Taylor & Carson 2011] and better collaboration [Lade 2010]), then perhaps this form of leadership is a worthwhile objective.

However, as Benson and Blackman (2011) warn, these types of benefits are inherently difficult to achieve in destinations which exhibit geographic dispersion and complex social characteristics, as is the case with the GBH and OT. In fact those issues that a distributed leadership approach might address, are the very forces that would work against initially introducing such an approach. An approach to this dilemma can be found in the leadership continuum idea proposed by Currie, Lockett & Suhomlinova (2009). Perhaps the leadership approach for a GDT on the GBH and OT would need to change over time. In the initial stages the GDT leadership would be more participative in style, at the weaker end of the continuum, characterised by collegiality and participation. Following a deliberate strategy over time, a stronger form of distributed leadership would emerge with team members, who are fully empowered, sharing the leadership. Previous research has shown this strong leadership approach to be effective (Ensley, Pearson & Pearce 2003; Peters & Manz 2007; Solansky 2008). Such a graduated approach might be easier to achieve on the OT because it is located in a single jurisdiction, with no dividing state or Shire

boundaries, as is the case on the GBH. Also the OT has the potential to leverage off exiting providers, in the form of the South Australian Tourism Commission and OACDT, both of whom have a legitimate but relatively unexploited role of developing tourism. If this staged approach were adopted then the need for behavioural complexity as identified by Vilkinas, Cartan & Saebel (2011) becomes critical. This requires paradoxical thinking, and flexible, adaptive leadership behaviours.

It does seem clear that leadership has a pervasive impact on each of the elements of the GDT framework. It would be central to the establishment and functioning of a GDT. This suggests the need to review the configuration of the I-P-O. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Martins, Gilson and Maynard (2004) position leadership as both an input and as a moderator. For the purposes of this study and in the absence of explicit guidance by those authors, leadership was treated as an input (I). However, the current study indicates that leadership has a much more pervasive and indeed important role in the model and could be more accurately seen as an element that moderates the influence of the other elements (see Figure 46 below).

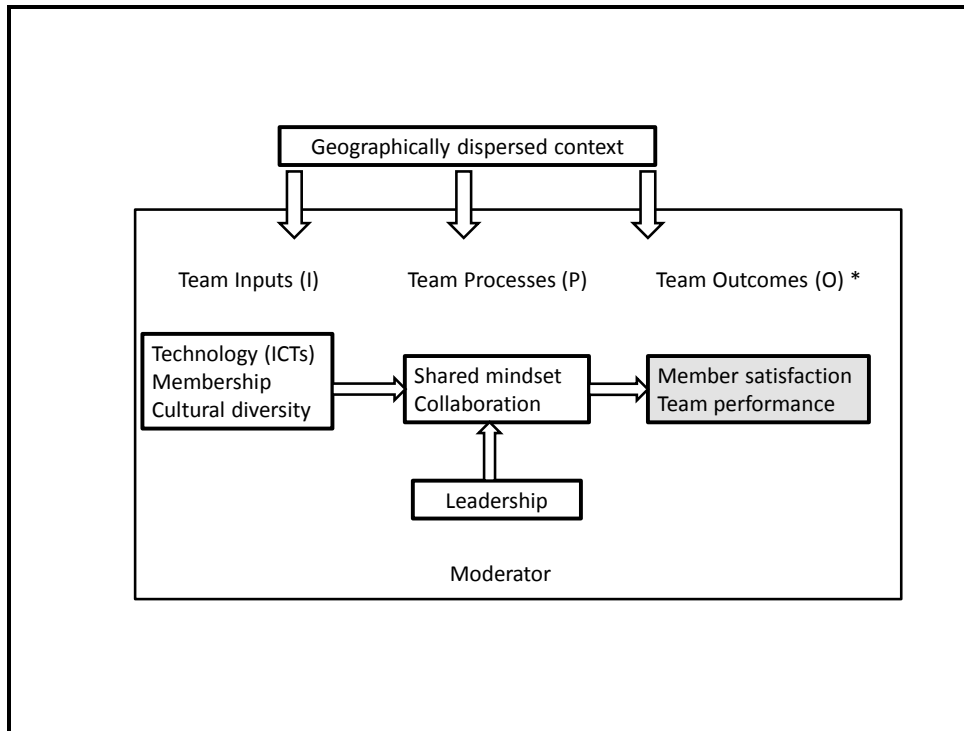


Figure 46: Revised I-P-O model (adapted from Martins, Gilson & Maynard 2004)

* **Note:** This study did not consider team outcomes. The two outcomes listed in this Figure are examples only drawn from the originating paper.

In summary, leadership is an under acknowledged but very important requirement for an effective GDT on the GBH and OT. Its importance suggests a moderating role in the I-P-O model. Whilst both traditional and participative leadership styles were in evidence, these were not commonly directed to the ongoing management of the GBH and OT tourism destinations. There was no evidence of distributed leadership on the GBH and OT.

5.3 I-P-O Integration

The purpose of this section is to highlight the dynamic, interactive nature of the GDT elements. The I-P-O model (see Figure 46 above) is used to integrate the summary findings of the study and build a holistic picture of the organisation of tourism providers as GDTs.

The results of this study affirm degrees of geographic dispersion amongst tourism providers. The impact of this dispersion was compounded by the actual nature of the environment. Key characteristics of the GBH and OT environment were remoteness and disconnectedness. Using the I-P-O model, geographic dispersion was seen as a powerful environmental factor which strongly influenced the tourism experience on the GBH and OT, the organisation of tourism providers, and had a pervasive impact on the other six elements of the GDT framework.

ICTs, as an input (I) in the I-P-O model, provide an opportunity to ameliorate the impacts of this remoteness and sense of disconnect on the GBH and OT. Basic ICT infrastructure was available to all tourism providers, but there was minimal application directed toward enhancing the GBH and OT as tourism destinations nor at actively embracing connectivity between multiple tourism providers. With enhancement of this infrastructure and appropriate training and education for tourism providers, ICTs could fulfil its essential role in a GDT by providing a conduit connecting tourism providers on the GBH and OT.

A second input (I) is team membership. The tourism providers identified in the study had the potential to constitute an appropriate team membership for a functioning GDT. However the willingness and ability of potential members to become involved is moot. The geographic dispersion of tourism providers and the nature of their remote environment could limit involvement in a GDT. ICTs can help facilitate interaction within this broad talent pool and ameliorate the impact of these influences. Another input (I) factor influencing their capacity to become team members is cultural diversity which can create fault-lines between tourism providers.

