A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations at Naracoorte Caves National Park, South Australia

by

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Declaration

I certify that this work does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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Abstract

The aims of this research project were to observe various aspects regarding visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park (NCNP). These included identifying the demographics of visitors; establishing and analysing their key motivations; determining where background information on the attraction is obtained from prior to visiting; and ascertaining whether social media plays a significant role in the background information collection process.

Utilising a mixed methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected over the Easter period in April 2017. Respondents were randomly selected to participate in either a structured questionnaire or a semi-structured interview with the primary researcher. Once the data was collected, the qualitative data was analysed through a process of coding. The quantitative data was entered into a database and further interpreted into graphs.

The findings revealed that most visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park are domestic visitors on a holiday. 94.5% of the respondents were Australian citizens visiting with family or a partner. The average age is 40.21 and 60% of visitors are female. Other major markets include the UK, India, Germany and China which represents the major market profile of international visitors to South Australia.

The most common motivations for visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park are geological aspects; enjoying free time; getting pleasure from adventure; satisfying curiosity; and experiencing cave tourism. The least common motivations are shopping for souvenirs; showing off experience of a cave tour; relief from everyday stress; seeking novelty; and socialising with friends interested in cave tourism. Visitors retrieved information mostly through Internet searches, word of mouth, brochures, social media, past experiences and signs, before visiting NCNP.

Overall, some key observations included the small number of respondents agreeing that stress relief was a major motivator for their visitation, despite previous studies stating this as a common motivator. Whilst a significant number of participants did not state seeking novelty was a main motivator, other motivations related to novelty such as satisfying curiosity were

chosen. Studies have shown social media as a key information source for visitors, however, this study yielded conflicting results. Only 2% of respondents stated they used social media to find out more about Naracoorte Caves and almost half of all respondents (49%) agreed that the UNESCO World Heritage Listing was an important aspect in attracting visitors to the site.

The main motivations are consistent with previous literature based on nature-based and cave tourism motivations which focus on natural aspects, experiencing something different and enjoying free time. It is important that marketing of the site is focused on sources such as the Internet to provide potential tourists with important information and to further entice those contemplating visiting NCNP.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Naracoorte Caves National Park (NCNP) is an important asset to South Australia's tourism industry. As the state's only UNESCO World Heritage Listed Site, the attraction possesses significant potential in attracting domestic and international visitors. The attraction offers an insight into South Australia's natural and cultural history unlike any other site in the state. The significant palaeontological findings located at NCNP showcase the development of local flora and fauna spanning at least 500,000 years (Naracoorte Caves National Park, 2014).

The annual number of visitors to the NCNP has increased over previous years (Naracoorte Herald, 2014). However, the site is yet to fully identify who the most common visitors are and what specifically motivates them to choose NCNP as their chosen travel destination. Furthermore, site management currently conducts no research on how potential visitors collect information about the attraction prior to visiting.

These insights are important for strengthening the potential to successfully cater for current tourists. They may also increase opportunities to improve the ways in which NCNP promote and attract tourists to the caves and the surrounding area. By identifying the aspects previously mentioned, this research will further assist the park in creating and implementing a strategy to develop the site as a successful and prominent tourism destination.

1.2 Tourism in South Australia

South Australia is home to an array of tourist attractions including numerous locations in Adelaide, Kanagaroo Island, the Riverlands, and the famous wine regions of Barossa Valley and the Adelaide Hills (Yap, 2010). South Australia was named Lonely Planet's fifth best region in the world in 2017 for its exceptional beaches, festivals, food and wine (Noble, 2016). The state was the only location in Australia to be recognised by the global travel authority (Crouch, 2016). The tourism industry in South Australia has experienced significant growth over the years, attracting tourists to the state's festivals, food and wine regions and nature-based tourism destinations. International tourist numbers have risen from 378,000

in 2013 to 435 in 2017 (Refer Table 1). According to South Australia's Tourism Minister, Leon Bignell, the visitor economy injects $6.3 million into the state (Griffiths, 2017a). The revenue stimulated by domestic and international visitors assists with the state's tourism growth, which includes improvements to tourism businesses, infrastructure and resources. While the South Australian tourism industry predominantly draws interstate and intrastate visitors to its attractions, international tourists are contributing significantly to the influx of tourist numbers. International visits, particularly from Asia, are increasing and therefore, contributing higher figures to the state's economy (Refer Table 1). International visitors now contribute a record amount of $1 billion into the state economy (Griffiths, 2017a). Tourism Australia discovered a 50% increase in Chinese visitors to South Australia, with the average Chinese tourist spending 160% more than the overall average of all tourists to the state (Griffiths, 2017b). With constant growth being recorded, there are many positive outlooks in the South Australian tourism industry. As any destination, there are still several aspects that need to be addressed to ensure the South Australian tourism industry can maximise its full potential. Tourism development gaps between urban and regional attractions is just one issue South Australia faces along with several other issues which will be discussed. Consequently, as more tourists choose to visit the state, certain issues within the industry must be addressed to enhance the tourist experience.

Tourism is considered a 'super-growth' sector in South Australia with benefits to the state arising from quickly expanding economies in Asia (Keen, 2015a). In mid-2016, the state saw an annual increase of 7.6% in the number of international visitors, which accounted for a 40% boost to the South Australian economy (Rebellato, 2016). The state has also experienced an increase of international visitors over the past five years (Refer Table 1).

Table 1 International Visitor Numbers to South Australia

Year Ending September	International Visitor Numbers
2013	378,000
2014	373,000
2015	392,000
2016	422,000
2017	435,000

(South Australian Tourism Commission, 2017b; Keen, 2015b; Regional Development Australia, 2017)

Up to the year ending September 2016, South Australia saw a 19% increase in visitor expenditure (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). It is estimated that the total visitor economy in South Australia is now worth $6.2 billion, which is an $800 million increase from the previous year (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016c). The state additionally performed better than the nation's 12% increase in tourist expenditure (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). The tourism industry in South Australia continues to grow due to a record cruise ship season, new direct flights with Qatar and China Southern and the World Routes aviation trade event taking place in 2019 (Crouch, 2016). Therefore, it is evident that tourism is an important growing sector for the South Australian economy.

Domestic tourism has seen positive trends with almost 23 million overnight trips from interstate and intrastate travellers combined (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). Domestic tourist expenditure in South Australia equates to over $5 million which is a 14% increase from 2015 (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). Furthermore, this number is substantially higher than figures such as 3.8% expenditure increase in Queensland and an even lower increase of 1.3% in New South Wales (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a).

International visitation in South Australia accounts for 6% of Australia's total international visitor number of just over 8 million (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016b; Tourism Australia, 2017). International visitors contributed $970 million to the South Australian tourism industry in 2016 which represents an 7% increase from the previous year (South

Australian Tourism Commission, 2016b). The figure rose to $1 billion for the very first time in 2017 (Griffiths, 2017a). Therefore, a strong link exists between the importance and benefit of tourism to the South Australian economy, consequently supporting the statement that tourism is a 'super-growth' sector.

The state's top international visitors are primarily from traditionally large supplier markets such as the UK, the US, New Zealand as well as Western European countries such as Germany (Novak, 2013). An increasing number of visitors are now arriving from Asian countries such as China, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). While domestic visitors predominantly visit South Australia for visiting friends and relatives (VFR), the international market visits the state for holiday and leisure (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). Inbound market growth forecasts are strong, therefore, a focus on international markets should be prioritised (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016b). The most significant international markets are the UK, China, USA, New Zealand and Germany, all of which have shown visitor number growth to some extent throughout recent years (Refer Table 2).

Table 1 Largest International Visitor Markets 2016-2017
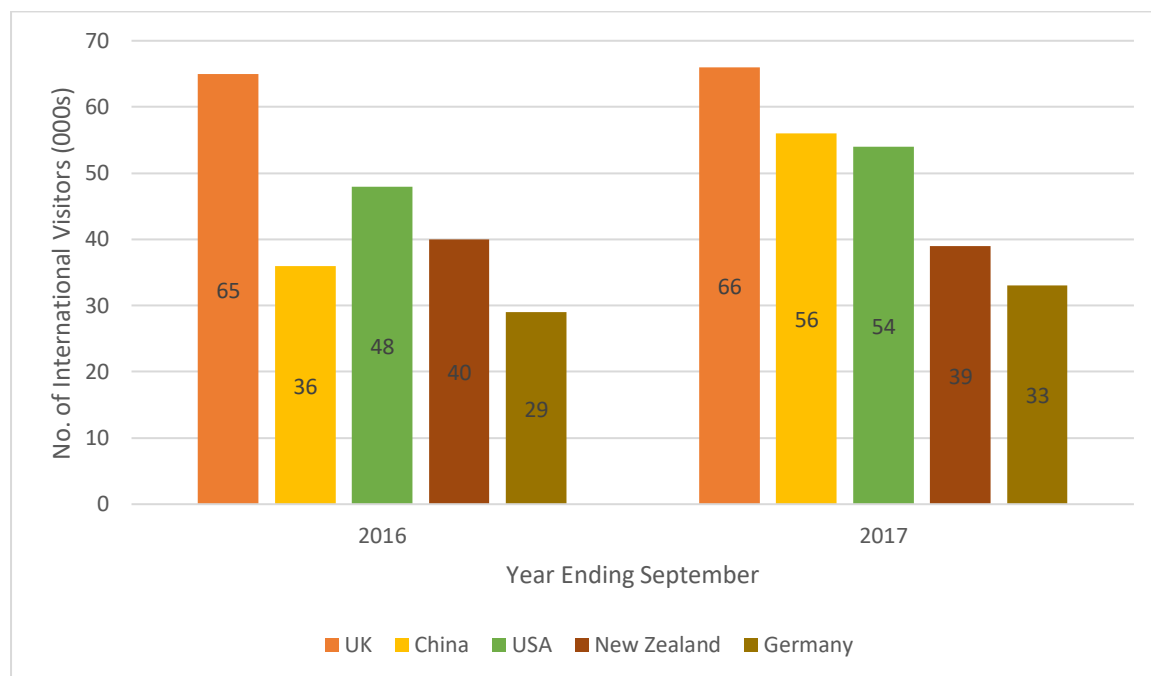
(South Australian Tourism Commission, 2017b)

China has been a key market for tourism in recent years as the Chinese economy and middle classes continue to grow. For many citizens of China, travel is considered a commodity rather than a luxury (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016b). The state has implemented signage made specifically for Mandarin speaking visitors and the introduction of direct flights with China Southern Airlines which brings $195,178 of visitor spend per flight (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2017a). South Australia is attractive to Chinese tourists because of four main points, those being natural settings, food, wine and wildlife (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016b). Average Chinese visitors travel as a couple and are aged 35-54 years old, are experienced travellers, travel in quality customized groups or are students and associated VFR (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016b). China is a key market to the South Australian tourism industry and economy as they contribute $240 million to the state's economy with only 38,000 visitors, showcasing their higher than average spending habits when travelling (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). Furthermore, estimations forecasted that by 2020, South Australia could attract 57,000 Chinese visitors, injecting an estimated figure of $450 million into the economy (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016b). Recent figures show that already, Chinese tourist numbers to South Australia have risen to 56,000 in 2017, totalling a contribution of $352 million to the economy (Griffiths, 2017b). Evidently, Chinese visitors play a key role in South Australia's tourism industry.

Despite growing numbers and successful trends emerging in the South Australian tourism industry, there are several challenges that must also be addressed. Firstly, many interstate and international visitors associate South Australia with wine (Keen, 2015a). While this is a positive for the food and wine industry, the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) director of marketing and communications, Emma Nicholls, suggests raising awareness of South Australia's broad range of features and attractions (Keen, 2015a). The large variety of tourist attractions and activities in South Australia are often overlooked and in doing so, does not invest in the full potential of the state's tourism industry. It is therefore important for the state to continuously raise awareness of South Australia's reputable wines whilst also promoting its cultural and nature-based aspects.

In addition, tourism growth is highly concentrated on the Adelaide region with redevelopments such as the Adelaide Oval and plans for several world-renowned hotels to

be built (Keen, 2015a). Whilst these advances are beneficial to the state and the CBD, it widens a gap between tourism development in the city and in regional areas. If this gap continues to grow, it could become a detrimental issue for regional communities and businesses that rely on tourism.

Tourism has seen many changes in the state and has recorded continuous growth over recent years. Interstate and intrastate provide a steady stream of visitors, and international visitors are showing more interest in what South Australia offers as a tourist attraction, in turn increasing visitation from countries in Europe such as Germany and the UK and in particular, Asian countries including China and Singapore. As the industry grows, so too does the economy and tourism infrastructure. The state is working towards catering for its Chinese visitors who spend more than any other visitor demographic and whose numbers are increasing significantly. While there has been a substantial amount of growth, the state must work towards showcasing the fact that there is a lot more to South Australia than wine tourism activities. In addition, regional tourism should also be a focus to ensure that tourism development is not solely for urban areas such as the city of Adelaide.

After receiving accolades from both Lonely Planet and UNESCO, it is clear that South Australia holds significant potential as a tourist destination and if planned correctly, could experience more growth in the years to come.

1.3 Research Setting

NCNP is located along the Limestone Coast of South Australia. Whilst 90% of international visitors to South Australia spend time in Adelaide, the Limestone Coast is the second most visited region with 46,000 international tourists visiting each year (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a). This equates to 11% of total international visitors to the state (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016a; South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016e). The region is home to several features which can be summarised as the '5Cs': Coonawarra wine region, caves, Coorong (traditional lands of the Ngarrindjeri people), coast, and craters (extinct volcanoes located in the region) (James & Wild, 2008).

NCNP consists of 26 caves and is the state's only UNESCO World Heritage Site (James, Clark & James, 2005). With an area of more than 300 hectares, the limestone caves are not only

aesthetically captivating, but also hold important paleontological discoveries such as fossils, which contribute to the understanding of the location's past climatic and ecological conditions (Weiler & Black, 2003). NCNP was first inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994 primarily due to the significant importance of the fossils found at the site (Hunter, 2014; Naracoorte Caves National Park, 2014). Research into geological, paleontological, biological, environmental and climatic information at the site has been ongoing for over 50 years and has contributed to the understanding of the phases of South Australia's geological formation and past climatic changes (South Australian Heritage Council, 2016). The official website of the NCNP states that 'the caves have acted as pitfall traps and owl roosting sites, collecting animals for at least 500,000 years. The Caves preserve the most complete fossil record there is for this period of time, spanning numerous ice ages, the arrival of the first homo sapiens in the area and the extinction of Australia's iconic Megafauna, roughly 60,000 years ago (Naracoorte Caves National Park, 2014). The park now includes a visitor centre to accommodate visitors with interpretation services that covers the site's geological formations and vegetation (Kim, Kim & Guo, 2008). The visitor centre, known as the Wonambi Fossil Centre, provides information services, tour booking services and is home to an animatronics display of the native Australian animals whose fossils were found at the Naracoorte Caves.

Discovered in 1845, NCNP has been at the forefront of nature-based tourism and in particular, cave tourism, in South Australia (South Australian Heritage Council, 2016). The caves hold an important aspect of Australia's geological history, which is one of the primary reasons that initiated interest and visitation to the site (James, et al., 2005). In 1885, William Reddan was appointed as cave manager where he began to improve the caves for possible tourists, created gardens, and began formal and regular tours before finding significant fossil beds at the Alexandra and Victoria Caves in 1900 (South Australian Heritage Council, 2016). These findings led to the site's eventual inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994, for the caves' 'outstanding natural universal values exemplifying major stages of the earth's evolutionary history and significant ongoing ecological and biological evolution' (James & Wild, 2008, p. 203). Visitors are drawn to the beauty and wonder of the caves and often show interest in the large bat colonies of Blanche Cave, Bat Cave, Wet Cave, Cathedral Cave and Robertson's cave (South Australia Heritage Council, 2016). Wet Cave can be accessed by booking a self-guided tour where visitors can guide themselves through the

site using the available interpretive materials. The other caves can be explored with the expertise of experienced guides. These tours provide extensive and engaging information on the geological, historical, paleontological and cultural aspects of the caves. Furthermore, there are various cave tours available for novice and expert cave adventurers. Evidently, there are numerous tours to cater for a variety of visitors to the site. Since the inscription onto the UNESCO World Heritage List, there have been various improvements and upgrades to the national park to better facilitate visitors.

The Limestone Coast now sees approximately 550,000 international and domestic visitors per annum who stimulate $292 million worth of visitor expenditure each year (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2016d). Furthermore, it is estimated that the full potential of expenditure in the region could reach $457 million by the year 2020 (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2015b). As only 8% of visitors to the region are international, ample statistics apply only to domestic tourists. The latest study shows that 17% of domestic visitors to the Limestone Coast partake in visits to the local national parks (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2015). NCNP is popular amongst visitors for its guided and self-guided walks and adventure caving tours, and in 2014, Tourism Minister, Leon Bignell stated that the caves welcomed more than 62,000 visitors within a year (Hunter, 2014). In 2014, the caves saw a record high of 7415 tourists visiting in the month of December (The Naracoorte Herald, 2014). The caves saw a significant number of visitors coming from South Australia, Victoria and overseas (The Naracoorte Herald, 2014). In addition to growing numbers, Naracoorte Caves National Park is internationally renowned for its responsible tourism operations and technology, attracting the Oman Ministry of Tourism Cabinet to witness the operations on their visit to the region (Lodiong, 2016).

NCNP holds substantial historical and heritage significance not only to the region, but to Australia and the rest of the world. Visitor numbers have shown a clear increase in recent years, therefore, this regional tourist attraction has much potential to stimulate more visitation and economic growth to the area.

Figure 1 Map of Naracoorte Caves National Park
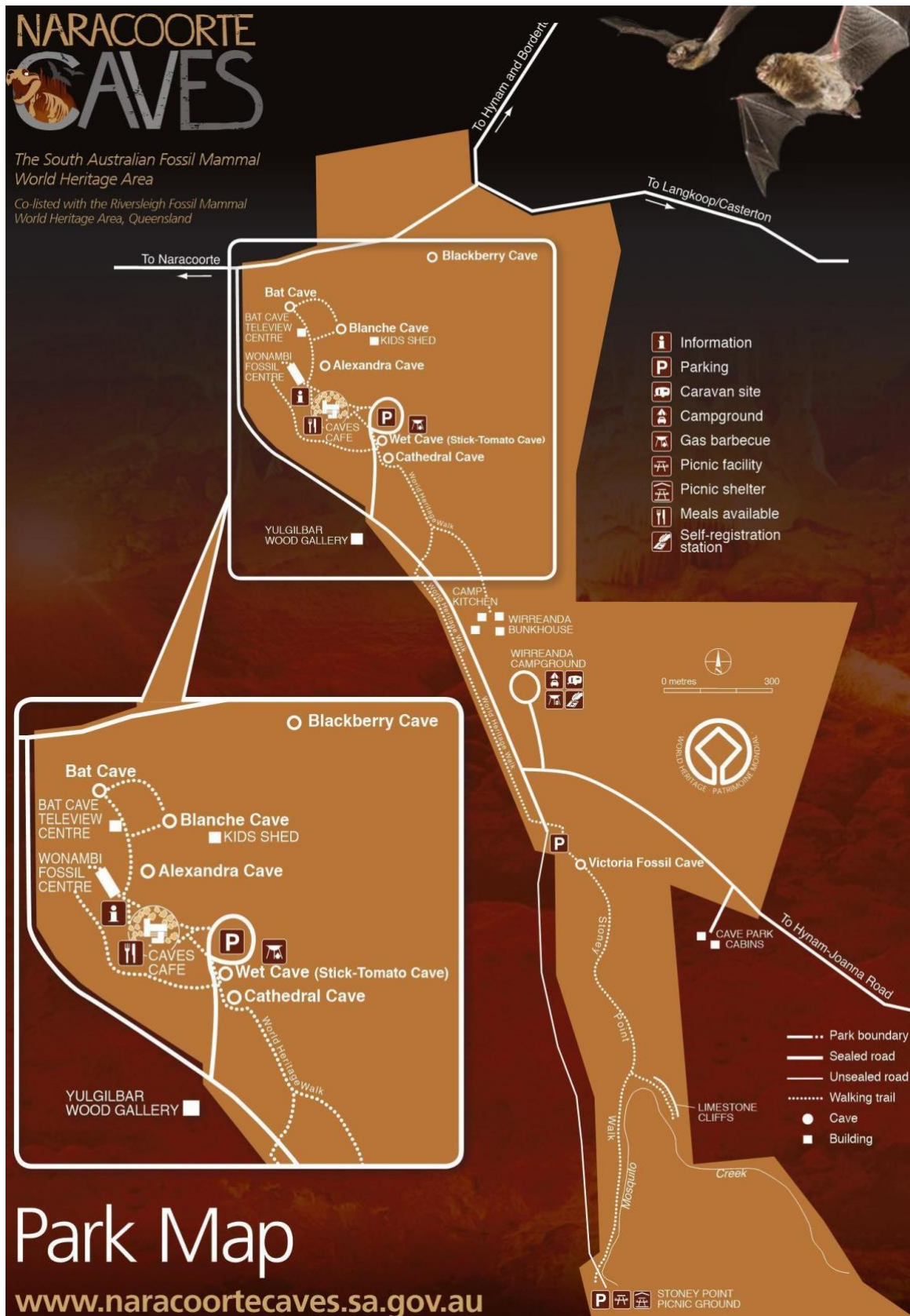
(Government of South Australia: Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, 2013)

1.4 Research Question

As tourism research at Naracoorte Caves is still in its infancy, several questions should be addressed regarding visitor demographics and motivations. The research questions for this study are as follows:

Main Research Question:

1. What are the key demographics of visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park and what are their key motivations for visitation?

Sub-research Questions:

1. Does the UNESCO World Heritage Listing encourage potential tourists to visit Naracoorte Caves National Park?

2. Where do visitors search for background information, prior to visitation of the site?

3. To what extent is social media an important vehicle for attracting visitors?

1.5 Report Synopsis

Following this chapter, a review of relevant literature will be undertaken on natural heritage and UNESCO World Heritage Listed site trends, along with the characteristics of nature-based tourism and the demographics and motivations of nature-based tourists. Finally, the literature review will provide an insight into the background information collection habits of tourists prior to visiting a site and the role of social media in this information search. The methodology section will then follow where the research methods and methodological approach of this project will be justified. The following chapters will provide an insight and analysis into the findings retrieved from the data collection phase along with an in-depth discussion of these results. The final chapter will look at some possible recommendations for both future research and for future tourism development at Naracoorte Caves National Park.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will provide an overview and evaluation of existing literature that relates to the topics that are researched throughout this thesis. Firstly, nature-based tourism and specifically nature-based tourists will be looked at. This section will include the demographics and motivations of visitors that have been identified in previous studies. The second section will look at the trends of natural heritage tourism and the trends of visiting UNESCO World Heritage Listed Sites. Finally, the last section will investigate the background information collection habits of tourists prior to visiting their chosen destination. In addition, this section will also look at the use of social media platforms throughout the background information collection stage. This thesis has been written to apply the following literature to a South Australian context, to identify any gaps in the current literature, and to further develop NCNP.

2.2 Natural Heritage and UNESCO Site Trends

2.2.1 Natural Heritage

Natural and cultural heritage are considered as important values for humankind on a global scale (Conradin, Engesser & Wiesmann, 2014). In 1972, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was approved by the General Conference of UNESCO and was implemented in 1977, currently it is endorsed in 187 countries (Cuccia, Guccio & Rizzo, 2016). Since 1972, World Heritage inscriptions have been increasing rapidly (Ribaudo & Figini, 2017), and as of June 2016, there are 229 Natural World Heritage sites, equating to approximately 279 million hectares of protected land (Becken & Wardle, 20117). Heritage classifications can be divided into three major groups: natural, cultural and mixed (both natural and cultural) (Yang, et al., 2010). The main objective of a World Heritage site is to preserve its important tangible and intangible attributes for future generations to enjoy (Cuccia, Guccio & Rizzo, 2016; Ribaudo & Figini, 2017). These sites are deemed as of outstanding value to humanity by UNESCO (Yang, et al., 2010). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) divide the definition of natural heritage into three parts: natural features, special formations and areas and natural sites (UNESCO, 1972, p. 5). Natural heritage tourism can be seen as an

umbrella concept and is defined as a type of tourism that enhances or sustains the geographical character of a certain location which includes its environment and heritage, culture aesthetics, and the well-being of its residents (Maine Conservation Connection, 2008). There are four natural heritage criteria that should be satisfied for a site to be included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The criteria consist of natural beauty, biological diversity, earth's history and ecological processes (UNESCO, 2013). Inscription onto the World Heritage List provides a number of important benefits for the respective sites and countries (Ribaudo & Figini, 2017). These benefits include:

- Attracting international cooperation
- Providing access to funds for conservation and preservation
- Instilling a strong commitment to preservation for future generations
- Generating externality for the tourism industry and other sectors
- Initiating the basis for an operational framework to assist in the implementation of a management plan
 (UNESCO, 2008).

