Seaport Marketing:
A Census of Australian Seaports

STEPHEN CHARLES CAHOON
BBus, BCom (Hons)

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

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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Stephan Cauenen
ABSTRACT

In recent times, the Australian seaport sector has witnessed a transformation in ownership, management, and operations as a result of government reform and developments in the broader maritime industry. This has created a hypercompetitive environment, typical of the New Economy, in which seaports must now manage. Seaports are facing an erosion of their once monopolistic positions and declining levels of captive trade as hinterlands continue to blur forcing seaports to compete for trade. A growing number of researchers have recommended the development of marketing strategies as a means to offset the challenges created by a hypercompetitive environment. However, a review of the extant literature on seaport marketing indicates a paucity of conceptual and empirical research especially in the area of in-depth research focusing on the extent of marketing being conducted by seaport management.

As the seaport sector in Australia represents a prime example of the challenging environment of the New Economy, the objective of this thesis is to investigate which marketing activities and strategies may be appropriate for these seaports. This is addressed by (i) examining the marketing activities and strategies currently being practised by Australian seaports; (ii), assessing whether they are based on services marketing principles; and (iii) determining whether the current seaport marketing activities and strategies are relevant for successfully marketing Australian seaports.

To establish the extent of marketing within Australian seaports, a census of all 54 commercial seaports was conducted via in-depth telephone interviews with the 30 senior seaport managers responsible for marketing those seaports. The telephone interviews consisted of 184 quantitative and qualitative items covering ten specific marketing dimensions (market research and segmentation, seaport product, logistics,
seaport pricing, marketing communication, seaport servicescape, seaport employees and customers, service processes, customer relationship management, and customer satisfaction), as well as the competitive environment, marketing strategy, demographics, and a peer assessment section focusing on the marketing efforts of other Australian seaports.

An analysis of the census data reveals a diverse range of seaports operating in a competitive environment, and which, although similar in the range of marketing efforts undertaken, vary considerably in their depth and strategic focus. It was found that over the past five years in particular, more seaports are relying on services marketing based activities as a means of attracting additional trade and retaining current customers. In addition, a greater emphasis is being placed on being customer-focused, which is recognised as being a necessary precondition for seaport success. It was also found that the primary marketing activities relevant to all seaports are promotion, community consultation, trade development, and customer relationship management. The major challenge however, is in managing them in an integrated manner with other services marketing based activities to provide a strategic approach for seaport marketing. It is suggested that strategic tools such as the expanded marketing mix are relevant as a foundation on which to develop marketing for seaports. Importantly, the use of the expanded marketing mix will assist seaport managers consider the marketing imperatives of each element, whereas currently, many are considered primarily from either a physical product or operational paradigm. It is further suggested that regardless of seaport size, marketing has become a necessary seaport management function that presents many opportunities for both trade and financial growth.
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As I now stand at the top of my Everest, I realise how great the view is, I also see that the stars are much closer, some within reach, many more things now seem possible.
## GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAPMA</td>
<td>Australian Association of Ports and Marine Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMC</td>
<td>Australian Maritime College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief executive officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPV</td>
<td>Cost, performance, value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Customer relationship management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI</td>
<td>Electronic data interchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRT</td>
<td>Gross registered tonnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GST</td>
<td>Goods and services tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human resource management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUA</td>
<td>Maritime Union of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRQ1</td>
<td>Primary research question one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ1</td>
<td>Subsidiary research question one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ2</td>
<td>Subsidiary research question two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEU</td>
<td>Twenty equivalent units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\bar{x}$</td>
<td>Arithmetic mean</td>
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