Chapter 6

The case study museums: Marketing perspectives

Introduction

This chapter aims to accomplish two things. Firstly, it provides an overview of the Australian state museums. The history, the antecedent organisations, and the governance structures of each museum are outlined with a view to providing a longitudinal perspective that is useful for case study analysis (Yin, 2003), and providing detail that will establish a background for the following findings and discussion chapter. As is apparent from Chapters 2 and 3, there is a clear pattern discernible in the development of the museum concept. While the Australian experience does differ from that found in other parts of the Western world, there are similarities. Australia has been affected by social changes that are global in nature. Australia’s state museums have had many issues to address from the 1960s to the present, such as the increase in leisure and recreation time, when analysing their market. There are, then, forces that have shaped the current museum sector, and museums in Australia, like those throughout the Western world, have responded accordingly. These forces appear as one of the main themes that are in evidence in this study.

As was outlined in Chapter 5, this research takes an interpretivist position, partly based on the belief that a qualitative approach provides the variety and depth of data required to understand the Australian state museums in relation to the research aims. One of the strengths of qualitative data is that it locates the phenomena within its context (Miles and Huberman, 1994). With this in mind, the second aim of this chapter is to analyse the case study museums from a marketing perspective. Using the museums’ statements as evidenced in annual reports and corporate websites it is possible to make an assessment of their position in relation to the significance of marketing. Also incorporated here is the results of the fieldwork visits to the main campus of each
museum. The researcher was in a position, having spent time on site, to make an assessment of the buildings, exhibitions and collections, the marketing collateral, and the overall ‘feel’ of each museum. This assessment is supported with analysis of photographs.

The analysis of the case study museums from a marketing perspective, then, uses this secondary data to provide valuable context for the overall research aims. This context is inextricably linked to the shape of the Australian state museum sector, and to the similarities and differences between each museum. For this reason, this chapter will conclude with a section that compares and contrasts the case study museums and considers the place of marketing generally, and electronic marketing specifically, in the museums’ strategies.

### Australian Museum

The Australian Museum is located at College and William Streets, in the centre of Sydney opposite Hyde Park, and is housed in an impressive building built in the 1840s (Appendix C: Colour plate 1.1). Like many older museums, it has constructed additional buildings that do not necessarily gel well with the original structures (Appendix C: Colour plate 1.2). It does not have any other campuses and is a museum of natural history in the traditional sense outlined in Chapter 2. That is, its collections do not cover human, social or cultural history. Rather, they include mineralogy and palaeontology, invertebrate and vertebrate zoology, and anthropology. In December 2005 the Australian Museum announced a revitalisation program, that included refurbishing the existing building, constructing a new collections and research building and new exhibitions, with the stated aim of revamping the Museum “for new 21st century visitors” (Britton, 2006: n.p.).

### History and governance

The Australian Museum, known as the Colonial Museum until 1836, is Australia's oldest museum having been founded in 1827, though it did not open to the public until
1857. It had a number of temporary premises before it moved to its present location in 1849. A museum for Sydney had been proposed in 1821 by the Philosophical Society of Australasia, and some specimens were collected, but the Society subsequently folded soon after.

The Museum was administered by the colonial government until 1836 when a committee to manage both the Australian Museum and the Botanical Gardens was established—rather prosaically called the ‘Committee of Superintendence of the Australian Museum and Botanical Garden’. Individual sub-committees for each institution were also constituted. In 1853 the *Australian Museum Act 1853* was established, which set up a Board of Trustees to manage the Museum. Various changes to the Acts governing the Australian Museum have occurred since then. The 1853 Act was repealed in 1902—to reconstitute the Museum following Federation. There was an amendment in 1931—to move the museum staff under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Board. In 1975, a new Act was passed. This Act, which came into effect from April 1976, established an Australian Museum Trust of a different constitution than previously—10 members, 8 appointed by the Governor on the nomination of the Minister and 2 elected. The Museum is governed by the Trust established through the *Australian Museum Trust Act 1975* and the later *Australian Museum Trust Regulation 2003*.

**Vision and aims**

The Australian Museum’s purpose, the nature of its collection and where it sees itself in an organisational sense, appears to have changed little since 1827 when it was first established. That is not to say that its vision and aims have not been refined over the intervening period. However, what is noticeable is that the Australian Museum has remained a museum with a narrow collection base. Some states have restructured their museum sector, perhaps in response to social, economic and political changes, with many incorporating an umbrella Board to administer campuses specialising in certain disciplines. Indeed, there has been a variety of responses. For example, Victoria’s state museums are administered by Museum Victoria (see below) which incorporates a number of campuses. The Melbourne Museum campus encompasses the natural
sciences as well as social history, but with science and technology covered by the Scienceworks museum—the home of the Melbourne Planetarium, for instance. Such a structure has not been established in New South Wales, where social history is within the purview of the Powerhouse Museum (which is also the custodian of the Sydney Observatory).

The Australian Museum’s (2005b) Annual report 2004/2005 stated that the Australian Museum Trust’s objectives are as follows:

1. To propagate knowledge about the natural environment of Australia and to increase that knowledge.
2. When acting in pursuance of its objects [sic], the Trust shall give particular emphasis and increasing knowledge in the natural sciences of biology, anthropology and geology. (2005b: 21)

These objectives are in line with the Museum’s role as a more traditional natural history institution. They are also brief, with little of the language one would expect from annual reports, given their significance as a public relations tool (Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 2003). It should be remembered, though, that these objectives relate to the Australian Museum Trust, the Museum’s governing body, and they appear in all the annual reports viewed (predominately in the Appendices under ‘Corporate Governance’). In 2005 the Australian Museum’s website, however, offered vision and mission statements more all-embracing and with more of a marketing tone. These statements do leave scope for activities in areas other than the natural sciences, and perhaps better reflect the Museum’s position in the museum sector:

**Vision Statement**
Sustainable environments and cultures for future generations, achieved through documenting and understanding the past and the present.

**Mission Statement**
To research, interpret, communicate and apply understanding of the environments and cultures of the Australian region to increase their long-term sustainability.
(Australian Museum, 2005a: n.p.)

The most recent website has simplified these statements as follows:
Our Purpose
To inspire the exploration of nature and cultures.

Our Vision
A beautiful and sustainable natural world with vibrant and diverse cultures.
(Australian Museum, 2007: n.p.)

These same statements also appear in the Australian Museum’s (2006) Annual report 2005/2006. The conclusion that can be reached is that the inclusion of the concept of sustainability in both year’s statements, and the more recent reference to ‘inspiring’ their customer, is indicative of the revision of the Australian Museum’s aims to meet twenty first century societal expectations and evidence of a clear attempt to position the Museum.

Look and feel
Buildings and internal spaces
This section needs to be thought about in the context of the Australian Museum being a traditional natural history museum, with, for example, fossil, biology and ethnographic collections. As a consequence, the displays are a combination of museum styles. That is, the minerals, birds and insects and skeleton displays tend to be a mixture of traditional display techniques (with a number clearly dating back some time) and more recent styles. The exhibitions and galleries within the original building are, however, clearly aligned with the core values, and the perceived differentiation of the Museum from others that is apparent in the marketing materials. There is evidence of current design practice—a clever use of lighting and interpretation—which result in the whole appearing modern without losing the traditional atmosphere. The Skeletons gallery is a good example of this (Appendix C: Colour plate 1.3). Overall, within the context set by the buildings, both the 1850s structure and the now out of date later additions, there is quite a professional look and feel to the Museum.

There is also a strong education focus. The Discovery and Search Centre (Appendix C: Colour plate 1.4) is large compared with other state museums. There is also an education area that seemed to be more for younger children. In addition, there was an
education officer in attendance at the Skeletons gallery during the fieldwork visit, but this may have been because it was school holidays.