2.2.2. World Heritage Listing in a Tourism Context

Literature on heritage spaces as tourist destinations has been a popular and steadily growing theme in tourism literature (Poria, et al., 2006). As protected areas possess the ability to accumulate and promote both cultural and natural values, it also attracts a significant amount of interest from tourism researchers (Armaitiene, Bertuzyte & Vaskaitis, 2014). The World Heritage List and its ability to promote a site as a tourist destination and generate revenue and economic development have recently attracted significant attention (Cuccia, et al., 2016). The visitation to World Heritage sites continues to increase along with the growth of tourism (Becken & Wardle, 2017). Initially, World Natural Heritage (WNH) was primarily seen as a safeguard for the conservation of natural heritage (Conradin, et al., 2014), but it has since been considered as an important international tourism promotion tool (Conradin, et al., 2014; Jimura, 2011; Ribaudo & Figini, 2017; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009; Yang, Lin & Han, 2010). Natural endowments possess the ability to enhance the effectual management of tourism destinations (Cuccia, et al, 2016) as nature is one of the core motivators for tourists' destination choice (Esparon, Stoeckl, Farr & Larson, 2015).

Thus, natural heritage sites are often seen to play a major role in attracting tourists to a certain region (McNamara & Prideaux, 2011). Visits to heritage sites are now considered one of the main components of the tourism industry today (Kerstetter, Confer & Graefe, 2001).

Tourists visit heritage sites in an effort to connect with special places and inspiring experiences on a personal level (Esparon, et al., 2015). It is considered a common motivational factor for international tourism destinations, both cultural and natural (Buckley, 2017). A UNESCO World Heritage Site list inscription is now recognised as an important status for a tourism destination (Moy & Phongpanichanan, 2014). For example, since its inscription onto the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Wet Tropics Rainforest located in Cairns, Australia has garnered heightened interest from tourists and other stakeholders (Prideaux, McNara & Thompson, 2012). A site can further develop its tourism destination status through a World Heritage Listing by raising its profile, drawing public attention to the site and stimulating demand (Su & Wall,2014). A UNESCO listing is often desired by sites as it provides an opportunity for policy makers to promote a destination, ultimately benefitting the local economy and further tourism development to the region (Ribaudo & Figini, 2017; Teo, Khan & Rahim, 2014). Furthermore, Poria, Reichel and Cohen (2011) suggest that a World Heritage Listing can potentially provide a 'quality brand' to lesser known sites, increase pride amongst the local community, and provide a valuable and unique experience for the tourist. In saying this, while a UNESCO World Heritage Listing is a viable tool in promoting visitation to a site, it is still important for a site to retain its competitiveness by not only ensuring its overall attractiveness, but to also ensure the veracity of its experiences and products for the visitor experience to surpass the offerings of other destinations (Esparon, et al., 2015; Moy & Phongpanichanan, 2014).

Heritage sites should aim to develop products, special events, and to improve customer service to attract repeat visitors and other potential visitors to the site (Armaitiene, et al., 2014; Moy & Phongpanichanan, 2014). Moreover, heritage sites and protected areas as tourism destinations must also continuously develop to keep up with contemporary tourism trends such as the need for more complex tourism products and the implementation of IT (Armaitiene, et al., 2014). It is suggested that if policy-makers become more informed about the interrelationships between current destination assets and visitor

preferences, the tourism industry will benefit from an improvement in the decision-making process (Esparon, et al., 2015). In doing this, visitor satisfaction may improve, resulting in possible recommendations to friends and relatives, repeat visitation, and extending the length of stay (Matushenko & Kvetenadze, 2013; Poria, et al., 2011; Vetitnev, Romanova). As competition continues to grow throughout the tourism industry, it is important to find new opportunities and ideas to rethink the ways in which natural heritage is exploited in an effort to attract visitors (Armaitiene, et al., 2014).

Previous literature has also suggested that tourists are willing to pay at least twice as much as the current admission price at a tourist destination if it were World Heritage Listed (Kim, Cheng & O'Leary, 2007; Mourato, Ozdemiroglu, Hett & Atkinson, 2004; Teo, et al., 2014). This means a World Heritage Listing has the potential to generate further revenue with the implementation of entry fee increases. This growth in revenue can then be used to manage the cultural, historical or natural importance of the site (Teo, et al., 2014). Furthermore, the price rise can also strengthen the current and potential visitors' beliefs in the importance of a site's assets (Teo, et al., 2014). In a study conducted by Moy and Phongpanichanan (2014), 62% of visitors approached in the Malaysian city of Melaka understood the importance of a UNESCO World Heritage listing, and 36% of visitors stated visiting a nearby World Heritage site whilst travelling was considered an obligation. Despite this obvious impact on UNESCO World Heritage Sites as a tourist destination, conservation has still largely remained the most important motive for the inscription onto the World Heritage List (Conradin, et al., 2014).

There has been much research to suggest that natural heritage and the induction onto the UNESCO World Heritage List promotes tourist visitation and tourism development to particular sites (Cellini, 2011; Cuccia, et al., 2016; Yang & Lin, 2014). The studies conducted have produced conflicting results (Ribaudo & Figini, 2017; Yang & Lin, 2014) and have become increasingly intense throughout recent years (Ribaudo & Figini, 2017). Notwithstanding the positive outcomes of a UNESCO listing, there are several opposing views. Cellini (2011) suggests that a World Heritage status is not an effective way of attracting potential tourists to a site, with little to no effect on visitor numbers. This is also supported by other research that yielded similar results suggesting that a World Heritage Site does not serve as a strong motivational factor for tourists (Poria, et al., 2011). In a

similar study, it was suggested overall, that there was no effect apart from a short-term increase shortly after a destination's World Heritage listing announcement (Huang, Tsaur & Yang, 2012). In addition, Poria et al. (2011) discovered that visitors did not perceive any real value perception of World Heritage Site listings. This is further enhanced by research that was conducted in Melaka, Malaysia which also revealed no increase in visitation or an increase in value perception of the site (Moy & Phongpanichanan, 2014). Cuccia, et al. (2016) also suggested that local tourism operators often overestimate the positive effects of a World Heritage Listing by UNESCO and react by oversupplying accommodation and other hospitality services. Ample amount of research has supported the idea that an inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list is a powerful tool for tourism attractions, however, the effects are still unclear and econometric results are not robust (Cellini, 2011).

Further research argues that a World Heritage Site listing can produce negative effects (Cuccia, Guccio & Rizzo, 2017; Poria, Reichel & Cohen, 2013). Cuccia et al. (2017) suggests that a World Heritage Site listing does not improve or induce a tourist destination's efficiency or behaviour over time. Furthermore, a World Heritage Site status may also lead to overcrowding and expectation of increased crowds and entry fees, deterring any potential tourists from visiting the site (Poria, et al., 2013). Thus, a key element in this issue is that visitors may not understand the impact their visitation may incur at a World Heritage Site and what effect this may have on long-term sustainability (Prideaux, et al., 2012). Fundamentally, this means that the outstanding value of a World Heritage listing is actually the catalyst of negative effects to a destination and suggests that quality is better than quantity in terms of both cultural and natural heritage (Cuccia, et al., 2016). Buckley (2017) hypothesises that there are many risks that World Heritage Sites face in legal and financial terms, and that these risks vary in severity and liability throughout various countries. Moreover, World Heritage listings tend to raise the expectations of stakeholders and potential visitors, therefore, stakes are high and disappointment can easily occur if visitors' expectations are not met (Cuccia, et al., 2016). Lastly, McNara and Prideaux (2011) suggest that significant natural heritage sites can create boundaries between nature and the visitor, resulting in an influence on the consumption and overall experience of natural heritage. Hence, this lessens the authenticity of the natural heritage site due to the focus on developing a site purely for the tourist gaze as the site is modified to please and attract

tourists (McNara & Prideaux, 2011; Prideaux, et al., 2012).

On the other hand, several studies suggest that World Heritage listings bring important positive aspects to visitor numbers, perceptions and experiences (Arezki, Cherif & Piotrowski, 2009; Buckley, 2004; Cuccia, 2012; Jimura, 2011; Patuelli, Mussoni & Candela, 2013). A study conducted in China implies that World Heritage Sites play a significant role in the increase of tourist visitation numbers (Yang, et al., 2010). This is further supported by official UNESCO documents that imply:

'...the inscription of a site on the World Heritage List brings an increase in public awareness of the site and of its outstanding values, thus also increasing the tourist activities at the site. When these are well planned for and organized respecting sustainable tourism principles, they can bring important funds to the site and to the local economy.' (UNESCO 2008, p. 10)

On the demand side, a World Heritage inscription attracts tourists who are interested in gaining a significant cultural or creative experience and the inscription provides the site with a comparative advantage against competing tourism destinations (Cuccia, et al., 2016; Poria, et al., 2011). In a study conducted by Moy and Phongpanichanan (2014), the majority of respondents acknowledged the importance of a UNESCO World Heritage status for a heritage site. Arezki et al. (2009) discovered that World Heritage Sites are a source of economic growth and development to a region and provide tourism specialisation that is appealing to visitors. These significant economic gains are due partly to the tourism specialisation that a World Heritage listing brings to a destination (Cuccia, et al., 2016). It is suggested that the more World Heritage Sites in one geographical location, the greater the motivation is for tourists to visit, thereby boosting its destination image, promoting visitation and repeat visitation and promoting economic gain (Poria, et al., 2011). A study by Cuccia (2012) also saw an increase in visitation to regions with a World Heritage Site. This figure was recorded as higher than both the national average and regional tourism growth throughout Italy (Cuccia, 2012). Jimura (2011) also identified a significant increase in day trippers resulting from a World Heritage listing in one specific region. This is also supported by the idea that World Heritage sites bring a strong positive effect and increases not only international tourists, but also encourages domestic travel from neighbouring regions

(Patuelli, et al., 2013). In a study on the Great Barrier Reef as a World Heritage Site, a majority of respondents revealed that the most important value for visiting the region was the environment and that these values were of such significant importance that any form of environmental degradation would impact a tourists' decisions greater than a 20% increase in local prices (Esparon, et al., 2015).

In addition to the studies examined, Yang and Lin (2014) conclude that whilst a World Heritage listing holds the potential to attract tourists, the effectiveness depends heavily on the marketing strategies implemented by the site authorities. Cuccia, et al. (2016) proposes that a World Heritage inscription alone would not attract more visitors as those choosing to travel to a destination do so for the overall experience that requires coordination from both public and private stakeholders. Furthermore, it is suggested that UNESCO could play a more significant role in assisting with the strategy formulation and implementation of protection policies and heritage promotion (Yang & Lin, 2014). Management bodies are often faced with the difficult and often conflicting task of ensuring the preservation of a site while simultaneously promoting it as a successful tourism destination (Buckley, 2017). It can also be argued that while a UNESCO World Heritage listing indicates an increase in the attractiveness of a tourist destination, the real success depends on the involvement of local community and their own degree of understanding of the significance of the site for not only themselves, but for future generations as well (Cuccia, et al., 2016). Sites enlisted by UNESCO have now become significant aids in promoting the tourism industry (Yang, et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important that along with the listing, a World Heritage Site must possess good management in terms of accessibility, good planning that enriches visitor experiences and good material and immaterial infrastructure (Cuccia, et al., 2016).

2.2.3 Natural Heritage Tourist Motivations

Key motivations to natural heritage tourism sites can be identified as experiencing landscape values, natural environment and cultural characteristics (Zgłobicki & Baran-Zgłobicka, 2013). Visitors to a cultural or natural heritage site can be motivated by a number of potential factors. These motives include interest in heritage, learning, culture, experiencing authentic elements, and visiting other sites in the area (Kerstetter, et al.,

2001). Moscardo (1996) also lists three main motives of visiting heritage sites which are educational motives, social motives and entertainment motives. Despite these distinct motivation categories, research by Poria, Reichel and Cohen (2013) found that visitors did not generally consider natural sites as World Heritage as they did not perceive or believe that nature relates to human heritage. Natural sites that could be considered as World Heritage would have to be well-known and exceptionally beautiful according to some respondents (Poria et al., 2013). Consequently, studies on natural heritage visitor motivations require further research.

By looking at several examples of World Heritage Sites and their influence on visitor numbers, the local economy and visitor experience, both positives and negatives have occurred in a range of different locations. Current empirical evidence suggests its effectiveness of tourism promotion is ambiguous (Cuccia et al., 2017). Evidently, there is no clear or universal pattern of the trends that follow a World Heritage listing (Ribaudo & Figini, 2017). While there are considerable differences varying amongst heritage sites, generalisations can therefore not be made in relation to any findings (Poria, et al., 2011).

2.3 Nature-based Tourism Motivations

2.3.1 A Definition of Nature-based Tourism

Concepts such as green tourism, ecotourism and nature-based tourism have gained increased popularity over recent years (Weaver & Lawton, 2008). This trend is consistent with the notion of climate change and responsible tourism heavily influencing tourist consumer demand in recent times (Teo, et al., 2014). Nature-based tourism is a fast-growing form of tourism (Mehmetoglu, 2005; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Meric & Hunt, 1998; Paco, Alves & Nunes, 2012) in which tourists travel to destinations that showcase pristine and unspoiled nature (Honey, 2002; Mehmetoglu, 2005). The growth of nature tourism is evolving so rapidly, that it is surpassing the growth of the tourism sector itself (Mehmetoglu, 2005; Nyaupane, Morais & Graefe, 2004). The components of nature-based tourism involve visitation of relatively undisturbed natural areas, continued protection and management of natural tourist attractions, and ecologically sustainable practices (Valentine,

1993). Laarman and Durst (1987) first penned the definition of nature-oriented tourism that comprises of recreation, education and adventure. Lindberg (1991) defines nature tourism as 'tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural areas' (p.3). Nature tourism primarily consists of nature-based activities merged with some form of physical activity (Meric & Hunt, 1998). Recreation is a notably important aspect of nature-based tourism as suggested by Valentine (1992). A nature-based tourist's experience is influenced by the direct enjoyment of nature while travelling and can be segmented into three categories: activities that are dependent on nature, activities that are further enhanced by nature, and activities that incidentally take place in a natural setting (Valentine, 1992). Another important aspect is noted by Bjork (1997), who suggests conservation is incorporated into a nature tourists' travel habits by visiting natural settings without exploiting or damaging the resources. In addition to enhancing the conservation of global diversity, nature-based tourism can also provide alternate livelihood strategies for local communities (Liu, Vogt, Luo, He, Frank & Liu, 2012; Wood, Guerry, Silver & Lacayo, 2013). Nature-based tourism is often considered as a desirable form of tourism as it acknowledges the natural assets of a destination or country, promotes regional growth, and generates employment and foreign exchange (Rantala, 2011; Weaver, 1998). Andereck (2009) discovered that visitors who were strongly motivated by nature-based activities had the tendency to value environmentally responsible practices higher than those who were less motivated by nature-based activities. Thus, nature-based tourism is linked to a positive shift towards more sustainable and responsible travel behaviours (Wight, 1993). Andereck (2009) discovered that visitors who were strongly motivated by nature-based activities had the tendency to value environmentally responsible practices higher than those who were less motivated by nature-based activities.

Similar to nature-based tourism, geotourism has evolved which involves touristic activities comprising of rocks and minerals, geology and geomorphology, natural resources of landscape, landforms, fossil beds and the overall appreciation of these features (Newsome, 2005). Interest in these aspects is part of an overall desire to learn, understand and appreciate earth sciences and the conservation of geodiversity (Dowling, 2013). Furthermore, cave tourism can be seen as a category of geotourism and the visitation of caves has been cited to be one of the oldest forms of geotourism (Bourne, Spate & Smith,

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2008). Those who are interested in cave tourism generally wish to enjoy the aesthetics of caves and the surrounding environment, and are also interested in the conservation and information on geological landscapes (Kim, et al., 2008; Dowling, 2013). Sites such as NCNP are pivotal in using their attractions as sustainable development tools for the environment and for local and regional communities (Dowling, 2013).

Nature-based tourism can therefore be a multifaceted sector of the tourism industry that includes a plethora of motivations and activities related to the natural environment (Tangeland & Aas, 2012).

2.3.2 Defining nature tourists

The importance of nature-based tourism is clear; therefore, nature tourists must be further understood to ensure best practice of tourism marketing and strategic planning (Mehmetoglu, 2005). The term 'nature tourist' does not have a universally agreed meaning according to scholars (Mehmetoglu, 2005; Meric & Hunt, 1998). While most tourists enjoy activities such as sightseeing and shopping, nature tourists seek activities such as visiting natural and wilderness areas, kayaking, cycling, and going on safari (Lang, O'Leary & Morrison, 1994; Meric & Hunt, 1998). One who simply travels to natural destinations or areas can be considered as a nature tourist (Lang & O'Leary, 1997). To further add to this definition, it is suggested that dedicated nature tourists desire to do no harm and leave little impact on the environment that they visit (Meric & Hunt, 1998). It is evident however, that nature tourists are not a homogenous group, and can often be segmented into a variety of different groups (Tkaczynski, et al., 2015; Wight, 2001). Literature has suggested that different activities will appeal to different nature tourists as the segment is relatively heterogeneous (McKercher, Ho, du Cros, So-Ming, 2002).

2.3.3 Demographics

While the motivations of nature tourists can often vary, the personal characteristics of tourists are another factor that influences the differences in activity preferences (Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele & Prebensen, 2015). As mentioned, current and past literature lacks a definition of nature tourists that can be universally agreed on. In addition to this,

numerous studies have produced varying results. This further emphasises the concept that nature tourists are not a homogeneous group.

Age

Many results from previous studies suggest nature-based tourists are typically over the age of 35 (Maleski, 2012). This is supported by another study that found almost all nature-based tourists that were surveyed were over the age of 30 (Mehmetoglu, 2005). While those aged 30 and over were the majority of another study, a considerable amount of those aged in their 20s was also identified as a significant proportion of nature-based tourists (Kim, et al., 2008). While most studies suggest nature-based tourists are often over the age of 30, this is not to say younger or older people do not visit nature-based sites as well. Youth and young adults aged between 12-21 were identified as the biggest group of visitors to a nature-based tourism site in Indonesia (Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013). The age group ranging from 21 to 30 was the largest sample size in a Malaysian study, again highlighting the fact that a younger demographic also visit nature-based sites (Teo, et al., 2014). Luo & Deng (2008) state that most of their respondents in China were aged between 18 and 35. These studies have shown a varying result in the average age of nature-based tourists. While they can most commonly be identified as 30 years old or above, many other studies suggest a younger demographic are also significant.

Gender

Studies vary in terms of participation by different genders with some showing a higher percentage of males and others showing a higher percentage of female participation (Maleski, 2012). Some studies suggest that both genders are equally interested in nature-based activities (Wight, 1996; Zografos & Allcroft, 2007). This was also found in a study based in Malaysia, where 48.9% of respondents were female and 51.1% were male (Teo, et al., 2014). A study conducted by Mehmetoglu (2005) showed that there was an almost equal amount of general nature-based tourists. A significant change may have occurred in terms of gender as a study conducted in 1998 found a much higher number of female nature-based tourists as opposed to males (Meric & Hunt, 1998). Research conducted in South Korea found that most

respondents who identified as nature-based tourists visiting a cave were male (Kim, et al., 2008). In a similar study of cave tourists, a slight majority (58%) of respondents were male (Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013). This was also concluded by research conducted in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park in China where 65.1% of survey participants were male (Luo & Deng, 2008).

These studies suggest that gender differences vary from different countries and different – nature-based tourist destinations. While some studies have found similar numbers between both genders, it is evident that other sites tend to have a greater disproportion, tilting either towards male or female.

Education Background

Research suggests that nature-based tourists are typically highly educated (Maleski, 2012) and are more than likely to have a higher education than general tourists (Meric & Hunt, 1998). A study conducted by Mehmetoglu (2005) stated that only one-fifth of survey participants had not undertaken any further study after high school. Meric and Hunt (1998) also identified 90.3% of their respondents to have a university degree or higher. Most respondents in a study conducted in South Korea also identified a majority of nature-based tourists to be either high school or university graduates (Kim, et al., 2008). Luo & Deng (2008) found that 71% of their participants had a higher level of education than high school and 6% had a postgraduate university degree. Another study further supports this as the larger proportion of these respondents also had high school and university as their highest level of education (Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013). In most cases, it can also be noted that these high levels of education have led to the employment of these tourists at the time of the study in both civilian and private sector jobs (Lo & Deng, 2008; Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013).

Therefore, it is important to note that most studies have identified nature-based tourists to be highly educated. This is an aspect that further links to motivations which will be later discussed.

Level of Income

It has been established that nature-based tourists have generally higher incomes than other tourists (Melaski, 2012). However, in some cases, studies have suggested otherwise. Kim et al (2008) discovered most respondents had an average monthly salary similar to that of the national average. Average incomes have also been recognised amongst nature-based tourists such as 75% of American tourists earning an income greater than $35,000 (Meric & Hunt, 1998). A study conducted at an ecolodge in Belize saw higher incomes amongst participants, with 32% earning $100,000 or more per annum (Kwan, Eagles & Gebhardt, 2010). A study in Indonesia discovered that nature-based tourists with an interest in cultural heritage had a higher level of income (Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013). Therefore, like many socio-demographic factors, not all nature-based tourists can be segmented into one range of income level, as most studies vary in results.

Travelling Companions

Nature-based tourists tend to travel with family or friends. 75% of visitors surveyed at a geotourism site in Indonesia were accompanied with friends (Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013). Similarly, nature-based tourists showed a higher percentage of travelling with friends than general tourists, however, the largest percentage was 71.1% of nature-based tourists travelling with family (Maleski, 2012). It has been found that a minority of nature tourists travel alone, which can be supported by the concept that nature tourists travel to spend time with family (Maleski, 2012).

Motivations

Motivations can be identified as a factor that guides behaviour and ultimately, initiates decisions and actions (Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). In the context of tourism studies, motivations can be defined as the 'fundamental reasons for a particular travelling behaviour' (Goh, Tan, Zainol, Mariney & Adeline, p. 50, 2013). In tourism research trends, tourist/visitor studies showed the most significant and above average growth in the past several decades (Ballantyne, Packer & Axelsen, 2009; Poria, Reichel & Biran, 2006). Various studies have implied that the identification and understanding of key visitor motivations can further assist communities and stakeholders in tourism development (Beh & Bruyere, 2007; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Zhang & Peng, 2014). Swarbrooke and Horner (1999) identify six main factors that

influence a traveller's decision to visit a specific destination. These factors include physical, emotional, personal development, status and cultural (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2006). The six factors can be broken into activities and desires that motivate a general tourist to travel (See Figure 2).

Figure 2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

In addition, nature tourism development must include the classification of nature tourists' specific motivations as they differ from other types of tourists (Mehmetoglu, 2005; Meric & Hunt, 1998). There are few studies that focus on the motivations, needs and lifestyle characteristics of nature tourists (Meric & Hunt, 1998). Understanding nature tourists' motivations is important as it provides a better insight into the choice of destination and activities (Tkaczynski, & Prebensen, 2012) and furthermore assists in the planning and implementation of sustainable and successful economic tourism programs (Meric & Hunt, 1998; Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). Intrinsic motivations such as rest and relaxation, the desire to escape, health and fitness, and social interaction are some of the main factors that encourage nature-based tourists to travel (Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). These motivations and desires can be fulfilled through the offering of various activities by a tourism destination (Andreu, Kozak, Avci & Cifter, 2004; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

Research by Zhang & Peng (2014) shows some of the most common motivations identified in studies such as 'experiencing something different', 'resting and relaxing' and 'increasing my knowledge and experience'. A similar study in Yanchep National Park, Western Australia found that the top motivations for geotourists were curiosity and education (Dowling, 2013). Research at Crystal Cave, Western Australia also identified the main intrinsic motivations to be relaxation, sense of wonder and escape from daily life (Allan, et al., 2015). The main motivations for nature-based tourists, particularly those visiting caves can be segmented into four dimensions. They are "escape motivation", "knowledge motivation", "socialisation motivation" and "novelty motivation" (Kim, et al., 2008). Escape motivation includes motivations such as enjoying free time and relief from everyday stress (Kim, et al., 2008) which correlates with another study that clusters motivational factors such as getting away from everyday life, mentally relaxing and having time for oneself as a 'mundane everyday' dimension (Mehmetoglu, 2007). Both Kim et al. (2008) and Mehmetoglu (2007) suggest that

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another cluster of motivations can be labelled as 'novelty' which involves satisfying curiosity, learning and experiencing new things and getting pleasure from adventure. The nature factor as suggested by Mehmetoglu (2007) complements the knowledge motivation by Kim et al. (2008), where both studies suggest that nature-based tourists are motivated by experiencing nature or cave tourism, and the desire to visit natural attractions. The socialisation motivation is another important motivation of nature based tourists whereby visitors travel to socialise with friends and family, to have social contact and to build ties with family and friends (Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007).