Cultural diversity (both organisational and racial), a third input (I) in the I-P-O model, was evident on GBH and OT, but was not actively utilised for tourism purposes. A GDT membership that reflects the cultural diversity on the GBH and OT could leverage the benefits of this diversity. However, there are significant risks both inherently associated with diversity and also specifically identified in this study for tourism providers on the GBH and OT. ICTs offer the opportunity for tourism providers to engage more frequently, possibly minimising the negative outcomes associated with diversity. ICTs can connect culturally diverse and geographically distributed team members and facilitate engagement. However, to achieve maximum potential from diversity, tourism providers require a common mindset and be willing to collaborate (see below). Diversity exists but intervention is required to recognise the benefits. Appropriate leadership needs to be in place (see below).

Members of a GDT require the I-P-O process (P) of a shared mindset that enthusiastically embraces the GBH and OT as complete destinations. There is little evidence of this between tourism providers despite the fact that both destinations were often well recognised and distinctive tourism entities. The challenges that come with cultural diversity would need to be addressed to achieve a shared mindset. The additional engagement flowing from the increased use of ICTs could help create a pathway to a more robust shared mindset. The process of collaboration is facilitated by this shared mindset (discussed below). Appropriate leadership would need to carefully nurture the diverse interests of tourism providers to create a GDT of one mind.

Collaboration is another team process (P) in the I-P-O model. On the GBH and OT collaboration was recognised as beneficial, but it was not widely adopted.

The remote environment, the geographic distribution of tourism providers, the cultural diversity, the lack of a common mindset and low usage of ICTs were inhibiting factors. Addressing these factors, as discussed above, through an appropriate leadership would be prerequisite to a successful GDT.

Leadership, repositioned in the I-P-O model as a moderator, emerges as a pivotal element of a GDT on the GBH and OT. It interacts strongly with each of the other elements, and can be seen as a moderator within the model. Whilst some leadership was in evidence on the GBH and OT they did not extend to distributed leadership directed to the destinations as entities. This might in part explain the current status of the other elements (for example, lack of a shared mindset and low levels of collaboration). Distributed leadership offers the potential to address these issues, although perhaps a more collaborative style of leadership might initially be required.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study as they relate to each of the research questions. Using the I-P-O model as an integrative framework, these findings provide insight into the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs as GDTs. Adopting this model as a theoretical lens provided a description of the organisation of tourism providers on the GBH and OT, and an indication of the appropriateness of a GDT as an organising mechanism, and some insights into the implications of a GDT approach.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter firstly re-visits the aims of research and the approach taken. It then discusses the findings as they address the research questions. The limitations and strengths of the study are then outlined. Next the major theoretical and practical contributions of the study are detailed. Finally, some recommendations for future practice and research are considered.

6.2 Aims of the study and approach taken

The purpose of the study was to advance the understanding of remote Australian tourism destinations. The specific focus was the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs. Providers were conceptualised as members of a team for the purposes of delivering the tourism experience. Because of the nature of these destinations, particularly the spatial configuration, a form of virtual team (a GDT) was employed as the analytical lens. The GDT framework comprised seven elements, which were configured using an I-P-O model (see Figure 1, p. 3). A specific research question was attached to each element of the framework (see Table 1, p. 4), which collectively offered insights to explain the organisation of tourism providers on RTTs as GDTs. A case study research design was adopted for the study. Two similar cases were used, the GBH and the OT. Data for each case were collected through Internet searches, and field studies. The elements of the GDT framework guided the data collection and data analysis.

6.3 The research findings.

The results provide valuable insight into the organisation of tourism providers on the GBH and OT. They present a description of the conditions on these RTTs, some explanation for this, and some tentative prescriptive observations. By using the

elements of the GDT framework to structure the data collection and analysis, these results clustered around each of the individual research questions. By considering each element of the GDT framework separately, the study contributes to specific dimensions of these remote destinations. However, when viewed as part of the I-P-O framework, these data take on a more dynamic and interactive perspective, and more accurately reflect the complexity of these destinations, and the issues that tourism providers face.

Each element of the GDT framework was a useful avenue of analysis. The findings affirm degrees of geographic dispersion amongst tourism providers consistent with that of a GDT. This element directly impacted each of the other GDT elements, affirming its positioning in the I-P-O model as an influential environmental factor. This environment for these two RTTs was characterised by remoteness and disconnectedness. There was not only dispersion over the extended geography of the physical track itself but it also extended to other desert centres and distant Australian locations. Consistent with the themes argued by Stafford Smith (2008), this dispersion dramatically influences the manner in which tourism providers are able to organise. Paradoxically, whilst this dispersion produced operational concerns for tourism providers, it was also fundamental to the tourism experience. The challenge for tourism providers is to maintain and capitalise on this experience and minimise attendant negative dimensions.

Basic ICT infrastructure was available to all tourism providers, offering the potential to ameliorate the impacts of this remoteness and sense of disconnect. The sophistication of this infrastructure varied markedly, affecting its adoption as a common tool for organising providers. Characteristically those smaller providers,

engaged in direct contact with tourists used basic ICTs creating a lowest common denominator effect when dealing with those providers using more sophisticated technologies. Whilst there was some use of ICTs to connect providers, they were not commonly employed to enhance the whole destination as an entity. ICT enabled connectivity between providers was not structured or coordinated. There was no deliberate strategy to leverage the potential of ICTs. However, there was a basic infrastructure in place which could serve as a valuable input (I) to a GDT and which over time could be enhanced. Organised as a GDT, tourism providers could use ICTs to engage more closely and constructively in pursuit of the collective development of their respective destinations. To achieve this, basic levels of training are essential. In addition, to fully realise the potential input of ICTs as a resource, the influences of the remaining GDT elements need to be considered.

As discussed in Chapter Five, there was a group of tourism providers whose team membership would be essential or very important to the functioning of a GDT. These providers did have the potential to engage as team members. However, the issue is their willingness and ability to engage in the team. The results indicated a rather competitive stance amongst some providers and on occasions personal animosity was evident. Other providers had competing priorities which could jeopardise a willingness to contribute. Gaining the commitment of those providers needed for a GDT to function could therefore be problematic in some cases. As discussed, one factor impacting member engagement was the remote geography and provider dispersion. Another factor was the existing ICT capability and usage. In addition, to fully realise the potential contribution of team members as a resource input (I), the influences of the remaining GDT elements need to be considered.