The museum shop and a cafeteria-style food outlet are in the main entrance area along with the Admissions Desk (Appendix C: Colour plate 1.5). Once inside there is a large open area that has an information and resources desk (Appendix C: Colour plate 1.6). In both these areas it is clear that the Museum has needed to work within the constraints of the original building.

**Website**

There has been a clear development of the Australian Museum’s website over the period under review as far as design and usability is concerned. Also relevant is the recent incorporation of changes due to a rebranding exercise—for the most part the website fits in with the printed material, signage and other collateral. At the time of writing there were areas, notably the research sections, that had not been revised. The Australian Museum’s website has a significant research focus and these are large sections so it is not surprising they are the last to be revised. There is evidence of strategies aimed at communicating with the Museum’s various publics. It is apparent that the Australian Museum recognises the importance of their website as a marketing resource.

**Collateral**

Most of the Australian Museum’s brochures currently reflect the rebranding exercise, inasmuch as they reflect the new style and have the Museum’s new logo on them. The ‘Highlights’ brochure still has the old look, but the Museum are apparently using up old stock and looking at progressively bringing in the new branding. There are brochures for any special exhibitions, as well as a quarterly ‘What’s on’ publication. The Museum’s annual reports are well designed with a ‘summary’ and a ‘detailed’ version. The approach taken is reflective of a considered use of printed material to support marketing strategies.
Summary

While its collection may have a similar focus to that with which the institution began, the Australian Museum is taking account of the times in which it finds itself. On the surface it might be assumed that a natural history museum housed in its (almost) original building might not be reflecting a marketing orientation, that it might still be preoccupied with its collection and therefore be more reflective of a product orientation. This is not the case with the Australian Museum. Still, there are issues in relation to its buildings. On the one hand a heritage-style building can add value for a traditional, authoritative positioning, but on the other it is quite restrictive as regards current display and museum practice. It is also restrictive in relation to practical matters such as the siting of retail outlets, and customer service points and entrances. Similarly the later building, while more recent, is now out of date. This has been recognised in the revitalisation program.

The approach that can be seen around the Museum in relation to marketing communication is one of alignment to core values. Signage, outside banners and the outdoor advertising seen around the city are all in keeping with the branding as evidenced in printed material. Similarly, the website communicates with the key stakeholders, and while it is not perhaps operating at a high technical level, is apparently achieving the desired outcomes. In general, the Australian Museum does have to operate within some constraints, but does so with a clear marketing emphasis.

Museum Victoria

Museum Victoria is Australia’s largest public museum organisation. It is comprised of three campuses of which Melbourne Museum is the largest. Melbourne Museum (Appendix C: Colour plate 2.1) is located in Melbourne’s Carlton Gardens, having moved to the site in October, 2000. This was the campus that was visited as part of the fieldwork. The other campuses are at Spotswood, which incorporates the Scienceworks Museum (which opened in 1992) and the Melbourne Planetarium, and a site in Flinders Street at the Old Customs House that houses the Immigration Museum. In addition,
since 1996 Museum Victoria has owned and managed the Royal Exhibition Building, a World Heritage-listed building adjacent to the Melbourne Museum site (Appendix C: Colour plate 2.2).

**History and governance**
The present structure of the state museum sector in Victoria dates back to 1983, when the organisation was established under the *Museums Act (1983)*. The various campuses and museums that comprise the present organisation, Museum Victoria, were established at different times and have been variously named. Victoria’s first museum was called the National Museum of Victoria, which opened in the Government Assay Office in La Trobe Street in 1854, displaying geological and natural science collections. It was soon to move to the University of Melbourne in 1863, before moving in 1899 to the site it occupied for the twentieth century in Swanston Street. Victoria’s Industrial and Technological Museum was established in December 1869 and was initially built around material exhibited at the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866-67 (Museum Victoria, 2001). This was later to become the Institute of Applied Science, and then the Science Museum of Victoria in 1970. The Immigration Museum was established in 1998.

The *Museums Act (1983)* amalgamated the National Museum of Victoria with the Science Museum of Victoria. It established the organisation Museum Victoria and its governing body, the Museum Board of Victoria. The Board has a maximum of eleven members appointed for a three-year term. At the time of proclamation the National Museum of Victoria’s name changed to its present name, the Melbourne Museum.

**Vision and aims**
Museum Victoria is a multi-campus museum entity—called ‘a networked organisation’ in their public statements—and as such has a well articulated corporate-level vision. Within this vision the corporate branding strategy for Museum Victoria stresses that each museum is *one of three* campuses. Consequently, information on the individual campuses in relation to missions, aims and strategies is difficult to obtain from public corporate documents. The multi-campus organisation is in a similar situation to the Queensland Museum, which adopted a six campus structure, and Western Australia, also with six campuses. With Museum Victoria each campus does have a separate
identity within the corporate brand, because each serves a different market, but it is made clear in the corporate statements that they are all part of one whole.

Museum Victoria’s Annual report 2005/2006 states that its Vision is as follows:

Museum Victoria will reach out to an increasingly diverse audience through its collections and associated knowledge, using innovative programs that engage and fascinate. We will contribute to our community’s understanding of the world and ensure that our inheritance is augmented and passed on to future generations. (Museums Board of Victoria, 2006: 5).

It is possible to extract details on how that Vision is operationalised—how each campus fits into this Vision—from corporate publications. For example, in the same publication as above it is noted that Melbourne Museum:

is a broad-based state museum with a national and international focus… [whose] exhibitions and events cover the natural and physical sciences as well as social history and cultures (Museums Board of Victoria, 2006: 36).

Within Museum Victoria’s overall strategy the Melbourne Museum has a particular role to play. Similarly, the Immigration Museum’s role is clearly defined when it is described as “a contemporary social history museum that explores issues of immigration and cultural diversity” (Museums Board of Victoria, 2006: 4). Museum Victoria’s Annual report 2005/2006 also notes that Scienceworks “is a dynamic and interactive science and technology museum” (Museums Board of Victoria, 2006: 44).

In the context of the definitions in Chapter 2, Museum Victoria positions itself as an all inclusive museum organisation, with a broader scope than, for example, either the Australian Museum or the Museum of South Australian, both of which concentrate on natural history and the natural sciences. This contrasts with the concentration of Museum Victoria’s precursor, the National Museum of Victoria, on geological and natural science collections.

**Look and feel**

*Buildings and internal spaces*
Melbourne Museum’s move into purpose built facilities in 2000 has allowed the Museum to make use of space and design to provide a modern museum experience. Areas such as the entrance foyer can be designed to situate information desks, cloak rooms and shops in a manner convenient for the visitor (Appendix C: Colour plate 2.3). Melbourne Museum’s foyer acts as a focal point for the facilities located on the level below, such as the Discovery Centre (education) (Appendix C: Colour plate 2.4), the space used for the large travelling exhibitions and the entrance to the IMAX theatre.

Considerable resources have been directed to making the permanent exhibitions state of the art. Of the case study museums, Melbourne Museum has the largest exhibition spaces and makes considerable use of current museum display practice. There are numerous contemporary exhibitions that incorporate lighting and interpretation (Appendix C: Colour plate 2.5). However, Melbourne Museum has not lost sight of the links to the original museum in the city centre. It has included a number of the original displays set within the new facilities (Appendix C: Colour plate 2.6).

Nonetheless, there is a strong sense that Melbourne Museum is an entertainment venue, and not just a museum. This is not to say that it is without research credibility or does not appear to be a ‘real’ museum, with all that implies. However, it does seem to be aimed at attracting a broader cross section of visitors than some other museums. It seems much more in tune with a particular demographic and on the surface is certainly the most ‘marketing’ oriented.