In addition to these motivational dimensions, Mehmetoglu adds a final category labelled 'physical activities' which encompasses challenging and non-challenging physical activities along with engaging in nature-based activities. In a similar study, the motivations of those travelling to Crystal Cave in Western Australia were categorised into knowledge, relaxation, escape, enjoyment, friendship and sense of wonder (Allan, et al., 2015). This is supported by research conducted by Maleski (2012) who discovered that some of the least important motivations for nature-based tourists are shopping, experiencing nightlife and entertainment, and visiting amusement parks. Evidently, tourism is multi-dimensional and a tourist's choice of destination is often based on a number of motivations rather than one single motive (Goh, et al., 2013; Teo et al., 2014). These multiple factors play a role in influencing a tourist's motivation to travel and their choice of destination (Teo, et al., 2014).

Therefore, current literature has produced similar themes that categorise the motivations of nature-based tourists. Most studies agree that nature-based tourists travel for several reasons, namely to escape from the everyday life, to experience and learn something new, to enjoy natural settings and to socialise with friends and relatives.

Whilst it is important to understand visitor motivations, it must be added that the relationship between demographics and motivations is also an important aspect as this can assist in marketing towards specific target markets (Zhang & Peng, 2014). The relationship between demographics and motivations are clearly seen in a study where motivations differed greatly between domestic and international tourists. (Goh, et al., 2013; Trinh & Ryan, 2017). Additionally, age plays a large role in determining motivations whereby a teenager may have largely different motives to an adult travelling with their young family (Goh, et al., 2013).

Different nationalities and cultures may also experience a site in different ways and their perceptions may vary between groups (Trinh & Ryan, 2017). Understanding the differences in motivations correlated with demographics gives greater depth into the reasons why certain tourists choose to visit a destination.

2.3.4 Generalists vs Specialists

As identified, nature-based tourists can be segmented into a range of different groups based on their income levels, education and ages. Similarly, their motivations can also identify them in varying segments. The segmentation of markets is often encouraged as it can assist in developing marketing strategies and increasing visitation to specific sites (Beh & Bruyere, 2007). Cohen (1972) produced a typology in which two different types of nature-based tourists were identified as generalists and specialists. Generalists are noted to have little special interest in a tourism site, are less ambitious, rely heavily on man-made infrastructure and visit in relatively high numbers (Mehmetoglu, 2005). In comparison, specialists tend to be absorbed in existing support systems, require little infrastructure and management facilities (Mehmetoglu, 2005). In a similar study, Weaver (2001) suggests the segmentation of 'hard' and 'soft' ecotourists. 'Hard' ecotourists can be considered as environmentally conscious tourists travelling in small, specialised groups that include physical challenges in a natural setting (Arnegger, Woltering & Job, 2010). 'Soft' ecotourists are generally seen as mass ecotourists who make short-term visits to nature-based sites such as a one-day trip to a protected area, thus, 'soft' ecotourists represent nature-based tourism rather than ecotourism (Arnegger, et al., 2010). Hence, it is crucial for tourism management bodies to understand the importance of catering to the needs and motivations of general nature tourists and to also provide specific tour packages for specialist preferences (Meric & Hunt, 1998; Poria, et al., 2006).

2.4 Background Information Collection Prior to Visitation

2.4.1 Current Trends

There has been substantial research on the travel decision-making process (Choi, Lehto, Morrison & Jang, 2011; Sharifpour, Walters, Ritchie & Winter, 2014). Research is often

focused on what specific information sources are being used and when they are used throughout the decision-making process (Sharifpour, et al., 2014). Traditional decision-making models that include psychological and non-psychological variables, such as attitudes, motivation, marketing mix and pull factors have been analysed through tourism studies (Huan & Beaman, 2003). Understanding the decision-making process is an important aspect of tourism as information collection is noted as a crucial point in which marketers influence or alter a tourist's plan for travelling (Jani, 2011). Essentially, the information collection phase must provide tourists with significant navigation and search capabilities to acquire information in an efficient and convenient manner (Proll & Retschitzegger, 2000). Researchers have acknowledged the fact that information distribution can influence the tourist's decision task and the entire nature of the decision-making process as a sequential process (Choi, et al., 2011).

The perception of a place prior to visitation is a key component of site selection, and perceptions of different places often vary between people (Gartner, 1996). Beerli and Martin (2004) categorised destination image formation into two main categories, which are personal factors and information sources. These information sources can then be divided into organic information sources and induced information sources (Gunn, 1997). Organic information sources can include novels, television news, films, newspapers and stories from friends and family, whereas induced information sources can be brochures, television advertisements, print media and billboards (Gunn, 1997). Although induced information sources are a valuable attribute to destination image formation and the tourist decision-making process, the financial costs are high, and arguably, induced information sources may be more effective due to their regularity and reach (Khodadadi, 2013). In saying this, previous studies have discovered that first-time visitors generally use tour operators and travel agents, however; both first-time visitors and experienced visitors use recommendations from friends and relatives extensively (Choi et al., 2011; Kim, et al., 2008). In line with recommendations from friends and relatives, the Internet comprises of several platforms where people can share their travel experiences, ultimately leading to an influence on other potential visitors' travel decision-making (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

The past decade has seen a vast increase in tourist information due to globalisation and rapid technological advances which has resulted in complexity for consumers and destinations

which ultimately has "reengineered" the tourist industry (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Govers & Go, 2003; Hvass & Munar, 2012). It is now easier, cheaper and faster for tourists to find information and book holidays due to the advances in technology (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). The most trust is afforded to State government tourism websites (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014), which corresponds with Choi et al.'s (2011) study, which suggests that the official destination websites are the most used during travel information search prior to visiting the destination. Not only can the Internet be used in a pre-departure visit, it can also be accessed to acquire information throughout the travelling stage and the post-travelling stage (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). The Internet has changed the ways in which tourists search for information and other forms of technology such as mobile devices have impacted information collection habits significantly. Kim and Fesenmaier (2017) state that mobile devices now provide an explosion of information in which potential tourists must now sift through large amounts of information to find the experience that they wish to pursue. Therefore, there is an abundance of travel information that can be accessed through an extensive variety of ways. As every tourist is different and possesses diverse motivations, wants and experiences, travel information collection and processing varies greatly. Prior knowledge before visiting a site is important to understand, but it must be considered as a multidimensional construct (Sharifpour, et al., 2014). It is therefore crucial to understand how different tourist groups collect travel information prior to choosing and visiting a destination.

2.4.2 The Role of Social Media in Tourism Destination Information Searches

It is evident that the Internet has dramatically affected the processes in which tourism-related information is distributed and how this information is used by tourists to plan future travels (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Various studies have concluded that the Internet is the most frequent source of information for visitors, prior to their visitation to a tourism site (Allan, et al., 2015; Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Zgłobicki & Baran-Zgłobicka, 2013). This is supported by a study that found 89% of respondents chose the Internet as the first option for the planning of a trip (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). Social media now plays a primary role in information search and the decision-making processes of potential tourists, it is highly influential on the ways in which tourists and businesses contribute to the tourism industry (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Furthermore, it constitutes a significant percentage of the online tourism domain,

often appearing as the first search results on search engines such as Google (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Social media can include 'social networking sites, consumer review sites, content community sites, Internet forums and location-based social media' (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014, p. 28). Well-known sites for tourism information are Wikitravel, Travelblog, and media-sharing sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Another study found that online information sources included official destination websites, map or weather sites, accommodation sites, online travel communities, tour operator websites, online travel guides, and transportation websites (Choi, et al., 2011). The study concluded that official destination websites were the most used throughout a traveller's decision-making process (Choi, et al., 2011). In another study, 49.1% of respondents stated Tripadvisor was the most popular social media platform used in the search for general travel information (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). Therefore, it is vital to understand the changes technology has brought to the dissemination and accessibility of travel related information as this could be a way forward for marketing programs and tourism information systems (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Xiang, Wober & Fesenmaier, 2008; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006). The Internet has provided potential tourists with greater availability of information from not only tourism organisations, but increasingly from other users and consumers (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Tourists can share their knowledge through social media, as well as their personal experiences, which are largely dependent on how the individual perceives a tourism place, product or service (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). By sharing these experiences, it has been found that the tourism experience is not only based on the on-site activities, but also depends on the collection of information for a future trip and the reflection and conversation about a past trip (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017). This information can occasionally result in the creation of new products or services and an overall improvement to both aspects (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). In addition, organisations are also able to collect information about their users which provides new opportunities for businesses in a particular tourist destination to reach customers (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). To successfully gain the attention of customers and future visitors, businesses should aim to dynamically engage with customers through social media platforms (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). This can be achieved through designing social media communications where tourists are encouraged to share the nature of their travel experiences both during and post-visit (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017).

2.4.3 Sharing Tourism Experiences Through Social Media

As mentioned previously, recommendations by friends and relatives are one of the most highly valued sources of information when choosing a destination (Choi, et al., 2011). Tourism is largely based on personal experience, which compliments social media and its large amount of user-generated content (UGC), which can influence a tourists' decision-making through personal experiences and stories (Bizirgianni, Dionysopoulou, 2013; Zeng & Gerritson, 2014). UGC is considered information and content that is generated by users of the Internet, and users can be both organisations or individuals (Hvass & Munar, 2012). Not only is it a new way to communicate, but it is an online environment that is entirely built on the contributions and interactions of Internet users (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Furthermore, social media operates at a speed that allows information and travel experiences to be shared instantly (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). Evidently, sharing travel experiences on social media platforms is able to regenerate and extend the lifespan of a tourism experience, thus exposing the trip to other potential visitors and possibly encouraging travel to the region (Kim & Ferenmaier, 2017). Studies suggest that social media sharing is a self-centred motivation as it comes with the possibility of gaining respect and recognition, augmenting one's self esteem and position in society, and in increasing social ties (Baym, 2010; Urry, 2007). In contrast, another study suggested that sharing tourism experiences through social media sites was motivated by community-related values (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Hillman (2007) states that the primary motivation to share photos of a travel experience on social media is to provide proof that a place was physically visited. Despite the motivations, it is a relevant concept that tourists are now able to express their opinions, needs or desires in relation to a site that they have visited or are planning to visit in the future (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). Therefore, it is clear that social media is an excellent tool for tourism organisations to utilise as a marketing strategy for various tourism products and services (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

Research conducted by Munar and Jacobsen (2014), found that 31% of respondents confirmed they had already used social media to share their travel experiences in Mallorca, and another 28% were planning to share their experiences. Another study received higher results with 89% of its respondents taking pictures and 41% of the tourists posting the pictures to social networking sites (Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung, & Law, 2011). Despite these results showing consistent patterns, this topic of research is still in its infancy and more

research should be conducted to further understand these behaviours (Boley, Magnini & Tuten, 2013; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Research thus far has shown that social media does have the potential to increase the online visibility of tourism locations, including small leisure destinations (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). Kim and Fenermaier (2017) found that most travel experiences shared on social media are of a positive nature, therefore post-trip evaluation can often be positive and consequently encourages other tourists to travel as well.

Another positive that is seen through the relationship between social media and tourism is through times of crisis. Social media is considered a popular source for crisis-related information due to the speed in which information is disseminated and the personal content that is produced before traditional information sources such as television and radio (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015). It is evident that the changing face of tourism information collection is largely interrelated with the rise of technology and social media over the past decade. Most importantly, understanding the effects of this change and how tourists use social media during the travel planning process will benefit tourist destinations and the platforms on which they are marketed. Social media is evidently an accessible form of marketing, however; Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) suggest organisations look at using social media as a marketing tool targeted towards specific niche tourist groups rather than general social media users.

Ultimately, the sharing of tourism experiences influences the ways in which other tourists search for information prior to a trip and understanding these changing roles is a crucial part of tourism research (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017).

2.4.4 Disadvantages of Social Media

Whilst it is evident that the age of the Internet and social media has positively changed the ways in which tourists collect and share information, the shift also comes with some potential disadvantages. Information may often be biased and can also be easily stored and passed on to third parties (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). In addition, some companies are behind in harnessing the marketing reach of social media due to financial strains and reluctance to adopt a social media approach due to the commitment of time and resources and often limited marketing budgets within companies (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). Therefore, more pressure is posed upon tourism companies as only publishing online brochures is considered

inadequate in today's world of fast-paced and personal information dissemination (Proll & Retschitzegger, 2000).

It has been discussed that UGC can be seen as a positive for the information phase in a tourism context, but as anyone can be an author on the Internet, the credibility of content is significantly lessened (Williams, Bascombe, Brenner & Green, 1996). Furthermore, Kim and Ferenmaier (2017) also state that self-reporting through social media is unreliable due to the emotional state that one may be in at the time of posting.

Lastly, each destination and each tourist differs, therefore, there is no universal way in which social media can be used in a tourism context (Proll & Retschitzegger, 2000). Therefore, while the rise of technology and social media in recent years has created a positive shift in tourism information dissemination, the associated disadvantages cannot be ignored.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the methodologies that were utilised to conduct this research. The aims and outcomes, research approach, research setting, ethical considerations, data collection and analysis will be outlined along with a discussion into the establishment of trustworthiness and rigour.

Aims and Outcomes

The aims of the research in this paper were to observe various aspects regarding visitors to the Naracoorte Caves. The research is particularly focused on:

- Identifying the demographics of visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park and establishing the key demographic groups
- Identifying and analysing the key motivations of visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park
- Ascertaining where visitors collect information about their chosen destination prior to visitation
- Determining whether social media plays a significant role in information collection prior to visitation

The data was collected through several onsite surveys and in-depth interviews. In doing this, a number of aspects can be further looked at. Firstly, by looking at visitor demographics, the site can obtain a clear picture of the key markets that they attract. As the destination has little information on present visitor demographics, this may be of significant benefit for the site. Particularly, it will assist in understanding what market segments target. In addition, looking at the specific motivations of visitors will result in a better understanding of their reasons for visitation. Furthermore, specific demographic groups may also display differences in motivations, which will provide further insight and a deeper knowledge into visitor motivations. Finally, analysing the collected data will also provide an insight into how tourists to the Naracoorte Caves National Park collect background information during travel planning and decision-making prior to visitation. Additionally, this study addresses whether social media plays an active role in the tourist decision-making

process and how this applies to the specific demographic groups visiting the site.

The results of this research will assist NCNP and its management authorities in understanding its visitors and their specific habits and needs. This will provide insight that may be used in future strategic development for the site. Whilst the results apply specifically to NCNP, it could also apply to other national parks or UNESCO World Heritage sites in a general sense. By analysing and understanding the demographics, motivations and background information collection habits of visitors, this may assist in the development of effective interpretation and education facilities throughout the park. Ideally, these findings should support NCNP and its authorities in understanding their key visitors to facilitate to their needs and better understand what they expect to experience at the site. Furthermore, it will assist in understanding how to promote the caves and to understand the information platforms that their visitors are currently using.

3.2 Research Approach

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

Firstly, this study undertook the interpretive social sciences paradigm, otherwise known as the constructivist paradigm (Jennings, 2010). This paradigm assumes 'that social reality is not singular or objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology), and is therefore best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology)' (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 103). Therefore, the relationship between the researcher the participants should be intersubjective rather than objective (Jennings, 2010). This paradigm is often associated with qualitative research (Terrell, 2012) and will apply to the in-depth, semi-structured interviews that will be conducted for this study. Results will be collated and analysed to support the information retained from the quantitative method of survey research.

Secondly, the positivist paradigm was utilised throughout the quantitative research. A popular quantitative research method is survey research (Bhattacharjee, 2012), which was conducted throughout this study. Participants were chosen randomly with the assistance of two undergraduate students. It was encouraged that every second person was to be

approached, to ensure randomisation of the results.

The ontological basis of the positivist paradigm is that the world is perceived as organised by universal truths and laws, and the epistemology of this paradigm sees the relationship between research and subjects as value free where the research does not influence the findings or results (Jennings, 2010). This epistemological basis is a positive asset of this paradigm as it can strengthen the ways in which the survey is compiled.

3.2.2 Mixed Methods

For this study, a mixed methods approach was applied as it can often yield unique and highly valuable insights (Bhattacherjee, 2012). According to Jennings (2010), a mixed method approach takes aspects from both qualitative and quantitative methodologies; however, one is predominantly used more than the other. In this case, it was the quantitative methodology which was utilised more, as this is a popular option for many studies (Molina-Azorín & Font, 2015). As the mixed methods approach involves two aspects of research methods, two paradigms have been involved; the interpretive social sciences paradigm and the positivist paradigm.

The mixed methods approach was chosen for this research, as firstly, surveys that were conducted as part of the quantitative methodology were dispersed throughout a larger sample size. The preferred sample size planned for this study was approximately 200-300 participants. The qualitative methodology involved approximately 15-25 in-depth interviews, which is a significantly smaller sample size than the quantitative results. Whilst it is a smaller sample size, the advantage of an in-depth interview is the removal of interviewer bias (Zhang & Peng, 2014), and the ability for the interviewee to elaborate on their response. Additionally, in-depth interviews allow interviewees to think of their own answers in comparison to a survey where options are specified and given to the respondent, which may hinder their ability to create their own personal answers.

The mixed methods approach was chosen due to the opportunities for more pragmatic transformative research and reliability (Molina-Azorín & Font, 2015). By employing a mixed method approach, both qualitative and quantitative data supports each other to further justify the results, which will be analysed and integrated through the interpretation phase.

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This research occurred through a concurrent triangulation design whereby quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analysed simultaneously but separately (Creswell, 2006; Terrell, 2012). There is a total of four variants of the concurrent triangulation research design, however; this research took the form of the convergence model. Through this traditional model, both quantitative and qualitative research are collected and analysed separately before the different results were converged (Creswell, 2006).

3.2.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval for this project was obtained from the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee on the 8th February 2017 (See Appendix A). The ethical considerations made were highly dependent on the type of research conducted, as suggested by Jennings (2010). As this research adopted a mixed methods methodology, members of the public were to be approached throughout data collection. This meant verbal permission was to be obtained from survey participants and written consent was a crucial component of consent for the in-depth interviews.

To ensure all participants were aware of the purpose of the research, an information sheet was provided to survey and interview participants. In-depth interview participants were also provided with a letter of introduction (See Appendix B and C). Both documents provided participants with information on the following, as proposed by de Vaus (2002):

- The research aim, purpose and process
- The benefits of the research
- The ability and right to ask questions concerning any aspect of the research
- The voluntary nature of participation
- The identity of the researcher and the associated organisation
- How the findings will be used
- When and where the findings will be available

These points are a crucial component of providing informed consent to all participants involved. Whilst reading the information sheet, participants were encouraged to ask any further questions or voice any concerns regarding their participation in the study. Participants were also notified that if at any point they felt uncomfortable, they were

entitled to withdraw from the research.

Confidentiality was also a key component of the research and this was also mentioned in the information sheet. Participants were advised that the information collected would be kept in a folder marked 'confidential' and that their information could only be accessed by the researcher. Once all the information had been collated, the materials would be destroyed. Whilst confidentiality was implied, anonymity could not be guaranteed due to the environment in which surveys and interviews were undertaken. As surveying and interviewing took place in public areas, there was a possibility that other members of the public could hear or see the information being disclosed.

Once the information was transferred to participants, surveys could begin, however; the interviews began only after a consent form was signed and dated.

3.2.4 Data Collection

The data collection phase took place over three days from the 14th of April to the 16th of April 2017. Each day totalled eight hours of data collection for all three researchers. As a concurrent triangulation method was employed, two researchers spent their time distributing surveys to visitors. The remaining researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with one visitor at a time. The surveys were distributed for visitors to fill out independently as this option took less time and yielded a higher number of completed surveys simultaneously. Both researchers were located near the chosen respondents, if any questions regarding the research were to occur. Interview participants were selected randomly and were interviewed in a quieter and more private setting of their choice. This was usually a corner in the Wonambi Fossil Centre, on outdoor seating or in the café. A total of 200 surveys were completed and 25 interviews were conducted over the three days at NCNP.

3.2.5 Structured Surveying

The research involved in this project adopted structured surveying for the quantitative research component. Face-to-face surveying was chosen as the principal method of surveying as it yielded a higher possibility of visitor participation as opposed to phone call or

email. The draft questionnaire was compiled in 2016 with influences from various journal articles and theoretical concepts based on visitor demographics and motivations of cave tourists (Kim et al., 2008; Newsome & Dowling, 2001; Tongkul, 2005). A meeting was held with a principal stakeholder of NCNP to determine the aspects the park wished to cover through the research. Following this initial meeting, the survey instrument was edited to cater for the park management needs. Further consultation occurred via email to ensure that the questionnaire would suit both the needs of the thesis and the national park. Only minor changes were made during the email consultation period. The final survey was completed in March 2017 and consisted of four sections which were (1) visitor demographics; (2) typical visitor behaviour and motivations; (3) visitor information collection habits and (4) general feedback. The survey employed a seven-point Likert scale, which can be perceived as a tourism research trend for many similar studies (Allan, et al., 2015; Beh & Bruyere, 2007; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Teo, et al, 2014). A seven-point Likert scale was chosen as the choice of items on this scale has a higher probability of meeting the objective reality of participants, which in turn, increases the reliability of the research (Joshi, Kale, Chandel & Pal, 2015). Participants were asked to voice their agreeance with several statements regarding their motivations and information collection habits (measured on a 7-point Lickert scale where 1 = entirely disagree, 2 = mostly disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = mostly agree and 7 = entirely agree). By using this Lickert scale, it enabled the researchers to compare and analyse the visitor responses to a series of questions related to attitudes, motivations and habits.

As the data collection phase spanned a total of three days at Naracoorte, face-to-face interviews were the most effective at collecting the required number of 200-300 completed surveys. However, as an added measure, surveys were also printed one week prior to commencing onsite data collection. These copies were kept at the Wonambi Fossil Centre which was a main point of interest for visitors to the caves. A total of four surveys that were available at the centre were voluntarily completed by some visitors prior to the data collection phase. Initially, SurveyMonkey was the preferred option of accessing possible participants who refused to take part in the survey onsite due to lack of time on their behalf. However; it was decided that this would not be the most effective or economical way to continue collecting surveys after the onsite data collection phase. Therefore, it was planned that printed surveys would be left at the Wonambi Fossil Centre for a total of one month after

the onsite data collection phase was complete. This measure was anticipated to ensure as many useable surveys as possible were completed to contribute to the final findings of the study. In addition, those who were approached to partake in an in-depth interview but declined were also asked to provide their email address if they agreed to be contacted and surveyed via email at a later and more suitable date. These measures were taken in order to collect the required amount of surveys and interviews without limiting the data collection to the three days spent at the Naracoorte Caves National Park. However; the desired number of participants responded satisfactorily. Therefore, the measures that were initially planned if an insufficient amount of surveys or interviews were conducted, did not take place.

3.2.6 Survey Distribution and Collection

The surveying process took place from 14 April – 16 April 2017 as these dates were during the Easter period which is the peak season for Naracoorte Caves National Park. This timeframe was established as a suitable time to conduct research during the consultation phase with a principal stakeholder of the site. To collect information on the visitor demographics, motivations and background information collection habits, two researchers spent a total of three, eight hour days surveying visitors who were present at the site during this period. Every second visitor was approached by each researcher in an attempt to randomise the results collected. Surveys took approximately five to seven minutes to be completed by each participant. Over the three days of data collection at Naracoorte, a total of 202 surveys were undertaken. Upon further inspection, 200 surveys were deemed as suitable for further data analysis.

Several limitations regarding the survey distribution and collection methods should be discussed. Firstly, randomization issues were present as there were two researchers onsite. Therefore, both researchers were unaware of each other's actions which made it difficult for the both of them to identify who had and who had not already been interviewed. Both researchers used strong communication skills to ensure the same person was not approached twice, however; this was not possible to achieve at all times. The researchers were initially to be located at different areas of the national park, but both were relocated to the Wonambi Fossil Centre as most visitors would visit there upon arrival.

Secondly, surveys were only distributed in English. This would have limited the completion of surveys by international visitors who had limited knowledge of the English language. Therefore, it can be assumed that the results may have been affected by these limitations that occurred during the data collection phase.

Another limitation that occurred was when a family was approached, the female member of the family was often the one to agree to complete a survey. This may be a contributing factor to the gender skew in the results.

3.3 Interviewing Process

Qualitative research was conducted in the form of in-depth interviews which were also conducted from 14-April – 16 April. The lead researcher was responsible for conducting a total of 25 in-depth interviews over this period and transcribing each interview afterwards. In-depth interviews are often used throughout the exploratory stage of research as it possesses the ability to produce perceptive information into the travel motivations of visitors (Hsu & Huang, 2008). Similar to the survey participants, every second possible interviewee was approached to ensure randomization of the research results. The interviews that were conducted ranged from 20-50 minutes in total and provided a much more comprehensive and open discussion about demographics, motivations and background information collection prior to visitation. Seven interviews were conducted on the first day, and nine interviews were conducted on the remaining two days of the data collection phase.

Certain limitations involving the in-depth interviews were also present during the data collection phase and will be reflected on in this section. Firstly, the in-depth interviews were also only conducted in English which hindered the participation of international visitors who had limited proficiency in the English language. This was clear as several visitors were approached but did not wish to participate in the research as they felt their English skills were not adequate for the in-depth conversations. This inhibited the researcher to collect valuable information about the motivations and habits of those visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park from overseas.