Cultural diversity (both organisational and racial) was evident on the GBH and OT, thus providing the potential to leverage its benefits as a resource input (I) for a GDT. The results indicated that at this time more of the risks inherent in diversity were in evidence than the benefits. Faultlines were identified that contributed to the under-utilisation of cultural diversity. However, the existence and extent of diversity offers a powerful latent resource for tourism providers, should it be mobilised. The sheer physical geographic dispersion of tourism providers again creates a paradox. In one sense this dispersion accentuates the diversity, the differentness, the remoteness of these two RTTs. From another perspective, it hinders the requisite engagement between providers. The subtle challenge is to retain the diversity and minimise the risks. ICTs offer the opportunity for tourism providers to engage more frequently, possibly minimising the negative effects of diversity. This could encourage tourism providers to be more willing to engage as team members, which could also moderate the risks. In addition, to fully realise the potential benefits of diversity as a resource input (I), the influences of the remaining GDT elements need to be considered.

Whilst both destinations were often recognised as distinct tourism entities, and tourism was often seen as important, most providers were not of one mind in terms of the GBH or OT as complete tourism destinations. In this sense there was little evidence of a shared mindset amongst tourism providers. The mindset of providers was predominantly self-centric despite the implicit recognition in most cases that the destination was greater than the individual tourism provider's own limited agenda. In some cases this agenda was predominantly concerned with tourism, but restricted geographically. In other cases these agendas were quite varied and extended to non- tourism matters. At times these varied mindsets were connected to the cultural diversity of tourism providers. Differing racial and organisational

experiences and interests generated differing world views. This creates another challenge for a GDT: how to blend these mindsets to a common concern for tourism related matters embracing their entire destinations? There is however, the potential to develop a common mindset. The existence of a clearly defined and well recognised destination provides a basis for a more collegiate mindset. There is a physical entity on which to focus. Once again, the use of ICTs offer opportunities to improve connectivity, mitigate the negative dimensions of cultural diversity, and so nurture the mindset required of GDT members. In addition, to fully realise the potential benefits of diversity as a team process (P) the influences of the remaining GDT elements need to be considered.

Collaboration on the GBH and OT was recognised as important, but not widely adopted. There were some isolated examples of collaborative behaviours but no systemic activities directed to the entire destination. The geographic distribution of tourism providers, their cultural diversity, the lack of a common mindset, and low usage of ICTs are suggested as inhibiting factors. However, given the value placed on collaboration, it is conceivable that if these factors (as discussed above) were addressed, then collaboration could enthusiastically be embraced and evolve into a positive feature of these destinations. In addition, to fully realise the potential benefits of collaboration as a team process (P) the influences of the remaining GDT element, leadership, needs to be considered.

Leadership emerged as a pivotal element in the I-P-O model when applied to the GBH and OT, and hence its re-defined role as a moderating variable. Traditional and collaborative leadership were in evidence but not distributed leadership. There were isolated instances of leadership activities directed to the OT as an entire

destination but not the GBH. This could be explained by the fewer jurisdictional boundaries on the former. But even on the OT there was no evidence of concerted leadership activity pervading the entire destination. This lack of leadership activity might in part explain the current status of the other GDT elements. Appropriate leadership offers the potential to significantly and positively impact each of the other elements. Effective leadership interventions could help build a functioning GDT. An appropriate leadership style could encourage engagement, commitment, collaboration, help build ICT skills and facilitate member communication. This is consistent with a distributed leadership approach which over time sees the style move along a continuum to gradually adopt a shared model. One significant challenge is to identify and engage such a leader.

The results of this study are drawn from the GBH and OT case studies. These were selected as case studies because they are representative of RTTs. With some caution, it seems a safe conclusion to extrapolate the findings discussed above to RTTs as the broader genre of destination. These results offer insight into what is happening and why, and a view of future possibilities. When viewed individually each GDT element provides valuable data. When viewed collectively, in the form of the I-P-O model, a more dynamic description of RTTs and a vision of the future can be constructed. The theme which emerges from these results is that RTTs demonstrate a fledgling capacity and latent potential as vibrant destinations.

6.4 Limitations and strengths of the study

This section discusses the limitations and strengths of the study. Interestingly, some aspects of the study that can be construed as a limitation when viewed from one perspective, have made this study more robust when considered from a different

stance. As a consequence the following discussion treats some issues as both a limitation and as a strength.

There is a clearly defined geographical limitation to the study; the focus is on remote Australia. Given the powerful and pervasive impact of this particular environment, the capacity to generalise findings to other geographic regions could be limited. In addition, the particular type of destination, RTTs, may also have idiosyncratic characteristics that limit a broader application of the findings. An argument may be mounted that whilst RTTs are a form of touring route, they are sufficiently different to warrant consideration as a sub-species of touring routes. The wider application of these results needs to be treated with some caution. However this same clearly defined geographic boundary also proved to be a strength of the study. It provided a clear focus to the study and a depth of analysis that might not otherwise have been possible.

Whilst the focus of the study is tightly defined, the inclusion of seven elements of the GDT framework produced a large amount of data. As a result deeper analysis of each element was not possible within the confines of the current study. A more extensive explanation of the complexities and relationships produced through examination of the I-P-O model would provide further insights. In particular, for reasons involving logistics and the need to draw a practical boundary around the scope of the study, no data relating to outcomes (O) was collected. Whilst this was considered beyond the reach of the study, it would nevertheless have been an interesting inclusion.

The choice of a GDT as the analytical lens has limitations. As with the choice of any specific theoretical framework, the posture taken toward the study is

predetermined. In this case only the seven elements of the GDT framework were considered. In addition, only teams were considered as the organising mechanism for tourism providers. Perhaps more importantly, since no GDTs (in fact no teams) existed on the GBH or OT this configuration was somewhat hypothetical. This meant that some data was applied in a more abstract manner, considering the potential for say team membership, rather than a more concrete application. However, the novelty of the approach also brought a fresh conceptualisation of issues and their relationship to each other. It offered some explanations for the extant circumstances and some insights for the future. The GDT lens provided a previously untested model for organising tourism providers in remote dispersed locations.

GDTs, having emerged from the more general literature on teams, have a strong theoretical foundation. This was a strength of the study, in that the theoretical dimension of the GDT framework elements and their positioning in the I-P-O model were soundly based in established research. In addition GDTs have not been explored in the type of context found with RTTs. The opportunity to explore this novel application was a strength of the study.

6.5 Implications for theoretical knowledge

This study has made a contribution to the understanding of remote tourism destinations. It affirms the importance of adopting a whole of destination approach to the study of tourism destinations. A holistic approach was essential to capture the extensive range of factors impacting on tourism providers and their subtle connections. The complexity of remote destinations and their dynamic nature has also been highlighted by this approach.