Website
Museum Victoria’s website reflects the corporate structure of the organisation. It provides links to each of its campuses as well as operating as the corporate Internet presence. It is the place where annual reports and corporate documents are available and provides considerable resources available to schools and adult learners, and the research community. Each of the separately branded campuses has its own extensive website with a focus on driving visitors to the Museum itself. There is usually Museum Victoria, and Victorian Government, branding to be seen on all the website’s pages. Significantly, while there are considerable resources on the Museum Victoria websites
generally, the specific exhibition and site information is mainly located on the campus websites. Overall, there is a seamless use of design and graphics in providing the combination of information and resources for online and actual museum visitors.

**Collateral**

Museum Victoria’s printed materials are indicative of both a significant budget and a concomitant concern with integrating communication tools and the museum’s brand and brand identity. A recent rebranding exercise (to be discussed below) has necessitated a revised suite of publications. There are brochures for exhibitions and special events at each campus, as well as a regular, seasonal corporate-level ‘What’s on’ publication that covers all the campuses. There is a considered use of outdoor advertising that consistently uses the Museum’s branding.

**Summary**

As with all the state museums, there is an emphasis on the fact the Museum is part of a state system. Certainly, the collateral all includes the Victorian government logo, and it clearly has responsibility for the state collections. However, the Melbourne Museum, in particular, does appear to position itself less as a destination for Victorians and more as a tourist destination. As was noted above, it describes itself as “a broad-based state museum with a national and international focus…” (Museums Board of Victoria, 2006: 36). It also makes much of its location in Carlton Gardens and its proximity to the Royal Exhibition Building. The Immigration Museum, another of Museum Victoria’s campuses, tells more of a Victorian story.

Considerable effort has gone into the rebranding exercise conducted by Museum Victoria, which indicates the importance the organisation attaches to the more obvious marketing strategies. Changes to the corporate visual identity are recounted as a case study in the *Annual report 2005/2006* (Museums Board of Victoria, 2006). Presented as a result of one of their strategic directions, it is stated there that:

> over the last year Museum Victoria has redeveloped its brand to position itself as a leading, vibrant and connected cultural institution (Museums Board of Victoria, 2006: 16).
Each campus has its own image within the corporate brand. This is reflected in the website, where there is a successful melding of the ‘family’ brand concept.

There is an advantage in size for Museum Victoria. It clearly does have a significant marketing budget in comparison to other state museums. But that budget still has to be strategically directed to be effective. Based on their public statements in annual reports, which regularly use marketing related terms such as ‘brand’, ‘positioning’ and ‘audience’, and the evidence that can be gathered from fieldwork visits, Museum Victoria has a strong commitment to recognising and communicating with its various audiences.

Queensland Museum

Like Museum Victoria, Queensland Museum is a multi-campus organisation. It has six campuses: the Queensland Museum South Bank in Brisbane; the Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville; the Workshops Rail Museum in Ipswich; Cobb & Co Museum in Toowoomba; the Lands, Mapping and Surveying Museum in Woolloongabba; and Woodworks: The Forestry and Timber Museum at Gympie. The Queensland Museum South Bank (Appendix C: Colour plate 3.1), the largest campus and ‘head office’ of the Queensland Museum network, is located in Grey Street, Brisbane. In 2004 the new Queensland Sciencentre (Appendix C: Colour plate 3.2) opened at the South Bank site—it had previously been located in George Street. The South Bank campus was the location for the Queensland Museum fieldwork visit.

History and governance

The original Queensland Museum was established in 1862. As was noted in Chapter 2, this was only two years after the colony had been proclaimed. The Museum was established by the Queensland Philosophical Society which itself had only been in existence for three years. The state government were involved from the first, however,
providing some financial assistance as well as rooms for the display of the collection. The government assumed control of the Museum in 1871.

The present Board of the Museum was established in 1970, with the proclamation of the Queensland Museum Act 1970. There have been two substantial amendments to the Act, the Arts Legislation Amendment Act 1977 and the Arts Legislation Amendment Act 2003.

Vision and aims

The corporate branding strategy for Queensland Museum stresses that each campus is one of six campuses. From a marketing perspective this is a sound strategy. Keller (2003) has noted that there are significant marketing advantages when a corporate brand is in place over the strategies set for individual product brands, which are in effect the individual campuses. The reasoning behind Queensland Museum’s structure is clearly expressed in its Annual report 2005-2006:

Each campus has complementary specialist collections and research expertise that encompass different aspects of Queensland’s natural and cultural heritage and cater for regional needs (Queensland Museum, 2006: 20).

Queensland Museum has a strong state-focus and prides itself on providing “a memorable, enjoyable, educational experience to all Queenslanders no matter where they live” (Queensland Museum, 2006: 20). Each campus, then, does have a separate identity, as each serves a different market, but they are all deemed part of the whole. Given that Queensland Museum is an umbrella organisation, there is a lack of information on each museum as individual organisations, in relation to missions, aims and strategies. The Queensland Museum’s Annual report 2005-2006 cited above does not mention each collection’s content, for example, except in relation to achievements and developments throughout the year (Queensland Museum, 2006).

Nonetheless, a brief ‘definition’ of the collection and, therefore, some indication of the market to which each museum campus is aimed, can be obtained from Queensland Museum’s website. For example, it says of the Queensland Museum South Bank, that:
This fascinating museum of natural history, cultural heritage, science and human achievement tells the changing story of Queensland (Queensland Museum, 2007).

As was noted previously, the Queensland Sciencentre’s move to the South Bank site has been only in recent times. This has expanded the collection base of the Queensland Museum South Bank campus. It is now the only museum campus in this study to include the science and technology aspects of a modern museum alongside the more traditional natural history, or even the more recent cultural history collections. In the states that do have a science and technology museum, these areas are organised in a separate museum: New South Wales with its Powerhouse Museum, and Victoria with the Scienceworks campus of Museum Victoria. With all its campuses taken into account Queensland Museum has considerable diversity in its collections. In relation to the definitions set out in Chapter 2, the Queensland Museum has perhaps the broadest coverage of disciplines to be found in the case study museums.

**Look and feel**

*Buildings and internal spaces*

The Queensland Museum South Bank is part of a cultural precinct (Appendix C: Colour plate 3.3), along with the Gallery of Modern Art, the Art Gallery of Queensland and the State Library of Queensland. It also adjoins the South Bank Parklands and the Performing Arts Centre and is generally part of a long strip of leisure attractions.

Like Melbourne Museum, the building is recent and purpose built. Again, the positives of this are that it has been designed with current museum practice in mind, in that it has atriums (Appendix C: Colour plate 3.4) to allow the different floors to be seen by visitors, disabled access built in, flexible exhibition spaces and purpose built storage. In addition, the building’s modern styling is used as part of the logo and other brand identity components. The negative is that the building cannot be used to reinforce any heritage facet of a brand, as is possible with, for example, the Australian Museum and the South Australian Museum.

The main visitor entrance is quite low key, perhaps due to the fact that the Museum is free. The Museum does not need a large front counter with cash handling facilities.
There is an escalator down to the Sciencentre, which has an entrance fee, and consequently larger facilities (Appendix C: Colour plate 3.2). The café seems to be an afterthought at the back of the Museum. It is run by a catering firm. It is inexpensive and mostly clean but it does not add anything to the brand of the museum and does not seem to be part of the ‘whole’.

In line with the fact the building is new, exhibits are of a contemporary nature. Lighting, signage visitor facilities and collection displays are modern and appear to be designed to appeal to the visitor. There is a strong focus on Queensland (Appendix C: Colour plate 3.5), which was noted above in relation to the Museum’s vision and aims. As is the case with all the Australian state museums, there is a large section devoted to education (Appendix C: Colour plate 3.6).