Secondly, as the interviews did take significantly longer than the surveys, this may have

acted as a deterrent for any possible participant who was approached onsite. In addition to this, tours ran more frequently than usual throughout the Easter period. Therefore, tours were running consistently throughout the day, with limited amount of time between each tour. This factor did impede on the ability to approach possible participants in such a short amount of time. Those who declined often felt as though they would simply not have enough time to go through with an in-depth interview in the amount time that they had between tours.

3.4 Data Analysis

Once data is collected, the next step in the process is to analyse the data. Jennings (2010) states that data analysis is 'the process by which the collected information is examined and assessed to identify patterns that address the questions' (p. 437). As this research took on both qualitative and quantitative methods of research, the ways in which both sets of data were analysed differ from one another.

The qualitative data was analysed through a process of coding. This was achieved by analysing the transcriptions post data collection phase. Recurring themes and quotes that occurred in multiple interviews were colour coded and placed into a document with quotes from that theme alone. This process delved deep into the interviews to get an overall sense of what participants had to say, and to determine any outliers in the research.

The data collected from surveying was entered into a spreadsheet in which the data was collated and converted into graphs. In doing this, it gave the data a visual representation for easier analysis. The collated data provided a general picture of the main demographics, motivations and background information collection habits of the participants who took part in the research.

Both sets of data were completed in mid-May 2017, approximately one month after the data collection phase was completed. When both qualitative and quantitative data were analysed, it was important to use both sets of data to support each other. This part of the data analysis process was crucial in establishing a reliable case study.

Chapter 4 Results

4.1 Introduction

This section will explore the results of the data collected and will further discuss the significance of these findings. Major themes were identified regarding the demographic profiles of the respondents, their motivations for travel and background information collection habits prior to visitation. The themes discussed in this chapter will utilise the data collected throughout the surveying process which included a total of 200 respondents.

4.2 Quantitative Results

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of respondents is summarised in the tables below. Of the 200 respondents that were surveyed, most of the respondents (Refer Table 3) were female (60%), aged 35-44 (28%) followed closely by 27% aged 25-34 (Refer Table 4). The third most significant age bracket was those aged between 45-54 (Refer Table 4). The average age of those visiting Naracoorte Caves is 40.21 (Refer Table 4).

Table 2 Gender Profile

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
Male	80	40.0
Female	120	60.0
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

Table 3 Age Profile

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)	Mean
18-24	28	14	2.94
25-34	54	27	8.37
35-44	56	28	11.48
45-54	37	18	9.44
55-64	18	9	5.49
65-74	7	4	2.49
Above 75	0	0	0
TOTAL	**200**	**100**	**40.21**

Most respondents had a household income ranging from $60,001-$120,000 with 21% earning $60,001-$90,000 per year and 21% earning $90,001-$120,000 per year (Refer Table 5). The majority of respondents (43%) confirmed that high school was their highest level of education (Refer Table 6). This was followed by those who had received a Bachelor's Degree as their highest level of education (Refer Table 6).

Table 4 Annual Income

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
Less than $30,000	19	9.5
$30,000 - $60,000	25	12.5
$60,001 - $90,000	42	21.0
$90,001 - $120,000	42	21.0
$120,001 - $150,000	17	8.5
Over $150,000	25	12.5
Prefer not to say	30	15.0
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

Table 5 Education Level

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
Did not complete high school	7	3.5
High school	86	43.0
Bachelor degree	69	34.5
Postgraduate degree	38	19.0
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

Out of the 200 respondents surveyed, a majority (64%) were visiting NCNP for the first time (Refer Table 7). The minority (36%) had visited NCNP on previous occasions. Respondents visiting NCNP were mostly domestic visitors on holiday (69%) (See Table 8). Of the 200 respondents, 67% were born in Australia (Refer Table 11). A total of 94.5% of respondents were permanent Australian residents (Refer Table 9). Only 5.5% of those surveyed were international visitors (Refer Table 9).

Table 6 First Time Visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
Yes	128	64
No	72	36
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

Table 7 Visitor Status

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
Local resident	14	7
Domestic visitor on daytrip	34	17
Domestic visitor on holiday	139	69
International visitor on holiday	13	7
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

Table 8 Residency

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
Australian Resident	189	94.5
International Visitor	11	5.5
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

Most visitors to NCNP were travelling with either their family including children (38%) or with their partner or spouse (33%) (Refer Table 10). Those visiting with friends equated to 17.5% of the data, and only 3.5% were travelling on their own (Refer Table 10).

Table 9 Accompanying Person/s

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
No-one	7	3.5
Partner/spouse	66	33.0
Friends	35	17.5
Family (including children)	76	38.0
Family (including adults	15	7.5
Volunteers/social group	0	0
Co-workers	1	0.5
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

Most visitors were born in Australia (67%), and the second largest group were those born in the UK, which equated to 11% of the total respondents (Refer Table 11). Indian-born visitors were the third largest group (5%), followed by Germany (3%) (Refer Table 11). Other countries yielded significantly lower results with China, Malaysia, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada representing 2% each of the respondents (Refer Table 11). 1% of those surveyed were born in the USA, and those born in other various countries equated to 3% of the sample size (Refer Table 11)

Table 10 Country of Birth (Top 10)

Category	No. of Responses	Sample (%)
1. Australia	134	67.0
2. UK	21	11.0
3. India	9	5.0
4. Germany	6	3.0
5. China	4	2.0
6. Malaysia	4	2.0
7. South Africa	4	2.0
8. New Zealand	3	2.0
9. Canada	3	2.0
10. USA	2	1.0
	10	3.0
TOTAL	**200**	**100**

4.2.2 Typical Visitor Behaviour and Motivations

Overall, a majority of the 200 respondents stated their intention to visit Naracoorte Caves was due to the geological aspects (88%) (Refer Table 12). Most respondents visited the site to participate in a guided tour of the caves (65%) (Refer Table 12) and 49% stated that the UNESCO World Heritage status of the caves was a major motivator of the visit (Refer Table 13).

Factors from the 'escape motivation' as hypothesised by Kim et al. (2008), were included in the survey conducted at Naracoorte. Relief from everyday stress was not a major factor that motivated respondents to visit Naracoorte Caves (34%) (Refer Table 12), however, a majority of the respondents (86%) listed enjoying free time as a significant factor in their decision to visit (Refer Table 12). Only 40% of respondents listed recharging energy as a main motivator of visitation (Refer Table 12). Shopping for souvenirs was not chosen as a significant motivation factor by a large portion of respondents (69%) (Refer Table 12).

Another dimension of motivations relating to cave tourism is 'knowledge motivation' (Kim, et al., 2008). Respondents strongly associated their motivations with this dimension. A significant number of respondents (59%) agreed that a motivation for travelling to Naracoorte Caves National Park was to expand knowledge of cave tourism (Refer Table 12), with another 77% of respondents stating that the desire to experience cave tourism was a significant motivational factor (Refer Table 12). While only 42% of those surveyed chose interest in cave tourism resources as a major motivator (Refer Table 12), most respondents (69%) decided to visit the caves for educational purposes (Refer Table 12).

Table 11 Escape and knowledge motivations influencing visit to Naracoorte Caves National Park

Factor	1* (%)	2* (%)	3* (%)	4* (%)	5* (%)	6* (%)	7* (%)	Mean
Escape Motivation								
Decided to visit to get relief from everyday stress	19	11	8	28	25	3	6	3.59
Decided to visit to enjoy free time	4	1	1	7	37	25	24	5.41
Decided to visit to recharge energy	11	7	7	35	21	10	9	4.11
Decided to visit to shop for souvenirs	43	14	12	22	6	1	2	2.40
Knowledge Motivation								
Decided to visit to expand knowledge of cave tourism	7	7	6	21	33	15	11	4.53
Decided to visit to experience cave tourism	2	4	2	15	31	29	17	5.23
Decided to visit because of interest in cave tourism resources	11	8	7	32	26	9	7	4.09
Decided to visit for educational purposes	6	5	6	14	36	20	13	4.78
Decided to visit because of geological aspects	0	2	2	8	24	33	31	5.73
Decided to visit to participate in a guided tour	5	4	6	20	21	22	22	5.01

* Note: *N* = 200. 1*= Entirely disagree, 2*= Mostly disagree, 3*= Somewhat disagree, 4*=

Neither agree nor disagree, 5*= Somewhat agree, 6*= Mostly agree, 7*= Entirely agree

Socialising with friends who have an interest in cave tourism was not a major motivator with only 32% of respondents agreeing with the statement (Refer Table 13). Taking photos of cave areas is a significant factor of the 'socialisation motivation' (Kim, et al., 2008), with a relatively significant portion of respondents (64%) stating this activity motivated their decision to travel to NCNP (Refer Table 13). Less than half (49%) of the respondents saw building ties with relatives and friends as a major motivator for their visitation (Refer Table 13) and over half (52%) felt that showing off the experience of participating in a cave tour was not a desire that contributed to their desire to travel to the caves (Refer Table 13).

Regarding the 'novelty motivation' (Kim, et al., 2008), 36% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they chose to visit the caves to seek novelty (Refer Table 13). However, a significant number of respondents (79%) decided to visit to get pleasure from adventure and a further 78% also stated that a major motivator was to satisfy their curiosity (Refer Table 13).

Table 12 Socialisation and novelty motivations influencing visit to Naracoorte Caves National Park

Factor	1* (%)	2* (%)	3* (%)	4* (%)	5* (%)	6* (%)	7* (%)	Mean
Socialisation Motivation								
Decided to visit to socialise with friends who have an interest in cave tourism	22	7	7	32	13	10	9	3.71
Decided to visit to take photos of cave areas	6	4	4	22	28	16	20	4.88
Decided to visit to build ties with family and friends	13	8	6	25	19	15	15	4.34
Decided to visit to show off experience of taking a cave tour	30	10	12	30	8	4	6	3.06
Novelty Motivation								
Decided to visit due to UNESCO World Heritage status	7	8	5	31	23	13	13	4.42
Decided to visit to seek novelty	21	7	8	33	19	9	4	3.66
Decide to visit to get pleasure from adventure	4	1	3	13	33	2	19	5.24
Decided to visit to satisfy curiosity	1	1	1	19	30	29	19	5.36

* Note: *N* = 200. 1*= Entirely disagree, 2*= Mostly disagree, 3*= Somewhat disagree, 4*= Neither agree nor disagree, 5*= Somewhat agree, 6*= Mostly agree, 7*= Entirely agree

4.2.3. Background Information Collection Habits

In this section, respondents were asked to choose the sources which they utilised to retrieve background information prior to their travels to NCNP. Multiple answers were accepted as it is not uncommon to use more than one source of information when searching for information. Overall, the largest portion (36%) stated that they used the Internet to collect information prior to visitation (Refer Table 14). The second largest group (34%) was those who sought information through word of mouth (Refer Table 14). Brochures were another source that were used by a relatively important number of respondents (18%), however, not nearly as many as those who used social media (Refer Table 14). Social media was used by a total of 4% of the respondents followed by information gained from past experiences and signage (2%) (Refer Table 14). Newspapers and magazines, travel agencies, tourist information and Google Maps were all used by only 1% of the sample size meaning that overall, these information sources show less significance than other sources such as the Internet, word of mouth and brochures (Refer Table 14).

Table 13 Background information sources used prior to visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park

Source	Sample (%)
Brochure	18.0
Internet search	36.0
Social media	4.0
Newspaper/magazine	1.0
Travel agency	1.0
Word of mouth	34.0
Past experience	2.0
Signs	2.0
Tourist information	1.0
Google maps	1.0
TOTAL	**100**

Table 14 Usage frequency of information sources utilised prior to visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park

Source	Sample (%)
Brochure	11.0
Internet search	50.0
Social media	1.0
Newspaper/magazine	1.0
Word of mouth	32.0
Past experience	2.0
Signs	2.0
Google maps	1.0
TOTAL	**100**

Out of the information sources previously discussed, respondents were asked to choose which single source was the one that was utilised the most throughout the information collection stage of the travel decision-making process. A large number (50%) of respondents chose the Internet as the most frequently used source of information (Refer Table 15). A smaller but significant number of 32% of respondents chose word of mouth as their information source preference (Refer Table 15). Only 11% of respondents chose brochures as their most used information source and an even lesser amount (2%) used past experiences the most (Refer Table 15). Lastly, newspapers and magazines, social media and Google Map were used the least frequently with only 1% of respondents choosing these specific information sources (Refer Table 15).

Table 15 Online information collection habits

Factor	1*(%)	2*(%)	3*(%)	4*(%)	5*(%)	6*(%)	7*(%)	Mean
I find myself using the Internet frequently for information prior to visiting tourist destinations	3.0	2.0	1.0	8.0	13.0	25.0	48.0	5.89
I specifically looked for information on Naracoorte Caves National Park on social media	22.0	11.0	13.0	26.0	12.0	8.0	8.0	3.48
I was disappointed to find a lack of social media presence from Naracoorte Caves National Park	19.0	9.0	8.0	54.0	6.0	2.0	2.0	3.29
My expectations derived from prior information collection were met by my experience at Naracoorte Caves National Park	4.0	1.0	3.0	48.0	18.0	14.0	12.0	4.62
I was satisfied with my experience at Naracoorte Caves National Park	0.0	0.0	1.0	33.0	15.0	25.0	26.0	5.40

* Note: *N* = 200. 1*= Entirely disagree, 2*= Mostly disagree, 3*= Somewhat disagree, 4*= Neither agree nor disagree, 5*= Somewhat agree, 6*= Mostly agree, 7*= Entirely agree

To establish the importance of digital marketing, respondents were then questioned about how the Internet and social media is generally used when searching for information on a site that they wish to visit such as NCNP (Refer Table 16). Overall, a majority (86%) of the survey participants stated that to some extent, the Internet would generally be used to collect information on a particular site prior to visitation, meaning digital sources are crucial aspects of marketing (Refer Table 16).

In terms of social media, only 28% of the respondents sought information on NCNP on any platform of social media (Refer Table 16). 46% disagreed with the statement about specifically looking for information about the caves on social media (Refer Table 16). Therefore, the next question did not apply to most respondents, hence 54% did not agree nor disagree, however

a significant number (36%) of participants stated they were not disappointed to find a lack of social media presence from NCNP (Refer Table 16). More respondents (44%) agreed than disagreed with the statement suggesting expectations that derived from a previous information search were met by the facilities and activities provided by the park (Refer Table 16). Overall, 66% of respondents were satisfied with the experiences had at NCNP (Refer Table 16).

Chapter 5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

This section will provide a more comprehensive analysis of the results by analysing the qualitative findings collected from the in-depth interviews conducted with 25 individual participants. By using both quantitative and qualitative sets of data, this will provide greater depth to the results as the qualitative data supports what the quantitative data established in the previous section. Demographic characteristics of the respondents were also provided to further contextualise the qualitative findings (See Appendix 3).

5.2 Most Common Motivational Factors

The five most common motivations have been identified as the factors that received the highest mean scores. The top motivations for visiting NCNP are geological aspects; enjoying free time; getting pleasure from adventure; satisfying curiosity; and experiencing cave tourism (Refer Table 17).

Table 16 Most Common Motivational Factors
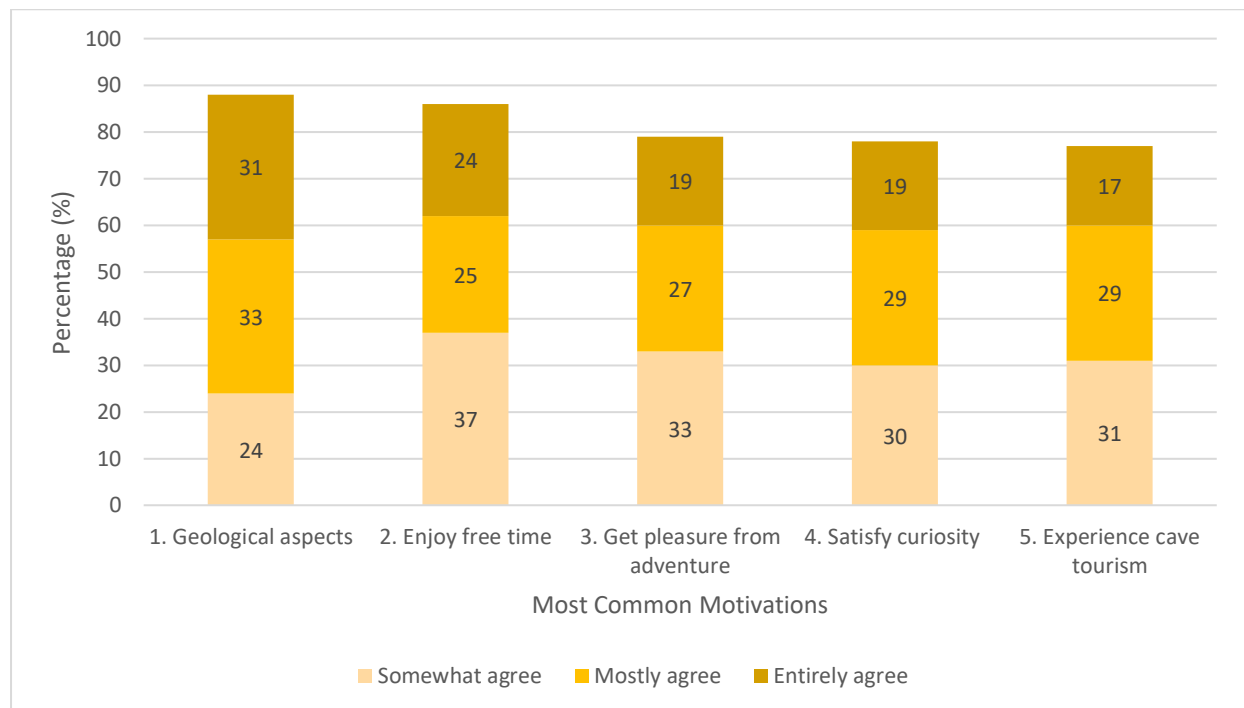
5.2.1 Geological Aspects

Geotourism involves touristic activities that consist of rocks and minerals, geology and geomorphology, natural resources of landscape, landforms, fossil beds and the overall appreciation of these features (Newsome, 2005). Natural resources such as these are significant as those visiting sites such as Naracoorte Caves National Park are primarily interested in visiting, learning or appreciating geosites (Dowling, 2013). Geological aspects are therefore an important component of a tourists' experience at NCNP. Cave tourists are interested in not only information about geological aspects, but previous studies have found a common interest in the conservation of geological landscapes and its associated heritage (Dowling, 2013; Fauzi & Misni, 2016; Kim, et al., 2008). Additionally, those visiting cave sites are often motivated by the overall aesthetics and the surrounding environment of caves (Kim, et al., 2008). Therefore, geological aspects are important to consider when observing the motivations of cave tourists such as those at NCNP.

As previously discussed, most respondents (88%) agreed to some extent that geological aspects are a major motivation to visit Naracoorte Caves. 31% entirely agreed with the statement, 33% mostly agreed, and 24% somewhat agreed that geological aspects were a main motivational factor. This motivation can be categorised as 'knowledge motivation' which has been hypothesised by both Kim et al. (2008) and Mehmetoglu (2007) as a motivation in which tourists desire to experience and learn about natural aspects at the site they choose to visit. This is also established by other studies that suggest nature-based tourists are generally motivated by the desire to expand knowledge about natural settings Allan, et al., 2015; Zhang & Peng, 2014). Within the knowledge category, participants of the in-depth interviews provided insight into the different types of knowledge that they desired to increase through their visit to the caves. Two respondents stated they were interested in the caves as they had experienced cave tourism in the country they were born in:

"*We do have caves in Zimbabwe and I just wanted to compare and see what they're like here.*" (R1)

This female respondent was travelling with a friend who was also interested in comparing the caves to the ones they had witnessed in their home country of Zimbabwe. It has been suggested that expanding one's knowledge of caves and cave tourism is a common

motivator of geotourists (Kim, et al, 2008). Evidently, while both respondents had previously visited other caves, they wished to expand their knowledge on caves to identify whether they differ in various countries. In a similar instance, another participant had also visited other nearby caves and wanted to find out more at Naracoorte. This respondent specified a desire to see geological formations of caves such as stalagmites and stalactites and had visited the nearby Tantanoola Caves due to this personal interest in palaeontology.

Another participant also established their interest in caves which motivated them to visit Naracoorte. This participant also noted their desire to learn about history which was another typical motivation. The three respondents who specifically mentioned history listed this as a main motivation for choosing Naracoorte Caves as a place to visit. A growing interest in science and natural history has further added to the concept of nature-based tourism and the initial desires of simply enjoying natural settings devoid of human interference (Olafsdottir, 2013).

"I guess I'm interested in natural history including the evolution of animals and a bit about geology. So, I think that is what motivated me to visit today." (R5)

Visiting a site to learn about history, culture and heritage has been identified as an important motivator for natural heritage tourists (Kerstetter,et al., 2001; Moscardo, 1996; Olafsdottir, 2013). Furthermore, earth's history and ecological processes is one of the key criteria for a site to become a UNESCO natural heritage site (UNESCO, 2013). As previously discussed, NCNP provides an insight into the rich history of not only the region, but of South Australia. By analysing this data, it is evident that the history of the site is a major aspect which motivates tourists to visit the park.

The fossils of megafauna that once existed in Australia can be identified as one of the main geological aspects that encourages tourists to visit. Most respondents mentioned fossils as one of the main attractions that promoted visitation to the site.

"I want to go underground and see some rocks and things, stalactites, stalagmites and maybe a few fossils, that's about it." (R17)

"I did a science degree majoring in archaeology and biology and you know, did a lot of human evolution so I guess it's led to a bit of an interest in fossils and fauna and all those sorts of things as well." (R25)

A number of respondents also noted that it was their travelling companion that was interested in the fossils. Previous literature has established the idea that a higher percentage of nature-based tourists travel with a companion in comparison to other types of tourists (Maleski, 2012). Therefore, the findings here show that travelling with a companion who has an interest in cave tourism and its accompanying geological aspects can influence the choice of travel destination.

The fossils at NCNP are a main attraction of the site and their existence is one of the most prominent reasons why the site became UNESCO World Heritage Listed. Both quantitative and qualitative data sets suggest that the geological aspects are a key factor in attracting visitors. To support this finding, it has been previously implied that those interested in cave tourism not only enjoy the aesthetics of the caves but are also interested in the conservation and information of geological aspects such as the fossils at Naracoorte (Kim et al., 2008). Similarly, to support the findings, Dowling (2013) also noted that education was a key motivation for most geotourists.

5.2.2 Enjoying Free Time

Enjoying free time is considered a key motivation listed under the 'escape dimension' (Kim, et al., 2008). Intrinsic motivations such as rest and relaxation, the desire to escape and enjoying free time can be identified as one of the main motivators for nature-based tourists (Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). Escaping from the everyday life by spending free time at a tourist destination is clearly not a new concept. Many studies have discovered that a key motivation for visiting nature-based sites is often related to the escape motivation in which tourists visit sites to relax and enjoy free time (Allan, et al., 2015; Kim, et al, 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). Chang (2014) further adds that nature-based tourism primarily consists of activities undertaken by tourists while on holiday or enjoying free time with a main purpose of enjoying natural attractions. It is clear that tourists wish to escape everyday mundane tasks during their free time and further believe that spending that time in a natural

setting such as Naracoorte Caves will enhance the experience (Chang, 2014; Valentine, 1992). This is reflected in the findings of this study.

The second most chosen motivation was 'to enjoy free time' at NCNP with 24% entirely agreeing with the statement, 25% mostly agreeing and 37% somewhat agreeing. As the data was collected during the Easter holidays, this motivation may have been chosen at a higher point on the Likert scale as opposed to other periods throughout the year. This is due to the extra free time that most people receive over the Easter break. The qualitative data evidently shows that enjoying free time and relaxing was a key factor for most visitors to visit Naracoorte Caves National Park:

"I just came here to relax, there's five of us that work full time so it's a nice break from work, it's a beautiful area and it's a lovely place to be." (R14)

In addition to this, natural settings are often visited to enhance certain activities such as enjoying free time (Valentine, 1992; Chang, 2014). Several respondents voiced a wish to enjoy the natural surroundings during the in-depth interviews:

"I also like just sitting in a natural environment and taking it in, because I think that's good for you and it feels good once you get used to it, so it's for those reasons. I was motivated to visit for the trees and the caves. The natural surroundings." (R5)

"We're huge fans of nature, getting out there just seeing countryside and its beauty. We want to see more of the natural side of the state to see what's out there, see what we've missed." (R11)

Evidently, enjoying free time is a major motivator for visitors to Naracoorte Caves. This finding relates back to this theme discussed in the literature review whereby various authors have established the escape motivation as a common aspect of nature-based tourist motivation (Allan, et al., 2015; Kim, et al, 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). Furthermore, as Valentine (1992) suggested, nature-based attractions are often visited as the relaxing attributes of natural settings adds to the overall tourist experience which has been established throughout the qualitative data collected for this paper.