A major contribution of this study was the approach taken to the construction of its theoretical base. Firstly, a multi-disciplined approach was taken. The focus of the study was tourism destinations but the core analytical framework was sourced from the management and organisation behaviour literature. The phenomenon of virtuality in organisational settings has been extensively researched from an organisation behaviour stance but has received little application to tourism settings. By adopting a GDT lens the current study has been able to cross disciplinary boundaries. Each of the framework elements also drew on aspects of the management literature, for example organisational culture, collaboration and leadership. Secondly, this study has drawn on a variety of tourism literatures to explore the theoretical dimensions of the study. It has applied the literature associated with touring routes, 4WD tourism and tourism destinations to the elements of the core theoretical framework used in the study. The distinction between peripheral and remote destinations was also considered.

The use of an appropriate theoretical framework to study tourism destinations has made a contribution to theoretical knowledge. The use of GDTs as a theoretical lens to better understand RTTs adds a fresh dimension to the remote tourism literature. This particular theoretical framework has not previously been adopted to study remote destinations. Whilst other studies involving the use of, for example clusters or networks, provide valuable insights, the GDT lens contributes a different perspective. At the heart of this model is geographic dispersion, and this is the very essence of remote destinations. This core compatibility of model with context provides the opportunity to apply a well researched theoretical framework to an under-researched phenomenon. The lens does not fight this environmental context but fits within it in order to describe and explain. This lens embraces the special

configuration of the RTT environment, and applies the elements of the GDT framework to analyse these destinations. By conceptualising tourism providers as a team the focus becomes the synergy produced by the collective tourism providers in addition to individual perspectives.

In addition, the use of the seven elements of the framework, configured as an I-P-O model, acknowledges the complexity of remote destinations. It is not asserted that these elements capture the complete picture of RTTs but they are influential dimensions. They highlight the interdependent and dynamic nature of the conditions which tourism providers face. Further, the theoretical simplicity of the I-P-O model offers some clarity on this complexity. The use of this model recognises this non-negotiable feature of remote destinations and affirms the radical challenges inherent in remote locations.

This research makes a contribution to the theory of case study research design. The case study was adopted as its research design, the approach was transparent and rigorous. A strong theoretical framework guided the data collection and analysis. Whilst previous studies of tourism destinations have adopted a case study methodology, many have not been meticulous in the description of their methods. The current study affirms the merit of a rigorous research design, particularly the data collection method and data analysis techniques. The detailed consideration of researcher bias also makes a valuable contribution.

This study extends the application of virtual teaming to a new environment. The use of GDTs in remote tourism destinations is novel. Also the use of GDTs where part of the required membership pool might not be enthusiastic contributors also adds a fresh perspective to the GDT literature. Other issues arising specifically

from the study could supplement this body of knowledge. For example, the use of ICTs where variable levels of sophistication exist between team members is another complexity or nuance for the GDT theoretical mix.

6.6 Implications for practice and policy

6.6.1 Practice

This study has made a valuable practical contribution to RTTs as tourism destinations. It offers tourism providers a practical organising mechanism. This is a mechanism which gives the opportunity to simultaneously develop common goals for the benefit of the whole destination in parallel with furthering individual interests. The elements of the GDT framework highlight the essential ingredients for developing teamwork between tourism providers, and thus offering a way to experience the reciprocity identified as essential for RTTs. Notable amongst these ingredients is the need for a common mindset, the challenges of culturally based faultlines, the role of collaboration and the importance of appropriate leadership. In the process of identifying and exploring these elements, the study also provided insights into current practice and as a direct consequence, focal points for change.

Should tourism providers assume a GDT as their organising framework, a practical blueprint for change emerges. The elements of the framework offer diagnostic data on some essential components of their current performance and the reasons for this. These same elements highlight future needs. For example, team members recognise the need for a common mindset, which in turn can be nurtured through greater usage of ICTs and through appropriate leadership. GDTs offer a means of identifying the logical threads of change and the hurdles that litter this

pathway. These hurdles include the need for tourism providers to rethink the very essence of their relationships and to move from an individual to a team perspective.

6.6.2 Policy

The results of this study will also contribute to remote tourism policy development. The identification and classification of tourism providers, their locations and how they interact will add to base-line data for these remote destinations. Several specific findings warrant the attention of policy makers, such as government agencies associated with tourism development. These include the current availability and potential leverage of ICTs, the sense of disconnect felt by many tourism providers, and the extent and impact of faultlines associated with RTTs. Importantly, the critical role of leadership in these destinations and its potential influence over a broad range of issues should be a highly placed agenda item for policy makers. These findings could be seen by policy makers as levers for change and part of their future considerations.

The findings of this study will also be of value to educators. Tertiary institutions and private providers could use this data to inform their education and training agendas. The content of programmes might address some of the issues raised in the study. For example they might include the nature of teams and the requirements for teamwork, identifying and dealing with faultlines, making use of ICTs, dealing with diversity and leadership skills. These results could make an important contribution to training and education outcomes on RTTs. Learning materials could be developed and delivered online through the ICT network available to GDTs.

6.7 Future research

This study has highlighted the importance of leadership in remote destination GDTs. Leadership was found to strongly influence each of the I-P-O components. This finding should be further explored through a detailed consideration of the nature and impact of leadership, how this might be developed, and how it might be applied. In particular further analysis of the value of distributed leadership would be useful. This style of leadership is highly regarded in the literature but there has been no specific application of it in remote destinations. Leadership research extending beyond an application to GDTs to encompass remote destinations in general, should also be considered. Further analysis of leadership in remote destinations should be a priority.

The outcomes (O) dimension of the I-P-O model was beyond the scope of the current study. However, it is an important component which requires elaboration and is worthy of further research. Whether within the context of a GDT or other structural forms, a detailed understanding of desired outcomes and actual outcomes produced is essential to a better understanding of remote destinations. Considering outcomes also allows a focus on effectiveness. Studies which identify effectiveness criteria and measures would be of value to tourism providers. To more specifically build on the current study, longitudinal research which measures outcomes at the commencement and conclusion of an intervention aimed at establishing GDTs at defined remote locations would be worthwhile.