*Website*

In a similar manner to Museum Victoria, the Queensland Museum’s corporate website is the ‘front door’ to the organisation, providing corporate-level resources and an overview of the Museum’s six campuses. Again, it is also the central point for education resources. In some ways the corporate image is more tightly controlled than Museum Victoria, however, with the campus museum websites having less of their own ‘personality’. For example, links to the other campuses are part of the template for every page. As expected, there are links to the corporate organisation as well as the Queensland Government and any relevant sponsoring government body, for example, the Brisbane City Council. That said, the look and feel of all parts of the website are professional, and significant resources have been directed to address the issue of communication with its publics, including the important education market.
Collateral

As with other multi-campus museums, there are different publications for each campus. There does not appear to be a corporate-level publication covering all campuses. This may be because the Queensland Museum’s other campuses are primarily regional, and visitors to Brisbane may not necessarily travel to regional Queensland. That said, the Queensland Museum South Bank’s publications links to the corporate and state government brand identity components, and are indicative of a professional approach to marketing collateral.

Summary

The Queensland Museum has a strong corporate-level strategy that is seen in the unified manner in which its marketing is conducted. The Queensland government also plays a prominent role in the public face of the Museum—a full-colour Queensland government logo is on all business cards, for example. Other states have a similar strategy, but the Queensland case appears to be the most controlled of all. This is not to necessarily imply that such a situation is detrimental to an effective museum operation. While it is outside the scope of this thesis to consider the state politics that might be at work, it can be postulated that the strong regional focus and geographic distribution of the Queensland museum sector might necessitate this approach. The Annual report 2005-2006 certainly hints at this by referring to its service to “all Queenslanders no matter where they live” (Queensland Museum, 2006: 20). It does aim to differentiate itself from other providers of “education-based entertainment” by noting that its “authority…” is based on a long term commitment to high quality scholarship and research” (Queensland Museum, 2006: 9).

Within those parameters, the Queensland Museum is an organisation that clearly recognises its role in the community and sets about connecting to its publics in a strategic manner. There is a consistent use of the corporate identity across the marketing communication tools, and a strategic use of the corporate and campus websites to achieve organisational goals.
South Australian Museum

The South Australian Museum is situated in a cultural precinct along with the State Library of South Australia and the Art Gallery of South Australia in the centre of Adelaide. It does not have any other campuses, and in a similar manner to the Australian Museum has a combination of old and new buildings. In this case it has a more recently constructed entrance (Appendix C: Colour plate 4.1) attached to an original building (Appendix C: Colour plate 4.2). Also like the Australian Museum, it is a museum of natural history. That is, its collections concentrate on the natural sciences. The South Australian Museum does have a significant indigenous cultural heritage collection and is also prominent in anthropology generally.

History and governance

The South Australian Museum considers its history to have commenced in London with the foundation of the South Australian Literary Association in 1834. The aim of that Association was to “satisfy intellectual pursuits such as literature, arts, history and natural science” (South Australian Museum, 2004: n.p.). In 1856 an Act was proclaimed to establish an institution incorporating a public library and museum. A Board of Governors was appointed to the newly formed South Australian Institute Museum. The Institute’s purpose built accommodation was opened in 1861 and housed a library, an art gallery and a museum; the museum being situated in the northern half of the building. In 1939 legislation was passed that gave the South Australian Institute Museum autonomy from the art gallery and library. At the same time it was renamed the South Australian Museum.

In 2003 the South Australian Museum opened its Science Centre, which they claim is the:

first such centre in Australia and gives visitors a snapshot of the systems used to store specimens, ethnographic and historical material (South Australian Museum, 2007: n.p.).
The Museum is managed by the South Australian Museum Board, which is constituted under the *South Australian Museum Act, 1976-1985*. The Board has eight members and acts as a body corporate.

**Vision and aims**

The South Australian Museum sees its purpose in a similar light as the Australian Museum. That is, it is a more traditional natural history museum without the broader approach to the concept of cultural history that is inclusive of social history. It has quite a narrow collection compared to Museum Victoria’s Melbourne Museum and the Queensland Museum’s South Bank campus, for example. It is, though, well respected in its field, and is clear about its focus in its published corporate documents. The South Australian Museum Board’s *Annual report 2005-2006* states that the role of management of the Museum, as prescribed under the *South Australian Museum Act, 1976-1985*, is:

> To increase knowledge and understanding of our natural and cultural heritage: to serve the community by acquiring, preserving, interpreting and presenting to the public, material evidence concerning people and nature; and to provide opportunities for study, education and enjoyment (South Australian Museum Board, 2006: 3).

A section titled “South Australian Museum Vision’ appeared in the *Annual report 2004-2005*, and this elaborated with a Vision Statement thus:

The South Australian Museum aspires to be acknowledged as a world-class resource and centre of excellence:
- Custodian of the most significant Aboriginal collection
- Recognised for pursuing leading frontier research, development and interpretation of its collections
- Engaged with its visitors and community in presenting the natural world and its history
- A centre of education, innovation, wonder and fun.

(South Australian Museum Board, 2005: 6)

Significantly, this vision statement does not appear in the latest annual report assessed here or on the Museum’s website. Nonetheless, while the statement from the Act notes a role in relation to ‘people’, the Vision Statement emphasises the natural world, though
notably the indigenous collection is given first mention. The significance of the South Australian Museum’s indigenous collection is reinforced in a document available on the Museum’s website, where it is noted that:

Today the South Australian Museum boasts the largest Australian Aboriginal Cultures collection in the world making Adelaide the gateway to and from the Outback (South Australian Museum, 2004: n.p.).

That document also states that the Museum’s specialised knowledge is based on 150 years of research and scholarship and “contributes to the protection of… native title and indigenous family history” (South Australian Museum, 2004). This is a viable point of differentiation within the museum sector in Australia.

**Look and feel**

*Buildings and internal spaces*

The combination of old and new buildings noted above does pose some difficulties for the South Australian Museum. The entrance area is new and encloses older buildings. It would be difficult to change and leaves the area around the main entry to the galleries, museum shop and cafeteria somewhat cramped (Appendix C: Colour plate 4.3). As was the case with the Australian Museum, it is clear that the Museum has worked within the constraints of the original buildings.

The displays are a combination of museum styles. There are old-fashioned cases and dioramas from the 1970s that include stuffed animals—for example, the Australian Fauna display on Level 2 (Appendix C: Colour plate 4.4)—which are clearly in need of refurbishment (an attendant mentioned there are plans underway). There is a similar display on the Ground Level of World Mammals. In contrast, the newer exhibitions are more polished. The Australian Aboriginal Cultural Gallery is contemporary in design and very extensive. The Pacific Cultures gallery is an example of the direction the Museum appeared to be taking. There, older displays are successfully reinvigorated using current design and interpretation techniques and realigned with twenty-first century cultural sensitivities (Appendix C: Colour plate 4.5).
In general, the South Australian Museum appears to be seeking to communicate with a contemporary audience, with marketing strategies in place, albeit within resource constraints. Strategies such as establishing small retail outlets at the exit to special exhibits is indicative of this approach (Appendix C: Colour plate 4.6).

**Website**

In look and feel, the South Australian Museum’s website has not changed appreciably in the period during which it has been reviewed. It is possible that there have been changes, such as an increase in the amount of archived material now available in a digital format. However, from a design and usability perspective the website is clear and information for the prospective visitor is available. The research and archive sections are well laid out but not as extensive as other museums. There is still a visible alignment with an overall marketing focus, with the Museum branding in evidence and the use of communication tools aimed at the Museum’s public. As a natural history museum there is a strong concentration on the collection which is appropriate, as it is linked to the Museum’s positioning.