5.2.3 Experiencing Adventure

Adventure in a tourism context is generally considered as an experience that may pose a risk (Weber, 2001). Getting pleasure from adventure has been a key finding in the motivations of nature-based tourists in previous studies (Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmehtoglu, 2007). Kozak (2002) states seeking and experiencing adventure as a key push factor for tourists. It is categorised as a 'novelty motivation' (Kim, et al., 2008), and has been an important part of the findings of this study. Being part of the novelty category, adventure is clustered with other motivations such as escape, surprise, thrill, boredom alleviation and change from routine (Berlyne, 1950). A common factor of all these motivations is the idea of experiencing something different from everyday life. As caves are not often experienced daily, this gives NCNP an adventurous edge.

A significant number (19%) of respondents entirely agreed that pleasure from adventure was a main motivator in their visit to NCNP, followed by 20% mostly agreeing and 33% somewhat agreeing. One of the first definitions of nature-based tourism included the motivation to experience adventure as a key element (Laarman & Durst, 1987).

"Both of us are very much into hiking and anything sort of adventure related and it's up the road, a quick getaway from Adelaide so it's a decent amount of time to get away for a short visit and do something while we're here." (R10)

"The main reason for visiting the caves today was adventure, I guess." (R17)

The qualitative data presented here correlates with the quantitative data in that adventure can be identified as a main motivational factor for visiting Naracoorte Caves. Respondent Ten suggests that their idea of adventure is experiencing exposure to risk through touristic activities such as adventure caving (Weber, 2001; Crane & Fletcher, 2016). In contrast, a vast majority of cave tourists such as Respondent Seventeen visit caves in safe conditions such as well-lit concrete paths and still identify this as an adventure due to the rarity of the experience (Crane & Fletcher, 2016).

Seeking adventure and experiencing its accompanying pleasure has been identified as a major motivation for most nature-based tourists in previous papers (Laarman & Durst, 1987; Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007). This study is no exception with a majority of respondents choosing to visit NCNP in order to experience some adventure. Therefore, this section complies with the findings of previous studies on nature-based tourists seeking pleasure from adventure.

5.2.4 Satisfying Curiosity

Curiosity is identified as a characteristic of human behaviour referring to the intrinsic desire to search for and obtain new information or experiences (Berlyne, 1978). Curiosity can be deconstructed into two categories. These categories are interest curiosity, which concerns the pleasure acquired from knowing; and deprivation curiosity, which involves the seeking of information to reduce uncertainty (Litman, 2010). Satisfying curiosity has been identified as a 'novelty motivation' (Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007). Previous studies have discovered curiosity is one of the main drivers of nature-based tourism and nature-based tourist motivations (Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Dowling, 2013).

A large proportion (78%) of respondents agreed with the statement 'I decided to visit NCNP to satisfy curiosity'. 19% entirely agreed followed by a larger number of 29% mostly agreeing, and 30% somewhat agreeing. Previous studies have discovered curiosity is one of the main drivers of nature-based tourism and nature-based tourist motivations (Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Dowling, 2013). The qualitative data saw a significant number of respondents mention their varying desires to satisfy their own personal curiosity:

"My friend has basically been planning the trip so I think it was just something interesting to see caves and experience something different. We were just curious to see what it's like and to experience something different from city life, and just experience a different part of Adelaide." (R1)

"We have caves in my country so I was curious if it would be any different to the caves we have." (R4)

A regular theme found throughout the qualitative data was the desire to experience something different, which may lead to curiosity and furthermore, visiting a site to satisfy the curiosity that has been generated. One respondent had recommended NCNP to many people as a travel consultant but had never visited personally. Therefore, curiosity is a main motivator for this respondent's decision to visit the area. Similarly, another respondent wanted to experience a different part of Australia, highlighting the fact that the caves are different to something that could be experienced in the Riverlands of South Australia.

Overall, most respondents agreed that satisfying curiosity was a key component in the final decision to visit Naracoorte Caves. This motivation has been identified as a crucial factor in previous studies (Kim et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007), and this study has further added to this concept as many respondents suggested experiencing something different was also an important factor of their curiosity. Zhang and Peng (2014) have also established the fact that many nature-based tourists are motivated by the idea of experiencing something different. This research supports this statement that has been identified in previous literature.

5.2.5 Experiencing Cave Tourism

Newsome (2005) identified cave tourists as those who have an interest in touristic activities comprising of rocks and minerals, geology and geomorphology, natural resources of landscape, landforms, fossil beds and the overall appreciation of these features. In addition to the overall interest in these geological and geomorphological aspects, it is also suggested that the urge to experience cave tourism fosters an interest in the conservation of these aspects (Kim, et al., 2008). A defining characteristic of nature-based tourists and cave tourists is their overall interest in enjoying natural features whilst also supporting conservation for future generations to enjoy (Bjork, 1997). Experiencing cave tourism ties in closely with the geological aspects motivation that was previously discussed in this section.

Experiencing cave tourism was the fifth most significant motivation of a majority (77%) of respondents. 17% of respondents entirely agreed that cave tourism was a main motivator, 29% mostly agreed and 31% only somewhat agreed. These statistics are further supported by the qualitative results derived from the in-depth interviews. A significant number of

respondents voiced their interest in visiting various caves and an interest in the conservation of these attractions:

"I've seen the caves at Kangaroo Island and in Jamaica we saw some caves and we were in the Naracoorte area so we thought why not visit." (R20)

"I think the conservation has always interested me to come. I've come here just to see the nature, caves and the conservation of these features." (R24)

Similar to the geological aspects motivation, experiencing cave tourism can be categorised as a 'knowledge motivation (Kim et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007). This desire to gain knowledge about caves has been a recurring theme throughout this section. Expanding knowledge by learning through touristic activities has been identified as a major motivator of both cultural and natural heritage tourists (Kerstetter, et al., 2001). Evidently this study further supports the idea that experiencing cave tourism is a major motivator due to the desire to learn and grow one's knowledge of the many complex aspects of caves and their surrounding areas.

5.3 Least Common Motivational Factors

The five least common motivations are the motivations that produced the lowest mean scores. These findings suggest that the motivations in this section do not play an important role in the motivation of tourists visiting NCNP. The lowest five motivations are shopping for souvenirs; showing off experience of a cave tour; relief from everyday stress; seeking novelty; and socialising with friends interested in cave tourism (See Table 18).

Table 17 Least Common Motivational Factors
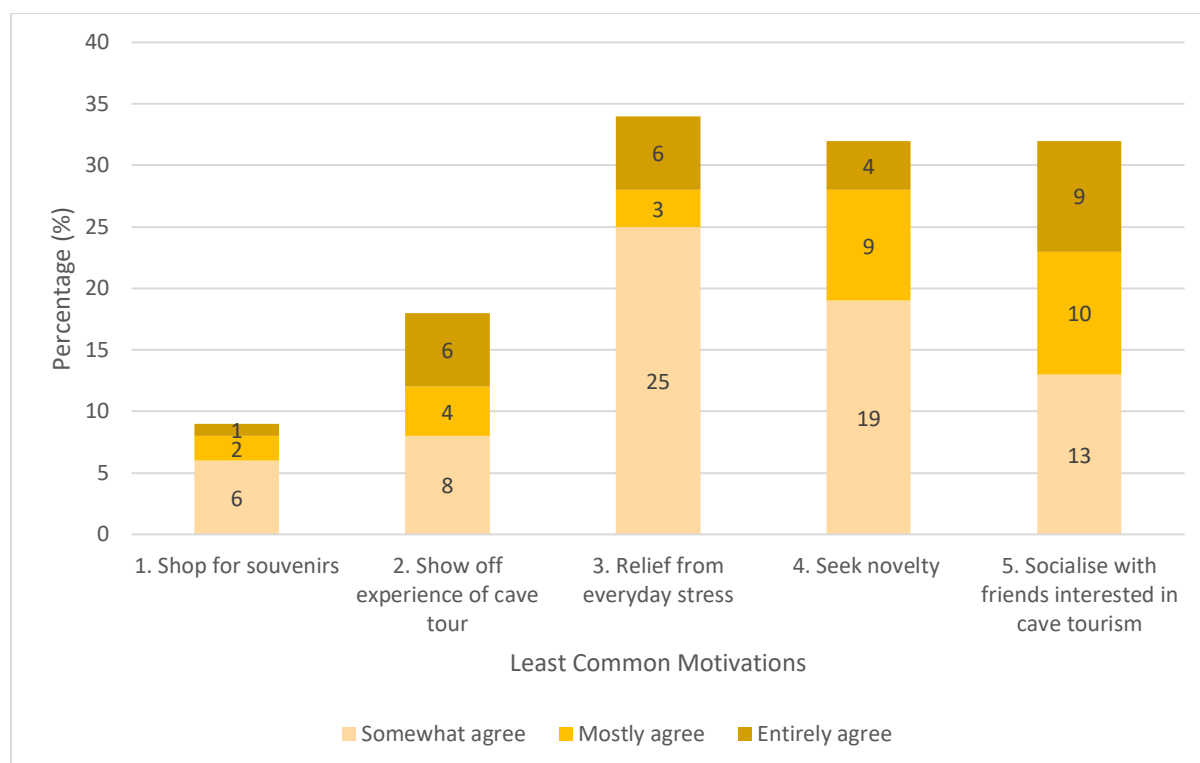
5.3.1 Shopping for Souvenirs

Qi and Hong (2011) identify souvenirs as communication platforms that are capable of promoting nature-based tourism beyond the site itself. Furthermore, other research has suggested that souvenirs play an important role in influencing the tourist experience, whereby in a nature-based context, consumption adopts a symbolic value (Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). Despite these findings, it has been found that overall, nature-based tourists are less inclined towards activities such as shopping as this is not an activity typically associated with visiting natural settings (Lang, O'Leary & Morrison, 1994; Meric & Hunt, 1998). Additionally, a previous study has also found that one of the least important motivations for nature-based tourists is shopping (Maleski, 2012).

Only 9% of the 200 survey respondents listed shopping for souvenirs as one of their main motivations for visiting NCNP. Most respondents (69%) disagreed with the statement. Out of the 25 interviewees, no participants mentioned shopping for souvenirs in any context, meaning there is little relevance to this motivation in most cases. Shopping for souvenirs is not typically associated with some of the major motivations discussed earlier which may be an indicator as to why it did not yield significant results.

Two survey respondents (1%), however, did suggest providing a wider variety of souvenirs for tourists to purchase as an improvement for the caves. A more diverse range of products may increase the interest in buying souvenirs at Naracoorte Caves.

It is evident that past literature has noted the importance of souvenir shopping however; it is not regarded as a crucial part of nature tourists' experiences. Therefore, the findings from this study also reflect the insignificance of souvenir shopping at a nature-based tourism site such as NCNP.

5.3.2 Showing Off Experience of a Cave Tour

Showing off an experience of a cave tour has been listed as a main motivation of cave tourism (Kim, et al., 2008), this is supported by other previous literature that has determined this same concept (Baym, 2010; Hillman, 2007; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Urry, 2007). Sharing an experience on platforms such as social media has become a modern-day norm and this has been identified as a self-centred motivation that stems from the want to gain respect and recognition, increase social ties and augment one's self esteem or position in society (Baym, 2010; Urry, 2007). Experiences of tourism are often shared as proof that a site was physically visited (Hillman, 2007). In contrast, another study suggested that sharing tourism experiences through social media sites was motivated by community-related values (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Furthermore, sharing experiences is not only influenced by self-centred motivations, but also provides a chance for visitors to reflect on the experience and talk about the past trip with their social network (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017).

Despite findings from previous studies, this study does not yield the same result with 18% of respondents admitting that showing off the experience of a cave tour was one of their main motivations for visiting the park. A majority of interviewees stated their plans to participate in a tour during their visit to NCNP. Another significant proportion of respondents also mentioned that they had already taken a tour of one of the caves. The tours varied from guided tours to self-guided tours that are available at the site. In some cases, visitors had to spend more than one day in order to participate in a larger amount of tours. Despite their

participation in multiple cave tours, interview participants did not mention their desire to show off their experience of a guided tour at NCNP.

While it is evident that tours are a popular activity to participate in at NCNP, none of the interviewees stated the desire to show off their cave tour experience. This may be because showing off is a habit that some do not feel comfortable with admitting to.

5.3.3 Relief from Everyday Stress

Stress can be experienced emotionally, physically, and cognitively and can include symptoms such as anxiety, degradation of the immune system, and reduced attention capacity (Evans & Cohen, 1987; Thayer, 1989; Ulrich, Simons, Losito, Fiorito, Miles & Zelson, 1991). Stress restoration through leisure is believed to improve psychological states and change moods from negative to positive (Hull & Michael, 1995). Studies have shown that exposure to natural environments can promote rest and relaxation, leading to stress relief (Chang, 2014; Hull & Michael, 1995). Therefore, nature-based sites such as NCNP be instrumental sites for stress relief.

As previously discussed, relaxation is an important factor for nature-based tourist motivations and this has been further supported by the top five motivations identified in this study. Nature-based tourists have consistently listed relaxation as a major travel motivation (Allan, et al., 2015; Dowling, 2013; Kim et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). Mehmetoglu (2007) identifies this as escaping the 'mundane everyday' and posits that mental relaxation and an environment such as the one at Naracoorte Caves National Park enhances the escape from everyday life.

Relief from everyday stress was not found to be a major motivator to visit NCNP with only 35% respondents stating this factor motivated them to visit and 38% disagreeing with the statement.

A few interview participants mentioned relaxing and enjoying the natural surroundings at NCNP as one of the main motivators for their visit. None of the participants specifically mentioned everyday stress, however, a significant number of responders did cite the need

to escape everyday life by experiencing something different such as the caves. Despite these findings, it cannot be assumed that the want to escape from everyday life is purely associated with stress.

Despite the obvious need for intrinsic motivations such as relaxation and rest, none of the interview participants associated this with escaping from everyday stress. Thus, relief from everyday stress has not been identified as a major motivational factor for visitors to NCNP.

5.3.4 Seeking Novelty

Novelty is the degree of contrast between both past experiences and present perceptions (Pearson, 1970). Seeking novelty has been identified in previous studies as a main motivator of nature-based and general tourists (Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Som, Marzuki, Yousefi & AbuKhalifeh, 2012; Toyama & Yamada, 2012; Wan, 2013; Wong, Cheung & Wan, 2013). Lee and Crompton (1992) hypothesised that novelty is comprised of surprise, thrill, boredom alleviation and adventure, and that novelty can be a new experience, but not necessarily new knowledge (Crompton, 1979). It can be assumed that novelty would be a popular motivation for those visiting NCNP due to the novelty of travelling to the region and experiencing caves. However, the results suggest otherwise.

A small number (32%) of respondents agreed that seeking novelty was a significant motivator. A larger number (36%) disagreed with the concept, therefore, seeking novelty is not considered to be a major factor in motivating tourists to visit NCNP. As previously discussed, the 'novelty motivation' did make it to the top motivations, with some respondents seeking various experiences. A significant number of participants did say that the caves were chosen as a destination to visit due to their desire to experience something different. In contrast, another interview participant stated:

"I come from a town in the UK where there's lots of caves so caves are nothing new to me, I've been in and out of them since I was a kid." (R21)

In addition to this, other participants had also previously visited caves, therefore, the novelty factor does not apply as much as it would to a first-time cave tourist. Seeking

novelty did not garner a lot of response from both survey and interview participants. As fewer respondents did not relate seeking novelty to their own sets of motivations, it is not considered a top motivation, as otherwise stated by various studies (Mehmetoglu, 2007; Kim, et al., 2008).

5.3.5 Socialising with Friends Interested in Cave Tourism

Past studies have discovered socialisation to be a key player in motivating nature-based tourists to visit a certain site (Kim et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007). In a previous study, 75% of visitors surveyed at a geotourism site in Indonesia were accompanied with friends (Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013). In a similar study, it was established that nature-based tourists displayed a higher percentage of travelling with friends as opposed to general tourists (Maleski, 2012). It has been found that a minority of nature tourists travel alone, which can be supported by the concept that nature tourists travel to spend time with either friends or family (Maleski, 2012).

Only 32% agreed with the idea that they primarily decided to visit NCNP to socialise with friends that are interested in cave tourism. 36% disagreed with the statement. Past studies have discovered socialisation to be a key player in motivating nature-based tourists to visit a certain site (Kim et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007). Various interview respondents agreed that their friends had played a part in the motivation to travel to Naracoorte Caves National Park:

"My friend motivated me to come here. She's basically been planning the trip so I think it was just something interesting and seeing caves. My friend found it on a map and she wanted to come here to see the caves and go sightseeing." (R1)

When asked for any personal reasons to visit the park, Respondent Thirteen stated there were no personal interests that acted as a motivation and that the trip was organised by a group of friends, however, their personal interests were not cave tourism. Therefore, while the group were not necessarily interested in cave tourism, the opportunity to socialise with friends was a significant motivator. This contradicts the findings from the quantitative results.

While some respondents have suggested that visiting with friends who are interested in cave tourism is a significant motivator, it is not entirely reflected by the statistics from the quantitative data. A major factor may be that most respondents (83%) did not visit with friends, therefore this motivation would not have applied to them.

5.4 Sources of Information Most Utilised by Visitors to NCNP

A significant amount of research has been conducted on the tourist decision-making process (Choi, Lehto, Morrison & Jang, 2011; Sharifpour, Walters, Ritchie & Winter, 2014). This research pays specific attention to the information sources most frequently used by tourists and at what point they are used throughout the decision-making process (Sharifpour, et al., 2014). This section will look at the sources most used by those who visit NCNP. This will also be broken down into the most frequently used sources by both interstate and intrastate visitors. This will assist NCNP in understanding the differences in the decision-making processes between these two demographics. As the international visitor sample size in this study was relatively small, these results will not be analysed further. The main information sources include the use of an Internet search, word of mouth, brochures, social media, past experiences and signs (See Table 19). Analysing the use of these information sources will assist in understanding where information is retrieved prior to visitation and may contribute to the site's marketing strategies.

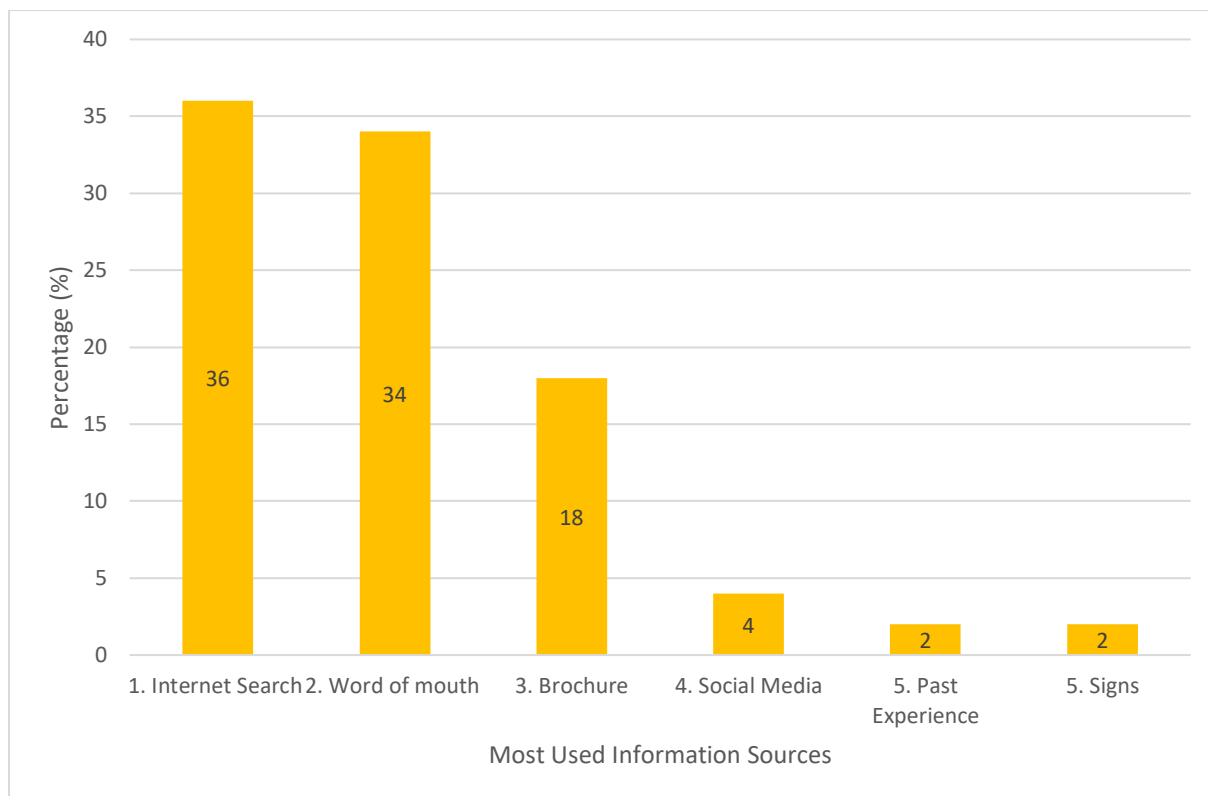*Table 18 Top Information Sources Used Prior to Visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park*

Table 19 Most Frequently Used Information Sources by Interstate Visitors Prior to Visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park
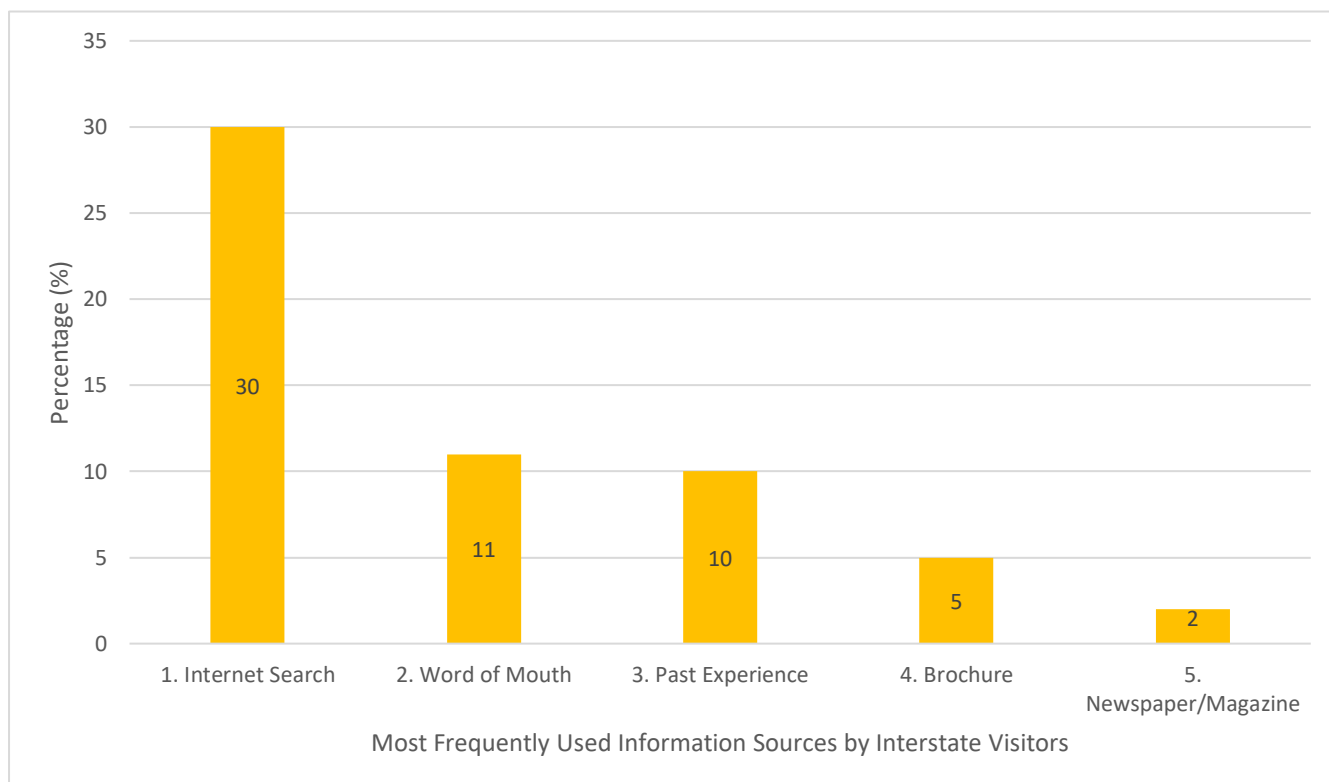
Table 20 Most Frequently Used Information Sources Used by South Australian Visitors Prior to Visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park
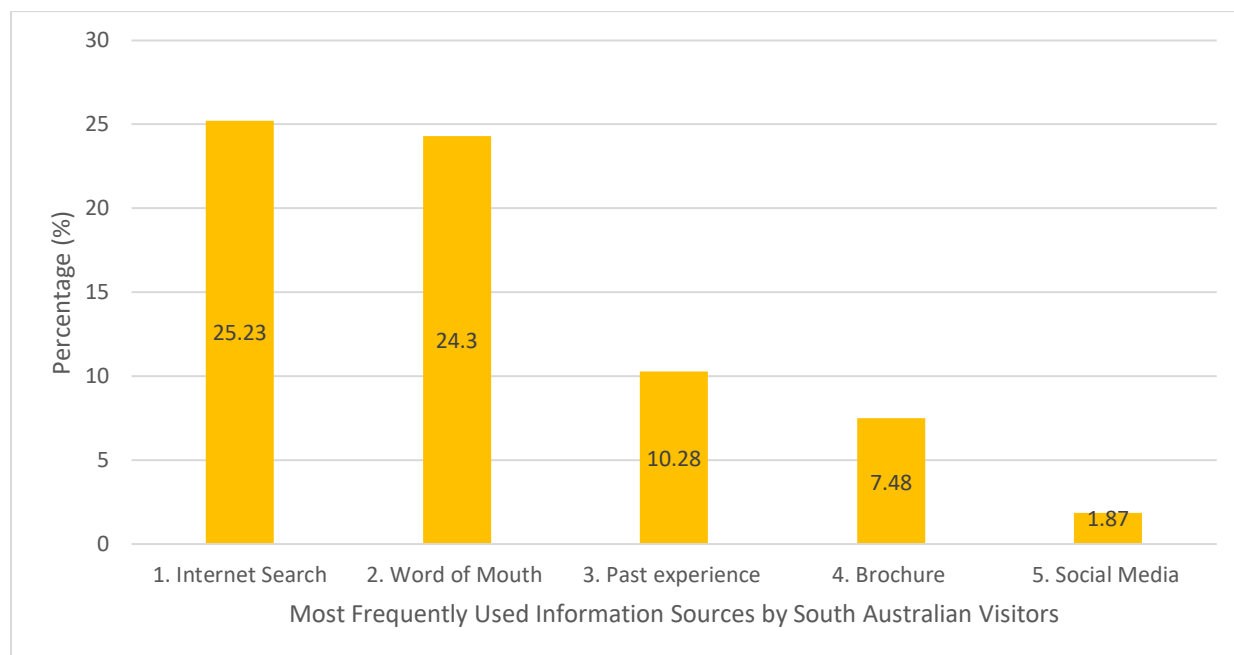
5.4.1 Internet Searches

36% of all respondents chose the Internet as one of their main sources when searching for information prior to visiting NCNP. 50% stated the Internet was the most frequently used source out of all the information collected before choosing to visit the site. This was the largest percentage chosen out of the nine available options. Both interstate and South Australian visitors chose Internet search as the most frequently used information source with 30% of interstate visitors selecting the Internet as the most used source (Refer Table 20) and 25.23% of South Australian visitors (Refer Table 2s). This result correlates with previous literature conducted on the tourist decision-making process prior to visiting a destination whereby the Internet has been frequently chosen as the most popular information source (Allan, et al., 2015; Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Zgłobicki & Baran-Zgłobicka, 2013). In addition, it has been established that official destination websites are the most used source of information throughout a traveller's decision-making process (Choi, et al., 2011). This finding is supported by some interview participants throughout this study:

"I went onto the Naracoorte Website and read into each cave tour and then looked at the times and what was suitable for me and picked the two most suitable, that's pretty much all the research." (R2)

"We found information on the website. We just jumped on to see what was available tour wise, we gave the centre a call, that sort of stuff, that's how we found out about it." (R10)

The trustworthiness of official websites as discovered in previous literature is also present in the findings of this study (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Official destination websites have been identified as the most frequently used travel information source (Choi, et al., 2011) as has been found in these results.