The current research adopted GDTs as a theoretical lens to explore the organisation of tourism providers. Whilst the results of the current study indicate this mode of organisation has merit, the value of GDTs in remote destinations could be

further explored. An action research intervention, with the aim of establishing a team, monitoring its progress and reviewing outcomes, would be valuable. This would provide the opportunity to more closely engage with individual providers and assess their support for such an organising mechanism. Adopting a participative action research method would incorporate a structured change process driven by identified user needs and as such develop its own momentum for change. The study could perhaps be centred on an RTT, or another tourism destination.

6.8 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the study and its implications. The purpose of the study and the research questions provided a framework for discussion of the results. Generalisations from these findings affirm the utility of GDTs as an organising mechanism for tourism providers on RTTs. Each of the elements of the GDT framework was relevant to RTTs and offered insights into current practice. The I-P-O model captured the dynamic flavour of RTTs and also presented glimpses of future possibilities.

The chapter also considered the implications of the study upon theory and practice. The use of the GDT framework as an analytical lens is a strong theoretical dimension of the study. The application of a GDT framework to RTTs extends the use of this structure to new dimensions. The multidisciplinary nature of the literature used in this study demonstrates the array of options to researchers to achieve various perspectives on complex issues. The practical implications of the study were identified. The results will be of benefit to tourism providers on RTTs, to policy makers and to educators. These benefits take the form of both extensive diagnostic

data explaining the current conditions on RTTs and the implications of this for future practice.

This chapter included discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study. Here a paradox was evident; some aspects of the study were both a limitation and a strength. Finally, some directions for future research were suggested. These included the need for a more extensive consideration and application of the GDT framework, with particular emphasis on the role of leadership on RTTs.

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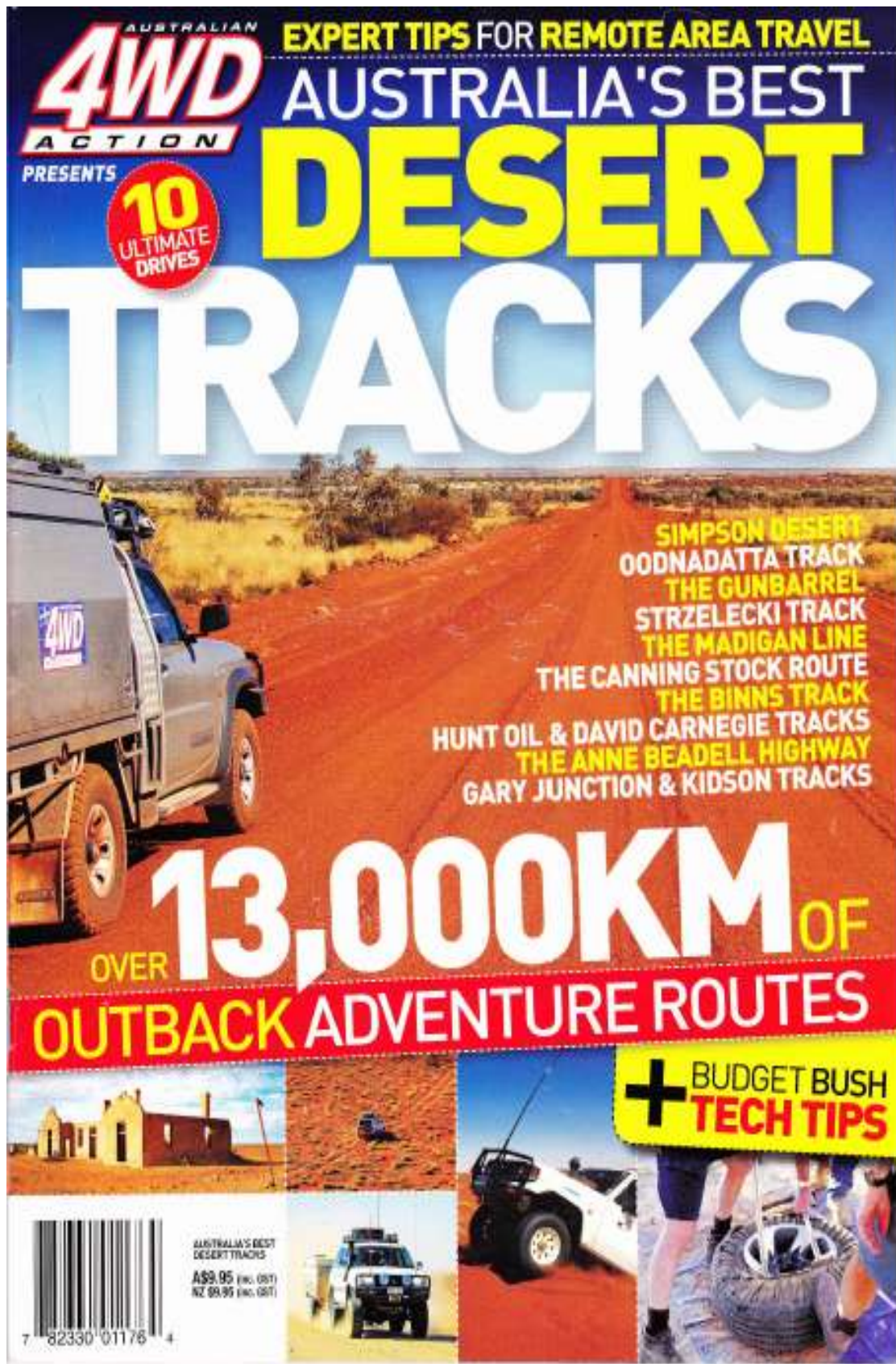
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Appendices

Appendix One: Australia's best desert tracks







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EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

EMAIL: 4wd@expresspublications.com.au

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

NATIONAL SALES & MARKETING MANAGER

BRUCE TAYLOR

PH: 02 9779 3611

MOBILE: 0495 624 039

EMAIL: bruce.taylor@expresspublications.com.au

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT MANAGER

ALLAN O'LEARY

EMAIL: allan.oleary@expresspublications.com.au

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

SUEY CARR

PH: 02 9779 3621

EMAIL: suey.carr@expresspublications.com.au

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT MANAGER

LIAM BUSLER

PH: 02 9779 3666

EMAIL: liam.busler@expresspublications.com.au

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COMPILED BY TRACEY JENNS

I was reading a journal article recently about the 'desert syndrome'. Roughly three-quarters of this great country of ours can be loosely defined as desert. These areas are characterised by a sparse, mobile population, poor infrastructure, limited supplies, variable climate and scarce natural resources. I guess that commercially these factors make things pretty tough, but as a 4WDER these are the very things that get me out there.