**Collateral**

Interestingly, the South Australian Museum’s annual reports are plain and factual, without any indicators of a marketing approach used by the other museums. Their annual reports do not appear to be used as marketing communication tools, except perhaps, to internal publics such as the government and the Board. Other collateral is more in keeping with a marketing approach, with brochures and museum maps available. A bi-monthly full-colour newsletter, both in hard copy and emailed to a list, is used to communicate news and events.

**Summary**

In some respects the South Australian Museum appears to have marketing strategies in place that indicate a strong marketing approach. It uses its position as a world authority on Australian indigenous peoples to its advantage. This comes across both in their printed material and on their website. It also involves itself in the Adelaide community by using its location within a cultural precinct to host events that assist in attracting
visitors to the museum building. The strength of their research, and collection base generally, is used to support the credibility of their public statements. As was noted in a past newsletter, “research… keeps us at the forefront of the national and international research community” (South Australian Museum, 2006: 2).

In other respects, though, the South Australian Museum falls behind other museums. For example, the Museum’s vision for itself is not communicated through corporate documents or public statements. In addition, the printed materials and the website are not as consistent with an overall brand identity as would be ideal. Publications, such as the annual report and the newsletter, all use what they call their ‘footprint’ logo, but other than that, there is no consistent look and feel. Similarly, signage does not appear to be sending the same message as other communication tools. While the entrance foyer and shop and café area is not ideal, it would not be easily changed, and for the most part the Museum uses the area as best it can. From a marketing perspective, that involves the provision of services to attract visitors and to meet their expectations of a museum experience. Despite shortcomings, the South Australian Museum does this on the basis of its research and collection credibility.

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Interestingly, and as was noted in Chapter 2, Tasmania’s two major museums both combine art and natural history (including cultural and human history), with both separating the fields in their names—the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. This makes the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery quite distinctive amongst the museums under discussion here. However, the fact that this museum includes art in its collections does not change its place as Tasmania’s state museum, inasmuch as it reflects the definitions set out in Chapter 2 in relation both to its state-based funding and its establishment during Australia’s colonial period. The Museum itself is housed in a series of interconnected buildings. Some, like the entrance and foyer in Davey Street (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.1), are of a relatively recent
construction, and others, such the Customs House (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.2) and the Bond Store are of historical significance in their own right.

**History and governance**

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is the second oldest museum of those being studied here, after the Australian Museum in New South Wales. It was established in Hobart by the Royal Society of Tasmania, opening to the public in 1852. The original building on the Museum’s current site in Argyle Street near Constitution Dock was opened in 1863. In 1885 the Museum became a government authority controlled by a Board of Trustees that also managed the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Interestingly, this is similar to the situation in New South Wales noted previously, where the original Committee set up to manage the Australian Museum in 1836 also managed the Botanical Gardens. An art gallery and large exhibition area was purpose-built and opened in 1901. In that same year the Custom House was built as a celebration of Australia's Federation. This building now forms part of the Museum and has been leased from the Australian Commonwealth Government since 1995, and is used as administrative offices. There are a number of other historically significant buildings on the site.

In 1950 the two institutions were separated, with two new boards set up, one each for the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (seven Trustees made up of Royal Society, state and local government appointees) and the Botanical Gardens. The Trustees took over responsibility for the West Coast Pioneers' Memorial Museum at Zeehan in 1965, under the *West Coast Memorial Museum Act 1965*. This act was repealed in 1994, but the collection is still owned by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and is on long-term loan.

**Vision and aims**

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is quite different from the other Australian state museums in many respects. The first difference is its size. The population base and the consequent resource base are smaller than that of the mainland state museums and this has necessarily shaped museum activities. The most obvious evidence of this is the
combining of an art museum and a natural history museum in the one institution. While it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the reasons behind a particular state’s museum structure, in this case it may be that the small size of the population base simply meant that the resources were not available to justify a separate art museum in the same way as occurred in the other colonies. In those colonies groups of like minded individuals gathered and formed societies to promote the establishment of art museums, just as had happened with natural history museums.

The second major difference is that there are two similar museums in Tasmania. This is a fact that needs recognition, if for no other reason than in official corporate documents the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery sees itself as occupying a certain place in the market. The following statement is from its Annual report 2003-2004:

The TMAG is Tasmania’s flagship, natural and cultural, heritage institution. It is unique in that by the very nature of its collections it is the only institution in Tasmania to encompass all aspects of natural and cultural heritage within one facility (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2004: 4).

This seems largely to be a positioning statement in relation to its intra-state competitor, which has two facilities. Interestingly, this statement does not appear in subsequent annual reports to date.

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery’s vision and mission statements are more as one would expect. That is, they simply outline where the Museum sees itself operating, and what it sees as its purpose. The following is from its Annual report 2005-2006.

**Vision**
The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery aims to provide, promote and facilitate interaction with, and understanding of, the cultural and natural world for present and future generations.

**Role**
The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery collects, preserves, researches, displays, interprets and safeguards the physical evidence of the natural and cultural heritage of Tasmania, together with relevant material from interstate and overseas. (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2006: 3)
Clearly, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has a role in the state of Tasmania akin to the other state museums studied here. However, it does concern itself with the cultural and social history as well as the natural, unlike the Australian Museum. Also, it does not have a science and technology role, as Museum Victoria’s Scienworks does. Notably, none of the statements above refer directly to the art museum role, a point of potential differentiation in the museum sector.

**Look and feel**

*Buildings and internal spaces*

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is fortunate to be housed in, for the most part, a very interesting group of old buildings. Facing the harbour in Davey Street is the particularly impressive Customs House, noted above (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.2), housing the Museum’s administration. The other side in Macquarie Street looks suitably old too, except that the modern glass entrance constructed in the 1980s looks out of place (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.1). There is also a particularly conspicuous circa 1970s building that accommodates some of the art galleries. In addition, the buildings include the original Colonial Secretary’s cottage, which has been restored but is wedged against a newer construction (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.3), and the Bond Store, which sits in the middle of the Museum. Significantly, all information about the buildings was gleaned from a receptionist at the administration building reception desk. The historical buildings, deserving of a brochure to themselves, do not form part of any brand identity strategy, and their significance appears to be only imparted by word of mouth.

As might be expected from an old museum, there are still examples of quite out of date displays (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.4). However, in some respects this is not out of step with the expectations of the public in such a traditional setting. As was illustrated by the South Australian Museum example noted above, though, it is possible to keep traditional museum displays while giving them a contemporary feel. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has begun a program of renovation, with new displays and expanded exhibits. Principal amongst the new displays is the Antarctic and Southern Oceans exhibit, which is as professional and technically up-to-date as any from the other Australian state museums (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.5).
In some ways the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery’s efforts to communicate with its audience is evident in them starting to use their buildings and space—the Bond Store now figures more largely in programs and marketing. Nonetheless, there are still problems. The main visitor entrance does not have a totally professional look and feel (Appendix C: Colour plate 5.6). There needs to be more self-help information, for example, brochures, and perhaps a touch screen directory, or an illuminated map. In fairness, much of the front area would be difficult and expensive to change.

**Website**

When the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery’s website was first reviewed in 2005 it was by far the least professional of all the case study museums. It largely consisted of very brief text descriptions and a limited number of photographs of the Museum and its collection. There were sections for education and the collection but these were underdeveloped in comparison to other state museums. There have been some changes since that time, but in general they have been in design only. Overall the website now looks more professional, but it still does not have anywhere near the resources available as other museum websites. There is little in the way of marketing communication strategies evident. It is noted on the website that a ‘redevelopment’ is underway and that access to the collections database is not presently available. However, that note has been on the website since November 2006 to the researcher’s knowledge.