As half of the respondents chose the Internet as the most frequently used information, it is evident that the presence of online information about NCNP is a crucial part of the marketing strategy for the site.

5.4.2 Word of Mouth

The second most frequently used source was word of mouth which is another common information source that has been identified in previous literature. 34% of those surveyed at Naracoorte Caves chose word of mouth as the most predominant source of information prior to visiting. 11% of interstate visitors also chose word of mouth as their second most used information source, a significantly lower number (Refer Table 20). 24.3% of South Australian visitors chose word of mouth as their most frequently used source (Refer Table 21). In previous case studies, recommendations from friends and relatives has been extensively used by both first-time visitors and experienced visitors (Choi et al., 2011; Kim, et al., 2008) and this is reflected in the results of this study. Moreover, word of mouth now extends to online content where users share their personal travel experiences (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Word of mouth is a common source of information due to the trustworthiness of past experiences from friends and relatives (Choi et al., 2011). Additionally, recommendations from a positive experience has the potential to promote repeat visitation, and extend the length of stay (Poria, et al., 2011; Vetitnev, et al., 2013).

A majority of respondents who took part in the in-depth interviews of this study mentioned talking to friends or family about NCNP. Conversations regarding the site were positive, which motivated the respondents to pursue travels to the region. Respondent Five

mentioned, that when looking for information, they would specifically talk to someone they know that has visited the site to obtain more information before visiting.

Therefore, it is evident that a large proportion of visitors to NCNP seek information from those who have experienced the site first-hand and this factor has also been established in previous studies.

5.4.3 Brochures

Brochures can be recognised as organic sources of information and have been frequently used in past decades to influence a traveller's destination image of a certain place (Gunn, 1997). Brochures were the third most used information source for those visiting NCNP with 18% of the respondents choosing brochures as a main form of information. For both interstate and intrastate visitors, brochures were the fourth most frequented information source (Refer Table 20 & 21). The qualitative data further supports this notion as several respondents mentioned visiting information centres on the way to the national park and retrieving relevant brochures.

The findings in this section are contradictory to much tourism literature that alludes to the idea that the Internet is phasing out tangible information sources such as brochures. From a marketing perspective, tourism destinations are now expected to focus on online marketing tools (Proll & Retscitzegger, 2000). The Internet can now be accessed at all points of the decision-making process and present new information at any time, which renders brochures and other traditional forms of information sources as inadequate (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). Age range may also play a significant role in the usage of brochures. This study found that 59.6% of those who chose brochures as a key information source were aged between 35 and 74. The remaining 38.3% of participants who used brochures were aged between 18 and 34.

A number of interviewees mentioned using brochures to collect information about NCNP. Respondents who admitted their use of brochures and online brochures were aged between 45 and 67. This correlates with the results from the quantitative data. Therefore, whilst the use of brochures has declined over recent years, they are still viewed as a major

player in the decision-making process of visitors to Naracoorte Caves, particularly for those aged 35 and over.

5.4.4 Other Sources of Information

Social media (4%), past experience (2%) and signage (2%) were in the top five information sources, but produced significantly lower percentages. Past experience ranked the third most frequently used source by both interstate (10%) (Refer Table 20) and South Australian (10.28) visitors (Refer Table 21). As 36% of respondents were repeat visitors to NCNP, this would explain past experience as one of the main information sources. Signs were another major source and this result is also reflected in the qualitative data. Two respondents stated that they chose to visit the park as they drove past signs advertising NCNP. Both respondents saw the signs when driving from Melbourne to Adelaide. Evidently, the signs can be utilised as a major tool for attracting visitors travelling through the area. As a main source of information for travellers, any improvement to the signs would assist in attracting more visitors to the site. Social media was used primarily by 4% of survey participants. 1.87% of South Australians chose social media as a frequented source (Refer Table 21), making it the fifth most frequently used source for this demographic. On the other hand, 2% of interstate visitors chose newspapers and magazines (Refer Table 20), making it their fifth most frequented source of information. This demonstrates the idea that more interstate visitors may prefer to use traditional forms of information rather than less conventional sources. Interestingly, a previous study has suggested social media to be one of the key players in tourists' information search (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). The contrasting result regarding social media usage will be further discussed in the key observations of this thesis.

5.5 Key Observations

A number of observations can be considered as key findings due to their contradiction of previous literature. These include the motivation to relieve stress from everyday life, seeking novelty, the use of social media when searching for background information about the site and the pull factor of the UNESCO World Heritage Listing.

5.5.1 Nature-based Tourism and Stress Relief

Visiting to relieve oneself from everyday stress yielded a mean score of 3.59, with only 6% of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement. It has been noted that intrinsic motivations such as rest and relaxation and the desire to escape everyday urban life play a significant role in the visitation of nature-based sites such as NCNP (Olafsdottir, 2013; Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). It is an established belief that encountering nature reduces stress (Hull & Michael, 1995) and nature-based tourism itself encompasses the search for natural beauty in a quest to escape from everyday stresses (Olafsdottir, 2013). This translates into the multiple studies that have discovered the escape motivation as a key factor in prompting visitation to nature-based tourism destinations (Allan, et al., 2015; Kim, et al, 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Tkaczynski, et al., 2015). However, this study has suggested stress relief was not a major motivator, which contradicts the previous literature that has been discussed.

5.5.2 Seeking Novelty and Satisfying Curiosity

Novelty is an umbrella term for motivations such as satisfying curiosity (Kim, et al, 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007). The results from this study found satisfying curiosity to be one of the major motivations of those visiting NCNP. A majority (78%) of respondents chose satisfying curiosity to be one of the major reasons for their visit to the park. Similar studies have also found the longing to satisfy curiosity as a main driver of nature-based tourism and nature-based tourist motivations (Dowling, 2013; Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007).

As previously discussed, many of the respondents of both qualitative and quantitative data disclosed their want to experience something different or something they would not experience in everyday life. This has been recognised as part of the novelty motivation (Kim, et al., 2008; Mehmetoglu, 2007). 36% of respondents disagreed with the idea that they were motivated to visit NCNP in order to seek novelty. Although satisfying curiosity and getting pleasure from adventure were part of the top five motivations, seeking novelty was in the bottom five motivations. It can be assumed that participants were unaware that experiencing something new or satisfying curiosity relates to novelty. Therefore, seeking novelty could have been misinterpreted by many of the survey participants as clearly, the novelty motivation plays a significant role in the decision to visit NCNP.

5.5.3 Social Media Usage

The rise of the Internet and the use of social media to disseminate tourist information has commonly been identified as an important aspect of the traveller's decision-making process (Choi, et al., 2011; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017; Pabel & Prideaux, 2015; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). As established in the literature review, social media has the potential to inform and influence a tourist's decision to visit a certain destination (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Evidently, this study has discovered that visitors to NCNP most frequently use the Internet when searching for information before travelling. This complements other studies who have found similar results (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014;). A study conducted by Pabel and Prideaux (2015) found that 49.1% of respondents selected Tripadvisor as the most used form of social media when searching for information on a destination prior to visiting.

While social media was selected as one of the top forms of information for visitors to NCNP, it was an insignificant number of 2% as opposed to 36% using the Internet. Therefore, while social media has been hypothesised to be a major information source in previous studies, the results from this study suggest otherwise. A majority of respondents who were interviewed for this study stated they did not use any form of social media to search for information on NCNP. Most respondents stated that if they were to look for information on social media, it would be Tripadvisor, therefore reflecting the results found from a previous study (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015):

"Maybe, as far as I'll go is I don't know if it's social media, but Tripadvisor, where, if there's things that we're vacillating on staying, we'll read the reviews and then see from there but not really otherwise." (R3)

While the majority of interviewees did not engage with social media during their decision-making process, a significant number of respondents stated they would post something or had already uploaded photos of their trip to NCNP on social media. Previous literature has theorised that this habit creates and disseminates destination information more than ever before (Buhalis & Law, 2008). In addition, it creates the ability for a destination such as Naracoorte Caves National Park to improve existing material, services and products and

assist with the creation of new elements (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). One respondent expressed their opinion on Naracoorte Caves' lack of social media presence:

"I find that surprising that they don't have a Facebook or an Instagram to show any photos or anything like that. I've mentioned to a few people that if they're ever this way, make sure to visit the Naracoorte caves and a lot of people haven't heard of them unless you are specifically travelling a particular route and you're coming through Naracoorte, Naracoorte's probably not really a destination where people come and holiday but they would pass through and perhaps visit the caves. I'm sure a lot of people would pass through Naracoorte and would be oblivious there's caves here if it's not on social media." (R22)

Furthermore, sharing experiences on social media has the potential to disperse an experience to a large audience and promote visitation to a destination (Kim & Ferenmaier, 2017). It is vital that tourist destinations harness the marketing power of social media platforms, however, several risks are involved. As previously stated, there are financial strains and time commitments that may hinder the potential to use social media as a marketing strategy (Pabel & Prideaux, 2015). Additionally, content is not regulated on social media, so negative experiences can also be shared (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). One respondent shared this sentiment:

"I think social media is hit and miss because people can write anything. I think it would be useful especially if they have events or something or like tour times, I didn't know if the Easter time had extra tour times so that's sort of current information, useful because I think in general, the website doesn't specify that additional information or I may have missed it." (R18)

Due to the fast-paced nature of social media, information can be shared quickly. This is particularly relevant and useful for real-time updates on events. This was observed by Respondent Eighteen and another interviewee:

"I find it hard to find information you want to find on Facebook but I think it's good for events and things like that." (R25)

Therefore, while the results from this study did not match previous studies conducted, it can be seen that social media could provide better marketing opportunities for NCNP.

5.5.4 UNESCO World Heritage Listing as a Motivation

The literature review presented the idea that a UNESCO World Heritage Listing can act as a powerful international tourism tool (Conradin, et al., 2014; Jimura, 2011; Ribaudo & Figini, 2017; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009; Yang, Lin & Han, 2010). When asked if the UNESCO World Heritage status of NCNP was a key motivator of visiting the site, 49% of respondents agreed, 31% neither agreed nor disagreed and 20% of respondents did not find the heritage listing as a major motivator. During the in-depth interviews, respondents were asked if they were aware of the important accolade and the results were mixed. Six respondents were unaware of the listing prior to visiting or had only recently found out about it.

In some cases, visitors were aware that NCNP held a significant heritage listing but were unsure as to whether it was awarded by UNESCO or another significant organisation. This could be viewed as a gap in the marketing strategies of the site. As noted by Yang and Lin (2014) World Heritage listings hold the potential to attract tourists but must align with the effectiveness of marketing strategies implemented by site authorities.

"I didn't know about it before today, not really. I knew it was highly regarded as a place of prominence and what I'd heard about it but now I'm aware that it is a place of significant status so I would say and I'm very pleased to see that it's living up to it in all that I've seen so far." (R12)

"I don't know why it's important but I guess it's pretty special, so it's good to take advantage of it and come and check it out." (R17)

Despite some respondents voicing their unawareness of the UNESCO World Heritage Listing, others did suggest that they found out about the recognition on the official website on the caves. This supports the statistics that show half of the respondents chose the Internet as their most used source of information (Refer Table 19). The Internet has been identified as the most frequently used source of information (Allan, et al., 2015; Bizirgianni &

Dionysopoulou, 2013; Zgłobicki & Baran-Zgłobicka, 2013) and is usually the first place in which tourists search for information (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). Furthermore, the literature review established the idea that official websites and state government tourism websites are the most trusted form of online content for most tourists (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). In addition, official destination websites such as that of NCNP are the most used during travel information search prior to visiting the destination. (Choi, et al., 2011). Evidently, the NCNP official website is a reliable and frequented source of information for potential tourists:

"I went on the caves' website for the address and then that was when I found out it was a UNESCO World Heritage site." (R6)

"It says on the website that they are UNESCO World Heritage Listed, they've got the logo of it all over their materials." (R5)

As established in the literature review, a UNESCO heritage listing could be viewed as a significant motivator for tourists to visit a site, which in turn, fosters positive impacts to the site and the region (Arezki, Cherif & Piotrowski, 2009; Buckley, 2004; Cellini, 2011; Cuccia, 2012; Cuccia, et al., 2016; Jimura, 2011; Patuelli, Mussoni & Candela, 2013; Yang & Lin, 2014). Less than half (49%) of the survey respondents agreed with the idea that the accolade is a major motivation. In-depth interview respondents agreed with this concept:

"I think anything that's got international or national recognition is going to be of importance culturally, or you know, just from a science perspective or whatever so it's got to be worth a look at the very least." (R10)

"Because it's UNESCO world heritage listed I find this place interesting, there's a real history here." (R23)

"If you're travelling around the world you want to go to see the wonders, it's not a wonder of the world but it's a similar thing. The caves are pretty unique. Yeah, it's a motivator absolutely." (R22)

Other respondents suggested that if their trip to Naracoorte Caves was not already planned, the UNESCO World Heritage Listing would be the major factor that would finalise travel plans to the region. This corresponds well with the concept that such an accolade can influence the decision-making process of potential tourists:

"Yes, it kind of gives it like the edge to visit here if that makes sense. It makes it more of something you should see." (R6)

Some respondents did not consider the UNESCO World Heritage Listing of Naracoorte Caves as a major motivation for visiting the site. This complies with the findings discussed in the literature review where past studies have revealed UNESCO World Heritage Listings do not promote visitation nor act as a magnet for potential tourists (Cellini, 2011; Cuccia, et al., 2017; Huang, et al., 2012; Poria, et al., 2011). A few respondents stated they were not influenced by the significant heritage recognition:

"Yes, I knew it was one of the Australian heritage listed. It wasn't a driver but I definitely liked that it was, I'm happy that it is a world heritage site because conservation is important so it's even better." (R24)

"Yes, I am aware of the world heritage listing but it didn't really motivate me to visit." (R20)

Lastly, another important factor was recognised throughout the interviewing process. Some respondents suggested that the UNESCO World Heritage Listing would encourage them to bring friends or relatives to the site as the recognition is significant.

"Yes, the world heritage listing motivated me to visit. I will bring visitors here maybe one day because of the listing." (R9)

"I wasn't motivated because of the listing but I would definitely bring people here that were visiting us and hadn't been in this area before possibly because of that recognition." (R15)

Therefore, the listing not only promotes repeat visitation (Armaitiene, et al., 2014; Moy & Phongpanichanan, 2014), but also promotes recommendations to friends (Poria, et al., 2011;

Vetitnev, Romanova, Matushenko & Kvetenadze, 2013). Thus, it can be said that a UNESCO World Heritage Listing does have the ability to attract tourists a site.

Chapter 6 Recommendations and Conclusions

6.1 Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse the demographics, motivations and information collection habits of visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park. Chapter 2 explored the existing literature that focuses on themes such as nature-based tourism; the demographics of nature-based tourists; the decision-making process of tourists; the identification of popular information sources; and the importance of UNESCO World Heritage Listings in a tourism context. Through this review, findings from previous studies could be analysed to determine the overall preconceptions of the discussed themes.

The results of this research can conclude that visitors to the Naracoorte Caves are generally Australian residents who visit as a part of a holiday. Only 5.5% of respondents were international visitors, indicating the caves are not a well-known tourist attraction outside of the country. Out of the small sample size of international visitors, the most significant groups were those visiting from the UK, India and Germany. Despite the high number of domestic visitors, repeat visitation was somewhat low, with 64% stating it was their first time visiting the caves.

Those visiting Naracoorte Caves were mostly aged between 25-44. The mean age of all respondents was 40.21. The most significant household income brackets were $60,001-$90,000 and $90,001-$120,000. Most visitors had completed some form of education with 43% graduating from high school, and 34.5% obtaining a Bachelor's Degree. This study revealed results that are alike previous studies which suggest nature-based tourists are educated and earn average to above average income. Most respondents were travelling with family including children (38%) or with their partner or spouse (33%). This also mirrors a number of studies which indicate nature-based tourists rarely travel alone.

Regarding motivations, both the most common and least common motivations were identified throughout this paper. The findings of this study indicate that the most common motivational factors for visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park are: the geological aspects; enjoying free time; getting pleasure from adventure; satisfying curiosity; and experiencing cave tourism.

The least common motivations of visitation were: shopping for souvenirs; showing off an experience of cave tourism; relief from everyday stress; seeking novelty and socialising with friends who are interested in cave tourism.

Background information collection was another component of this study that was researched and analysed. As hypothesised by previous studies, the tourism industry has begun to rely heavily on dissemination information through the Internet. This study discovered that a majority (50%) of visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park used the Internet to find information about the site prior to visiting. The most frequently used information sources were recognised as Internet search, word of mouth, brochures, social media, past experience, and signage. These results differed between both South Australian visitors and visitors from interstate. These two demographics listed Internet search and word of mouth as their two most common information sources, followed by past experience. Brochures were the fourth most common source. While South Australians deemed social media as their fifth most frequented source of information, interstate visitors chose newspapers and magazines. Therefore, this study established the key differences in the process of searching for information for both interstate and South Australian visitors.

Overall, a number of key observations were found throughout this study. Firstly, some contradictions with previous studies were presented throughout this study. While it has been previously established that stress relief is a common motivator for nature-based tourists, this study yielded differing results as relief from everyday stress was one of the lowest motivations. Additionally, seeking novelty was also considered a low motivation, despite the concept that satisfying curiosity, a sub-theme of novelty, was measured as a top motivation. Whilst social media has been hypothesised as a key information source for tourists, it was a much less significant result in this study. It was labelled as one of the top sources, however; the percentage was significantly lower than the other most commonly used sources. Additionally, the qualitative results found that most respondents did not use social media to search for information regarding Naracoorte Caves National Park. Lastly, almost half of all respondents listed the Naracoorte Caves' UNESCO World Heritage listing as a major motivation for visitation. The qualitative results supported this idea with statements that considered the listing as a major push factor. Despite this, there was a small number of respondents who did not consider the accolade as something significant in terms

of motivations. Overall, there were mixed responses as to whether visitors were aware of the listing prior to visiting. Some respondents were aware, while others only found the information when they arrived at the site. These key observations provide an extensive insight into the motivations, demographics and information search habits of visitors to NCNP.

NCNP is an extremely important part of South Australia's tourism industry. As South Australia's only UNESCO World Heritage listed site, it is a fundamental part of the state's tourism industry and is pivotal in attracting both domestic and international visitors. The findings of this study have gathered information that will assist with numerous key aspects at the popular tourist attraction. The ability to enhance the services and products at the caves along with other features for specific demographic groups will be pivotal for the site in attracting potential visitors and promoting repeat visitation.

6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations for this study can be divided into two different categories. Firstly, this section will focus on recommendations that can be made for future studies. The second part will look at the recommendations that can be devised for the Naracoorte Caves National Park and their operations as a major tourist attraction.

6.2.1 Recommendations for Future Studies

Several recommendations will be suggested in this section to further enhance any possible research at Naracoorte Caves National Park or for any similar studies to be conducted. Firstly, data collection phase spanning a longer amount of time would be extremely beneficial for a future study. This would allow for a greater sample size to participate in the data collection phase, and therefore provide more data to work with throughout the analysis process.

As the data collection phase took place over the Easter break, this may have skewed some of the motivational factors of visitors. As stated previously, enjoying free time was identified as one of the top motivations, however, many participants would have had extra free time

over this certain period. In addition, many people utilise the Easter break as a time to spend with family which may explain the large amount of those visiting with family. These examples, amongst others showcase the possible ways in which the data collection time frame could have influenced the information obtained and analysed.

Only 5.5% of the 200 respondents surveyed were international visitors. This sample size was not sufficient to initiate further in-depth analysis into the international market at Naracoorte Caves National Park. A longer time frame would possibly yield a higher amount of international visitor participation in the surveying process. In addition, it would be beneficial for any future research to provide the survey in a number of different languages. As this survey was only in English, this may have inhibited the participation of some international visitors due to limitations in their English language abilities. Therefore, several reasons could have influenced the low participation rate of international visitors and future studies should apply a longer data collection phase or produce translated surveys to further enhance this component of the study.

While the average adult age of visitors to Naracoorte Caves was established as 40.21, this is exclusive of the large number of children present at the sight during the data collection phase. Due to ethics purposes, only those aged over eighteen could participate in the intended research. Therefore, there is a large disregard for children in the results of this study. 38% of respondents stated they were travelling with family, including children which establishes the idea that children are largely, an important demographic. It would be beneficial for future studies to delve into the importance of children who visit the site to further establish and enhance services and products for this specific demographic.

Lastly, a greater sample size would also be advantageous for any future studies. The participation of more respondents would provide more data to work with and could deliver some important findings that may not have been discovered in the sample size of 200 for this study. As previously recommended, not only would a longer data collection phase benefit the quality of the results, but would also allow for a larger sample size to be surveyed, therefore, contributing positively to the results.

6.2.2 Recommendations for Naracoorte Caves National Park

Throughout this study, a variety of key findings have been found and possess the ability to assist Naracoorte Caves National Park in their future operations as a tourist destination. The large majority of respondents were Australian residents, therefore establishing the fact that the international market is not a key component of the demographics of visitors. Nevertheless, this should not undermine the importance of international visitors, but should serve as an indicator that domestic visitors are the target market for the site. As previously discussed, interstate and South Australian visitors search for background information through mostly similar sources, however there are minor differences that should be considered when marketing to these separate demographics. It would be of interest to the site to delve into ways which may increase the awareness of the attraction to potential international tourists from countries such as the UK, India and Germany, which were some of the most significant international visitor demographics at the site.