The big draw for me is the remoteness. On some trips we might not see a vehicle for a couple of days. In some any civilisation. It gets to about four in the arse and there's a nice open space with plenty of wood. It only takes a few minutes to get bum in chair, beer in hand, feel the warmth of the fire and just settle back. It's still, and quiet except maybe for a few birds (or maybe a bull camel ranting off in the distance). My only worries are getting the cooking plate hot and keeping the fire ticking along - no phones, emails, deadlines, meetings, or bosses.

As the night progresses, our little troop solve the problems of the world and have some good laughs. These nights are cold, but that's fixed with a good jacket and a few blankets.

What else gets me out there? Well, I really enjoy the driving: picking the right gear, the right speed to minimise damage, threading

the vehicle between the metre-deep washaways, and even trying to work out a way around those bloody corrugations. When there are a few friends along, we learn from each other, get a little competitive in a friendly sort of way, give each other heaps of crap, and laugh a lot.

And of course there's the sheer beauty of the desert. The pristine sand patterns and the dune formations, the moon sliding away in the early morning, the cloudless blue sky behind the red sand, the rugged bright-orange breakaways, and the odd mesa intruding into the regular sand patterns and the acres of spinifex that look like a pale quilt in the late afternoon sun. How about those stands of desert oaks just dropped in the middle of the sand, scrub and spinifex? These deserts are something special.

I had a heap of fun putting these stories together. They're meant to be a snapshot of the trucks rather than the ultimate planning tool. But they give the essential details, and now it's up to you. Do some more research, get some friends together and go take a look. If you're already done the Simms, then aim for the Carrang, and on the way do the Gary Junction or the Kidson, and on the way home why not the Ann Beadell? Enjoy the road, and go get some of that red sand under your feet!

Take it easy,

Greg Cartan

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Appendix Two: Selection of case study sites

Ten desert tracks were identified from Glover & Zell (2007) as potentially appropriate case studies. Each of these were assessed against the criteria identified in Table 6. The comparative assessments are at Table 35 below. Two of the desert tracks met all criteria – the GBH and the OT (see Tables 36 & 37 below).

Table 34: Comparative assessment of potential case study sites.

Track	Criteria*									
	1.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Anne Beadell Highway	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	NO	NO	X
2. Birdsville Track	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Canning Stock Route	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	NO
4. Gunbarrell Highway	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Oodnadatta Track	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Strzelecki Track	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Tanami Track	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	NO
8. Old Ghan line	X	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X
9. The Gary Junction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X
10. Simpson Desert	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X

- Note 1: X indicates the criteria is satisfied and “NO” indicates criteria not satisfied.
- Note 2: Criteria 1-10 as applied to the GBH & OT are described in the tables below

Table 35: Assessing Gunbarrel Highway against the site selection criterion.

Criteria	Comments
1. Remote desert location	The GBH stretches 1400 km between Yulara/Ayers Rock Resort in south west Northern Territory and Wiluna in Western Australia (see Figure 4). The region is classified as remote desert (Stafford Smith, 2008).
2. A variety of resident groups	On the eastern end of the GBH is Yulara/Ayers Rock Resort, an aboriginal community and international resort complex, providing a gateway to heritage listed Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park. On the western end is Wiluna, with a population of approximately 1000. The town has a hotel, fuel supplies, mini-market, roadhouse council offices, some government services and a caravan park. Three indigenous communities are located on the GBH at Warburton (population approximately 570), Warakurna (population approximately 150) and Docker Rover (population approximately 350). Several pastoral properties are located adjacent to the GBH - Carnegie Station, Glenayle, and Granite Peak.
3. A variety of tourism providers along the track	Services connected with tourism are available at Yulara /Ayers Rock Resort, Docker River, Warakurna, Docker River, Carnegie Station and Wiluna.
4. Discreet and accessible start and finish points	On the eastern end of the GBH is Yulara/Ayer's Rock Resort, accessible on sealed roads 244 km from the Stuart Highway. On the western extremity is Wiluna, located on the Goldfields highway, a sealed road.
5. Iconic – recognizable	The Gunbarrel is a highly recognisable label. It is used in regional tourism marketing agencies, on the internet, in 4WD magazines and travel literature, and in international literature promoting Australian experiences (eg Frommers and Yahoo Travel). It is referred to one of Australia's great desert tracks in Glover & Zell (2007).
6. Notable attractions	The Track has a variety of attractions. The Kata Tjuta National Park is home to Uluru and the Olgas, the historical dimension of the Highway's construction by Len Beadell's crew, Lassiter's cave, the Giles Meteorological Station, and various indigenous cultural experiences. These are situated in the general experience of the Australian outback, itself key tourism attraction.
7. A genuine 4WD experience	The GBH offers a mix of driving experiences wrapped in the remoteness of the Australian desert region. Road conditions vary from wide unsealed but graded sections with extensive challenging corrugations, to more difficult sandy segments. There are opportunities for bush camping.
8. Availability of food, fuel, & water.	These services are sufficiently available at various locations along the Track, at Ayer's Rock Resort, Docker River, Warakurna, Warburton, Carnegie Station and Wiluna. There are moderate driving distances between locations.
9. Facilities	There are shower and camping facilities at several locations: Ayer's Rock Resort, Docker River, Warakurna, Warburton, Carnegie Station and Wiluna.
10. Researcher logistics	Is was possible for the researcher to travel to the GBH.