**Collateral**

Like the other case study museums, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has a seasonal ‘What’s on’ publication. Apparently there are other brochures related to special events and exhibitions produced as required. However, stocks had run out at the time of the researcher’s visit to the Museum and none were available for analysis. The collateral that was available was professionally designed, but the site/exhibitions map found at the main visitor’s desk was poorly reproduced. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is also unusual amongst the case study museums in that it does not have a logo or any other recognisable brand identity components linking individual marketing devices together.
Summary
The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery faces issues not needing to be considered by any other Australian state museum. Foremost amongst these is the breadth of their collection, necessitated by its place as a combined natural and social history museum and art museum. They need to secure their place in the wider national and international museum sector with a significant scholarship and research profile across a considerable number of disciplines. This is made more difficult by the small size of the state of Tasmania, and the consequent size of the budget allocation. Also relevant is the fact there is another broad based museum in the state, though the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery does have the advantage of receiving state funding and has the perception of being ‘the’ state museum, by virtue of its location in the state capital.

Within these obvious constraints the Museum does operate successfully, with an impressive per capita visitation—it is the most visited cultural site in the state (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2006). However, it does appear to have some way to go before it could be described as exhibited a marketing orientation, with some key issues not addressed. Primary amongst these is the lack of a clear branding strategy. There is even no evidence of the most basic brand identity component, the logo. The Tasmanian government logo is present on collateral and on the website—state government branding devices are present, though, on all state museums—but there is almost the appearance of a ‘blank’ where an institutional logo might be present. The basic concept of what purpose a brand might serve does not seem to be recognised.

Linked to this issue is a failure to use the perceived advantages of location—on the docks of the Hobart harbour—or to fully utilise the historic buildings (linked to the location) in either advertising or as part of a brand position. Partly this may be the result of the fact there is little competition. All other state museums compete with either other substantial museums, other cultural institutions, or other significant leisure activities. Some of these issues are being addressed, with the relocation of much of the collection to an off-site facility to suburban Hobart, which will free up exhibition space. There is also a program of upgrades planned for the website, which presently does not do the
extensive collection justice, and serves now only to highlight how out of touch the Museum appears to be with public expectations of a modern museum experience.

Western Australian Museum

The main campus¹ of the Western Australian Museum is accommodated in James Street, Perth (Appendix C: Colour plate 6.1), and is part of a cultural precinct that includes the state library and the state art gallery. Along with the Perth campus of the Western Australian Museum there are two sites at Fremantle, the Western Australian Maritime Museum and the Fremantle History Museum. There are also three other campuses in the regional centres of Albany, Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Geraldton. In 2005 the Western Australian Museum opened a new Collections and Research Centre in Welshpool (Appendix C: Colour plate 6.2), considered as another campus on the Museum’s website (Western Australian Museum, 2007). The administration is also located at this facility. While this was the location of the interviews for the Western Australian Museum, fieldwork was undertaken at the Perth campus.

History and governance

As seems common with the Australian state museums, the Western Australian Museum has had a name change since its inception. As was illustrated in Chapter 2, the name changes reflect the fact that the state museums were originally set up by the colonial governments, whose priorities changed, firstly as their colonies grew and secondly once statehood was achieved. The Western Australian Museum was originally known as the Perth Museum at its establishment in 1891. At that time its collections were mainly biological, ethnological and geological.

In 1959 a new Herbarium was established and the Western Australian Museum’s botanical collection was transferred to that institution. The Museum retained its collection related to earth sciences and zoology. However, significantly, in the 1960s

¹ The term branch is used by the Western Australian Museum, as opposed to campus, which is used by the other Australian state museums. However, campus will be used here for the sake of consistency.
and 1970s the Western Australian Museum was charged with developing and maintaining the state’s anthropological, archaeological, maritime archaeological and social and cultural history collections.

The present structure of the state museum sector in Western Australia dates back to 1969. The Western Australian Museum is a statutory authority established under the Museum Act 1969. It is a Body Corporate with Perpetual Succession and Common Seal, and is governed by a Board of seven Trustees.

**Vision and aims**

The Western Australian Museum has a number of campuses and consequently there is a lack of information on each as individual organisations. The corporate branding strategy downplays the individual entities. As has been noted previously, Museum Victoria adopted a similar strategy with its three campuses, as does Queensland Museum with a corporate structure and six campuses. Those umbrella organisations consider each of their campuses to have an identity, as each serves a different target market, but they are all deemed part of the whole for the purposes of corporate public statements, such as mission and vision.

The over-arching vision and mission statements published in the Western Australian Museum’s *Annual report 2004-2005* offers some insight into how the Museum see itself within the local community:

**Vision**
The Western Australian Museum will equip all Western Australians to better understand themselves, their environments (natural, social and built) and their place in the world.

**Mission**
The Museum will, with the support of the Western Australian community, continue to develop informative, interesting and vital programs, to improve the generation, and communication of our knowledge and assist in building sustainable awareness and appreciation of our natural environment and cultural heritage.

(Western Australian Museum, 2005: 10)
The vision statement explicitly mentions the natural, social and built environments. As was noted above, the 1960s and 1970s saw the Western Australian Museum’s mission expanded from the natural sciences to developing and managing anthropological, archaeological, maritime archaeological and social and cultural history collections.

Interestingly, the Annual report 2005-2006 does not mention vision or mission statements. It takes a different approach and outlines a ‘statement of purpose’ that says that the Museum will “investigate, document and showcase the enormous wealth and diversity of Western Australia’s natural and social history”, and “enrich the cultural life of Western Australia” and “inspire discovery across diverse audiences” (Western Australian Museum, 2006: 8).

From the statements above it appears that the collections cover a broad range of areas, in a similar way as can be found in Museum Victoria and the Queensland Museum. However, the social and cultural history exhibits at the Perth campus concentrate on Western Australian indigenous and colonial history and so do not touch on contemporary history or a wider national history. The other campuses also have quite specific collections that do not cover more general contemporary history. Nonetheless, the concentration on the Western Australian area is a clear point of differentiation between this and other similar Australian museums.

**Look and feel**

*Buildings and internal spaces*

The buildings of the Western Australian Museum Perth campus are made up of a set of adjoining historical buildings. There are two main wings joined by a modern foyer (Appendix C: Colour plate 6.3). A door at the back of the foyer leads to the museum shop and café at the rear of the main buildings. Both these are housed in the old Perth Gaol, which was the site of the original museum. There are two A4 sheets available to the public that outline the history of the buildings.

Once again, displays are a mixture of the old and the new. The Katta Djinoong – First Peoples exhibit (Appendix C: Colour plate 6.4) is made up of interpretation and
collection and tells a very Western Australian story. It is quite expansive and has a professional look and feel, but is located in an old set of rooms (spoiled by the creaky wooden floors). As far as natural history is concerned, there are displays that utilised current technology, with concealed lighting and a contemporary feel. The exhibit Diamonds to Dinosaurs is an example (Appendix C: Colour plate 6.5). One wing appears to be the home of some of the original stuffed animals from the early versions of the museum (Appendix C: Colour plate 6.6). Interestingly, this is presented in the Museum’s publications as ‘historical’, where they have value in addition to their usefulness as museum exhibits. The fact that the exhibits are ‘old’ is used as a positive.

Overall, the Western Australian Museum has a very local feel. It makes use of the distinctive nature of the Western Australian experience to package the museum to appeal to both visitors and locals. However, it seems that the local market is more important.