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Naracoorte Caves National Park has the advantage of using this accolade as a marketing and brand tool. As almost half of respondents listed this as a major motivator to visit the site, this is something that should be further looked at. Results suggested that not everyone was aware of this important listing which suggests some gaps in the marketing of the site as a UNESCO World Heritage listed attraction. Therefore, it is important that the Naracoorte Caves National Park harnesses the potential marketing power that the listing holds.

While social media was considered as an important but less crucial part of the background information collection phase of respondents, there were several key findings that can serve as recommendations. Social media usage was significantly lower as opposed to Internet search or word of mouth. This does not neglect the importance of social media as a number of respondents listed the importance of real time information access. Social media is considered an easy and effective way of distributing information about a tourist attraction. It would serve as a tool to distribute information on events, changes in opening times and local weather phenomenon that may affect the attraction. Previous literature has also suggested the importance of user-generated content which would be present on social media. This allows satisfied customers to promote sites such as Naracoorte Caves, but also

comes with the risk of unsatisfied visitors voicing their negative opinions. It would be beneficial for Naracoorte Caves National Park to instigate a social media marketing strategy to disseminate information in a way that suits that modern nature-based tourist.

Lastly, as mentioned previously, children can be a key component of visitation to Naracoorte Caves National Park. Therefore, it is important that appropriate facilities and interpretation should be present at the site to further enhance not only a child's experience, but the accompanying adults' as well.

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Appendix 1 Ethics Documents

Ethics Approval

Information Sheet

Letter of Introduction

Consent Form

FINAL APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.: **7523**

Project Title: A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations at Naracoorte Caves National Park, South Australia

Principal Researcher: Miss Rebecca Uphill

Email: uphi0007@flinders.edu.au

Approval Date: 8 February 2017   Ethics Approval Expiry Date: **1 February 2020**

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided with the addition of the following comment(s):

DR. Gareth Butler
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INFORMATION SHEET

Title: "A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations at Naracoorte Caves National Park, South Australia"

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Description of the study:
This study is part of the project entitled *"A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations at Naracoorte Caves National Park."*
This project will develop a contemporary demographic overview of tourists visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park and will also explore the key motivations that influence them. The key sources of information used by tourists to learn about Naracoorte Caves National Park will be additionally investigated. This project is supported by Flinders University Tourism Department.

Purpose of the study:
This project aims to find out if there are any unique tourist demographics, motivational factors and behaviours that relate to tourists visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park.

What will I be asked to do?
You are invited to attend a one-on-one interview with the investigator who will ask you several questions about your own motivational factors and information collection prior to visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park. The interview will take between 20 and 40 minutes. The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recorder to help the investigator when analysing the results. Once recorded, the interview will be transcribed (typed) and stored as a computer file and then destroyed once the results have been finalised. This is all voluntary.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?
By sharing your knowledge, opinions and experiences, deeper insights of visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park will be obtained. It will also benefit the site and the community to better understand tourists to the region and may also contribute towards further tourism development.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?
This research project does not require your name, therefore, no identifying information will be published. However, anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to the data collectaion location. Once the interview has been transcribed and saved as a file, the voice recording will then be destroyed. Any identifying information will be removed and the typed file stored on a password-protected computer that only the coordinator (Miss Rebecca Uphill) will have access to. Your input will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?
There are no high risks or discomforts assumed in this research project. It is only asked of you that you spare some of your leisure time to participate in this research project. Each interview will be approximately 20 to 40 minutes in duration and will take place in The Caves Café. The researcher will be willing to organise the interview at a place most suitable for you to reduce any discomfort.

How do I agree to participate?
Your participation is completely voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions and you are free to refuse the interview at any time without any effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate please read and sign the form and return it to me.

How will I receive feedback?
The outcomes of this project will be summarised and available from October 2017 on the following website: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rebecca_Uphill.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

DR. Gareth Butler
BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD

Lecturer in Tourism
Postgraduate Coordinator
Department of Tourism
School of Humanities
GPO Box 2100, Adelaide SA 5001
Tel: +618 8201 7950
Fax: +68 8201 3635

Email: gareth.butler@flinders.edu.au

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam

This letter is to introduce Rebecca Uphill who is a Masters student in the Tourism Department at Flinders University. She will produce her student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of identity. She is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis on the subject of "A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations to Naracoorte Caves National Park, South Australia. This project is a collaboration between the Flinders University Tourism Department, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, and Naracoorte Caves National Park. Your participation is extremely valuable to all organisations involved.

She would be most grateful if you would volunteer to assist in this project, by granting an interview, which covers certain aspects of this topic. No more than one hour on one occasion would be required.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Since Rebecca intends to make an audio recording of the interview, she will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interview, to use the recording or a transcription in preparing the thesis, on condition that your name or identity is not revealed, and that the recording will not be made available to any other person.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on +618 8201 7950, by fax on +68 8201 3635 or e-mail gareth.butler@flinders.edu.au

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Gareth Butler
Lecturer in Tourism
Department of Tourism

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee. For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Secretary of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 5962, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

CONSENT FORM FOR
(by interview)

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

"*A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations at Naracoorte Caves National Park, South Australia*"

Being over the age of 18 years, I hereby consent to participate as requested in the Letter of Introduction for the research project on an investigation on demographics, information collection and key motivations of tourists visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park.

1. I have read the information provided.

2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
    4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for

    future reference.

5. I understand that:

    - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.

    - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.

    - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.

    - I may ask that the recording/observation be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.

Participant's signature……………………………………Date…………………...

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name…………………………………………………..................

Researcher's signature…………………………………..Date…………………….

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
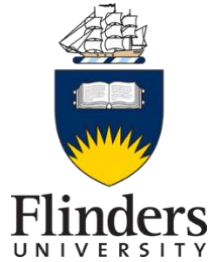Cultural Organization

Australian Fossil Mammal Sites
(Riversleigh / Naracoorte)
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994

Appendix 2 Data Collection Tools

Quantitative Data – Survey

Qualitative Data – Semi Structured Interview Script

A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations at Naracoorte Caves National Park, South Australia

Dear Sir/Madam,

We invite you to participate in a research study jointly conducted by Flinders University and Naracoorte Caves National Park. This survey seeks to observe and understand the demographics, motivations and information collection habits of tourists visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park. This research aims to examine what type of people the caves attract, what motivates tourists to visit the caves and where they collect their information about the site prior to visitation.

I would like to conduct a quick survey with you that will take approximately 10-20 minutes of your time. I am required to ask about your socio-demographic background as part of this research such as your age or place of residence, but all the information will be used only for this research project and you will not be identified in any way.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and all information disclosed by participants will be afforded complete anonymity. Also, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. Data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate but it will help us better understand visitors to Naracoorte Caves National Park and the surrounding area. This will contribute to improving the visitor experience and promoting tourism development in the region.

If you are willing to take part in this project, we can commence. Here is an Information Sheet in regards to the research. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions if you wish for more clarification.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Australian Fossil Mammal Sites
(Riversleigh / Naracoorte)
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994

SECTION A: VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Q1. Gender
1.   Male   ❏
2.   Female   ❏
3.   Unspecified   ❏

Q2. Age
1.   18-24   ❏
2.   25-34   ❏
3.   35-44   ❏
4.   45-54   ❏
5.   55-64   ❏
6.   65-74   ❏
7.   75 and over   ❏

Q3. Country of Birth
1.   Australia   ❏
2.   Other (please specify)   . . . .

Q4. Ethnic/Ancestry Group
1.   Australian   ❏
2.   Australian Aboriginal   ❏
3.   English   ❏
4.   Irish   ❏
5.   Scottish   ❏
6.   Italian   ❏
7.   Greek   ❏
8.   German   ❏
9.   Chinese   ❏
10.   Indian   ❏
11.   Other (please specify)   . . . .

Q5. **What is your approximate current household income bracket?**
1. Less than $30,000 ❏
2. $30,000 to $60,000 ❏
3. $60,001 to $90,000 ❏
4. $90,001 to $120,000 ❏
5. $120,001 to $150,000 ❏
6. Over $150,000 ❏
7. Prefer not to say ❏

Q6. **What is your highest level of completed education?**
1. Did not complete high school ❏
2. High School ❏
3. Bachelor Degree ❏
4. Postgraduate Degree ❏

Q7: **Which of the following best describes your visitor status today?**
1. Local resident ❏
2. Domestic visitor on a daytrip ❏
3. Domestic visitor on holiday ❏
4. International visitor on holiday ❏

Q8: **Australian Postcode of Residence (if applicable)**
1. Postcode . . . .
2. International visitor on holiday ❏

SECTION B: TYPICAL VISITOR BEHAVIOUR AND MOTIVATIONS

Q1. Is this your first time visiting Naracoorte Caves National Park?

1.	Yes	❏
2.	No	❏

Q2. Who are you visiting Naracoorte Caves with today?

1.	No-one	❏
2.	Partner or spouse	❏
3.	Friends	❏
4.	Family (including children)	❏
5.	Family (adults only)	❏
6.	Volunteer/social groups	❏
7.	Co-workers	❏

Q3.   Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding your motivations to visit Naracoorte Caves National Park:

	Entirely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Entirely Agree
1. I decided to visit NCNP because of geological aspects e.g. caves, paleontological findings	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. I decided to visit NCNP to participate in a guided tour	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. I decided to visit NCNP due to its UNESCO World Heritage status	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. I decided to visit NCNP to get relief from everyday stress	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. I decided to visit NCNP to enjoy free time	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6. I decided to visit NCNP to recharge energy	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
7. I decided to visit NCNP to shop for souvenirs	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8. I decided to visit NCNP to expand knowledge of cave tourism	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
9. I decided to visit NCNP to experience cave tourism	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
10. I decided to visit NCNP because of interest in cave tourism resources	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11. I decided to visit NCNP for educational purposes	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12. I decided to visit NCNP to socialise with friends who have an interest in cave tourism	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
13. I decided to visit NCNP to take photos of cave areas	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14. I decided to visit NCNP to build ties with family and friends	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
15. I decided to visit NCNP to show off experience of taking a cave tour	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
16. I decided to visit NCNP to seek novelty	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17. I decided to visit NCNP to get pleasure from adventure	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
18. I decided to visit NCNP to satisfy curiosity	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

SECTION C: VISITOR INFORMATION COLLECTION HABITS

Q1. How did you find information about Naracoorte Caves National Park? (Can choose multiple answers)

1.	Brochure	❏
2.	Internet search	❏
3.	Social Media	❏
4.	Newspaper/magazine	❏
5.	Travel agency	❏
6.	Word of mouth	❏
7.	TV/Radio	❏
8.	Past experience	❏
9.	Other	. . . .

Q2. If more than one option was chosen, which one was most frequently used?

1.	Brochure	❏
2.	Internet search	❏
3.	Social Media	❏
4.	Newspaper/magazine	❏
5.	Travel agency	❏
6.	Word of mouth	❏
7.	TV/Radio	❏
8.	Past experience	❏
9.	Other	. . . .

Q3. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding information collection prior to visitation:

	Entirely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Entirely Agree
1. I find myself using the internet frequently for information prior to visiting tourist destinations	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. I specifically looked for information on NCNP on social media	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. I was disappointed to find a lack of social media presence from NCNP	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. My expectations derived from prior information collection were met by my experience at NCNP	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. I was satisfied with my experience at NCNP	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

SECTION E – GENERAL FEEDBACK

Q1.   What 3 things would you like to see improved at Naracoorte Caves National Park?

1:_____

2:_____

3:_____

Q2.   What 3 things were the highlights of your visit to Naracoorte Caves National Park?

1:_____

2:_____

3:_____

Thank you for participating in this research, your comments are valued highly.
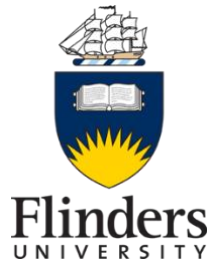
Interview Questions

"A Contemporary Overview of Visitor Motivations and Expectations at Naracoorte Caves National Park, South Australia."

Demographics

Postcode:

Or

Country:

Age:

Occupation:

Relationship Status:

Married   Single   De facto

Gender:

Male   Female   Other

Education (highest level):

Accompanying person/s:

Single   Family/relatives   Friends   Co-workers

Motivational Factors

Have you visited Naracoorte Caves National Park before?

What was it about Naracoorte Caves National Park in particular that initially motivated you to visit?

What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit Naracoorte Caves National Park

What have you done and are planning to do on your visit here at the national park?
Background Information Collection

How did you first hear about Naracoorte Caves National Park?

Did you do any research prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collection background information on a site that you are planning to visit?

What did you expect from your visit to Naracoorte Caves National Park after your information search?

Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

Did you use social media in your search on Naracoorte Caves National Park? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

Are you aware that Naracoorte Caves National Park is UNESCO World Heritage listed? If yes, was this something that motivated you to visit?

Appendix 3 Interview Transcripts

Some segments of these transcripts have been altered to ensure anonymity of all participants.

R: = Researcher

P: = Participant

Respondent #1

Postcode: 5043

Age: 37

Occupation: Student relations officer

Relationship Status: Single

Gender: Female

Education: Bachelor Degree

Visiting: with friends

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No

R: What motivated you to initially visit Naracoorte Caves?
P: My friend motivated me to come here. She's basically been planning the trip so I think it was just something interesting and seeing caves and yeah, something different.

R: What were your personal reasons for visiting Naracoorte caves?
P: Just curious, just curiosity to see what it's like, um we do have caves in Zimbabwe and I just wanted to compare and see what they're like here.

R: What have you done and what are planning to do on your visit here?
P: I guess do a few cave tours. Going to the Victoria and Alexander cave.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?
P: My friend found it on a map and she wanted to come here to see the caves and go sightseeing.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting?

P: We picked up some stuff at the visitor centre, yeah, the one that's somewhere before Naracoorte.

R: Did you go on the website?

P: Yeah, just a tad bit, yeah.

R: When planning to travel, what's your preferred method of collecting information about your chosen site?

P: I think it's a bit of everything, because we did ask around our friends and stuff to see who had been to- well we're going to Mt Gambier so we were just like has everyone been and of course, you get curious so you jump onto Google to find out what exactly it is that you want to see and what looks exciting and yeah.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Something different. Just from city life, yeah, something to do on the way, yeah just experience a different part of Adelaide.

R: Did you use any social media at all to find any information out about NCNP?

P: Not yet no.

R: Are you planning to put anything on social media about your visit here?

P: Yeah, I might post something on Facebook.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage listed?

P: Yeah my friend knew but I just found out.

Respondent #2

Postcode: 3350

Age: 37

Occupation: Coles Supervisor/Team Member

Relationship Status: Single

Gender: Female

Education: Year 12

Visiting: Alone

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No

R: What motivated you to initially visit Naracoorte Caves?
P: I'm interested in palaeontology and I also just went to the Tantanoola Caves and was interested in all the stalacmites and all those sort of formations in the caves and decided to come up here and have a look at this one before I head off down to Pt McDonald.

R: What were your personal reasons for visiting Naracoorte caves?
P: Just interests.

R: And you've always been interested in it?
P: Yeah, I have. I love history in general and I love all that stuff, it's fascinating.

R: What have you done and what are planning to do on your visit here?
P: Just a couple of caves. Just the Alexandra caves and the wet cave and then I have to head off.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Tripadvisor actually. I looked up Mt. Gambier and things to do on Tripadvisor for Mt Gambier and then this came up as a suggestion and I looked into it and thought wow I'm really interested in visiting so it was on my list.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting?

P: After Tripadvisor I went onto the Naracoorte Website and read into each cave tour and then looked at the times and what was suitable for me and picked the two most suitable, that's pretty much all the research.

R: Did you find the website useful?

P: Yeah, I did.

R: When planning to travel, what's your preferred method of collecting information about your chosen site?

P: Tripadvisor and I use Google a lot and just go into whatever comes up on Google mainly. Yeah, between those two, Google and Tripadvisor.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I expect to see pretty much what I saw on the website, just the different formations in the caves and possibly some fossils. I'm not sure, I don't think I'm in the fossil cave so I don't know if I'll see too many fossils. That's pretty much it, and take lots of photos.

R: Have your expectations been met?

P: I'm sure they will be.

R: Did you use any social media at all to find any information out about NCNP?

P: Not yet but I plan on posting things on social media.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage listed?

P: I only just read that just before.

R: So I assume it wasn't really a motivator then if you didn't know about it beforehand?

P: Yeah, it's cool.

Respondent #3

Postcode: 5067

Age: 36

Occupation: Biomathematician

Relationship Status: Married

Gender: Female

Education: PhD

Visiting: With husband

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No this is my first time.

R: What motivated you to initially visit Naracoorte Caves?
P: We were just discussing this – it's the caves but also knowing that there's all the fossils so we were quite interested to find out a little bit about the region.

R: What were your personal reasons for visiting Naracoorte caves?
P: We had heard and we were quite interested and we were basically on our way to Mt Gambier for Easter and we thought it would be fun to do it. In terms of personal, it wasn't something that, you know, in South Australia that we definitely wanted to do so we thought it was an interesting – so you know, we were interested to find out more when there's a side, you know, it's not like if I was in South Australia I wouldn't have especially came here but definitely just finding more out about anything that's to do with fossils.

R: What have you done and what are planning to do on your visit here?

P: We've just done the Victoria Fossil Cave but I think we might just do this one. We were deliberating so we're not sure. We might just walk around. We saw they had something to do with the bats so we might have a look but we haven't decided yet. But this was the one we really wanted to do which we had booked and then.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: On the website of the National Parks, I think that's one of the names that came up, like, you know, so we've only been down in South Australia for a bit more than a year, we actually lived in Brisbane before and I guess I was interested in more of the things that were around Adelaide so I think that's probably the first time I heard of them and then some friends went a month ago and really said that they were really worth going to as well. But I guess the first time would've been the website of the National Parks of South Australia

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting?

P: I did call them for today because I suspected they'd be busy and I was wondering if it was open and yeah I did, but just really their website was quite comprehensive and just deciding which one we wanted to visit, that was pretty much all, we didn't really do anything else.

R: When planning to travel, what's your preferred method of collecting information about your chosen site?

P: I found that we're not super organised, I found that the – you know the ones that provide you for the tourist information like, so there was the Limestone Coast one – I found that really helpful actually because we're not doing, you know, we're not going overseas for two weeks and so it kind of gives us a bit of a, something to start with you know, and then we can go out and spend a day doing this and that so, that had quite a lot of information. I've heard – I've also seen just on the internet then after that, so there's other caves, Tantanoola or something like that, that's just further down so we might if we have time, we might do that and then go to Mt Gambier, but yeah, so we start maybe from the tourist information and then just go over the internet and that's pretty much how we do it, that's all really.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Yeah, that was pretty much, it fulfilled the expectation, we were just going, something that was relatively well organised and not you know, I know you can do some that are narrower but it seemed like, you know, well lit with a bit of explanation, we weren't too sure what to expect with the explanation but we thought the guide was pretty good with the right balance between you know, knowing his stuff but not over science but we still learnt things and we were quite impressed actually – he was approachable, answered our questions, yeah, we did ask him a couple questions so we were actually satisfied and it was really good. But what we expected, we thought maybe it would be more broad you know, like they would just show us the cave and show us the you know, the fossils, but not explain that that much and we were actually quite impressed with the quality of what we got so yeah.

R: Did you use any social media at all to find any information out about NCNP?

P: No not at all, so not even aware if they have a page or anything.

R: Do usually use social media when you are looking for information on a destination?

P: No, I would if I can't find anything, so there's places where I guess because they don't really want to pay advertising, if you do a Google search, that's the first thing that comes up, you know, they have a Facebook page and so I guess I default to this because they don't have anything else but always, not really, no. Maybe, as far as I'll go is I don't know if it's social media, but Tripadvisor, where, if there's things that we're vacillating on staying, we'll read the reviews and then see from there but not really otherwise. So, that's probably as far as we'd go, and then we'd use Facebook if you know, the business has nothing else but that, but sometimes that's the case so.

But you know, the page on the National Parks is actually pretty good and I guess if that comes up first, so I often do a Google search I guess and then they come up with that.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage listed?

P: No, I didn't know that actually.

R: If you knew that before, would that have motivated you to come even more?

P: Possibly, yeah, I guess that's something that we you know, especially because we know that, that this place is a disappearing more and more so we kind of like to know that they're protected and you know that, so yeah, definitely, I didn't realise that.

We didn't really realise the amount of bones and things that they had, so I didn't really appreciate that until we came here, so that's cool.

Respondent #4

Postcode: 5045

Age: 35

Occupation: Accountant

Relationship Status: Single

Gender: Female

Education: Bachelor Degree

Visiting: with friends

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No

R: What motivated you to initially visit Naracoorte Caves?
P: I planned to visit with my friend for something interesting to do and to get out of Adelaide. Something different.

R: What were your personal reasons for visiting Naracoorte caves?
P: We have caves in my country so I was curious if it would be any different to the caves we have.

R: What have you done and what are planning to do on your visit here?
P: We're going to the Victoria something and Alexandra caves.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?
P: We found it on a map. We were just looking at a map and we were like oh caves, caves are there so let's go to the caves. Sightseeing and stuff.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting?

P: I found some brochures on Naracoorte in the city.

R: After you saw it on the map, did you Google it?

P: Yeah we Googled it.

R: When planning to travel, what's your preferred method of collecting information about your chosen site?

P: Just talking with friends and word of mouth before looking into it further.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: It was mainly something to do – something to do on our way to Mt Gambier.

R: Did you use any social media at all to find any information out about NCNP?

P: No I haven't.

R: Are you planning to put anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Yeah, I might put some photos up

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage listed?

P: Yeah.

R: Did you know about it before your visit or did you just find out?

P: I knew already.

R: And did that attract you more to come and visit?

P: Doesn't really make a difference.

Respondent #5

Postcode: 5084

Age: 31

Occupation: Information technology

Relationship status: Married

Gender: Male

Education (highest level): Bachelor with honours

Accompanying persons: Spouse

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: I'm not sure, I think so, when I was young.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: The trees and the caves. The natural surroundings. So I was going to go to Melbourne, but I didn't want to drive all day so I wanted to stop somewhere in between and at first I was just going to stop in Bordertown and stay there and my wife actually saw stuff about the Blue Lagoon and caves in the area and said why don't we go to those and so I saw Naracoorte wasn't far off the shortest path from Adelaide to Melbourne so I came to Naracoorte instead and stayed the night.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: I guess I'm interested in natural history like, the evolution of animals, a bit about geology, so maybe that, but I also like just sitting in a natural environment and taking it in, because I think that's good for you and it feels good once you get used to it, so it's for those reasons.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?

P: I visited Alexandra cave and I plan to visit two caves that you can go without a guide which are the Wet Cave and the one with the reconstructions of the ancient animals.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Google maps. I remembered that Naracoorte had caves but I didn't remember the details and this time I was looking at Google maps and I saw Naracoorte near the way I was going to go to Melbourne and I thought I remember that place has caves and I looked it up.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: I checked the website of the caves which is of these people here and read all the information on there and that was my preparation.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: If I know someone who knows about it, I'll ask them. Usually I don't, so then it's reading online. I use Wikipedia, I use Google Earth and Google Maps and I, for a thing like this I try to look for its official website to hear it from the people that run it.

R: Did you find the website helpful?

P: Yes.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Time sitting in or walking through caves, yeah, quiet and also this national park stuff where you're outside. I saw kangaroos, so yeah, I was kind of expecting that.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Yes.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Do you usually use social media when you're planning to travel somewhere?

P: Usually not, no. I'm not very active on social networks.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Yeah, it says on the website, they've got the logo of it all over their materials.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes, insignificantly, I would have come anyway but I guess if I was only just deciding, it would have made me more likely to come.

Respondent #6

Postcode: 3056 (UK citizen working holiday visa)

Age: 24

Occupation: Product developer for knitwear

Relationship status: de facto

Gender: female

Education (highest level): bachelor's degree

Accompanying persons: boyfriend

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No, never

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: So, everywhere that we travel through I like to stop off and have a look, so I looked at places before of where to stop off and this came up obviously because it's UNESCO World heritage site as well.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No personal interests, just that I like to have a look around wherever I'm travelling.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We were just coming through here so we were in the wine region before we came here, we're going around these caves and then we'll probably carry on straight to Adelaide.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?
P: I was Googling what to do on the way to Adelaide and this came up.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: Yeah, I went on the caves website for the address and then that was when I found out it was a UNESCO World Heritage site.

R: Did you find the website helpful?

P: Yeah, straightforward, easy, yeah.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: I do have, I always buy a lonely planet guide, I have it down as one of my things, but I just like to use that as a guide and then the rest of it I'll google and maybe ask people as well.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I don't know, I would like to see some fossils.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: I didn't have any expectations.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No but maybe after I will.

R: Just a heads up, they don't have a page.

P: They should have a page, yeah definitely.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes, it kind of gives it like the edge to visit here if that makes sense. It makes it more of something you should.