Table 36: Assessing Oodnadatta Track against the site selection criterion

Criteria	Comments
1. Remote desert location	The OT stretches 635 km between Maree in south central South Australia and Marla in the north of south Australia (see Figure 5). The region is classified as desert, and is sparsely populated.
2. A variety of resident groups	On the southern end of the OT is Maree a small town with a population of 350. The town has a mix of aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents. The northern extremity is Marla, located on the Stuart Highway. Along the OT there are small populated areas at William Creek and Coward Springs, and a larger town (population 200) at Oodnadatta which also has a mix of indigenous and non-indigenous residents. The OT crosses the traditional lands of three aboriginal groups, the Kuyani, Aarabana, and Arrente peoples.
3. A variety of tourism providers along the track	Services connected with tourism are available at Marree, Coward Springs, William Creek, Oodnadatta and Marla.
4. Discreet and accessible start and finish points	The start and finish points of the OT are quite accessible. Access to Maree is by sealed road (except for the final 79 km) and Marla is on the Stuart Highway.
5. Iconic – recognizable	The OT is a highly recognisable label. It is used in regional tourism marketing agencies, on the internet, in 4WD magazines and travel literature, and in international literature promoting Australian experiences (eg Frommers and Yahoo Travel). It is referred to one of Australia's great desert tracks in Glover & Zell (2007).
6. Notable attractions	The OT has a variety of attractions. It has historical significance: related to explorers Ernest Giles and John McDouall Stuart, the Old Telegraph Line, and many rail sidings on the The Old Ghan railway line. There is an Aboriginal Culture Centre in Maree – the Arabuna Community and Cultural Centre. These attractions are surrounded by the general experience of the Australian outback, itself a key attraction to 4WDers.
7. A genuine 4WD experience	The OT offers a mix of driving experiences wrapped in the remoteness of the Australian desert region. Road surface is in the main, unsealed and graded with extensive challenging corrugations, gibber sections, and is more difficult in wet conditions. There are opportunities for bush camping.
8. Availability of food, fuel, & water supplies.	Marree has a hotel, fuel supplies, mini-market, and roadhouse. Marla, which serves as a major roadhouse for Highway traffic and OT travellers, offers an hotel, shop, and fuel supplies. Oodnadatta has a hotel, shop, and fuel supplies.
9. Facilities	There are camping, and shower facilities at Marree, William Creek, Oodnadatta and Marla. Coward Springs has camping facilities and thermal spa.
10. Researcher logistics	It was possible for the researcher to travel to the OT.

Appendix Three: Interview consent form and information sheet

Consent Form: Tourism on the Oodnadatta Track (track interviews)

I, _____

Hereby consent to take part in the “Tourism on the Oodnadatta Track” study being conducted by Greg Cartan from Charles Darwin University. I understand that the purpose of the study is to understand the characteristics of tourism businesses associated with the Oodnadatta Track and how these businesses meet the needs of 4WD tourists.

The aims of the study and the anticipated benefits have been explained to me by Greg Cartan.

I understand that

- ☐ I will take part in an interview with Greg Cartan at a time and location that is convenient to me.
- ☐ The interview will be audio-taped to help data analysis.
- ☐ My name will not be recorded in any transcripts or publications from the study.
- ☐ I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, and can ask to have my interview excluded from the data analysis.
- ☐ The results of the research will be used for a PhD thesis, and in academic publications.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form will be kept by the researcher.

Sample Information Sheet

<u>Project:</u>	Tourism on the Oodnadatta Track
<u>Chief Investigator:</u>	Greg Cartan, Charles Darwin University
<u>Purpose of the Study:</u>	Greg Cartan is a PhD student at Charles Darwin University. I am is researching 4WD tourism on the Oodnadatta Track. I am trying to understand the characteristics of tourism businesses and how these businesses meet the needs of 4WD tourists. I also want to explore what tourist facilities might be suitable for the Oodnadatta Track in future years.
<u>Benefits of the Study:</u>	The results of the research will be of use to tourism businesses and tourism marketing agencies to help improve the quality of these types of holidays.
<u>How have you been Selected?</u>	You have been selected either as a result of a Google search of the Oodnadatta Track or because someone has made a direct referral. You meet the criteria as someone who is intimately connected to tourism in that region.
<u>What would be expected of you?</u>	I would like you to participate in an interview with me. The interview will take place at a time and location that is convenient for you. The interview will take no more than one hour. I will ask you some questions about tourism and the Oodnadatta Track.
<u>Discomfort/Risks:</u>	There are no specific risks associated with this study. I simply want to hear your opinions. I understand that your time is valuable, and so I will be brief and to the point.
<u>Confidentiality:</u>	The interview will be audio-taped (unless you would prefer I took hand written notes), however these tapes will be used only to identify general trends and themes. You will never be referred to by name in any

material published about the study, or in any transcripts of the tapes. If I use particular quotes, for example, I may refer to you as “Participant A” or some other pseudonym. No details that can identify you or your business will be kept or used.

Your Participation:

I would be grateful if you did participate in this study, however you are free to refuse to do so. Even if you do decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time by notifying the researcher and terminating the interview. If you withdraw, you can ask that your interview to that point not be used in the study.

Results of the Study:

The research is part of my PhD thesis and as such will be published at the completion of my work in 2009. A copy of the publications will be available online from the Charles Darwin University library soon after. I will also be publishing shorter research papers in the interim. I would be happy to email you a copy of these as they become available. Please give me your email address when we meet.

Persons to Contact:

If you have any questions about the interview or what is expected of you, please contact me, Greg Cartan on 08 83537422.

This sheet is yours to keep.

Appendix Four: Sample from photograph register

Photograph register: sample

Identifier	Significance	Location	Date taken
GBH Photo 12 (Figure 20)	Depicts GBH dispersion	100km west of Ayers Rock Resort	June 2007
GBH Photo 30 (Figure 21)	Depicts GBH distances	157 km east of Warburton	July 2007
GBH Photo 21 (Figure 22)	Warakurna services	Warakurna	July 2007

Note: the figures above relate to Figures in Chapter 4.

Appendix Five: Sample from document register

Sample document register

Document	Title	Description	Source	Acquired
GBH Document 1	The Warpur	Newspaper; Community information; Education.	Voyages Marketing Dept; Ayers Rock Resort	June 2007
OT Document 2	Welcome to the Oodnadatta track South Australia's String of Springs	Information & promotional brochure	Outback Areas Community Development Trust	April 2008

Appendix Six: Memoing template

RESEARCH MEMO

Reference:

Source:

Objective comments:

Interpretative comments:

Links:

Appendix Seven: Document References

Document	Title	Description	Source	Acquired
GBH Document 1	The Warpur	Newspaper; Community information education.	Voyages Marketing Dept; Ayers Rock Resort	June 2007
GBH Document 2	Ayers Rock Background information	Information document; educational	Voyages Marketing Dept; Ayers Rock Resort	June 2007
GBH Document 5	Australia's Golden Outback	Promotional brochure	Tourism WA	July 2007
GBH Document 7	Anangu Tours	Promotional brochure	Anangu Tours at Ayers Rock Resort	June 2007
GBH Document 12	Ayers Rock Resort and the traditional people of the region	Information document; educational	Voyages Marketing Dept; Ayers Rock Resort	June 2007
GBH Document 15	Kaltukatjara (Docker River) Community Business Plan	3-5 year Plan for Community	Community CEO	July 2007
GBH Document 16	Community tourism plan	Draft proposal for tourism promotion	Community CEO	July 2007
GBH Document 18	4X4 Guide to the NT	Promotional booklet	Tourism Central Australia	June 2007