Website
Like the Queensland Museum and Museum Victoria, the Western Australian Museum website reflects the multi-campus corporate structure of the institution. It provides a repository for corporate information, including annual reports, and links and information on each of its campuses. The resulting website structure appears somewhat more unwieldy than the two other multi-campus museums’ websites, with navigation not quite clear and pages looking cluttered. Though a matter of opinion, this is perhaps because the Western Australian Museum’s website is less elegant, or less contemporary, than the others. It may not have been reviewed, as far as look and feel is concerned, for some time. That said, the website seeks to communicate with the potential museum visitor, and each campus’s pages provide the necessary product information. There are resources available for the Museum’s publics, with extensive sections devoted to research.

Collateral
At the time of the fieldwork visit the Western Australian Museum did not have a publication that covered all its campuses or was a general ‘What’s on’ publication. It is...
possible that due to the regional nature of the other campuses, such a publication is not necessary, as was perhaps the case with the Queensland Museum. The brochures available at the Perth campus are a map and site description publication and another on a special exhibition. Interestingly, the logo of the Museum does not appear on the front of the main brochure, nor on the annual reports.

Summary
The Western Australian Museum has many positives in its approach to marketing as evidenced by the data viewed here. It appears to have an unambiguous role as the custodian of Western Australian natural and cultural history. This might seem at first glance to be too narrow a focus for a large cultural and tourist destination. However, the Western Australian Museum does use its local focus to advantage. The regional museums all support this corporate strategy, being firmly linked in their location. The difficulty, of course, is to ensure that the ‘outposts’ follow the central, corporate direction. For marketing this is particularly difficult in such a large state, and with a relatively small staff and budget. The Western Australian Museum has only recently moved to a central marketing function—formerly each campus was responsible for its own marketing—and this will take some time to stabilise.

While the overall look and feel of the collateral, website and annual reports is professional, there are some issues worth mentioning. The first is the logo, that appears to be very old-fashioned and not representative of the Western Australian Museum. It is also not used consistently. The logo is part of a wider issue related to how the Western Australian Museum connects its campuses under a family brand. The approach taken by both Museum Victoria and the Queensland Museum are more coherent in this respect, following common strategies found in the for profit business world. These issues should be part of an overall branding strategy. The Western Australian Museum does have a strong local focus, and relative advantages in relation to its research and collection both within the state and nationally, but currently fails to communicate these through a unified and audience-based branding strategy.
Summary analysis

It has been stated throughout this thesis that Australian state museums have not been immune to the pressures exerted by the economic and social changes seen throughout the world, particularly over the last half of the twentieth century and on into the twenty-first. Also true, though, is the fact that the Australian museum sector has developed in somewhat of a different way than has been evident in other parts of the Western world. Primary amongst these differences is the colonial beginnings of each state museum. In contrast to museums in the United States, Britain and Western Europe, Australian colonial museums began life as public institutions with funding primarily derived from government. All were brought under government control through state legislation quite early in their existence. For instance, the Australian Museum was formally constituted by the *Australian Museum Act 1853*, some twenty six years after it was established, and the Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery became a government authority in 1885, thirty years after its establishment. However, as was stated in Chapter 2, the colonies largely developed independently, with loyalties to the local community first, and then to England second. In the areas of politics and public policy there was a distinct lack of inter-state co-operation and quite a deal of rivalry. For the museum sector this meant that at the time of Federation each of the six Australian colonies had a separate museum system. It is clear, then, that while Australia has been subject to global influences, just as other national museum systems have, it is not certain that it has been subject to the same forces in the same measure, or importantly, has exhibited the same responses. This is certainly an issue in relation to the differences noticeable between the structures, and the similarities of the collections, of each state museum.

Firstly, in relation to the structure of each state’s museum system it is apparent that two models have developed. The first is where the structure and governance from the original colonial museum has been more or less retained into the present day. With some revisions to collection direction and policy, the general shape of the museum is the same as it was. The Australian Museum, the South Australian Museum and the Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery are included in this model. The Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery is different to the other two, in that it has always incorporated art into
its collection, and latterly social history, with the Australian Museum and the South Australian Museum being traditional natural history museums. Generally, though, the conclusion that can be drawn is that in these cases the discipline or subject areas that are now part of other multi-faceted museums were taken on by other organisations. From a marketing perspective these three museums could be said to have remained true to their core competencies, or their original focus. Perhaps, though, the reasons may have less to do with marketing strategies, and more to do with politics.

However, as was noted above, it is outside the aims of this research to investigate the reasons behind the formation of each state’s museum structure. In the case of Tasmania, and to a lesser extent South Australia, it could be said that they simply have never had the population base to support a large multi-campus, multi-discipline museum system. That argument does not appear valid for New South Wales, however, which is Australia’s most populous state and has a state museum that has the narrowest collection breadth.

The second model evident in the Australian state museum system is the multi-campus corporate umbrella system seen with Museum Victoria, Queensland Museum and the Western Australian Museum. One possible reason for the development of this second model is the strong regional flavour of those states’ demographics. In the case of Queensland and Western Australia the other museum campuses under the corporate umbrella tend to be in regional locations: the Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville, and the Kalgoorlie-Boulder campus of the Western Australian Museum are examples. Both these states are relatively large, and both have a strong state focus in their vision and aims. The argument falls down in relation to Victoria. There the campuses of Museum Victoria are all in the greater Melbourne area, and there are museums of note in the regional cities of Bendigo and Ballarat not part of the state system.

The point here is, perhaps, that even though a distinction can be made between single and multi-campus museum systems, there is little homogeneity within each model. There is a similar difficulty in relation to museum collections. That is, there does not
appear to be any consistency in approach that can be easily explained. The multi-campus museums tend to include social and cultural history. They also can include regional or local industry and community collections, but that is not the case in Victoria. Queensland and Victoria include a science component, but Western Australia does not. In New South Wales science is covered by the Powerhouse Museum. In addition, the multi-campus museums do not ignore the traditional museum areas that is the core of the single campus museums—they all still cover the natural history disciplines. Significantly, a well-regarded, and long standing, research profile in the natural sciences is used by all the state museums as part of whatever brand strategy they have in place. The credibility of the state museums is built on this research profile, regardless of the nature of any other subjects their collection might cover. It certainly supports their place as education providers, and seems to be at the heart of what it means to be a state museum in Australia.

As a consequence, though, all the state museums have some difficulty in differentiating themselves from each other. The Western Australian Museum, the Queensland Museum and the South Australian Museum have a strong state focus that comes out in their public statements. South Australia stresses its indigenous collection—being a world renowned centre for Aboriginal cultural heritage is a source of pride for the staff. The Australian Museum has an international reputation in the natural sciences. Museum Victoria’s Melbourne Museum is positioned as a tourist destination of national significance, and seeks to attract a wide audience. All the museums, except the Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery, use their location and buildings in some way as part of a marketing strategy. They all occupy a prime location, by virtue of their colonial roots. The colonial museums were located in the centre of the capitals, along with the library and the art gallery. Even the Melbourne Museum has subsequently not moved far from the centre of the city.

How successfully each museum has taken advantage of its location and its buildings and the relative distinctiveness of its collection as regards marketing strategy can be at least partially seen from its marketing collateral, public statements and its website. It was noted in Chapter 3 that the role of marketing within the case museums has
undergone an evolutionary process, with museums now accepting marketing as a means of achieving organisational objectives. Marketing has become more central to museum management, though it still does not necessarily play a strategic role in all museums. (The strategic role of marketing in the case museums will be discussed further in Chapter 7.) The rise of the marketing concept can be seen in the attention museums now give to marketing communication—marketing is seen as a tool for ‘reaching’ the public. Consequently, all the museums do make some attempt at communicating their strengths to their prospective audience.