Respondent #7

Postcode: 3061

Age: 26

Occupation: Paint sprayer

Relationship status: de facto

Gender: male

Education (highest level): TAFE diploma

Accompanying persons: partner

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: Nope, never visited before.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: When I was driving along the road just then, I saw the sign post and I just saw that and then my partner was just like 'oh let's just go in there' and then that was it and we just came here. Actually, we drove past it first and she was like 'oh you've got to turn around'.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: So we were just passing through this town to get to Adelaide and so we came through this town.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: So probably the same, just see the fossils, some heritage, get some food, yeah that would be the main point for me.

Information collection:

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Soon as I was driving into the town, I saw the sign and that's the first time I've heard of that of even knew it was there. Before that I didn't have a clue.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: As soon as I come into a town I type the town into Google and find out things to do in the town and that way I know what to do in that area and then I'll just go and do those things then. A bit more laid back.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I wasn't expecting caves. And I didn't expect it to be so big actually. I saw the map over there and I said bloody hell we're not doing all of it. I just saw how long it was and I said we're not walking that, we already walked around a massive lake today and I thought that was enough. I expected it to be quite small but no, I'm surprised how big it is.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yeah, I would like to explore them.

Respondent #8

Postcode: 3021

Age: 60

Occupation: Banker

Relationship status: married

Gender: female

Education (highest level): High school

Accompanying persons: husband

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No, we haven't

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: Just came to Coonawara, we live in Victoria and came to SA and found out that there's these caves here and we love visiting caves around and just thought yeah let's go to these ones just to have a look and find out more history.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No.

R: No personal interests in caves?
P: Oh, I do, I do have, I like history and I like to know about nature and stuff like that yeah.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: Got no clue, after this first tour I might go on another one. We've booked a tour to the Alexandra cave. So once that's done, we'll come back.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Through the wine region in Coonawara, one of the, we asked what is the best thing to visit here, we'll be here for few days and they said one of the things is the caves in Naracoorte. That was just a couple of days ago.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: We heard about it and that's it. We just heard about it and we wanted to see like I said, we like to usually go and see caves, even when we travel abroad you know, caves that have history and meaning.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: If I do research, it's either on the internet Googling something or if I can find articles to read I do a read and find out there.

R: So mostly internet research?

P: Yes, it's very easy now these days.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Find a bit about what lived here you know, how old they were and things like that.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: No.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: I found out about it a few days ago, I was reading about it, I was just waiting. Some of the brochures in the region had information.

R: And did that motivate you to come here?

P: That's another thing, world heritage is something special.

Respondent #9

Postcode: 5043

Age: 45

Occupation: housewife

Relationship status: de facto

Gender: female

Education (highest level): high school

Accompanying persons: family

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?

P: This is my first time.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?

P: Friend of mine introduced because of our kid so since it's school holidays here so we have

nothing to do so why don't we come here and have a visit.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?

P: Just decided to come here and holiday. Never tried campsite so this is my first time living in a campsite.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?

P: Visiting caves and caves and caves. Yesterday we went on a bat tour, today we're going on the self guided tours. I just follow the leader. (Talking about how her partner and friends organised everything, she just comes along)

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Internet.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: Internet. Everything is internet.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: By internet. Everything internet. Especially uncle Google. Uncle Google is amazing he knows everything. As long as you know how to ask him.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Just came here and relax, nothing much.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: So far so good. Yesterday is first day, today is second day yeah relax.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Not really, maybe Facebook, maybe my friend will do.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes. I will bring visitors here maybe one day

Respondent #10

Postcode: 5108

Age: 32

Occupation: stay at home mum

Relationship status: single

Gender: female

Education (highest level): TAFE

Accompanying persons: partner

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: Both of us are very much into hiking and anything sort of adventure related and its sort of up the road, a quick getaway from Adelaide so it's a decent amount of time to get away for a short visit and do something while we're here.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: Just something different.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We're going to do the adventure cave, the novice one. We're planning to do hiking in the area as well.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Word of mouth. Known about it for a while.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: On the website. We just jumped on to see what was available tour wise, we gave the centre a call, that sort of stuff, we found out about it.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: I will use internet mainly if someone is – like talking with other people and things like that, word of mouth is often a good one.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I don't know really. What do I expect – I don't know, just a different experience really, I wanted to give it a go, I'm quite interested in going to Cradle Mountain so they do like canyoning and there's caves there too, and try a bit of a wet your toes what they say and see how we go. Yeah so not too sure what to expect.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No, I haven't. I didn't do it through Facebook.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Yeah, probably. Take some pictures.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: I knew it was an international world heritage, but I didn't know it was UNESCO.

I think anything that's got international or national recognition is going to be of importance, culturally or you know just from a science perspective or whatever so it's got to be worth a look at the very least.

Respondent #11

Postcode: 5096

Age: 35

Occupation: truck driver/cook

Relationship status: de facto

Gender: male

Education (highest level): high school (yearr 12 not completed)

Accompanying persons: partner

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: I have not.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: Just a bit further out from where we usually go, just had a bit more time, just a bit more out here that we hadn't seen before. Might head up to Mt Gambier.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: More rest and relaxation, just seeing what, we're huge fans of nature, getting out there just seeing countryside and its beauty.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We wanna see more of the natural side of the state see what's out there, see what we've missed. That's the whole idea, check out our own backyard before diversifying it further out.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: I actually hadn't up until the point we researched it. My partner introduced me to the idea and I've been cave diving once before and I really enjoyed it so I wanted to get some more of it in. Found out about it about a month ago.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: A little bit. That was only because we knew we were coming here so I thought I better find something out. Mainly online searches, Google, looked at the information centre's website, just to see what, you know, experiences they offer and just went from there.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: I don't usually. I usually just get in the car and go, get to wherever I want to go and then look at stuff. I do look online as well to see what activities are on offer and see what jumps out at me.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I think it's pretty stupid to have any expectations, I just go in there and experience what's actually on offer instead of getting my hopes up then being let down by something.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No I have not.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Already have.

Respondent #12

Postcode: 5254

Age: 86

Occupation: farmer

Relationship status: single

Gender: male

Education (highest level): high school

Accompanying persons: partner and friends

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No, when I was in primary school, I went here, a very long time ago. 75 years ago.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: I'd heard that the improvements that they'd put into it and wonderful improvements on what it was in yesteryear, it was well worth seeing and this other family that's staying with us has also expressed an interest to come here and the weather's so beautiful so we've driven only a short distance, we're living here for the weekend and come up here to have a look at the improvement.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No, not really. Just a generalisation, no personal.

Me: I guess one of your personal reasons would be because you did come here so long ago and you wanted to see the improvements that have occurred over time.

P: Yes.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?

P: We booked in to do a 11:15 guided tour and then we've got entitlement for the wet caves tour which is part of the package that we're doing while we're here.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Probably 80 years ago when they were in their very primitive day of first finding of them and then gradual improvement over the years I've heard about how they've improved and lived in the state of SA and have never been to have a good look at them .

R: So I assume the first time you heard about Naracoorte caves was during school.

P: Yeah, I reckon it would be.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No. I've just heard from word of mouth that it's improved.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Reading up anything that you can find, any tourist info that's been sent out and reading about it that way, more or less.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: An expectation of great improvement from when I was a younger child, I hadn't heard much about it so I was quite excited to hear of its improvement from the standard that I will see in the tour later today.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Oh yes, I think it's very truthful of what I hear about it and encouragement for others to come and see it and look at it and I think it lives up, what I've seen up to date, lives up to the standard that I expected of what I'd heard about it.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes. I didn't know about it before today, not really. I knew it was highly regarded as a place of prominence and what I'd heard about it but now I'm aware that it is a place of significant status so I would say and I'm very pleased to see that it's living up to it in all that I've seen so far.

R: If you knew it was UNESCO World Heritage before you came here, would that have driven you even more to visit?

P: Yes, I think.

Respondent #13

Postcode: 5003

Age: 60

Occupation: legal assistant

Relationship status: married

Gender: female

Education (highest level): diploma

Accompanying persons: friends

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: Yes, I've been here three times before.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: Some of our friends used to live in Naracoorte and they said that all the caves were really nice and the fossil cave is really interesting so we're actually staying at the caravan park so we thought we should do that.

R: And what motivated you to visit the first time?
P: My husband loves caves and fossils. It's interesting.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No, not myself no. It's always someone else.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: Just the fossil cave, we're just going to visit the fossil cave for today, we've already been out into Naracoorte. I'm going to visit the wood gallery.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Through our friends, word of mouth, completely all positive.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No, just came along.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Before we visit we usually research on the internet when we go anywhere, but we didn't this time because our friends wee organising it, just had to come.

R: Do you usually do a Google search?

P: Yes.

R: And do you usually go onto the official website?

P: Yes we usually go on the website.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I don't really expect anything, just expect to like I said, my husband's the one going down, I'm not going to, he'll just be really interested in the fossils.

R: If you are expecting anything, are you expecting more to do with relaxing and enjoying nature or getting physical and enjoying the caves?

P: I expect to be taking a walk every day and having a lot of relaxing time.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Yes, it's beautiful, it's quiet, it's just lovely.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No because had to pay for a campsite here so we saw the list of caves. We're all 60 or over, not many of us are searching on FB.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes, I did. Probably a little bit more would make us more interested but not necessarily the main factor but tips me over the edge.

Respondent #14

Postcode: 5118

Age: 63

Occupation: business owner

Relationship status: married

Gender: female

Education (highest level): High school

Accompanying persons: friends (four couples)

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: Many years ago.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: One of the couples lived here for many years so they know area and they've organised it.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No, we go away every Easter and every couple picks a different place that's why we're here this year so no personal connection. The only other thing was, Dr. Chris Brown from the Living Room was down here and it was on the TV a couple of weeks ago.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We're basically just chilling out, we've been into Naracoorte and had a look around the place, our friends have taken us to where they worked and lived while they were here. I think we intend to be doing a tour this afternoon and we intend to go down to Penola tomorrow and next day I don't know what's planned and we're going back on Tuesday.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Through friends and through the TV. We were here when our children were very young so we knew of them.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: I personally didn't, we left that to the ones organising it.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: The internet. Just a Google search and Google maps.

R: Do you prefer to go on official websites?

P: Yeah, that's, yeah there's a bit more information that way.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I didn't really come with expectations. I just came here to relax, there's 5 of us that work full time so it's a nice break from work, but yeah, it's a beautiful place and it's a lovely place to be.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: The facilities are very good and they staff are very knowledgeable and friendly.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

Respondent #15

Postcode: 3400

Age: 62

Occupation: retired

Relationship status: married

Gender: male

Education (highest level): diploma

Accompanying persons: wife

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: We're actually curious and on our way home from Mt Gambier after visiting our son and we've just been on a road trip and just thought we'd drop in and have a look.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No personal reasons, just came in to have a look.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: Initially, this is just investigating what we might come back and so when it's a little quieter, we've just had some information from the chap at the desk and we'll probably come back when there's not so many people so we plan to then visit at least one of the caves, if not a couple.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: That would go back a long time, we've been living in this area for more than 25 years so we've probably known they've been here but never physically come here. Probably found out about it from a tourist info centre and word of mouth.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No, not at all. And we're actually surprised at how well organised everything is and we just thought it was going to be caves and a little office but it's massive, we didn't realise.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: We usually do a lot of research on the internet and we usually do drop into tourist information centres, just locally to get maps and something we didn't know was local or something that might be on at that time that we're there so we just, in this trip we just went by road to the Coorong, stopped there, down through Kingston, back round to Mt Gambier and now on our way to Horsesham.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: No I didn't, I didn't expect it to be this big and so organised.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: I haven't really been here that long but I think it's probably more than exceeded my expectations.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: I have done in the past but not recently because I didn't think we would be here today. I do use FB a little bit for that sort of thing. I look up cafes and that on FB and see what people are saying about it and its interesting that we haven't been here because we've lived in this area for 25 years and never been here so that's probably why we've come here today to see what it's like.

R: If you did search NCNP on FB and found out there wasn't a page, would that discourage you?

P: No, not at all, it's like Tripadvisor you only take in what you need and also there are some things on FB and Tripadvisor that some people complain and so you've got to sort of look through that.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: No. Um, no. Maybe for my wife. I would definitely bring people here that were visiting us and hadn't been in this area before possibly because of that but not myself.

Respondent #16

Postcode: NZ

Age: 67

Occupation: retired

Relationship status: married

Gender: male

Education (highest level): high school (not completed)

Accompanying persons: wife

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: It's of interest nationally, of interest to everybody to come and see what there is. Every corner, we've been on tour for 3 weeks out of 7 and every corner is an exciting corner so this is just another place we're coming to visit and it looks like it's very well done. It's unbelievable, tourism in Australia and everything is well done.

R: Did you have any personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No, I didn't have any.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We're going to go one 30 minute walk into one of the caves and we're going to go into one of the caves to look because I suffer from a sore back so I can't go on a big one hour tour.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Through the pamphlets, our friends told us to come here to stay because of those caves so word of mouth.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: We've been just reading the booklets, online brochures.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Look online and go to the visitor centre when we arrive. Every place we go to, we go to the visitor centre. Every place we've been to, they've been wonderful.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Some new adventure, something that we haven't seen before.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Really wonderful staff here, very helpful with my sore back, explained to me and my wife how we should go about it, wonderful.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: I am now. Yes, that's one of the reasons why I wanted to come to the caves.

Respondent #17

Postcode: 5161

Age: 33

Occupation: unemployed

Relationship status: married

Gender: male

Education (highest level): bachelor's degree

Accompanying persons: wife

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: When I was a kid, with my folks. So I guess we were doing a bit of a road trip so we thought would pop by on the way home.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: It's close to where were staying so the Coonawara so it's pretty convenient, on the way home and its world heritage listed as well so gotta see it and check it out when I'm an adult rather than when I was just a kid.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: Adventure I guess.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We're going to do the Alexandra cave at 9:30 and then the wet cave after.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: That would've been from my parents.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: Not really.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Usually do a bit of research on the internet, Tripadvisor, that sort of stuff whether its flights or hotels or places to visit. Yeah that's usually what we do.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: To go underground and see some rocks and things, stalactites, stalacmites, maybe a few fossils, yeah that's about it.

R: So far has it changed from your last experience here?

P: I can't really remember it, I think this is relatively new and so is the café.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Yeah, I think it's nice, the people on the front counter are great, very friendly.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: I wouldn't have, no. I have FB, Kerrie is sort of a social media person, I'm just on FB>

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Me no, but Kerrie probably because that's what she does.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yeah, it's – I don't know why it's important but I guess it's pretty special, so yeah, take advantage of it, come and check it out.

Respondent #18

Postcode: 5000

Age: 55

Occupation: travel consultant

Relationship status: single

Gender: female

Education (highest level): TAFE

Accompanying persons: friends

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No this is my first time.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: Probably the, the tourist side in SA, I haven't visited many places so I always wanted to visit caves and also interested in fossils.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: With my work as well, I sent people here before like student groups but personally I've never been here so I just wanted to discover a little bit more.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: Today we just went to the Wonambi centre and now going to the Victoria Fossil cave so it will be nice to have a guided tour.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Through work and then I did research on the website but I haven't really done anything on anything other than that. And also my ex-boss he came from Naracoorte so he talked about the caves before.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: Only a little bit. Actually from my friend, she also has a tour company and she does take students do and I asked her itinerary and asked her recommendations.

R: Did you go on the website?

P: Yes.

R: Did you find it useful?

R: Yes, I did.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: I do go to tourism websites, the national parks website and get some little bit of information and Google maps.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Get a little bit more about history and the site. Actually see the fossils, especially world heritage.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: I haven't been to the cave tour yet but I really like the centre as well, how to set it up and the people are very professional and the guides, asking them questions and they are giving some information which is really useful.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: Not really on social media.

R: Me and my spiel about what I asked that question.

P: I think that's hit and miss because people can put anything. I think it would be useful especially if they have events or something or like tour times, I didn't know if the Easter time had extra tour times so that's sort of current information, useful because I think in general, the website doesn't specify those additional information or I may have missed it.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Yeah, I probably will.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Definitely.

Respondent #19

Postcode: 3079

Age: 57

Occupation: post manager

Relationship status: married

Gender: female

Education (highest level): bachelor

Accompanying persons: husband

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: A friend told me about them.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP do you have any personal interests in caves of history?
P: No.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We're going to all the national parks and we're going down to Glenelg and Mt Gambier and we've been to the Grampions so we're just going on a road trip.
Just one fossil tour here.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Through a friend because we were coming to the region and then I googled it and looked on the internet at SA National Parks.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: Yes on Google and onto SA National Parks and official website of caves.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: I did try our local library and I couldn't get any books on Vic or SA national parks so I just resorted to the internet.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: To see some bones and fossils.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: So far so good.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No only Google.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Oh yeah, I will probably post something of my holidays but I wouldn't be searching for this on FB.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes, I read it before I came here. Yeah we're already interested in that sort of thing.

Respondent #20

Postcode: 5035

Age: 53

Occupation: manager

Relationship status: married

Gender: male

Education (highest level): diploma

Accompanying persons: family

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: I've seen the caves at KI and in Jamaica we saw some caves and we were in the area so why not.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No, we just heard that they're supposed to be quite spectacular.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: Go on a guided tour.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?
P: Probably from school days, we talked about it or studied about it but that's about it.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Google research.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: To see something that's hopefully more bigger than the other caves I've been to and spectacular.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Yep all very good.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: Other than googling and going on the website, no.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Normally not.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes I am aware. Not really (motivated me).

Respondent #21

Postcode: 5159

Age: 81

Occupation: retired

Relationship status: single

Gender: male

Education (highest level): high school (not completed)

Accompanying persons: family

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No, I've never been.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: They (family) decided to come this morning so I came with them.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No, just came with the family.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: No I think it's going to be a bit too much for me all this walking around and I'm just going to sit down and wait for them to come back.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?
P: I heard about them years ago, a friend of mine in Adelaide, he's been down here, he used to go all over the place camping with his two children years ago.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No, I didn't even know we were coming until breakfast this morning.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: I get all my gear ready and make sure my car's alright, pick my route what normal people do, check everything's right.

If I'm going somewhere, I've usually been there before as far as this is concerned I've never been here before and I didn't even know we were coming.

Well I might look around there in a minute and find out the history of the place.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I just thought we were going to Kingston.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: It says so around the corner but I didn't know before I came here.

Doesn't really attract me to a site. I come from a town in the UK where there's lots of caves so caves are nothing new to me, I've been in and out of them since I was a kid.

Respondent #22

Postcode: 3216

Age: 46

Occupation:

Relationship status: single

Gender: female

Education (highest level): TAFE

Accompanying persons: family

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: I have but not since I was…probably at school…high school.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: I'm just visiting for the Easter weekend and just thought it would be nice to come and see the caves, see the area and have lunch and friends of mum and got married here about a month ago in the Blanche cave. So mum and dad just wanted to show me where that was.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No personal reasons.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: We had lunch and just had a wander around in the nature along the paths and that's just have a look in the information centre but not planning on going on any tours today.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Grew up learning about it at school, in primary school since I was a little girl. We're lucky to have the Naracoorte Caves just across the border, something special. I've always known about it.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Usually websites, Googling. Word of mouth, that's pretty much it.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Just a nice pleasant peaceful afternoon, just to have lunch and have a walk through just the nice trees and nature. Just relaxing.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Yeah definitely. Took some photos, took some photos of mum and dad with the that big thing at the front so yeah, I've already sent those to my brother, my brother used to live in Naracoorte so he was interested in that so maybe next time he's over this way, he might call in because he mentioned that he hadn't been to see the caves for a long time, you sort of take them for granted a bit when you grow up in the area.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No. I find that surprising that they don't have a Facebook or an Instagram to show any photos or anything like that. I've mentioned to a few people that if they're ever this way, make sure to visit the Naracoorte caves and a lot of people haven't heard of them unless you specifically travelling a particular route and you're coming through Naracoorte, Naracoorte's probably not really a destination where people come and holiday but they would pass through and perhaps visit the caves. I'm sure a lot of people would pass through

Naracoorte and would be oblivious there's caves here if it's not on social media. I could be wrong.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Yeah I have shared photos with my brother. I probably won't put anything on Facebook but interesting, if I had have gone to put something on Facebook, I wouldn't have been able to tag the Naracoorte caves.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yeah, I would be I just forget things, I know it's heritage. I'm not sure how that works. I think it would definitely. If you're travelling around the world you want to go to what the wonders, it's not a wonder of the world but that's a similar thing. They're pretty unique. Yeah it's a motivator absolutely.

Respondent #23

Postcode: 3350

Age: 66

Occupation: retired

Relationship status: de facto

Gender: female

Education (highest level): bachelor

Accompanying persons: partner

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: We were driving around and our friends said there's caves here so we thought ok, let's go and have a look.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: No not really, just interested in it.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: Just have a look around, no real plans, we've only just arrived so we're having a look at what we're going to do. Probably go on a tour.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?
P: Just a brochure probably. Our friend said there were caves here then we went looking through the brochures.

R: Did you do any other research?

P: No, not really.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: I usually go on the internet and look up different areas, places and things to see.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Nothing really, it was just a spur of the moment thing. Expecting to see caves and fossils.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Probably, we've just walked from the carpark. We went to the caves in WA so they have nice facilities there too.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No.

R: Will you be posting anything on social media about your visit to NCNP?

P: Possibly, it's hard to say.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

Yeah. Because it's UNESCO world heritage listed I find this place interesting, there's a real history there.

Respondent #24

Postcode: 5042

Age: 20

Occupation: student

Relationship status: single

Gender: female

Education (highest level): high school

Accompanying persons: friends

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: Yes, I have.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: I think the conservation has always interested me to come, like to come here for an to see the nature and the conservation.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: I just love nature. The caves are very different to say the riverlands and I just wanted to see a different part of Australia.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: Well, I've pretty much been to all the caves, and the interpretive walk, I've seen the bats fly out, so done a fair bit.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: Probably word of mouth through visitor centres.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: No. I've been to Naracoorte before so I learnt a lot of that history that mentioned the caves, so it talked about when they were founded, who found them, when they had tours and stuff so indirectly I researched but I didn't go out of my way to research anything.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Probably really mixed. So my family travels a lot so I'd talk to them because my cousin has been to a lot of places. Probably do a little bit of information on social media on social media or online and then brochures, I pick them up along the way I guess.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: I don't know, I didn't really know what to expect, I'd heard a lot of things, some people said it was dated, other people said it was really cool so I really didn't know what to expect. I'd never really been into a cave so I hadn't really researched stalacmites, stalactites so I really didn't know what to expect.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: They were definitely met because like I said I had no idea of what it was so I had really low expectations and what I've seen, it keeps hitting me in the face every time like I keep learning something new. Definitely exceeded my expectations.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: No, but I posted stuff on social media after I visited.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yes, I knew it was one of the Australian heritage listed. It wasn't a driver but I definitely liked that it was, I'm happy that it is a world heritage site because conservation is important so it's even better.

Respondent #25

Postcode: 2619

Age: 42

Occupation: teacher

Relationship status: married

Gender: female

Education (highest level): masters

Accompanying persons: family

R: Have you visited Naracoorte Caves before?
P: No, it's the first time.

R: What was it about NCNP in particular that initially motivated you to visit?
P: I think the world heritage listing was one of the things and we were staying in the Mt Gambier area so we started looking for things to see around the area.

R: What were your personal reasons for choosing to visit NCNP?
P: Yeah, I did a science degree majoring in archaeology and biology and you know, did a lot of human evolution so I guess it's lead to a bit of an interest in fossils and fauna and all those sorts of things as well.

R: What have you done and are planning to do here on your visit to NCNP?
P: So we went to the Victoria cave and then we're looking at the Alexandra cave shortly and we had a look at the wet cave as well which was interesting.

R: How did you first hear about NCNP?

P: My husband told me about it, it would've been this year when we were looking at planning this trip. He said he was really interested in it and he was talking about it.

R: Did you do any research on the site prior to visiting? If so, where did you collect your information?

P: I might have had a look at tripadvisor, that's the go to, yeah that's probably about it. We went to Mt Gambier information centre and got a bit of information about it there as well.

R: When planning to travel, what is your preferred method of collecting information on a site that you are planning to visit?

P: Tripadvisor is one of the places we go to, I go to the, I use the South Australian tourism site as well. That was really handy for this trip. Yeah usually tripadvisor, information centres we drop into if we're staying for a little while and just word of mouth from friends who have been to similar places.

R: What did you expect from your visit to NCNP after your information search?

P: Some really good caves, really interesting fossils.

R: Were your expectations met? If yes, how were they met, if no, what was different to your expectations?

P: Yeah they were, and we weren't expecting to see the huge number of fossils from the Victoria cave so it probably surpassed I think what we were expecting. And the caves seem a lot cleaner, we've been to some other caves where you do get the blackening where people have touched them where as we've seen quite nice and clean and they've got good formations too.

R: Did you use social media in your search on NCNP? How was your experience and what were your thoughts on the information sources?

P: I don't know if tripadvisor is social media but that's about it. I find it hard to find information you want to find on Facebook but I think it's good for events and things like that.

R: Are you aware that NCNP is UNESCO World Heritage Listed? If yes, did this motivate you to visit? If no, would this have motivated you to visit even more?

P: Yeah I think it made it so it was definitely one of those things we were going to do.