Document	Title	Description	Source	Acquired
OT Document 2	Welcome to the Oodnadatta track South Australia's String of Springs	Information & promotional brochure	Outback Areas Community Development Trust	April 2008
OT Document 3	The Oodnadatta Track – String of Springs	Booklet : tourism promotion & environmental education	SA Tourism Commission	April 2008
OT Document 7	Desert Cave Hotel	Promotional brochure	Desert Cave Hotel	May 2008
OT Document 12	Outback Areas Community Development Trust	Information educational brochure	CEO, Outback Areas Community Development Trust	June 2008
OT Document 13	Outback Areas Community Development Trust: Annual Report 2006-2007	Annual Report: Information	Outback Areas Community Development Trust	June 2008
OT Document 14	Oodnadatta track mud map	Promotional guide & map	Pink Roadhouse	April 2008
OT Document 22	4WD tracks & repeater towers	Map and Brochure with tower locations and usage advice	Outback Areas Community Development Trust	April 2008

Document	Title	Description	Source	Acquired
OT Document 26	South Australia 4WD experiences	Brochure promoting state-wide 4WD experiences	SA Tourism Commission, Adelaide	April 2008
OT Document 27	South Australia Flinders Ranges & Outback	Booklet: tourism information & promotion	SA Tourism Commission	April 2008
OT Document 30	Desert Parks Pass South Australia 2009 Handbook	Permit, booklet and information package	Department for Environment and Heritage	May 2008

Appendix Eight Photographs cited

Identifier	Significance	Location	Date taken
GBH Photo 12 (Figure 21)	GBH dispersion	100km west of Ayres Rock Resort	June 2007
GBH Photo 21 (Figure 23)	Warakurna services	Warakurna	July 2007
GBH Photo 30 (Figure 22)	GBH distances	157 km east of Warburton	July 2007
GBH Photo 37 (Figure 24)	Carnegie Station Office and shop	Carnegie Station	July 2007
GBH Photo 43 (Figure 25)	4WD bonnet “office”	Gibson Desert	August 2007
OT Photo 10 (Figure 44)	Office, shop service station and interview site	Maree	May 2008
OT Photo 19 (Figure 43)	Camping facilities	Coward Springs	May 2008
OT Photo 22 (Figure 40)	OT harsh driving conditions	Near Curdimurka	May 2008
OT Photo 40 (Figure 42)	Tour operator	20km west of Oodnadatta	May 2008
OT Photo 49 (Figure 39)	OT remoteness and dispersion	Near Marla, SA	June 2008
OT Photo 50 (Figure 41)	OT dangerous driving terrain	Near Marla, SA	June 2008

Note: the figures above relate to Figures in Chapter 4.

Appendix Nine: Central Lands Council Permit to transit aboriginal lands



Central Land Council

Permits Section: Telephone (inter.) 61 08 8951 6320
Facsimile 61 08 8953 4345 CLC web site: <http://www.clc.org.au>

PERMIT TO TRANSIT ABORIGINAL LAND

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*
NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA *Aboriginal Land Act (1980)*

The person(s) whose name(s) are set out below are authorised to enter onto Aboriginal Land according to the details set out below and subject to the general and special conditions set out below or attached to this Permit.

Name of Aboriginal Land Trust(s):	Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust
Specific area(s) of entry:	ULURU TO WA BORDER
Dates of entry (inclusive) From: To:	06/04/2009 07/04/2009
Purpose of entry:	Transit
Vehicle description: Registration State/Territory	Nissan Patrol Cab chassis KRUZN3 South Australia
Address of Permit Holder:	50 Seaview Rd West Beach Adelaide South Australia 5024 Australia

Issued without alteration or erasure by the Central Land Council at Alice Springs on 24 March 2009

Authorised by the Central Land Council Permits Department.

PERMIT NUMBER: 1363

The person(s) whose name(s) are set out below are authorised to enter onto Aboriginal Land according to the details on the first page and subject to the general and special conditions set out below or attached to this Permit.

I have read the general conditions and the special conditions (if any) and I agree to abide by such conditions.

Name(s) of Permit Holder	Signature(s) of Permit Holder
Greg CARTAN	
Tricia VILKINAS	

Issued without alteration or erasure by the Central Land Council at Alice Springs on 24 March 2009

PERMIT NUMBER: 1363

GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. This Permit authorises your transit across Aboriginal land, along the specified route. You are not permitted to take sidetracks, or to enter any Aboriginal community or outstation.
2. You are not permitted to camp overnight or light fires while on Aboriginal land.
3. You are not permitted to discharge any firearm while on Aboriginal land.
4. You are not permitted to take any photographs or videos of Aboriginal people or Aboriginal land for any commercial purpose, or for publication or broadcast. If you wish to take photographs or videos for your private use, you must obtain permission before you do so.
5. While on Aboriginal land you are required to comply with the lawful directions of Traditional Aboriginal owners and their representatives.
6. You must carry this Permit at all times while on Aboriginal land, and produce the Permit for inspection at the request of Traditional Aboriginal owners or their representatives.
7. There are many areas on Aboriginal land where the sale, disposal or consumption of alcohol is prohibited by law, and you are required to observe those prohibitions.
8. This Permit is issued on the basis that you enter Aboriginal land at your own risk. The Traditional Aboriginal owners, the Aboriginal Land Trust, the Central Land Council and its members and employees, and the occupiers of Aboriginal land, do not accept any responsibility or liability for any loss, damage or liability associated directly or indirectly with your entry onto or transit through Aboriginal land.
9. You acknowledge and agree that your transit across Aboriginal land may be delayed for a period of time while traditional ceremonial activity is taking place on the land.
10. Failure to comply with the general and special conditions listed on this Permit will result in its immediate and automatic cancellation.
11. With the exception of Opal, petrol must not be brought into communities, whether in vehicle tanks, jerry cans, fuel drums or otherwise. **Opal petrol is a BP product designed to reduce harm caused by petrol sniffing.*

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. On the road between Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and the Western Australian border via Docker River community, **CAMPING IS ONLY PERMITTED AT KALTUKATJARA CAMPGROUND**, located about 2 km west of Kaltukatjara (Docker River) Community or 6 km east of the border.
2. Access to Tjunti (Lasseter's Cave) is permitted only for sightseeing during the day. Camping is no longer permitted at this location.
3. Access to Docker River community is only permitted for refuelling, and you are required to follow the sign posted route into the community. Access is prohibited to all other roads in the community.
4. The Docker River Road is often rough and can be dangerous, particularly for inexperienced drivers. Please leave plenty of time to arrive safely at your destination and drive according to the road conditions.