As regards collateral, printed material and websites as communication devices, Museum Victoria has the most comprehensive and consistent approach. Being the largest museum, with perhaps the largest budget, may be relevant. Even so, Museum Victoria still appears to have the most coherent marketing strategies. As noted in the previous Museum Victoria section, they exhibit a strong commitment to recognising and communicating to their various publics. This is evidenced in their suite of publications and interlinked corporate and campus-specific websites. Such an approach can also be seen with the Queensland Museum. There is a distinction between each campus, and the role of the corporate entity is clear. Publications, again, are focussed and attention to communicating to specific audiences is apparent. Both these museums are large and have multiple campuses. This places an extra burden on marketing, with coherence and consistency between campuses and the corporate umbrella organisation required.

Western Australia is less effective in this regard, with a somewhat disjointed approach to its collateral. This is not necessarily a reflection of the multi-campus structure of the museum. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is a single campus museum, and also does not exhibit a consistent approach to its marketing communications. In contrast, the Australian Museum has one of the most directed approaches to its marketing of all the case museums, regardless of size. It exhibits a clear marketing emphasis and a recognition of its relative strengths in the marketplace.

Also discernible from these secondary sources, and the fieldwork visits (including the sighting of external signage and any external advertising encountered), is each museum’s brand and brand identity strategies. As stated in Chapter 4, branding
encompasses the associations that come to mind when consumers think about a product, and all contact instances that they might have with a brand (Keller, 2003). While it does appear that the concept of branding is only embryonic in the museum sector, just as marketing has taken time to become accepted, all the case study museums were either in the process of, planning to, or have recently completed, a rebranding exercise. Museum Victoria appeared to have given the concept of brand the most thought, with an extensive process of brand health evaluation, staff consultation and, subsequently, various rebranding options being canvassed. Despite the tendency for brand to be confused with logo (Wheeler, 2006), there is a general understanding of the importance of brand amongst most of the case museums, and in fact what the concept of a brand means. (This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.) As far as their collateral and public statements are concerned, however, the Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery was perhaps the least concerned with brand and brand identity. It did not have a logo, which can be seen as a significant visual clue upon which consumers make a decision regarding a brand (Henderson & Cote, 1998). Further, and as mentioned previously, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery also did not appear to have considered its location or historical buildings as part of a positioning statement. Interestingly, they did use banners and signage to communicate with passers by, as did all other museums. The use of outdoor advertising, though, is a relatively inexpensive advertising tool.

The final issue to address in this summary analysis is the apparent part the website plays in each museum’s marketing strategies, and what similarities and differences in approach there might be. As was pointed out in Chapter 4, there is a significant use of the Internet by museums. It is, however, for what could be called corporate, educational, informational or curatorial objectives. Overall, there doesn’t appear to be an explicit use of the Web for marketing purposes. It should be noted, though, that when museums use their website to communicate their mission or vision, it is a ‘marketing’ use. All the case museums used their website in this way, though South Australia’s use was limited. Similarly, using their website to provide access to corporate documents, such as annual reports, financial statements or strategic plans is making use of the medium to communicate to a public. As is the case in the private sector, all museums have such information available. Indeed, some made available a considerable amount of
information. This may be because, as government organisations, they are now more aware of the transparency required in such matters.

There is also a trend to make resources available through museum websites for schools, researchers and the general public, particularly in the natural science areas. Again, all the museums used their websites in this way. Perhaps the issue is that the Australian state museums do not necessarily understand the marketing role their website is playing when it delivers content to its various publics, and therefore do not use it strategically. Nonetheless, it appears that some museums have gone past the idea that their website’s main role is simply to provide opening hours and directions to visit the museum’s physical facilities. The concept of a ‘virtual visitor’ is gaining some credence. That is, museums are beginning to conceive of the visitor to their website as being just as important as the visitor to its buildings. With museums that charge an entrance fee this is problematic. The question of cost is pertinent, inasmuch as entrance fees might go some way towards covering the cost of the physical visitor. The Australian Museum has significant virtual visitation numbers and is fee charging, but has no real way of making those virtual visitors contribute to the cost of their visit, other than perhaps to entice more virtual visitors to purchase museum products online.

The important point to make here is that the idea of a virtual visitor results in the museum using their website to do more than communicate. That is, there is a strategic use of the medium to connect to the visitor, providing them with services, content or information specific to their needs. In some respects the museums using their websites to connect with a research community are doing this, but that is only one public, and perhaps not the public that could directly contribute funds to cover the website costs.

Again, though, there is some relationship between the size of the museum and the level of involvement with the concept of the virtual visitor. Both the Museum Victoria and Queensland Museum websites exhibited signs of connecting to their online visitor in a more in-depth manner, going further than supplying information, no matter how detailed. However, the Australian Museum also appeared to consider their online visitors as more than seekers of information. Both the Western Australian Museum and
South Australian Museum did not appear to use their websites to any great extent as a marketing tool, though both did have extensive access to their research and collections and had resources for teachers. Of all the museums, the Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery made the least use of their website generally.

From this analysis there does not seem to be any noticeable feature that might determine the behaviour of a particular museum in relation to how it uses its website, or indeed, any other aspect of its marketing tools. There are considerable differences between the case study museums, in structure (multi-campus versus single), in the nature of their collection (natural history only, natural history plus social history, or both in addition to science), or how they might have responded to their circumstances. There are many similarities as well. These relate to the features of the museums noted in Chapter 3, such as their role as the not for profit, pre-eminent cultural institution in their respective state. All have been subject to the pressures of reduced funding and the requirements to be more business-like (requiring strategic plans and marketing plans). The external environment has affected them in the same way. However, using the secondary data here, there is nothing to explain their level of involvement in the marketing concept—each of the case museums has developed in their own way within their own state. Therefore, each museum can be seen as an individual entity, but simultaneously, as part of the wider museum system.

**Conclusion**

In the first instance this chapter has sought to provide an overview of the case study museums. The aim of this was to set the scene for the following findings and discussion chapter, Chapter 7. There is a considerable amount of secondary information available on public institutions such as museums. For example, the recognition that there needs to be transparent processes and free access to information has meant that government websites are significant sources of data. In addition, the researcher gathered as much marketing collateral, promotional materials and annual reports as was available. Immersion in the case is vital to explore fully the phenomenon and to triangulate with data collected through interviews that will form the basis of Chapter 7.
The sections on each museum considered three distinct but interrelated aspects of their makeup. The history and governance sub-section placed each museum in an historical context, allowing some insight into how this context might have a bearing on their present shape. A sub-section on vision and aims sought to tease out any clues as to the museum’s strategies in relation to its place in the market: how it sees its roles, and importantly, what it communicates to its publics in this respect. The was followed by a sub-section on the look and feel of the museums, considering their buildings, exhibitions, publication and websites. These are the facets of the state museums that could be seen as explicit ‘proof’ of any marketing or branding strategies. Each museum’s section concluded with a section that summarised the researcher’s assessment.

This, then, was the basis for the second aim of this chapter, to provide an assessment of the Australian state museums’ position in relation to the significance of marketing and shed some light on any similarities and differences between each museum. The last section of the chapter provided a summary analysis that aimed to synthesise the analysis of each museum. It was seen that there do not appear to be any common themes amongst the museums that determines their responses to the external forces they have all experienced. That is, the differences between their organisational structures and the similarities in their collections, based on their colonial history, does not explain their behaviours in relation to their marketing strategies, nor their use of electronic marketing in the form of a website. Each museum appears to have developed separately, though perhaps with common external pressures. The secondary data presented here clearly show that the state museums, with some variation, have embraced the marketing concept. Similarly, they all appear to have incorporated a website into their marketing communication toolkit. However, there is little evidence of a widespread move to use their websites explicitly to connect to the virtual museum visitor, arguably the next development in the museum marketplace.