



How green was my festival: Exploring challenges and opportunities associated with staging green events

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ABSTRACT

Organisers of events are increasingly looking to highlight their green credentials. This is occurring against the background of an increasingly sophisticated market that is suspicious of claims that cannot be substantiated. This conceptual paper explores some of the issues encompassing the management and staging of a green event. It examines the importance of engaging a range of key stakeholders and considers various ways in which events are greening their operations. This paper then considers some of the challenges involved in incorporating green messages into an event theme. It concludes with an analysis of future research needs associated with green events.

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1. Introduction

There is growing recognition of the rapidly increasing impact of climate change upon tourism patterns and practices (Becken and Hay, 2007; Gössling and Scott, 2008) and the importance of sustainability (Font and Harris, 2004; Murphy and Price, 2005; Swarbrooke, 1998; Weaver, 2006). In the events field, the focal area of 'green' interest, until recently, has been in how green strategies and the promise of environmental renewal are crucial for the competitive bidding for mega events, especially world sporting championships. These have been explored in case studies of the 2000 Sydney Olympics (Kearins and Pavlovich, 2002) and the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games (Carlsen and Taylor, 2003), as well as a more general exploration of the role and importance of green elements in general sports event management (Chernushenko, 1994). Interest in such strategies has been fuelled by widespread negative publicity relating to air pollution at the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. A further recent development has been in strategic collaborations between high-polluting and green events, such as the one developed between the 2009 Formula 1 Grand Prix and Earth Hour (Ker, 2009). Apart from the 'greening' of these mega sporting events, the effect of climate change and other green issues on events has attracted little attention at present.

Exceptions include the argument for adopting a triple-bottom-line approach in event planning (Getz, 2009; Hede, 2008; Sherwood, 2007); the development of public transport strategies for events (Robbins et al., 2007) and case studies from Canada of how climate change will affect the operation and planning of events (Jones et al., 2006). It must be stressed, however, that these are exceptions. Typically, green issues are missing from the events literature, despite the comment by Getz (1997: 36) that 'prevailing values now require that all events be environmentally friendly, and hopefully proactive about 'green' management and operations' and the acknowledgement that attention to environmental outcomes of events is a priority area for research (Getz, 2008). This conceptual paper aims to redress this balance by exploring some of the key issues and challenges inherent in developing and staging green events and suggesting areas of future research. This is achieved by drawing together some of the research on allied issues, as well as case studies and examples drawn from the authors' knowledge and secondary data sources such as newspapers, magazines and Websites.

Interestingly, the lack of academic research focused on green events is juxtaposed with increasing interest by organisers of events in highlighting their green credentials and an increasingly sophisticated market that is more knowledgeable about sustainability practices than ever before, yet suspicious of claims that cannot be substantiated (Heiskanen, 2005). This interest in green issues is perhaps linked to greater awareness of the effect of climate change on tourism, but also perhaps attributable to a growing consciousness that socially responsible activities and operations should become the *modus operandi* of business in the 21st century; particularly in this era of financial uncertainty

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(Business Events Australia, 2008). There are regulatory issues connected with a failure to meet expectations raised or promises made in connection with green issues (Henderson, 2007; Utting, 2005), as well as potential negative implications for future patronage or support, if event planners or managers do not consider green issues as part of their operations and marketing efforts. It is therefore imperative that the research agenda on green events keep pace with industry and societal needs. This paper is an important step in this process.

The term 'green event' can be defined as an event that has a sustainability policy or incorporates sustainable practices into its management and operations. Sustainability can be defined widely as encompassing not just environmental responsibilities or concerns, but also economic and socio-cultural sustainability, as reflected in the triple-bottom-line (TBL) of sustainability across the private sector (Font and Harris, 2004; Getz, 2009; Hede, 2008; Sherwood, 2007). Thus green events often have broader concerns than their environmental impact, as exemplified by the Byron Bay International East Coast Blues and Roots Festival (*Bluesfest*) in Australia, which has won awards for its commitment to improving and developing broad sustainability initiatives. The six strategic goals for *Bluesfest* are (1) building institutional capacity; (2) a culturally relevant festival; (3) a festival that respects, transforms and grows local community; (4) a zero waste festival; (5) carbon neutral initiatives and (6) a festival site that is a functioning, healthy and natural ecosystem (*Bluesfest*, 2008). It is important to note that while these broader sustainability goals have been developed by the event organisers, research is needed to gain a greater understanding of how visitors feel about these goals (or even whether they are aware of them) and the extent to which they play a part in the decision to attend these types of events and/or in repeat visitation.

This paper begins by examining the importance of involving key stakeholders in the staging of green events. The green 'message' flows through to a desire to respect and engage with the local community, visitors and different groups such as sponsors, venues and government agencies, through the development of partnerships or networks. Sponsorship opportunities are discussed, including the need to factor in the sustainable practices of other organisations, such as would-be supporters of or contributors to the event. The next section of the paper provides an overview and analysis of a plethora of operational issues linked to green events, including the importance of developing policies and practices in waste disposal, recycling, traffic, power and carbon offset schemes. It then considers some of the challenges involved in incorporating green messages into an event theme. In particular, it examines case studies of events promoting messages or concepts connected with food, such as 'fair-trade', organic produce, the 'slow food' movement and 'food miles', given that most events sell or provide some food to attendees and this is an aspect of events that may be overlooked in favour of more obvious green issues relating to energy and waste management. The paper concludes with the identification of future research issues involving the staging of green events.

2. Participation of key stakeholders

When making the decision to run a green event, not all stakeholders may necessarily be supportive, at least in the first instance. Event planners may need to be armed with information to support the need for and desirability of a green event, including research that supports their introduction and a cost-benefit analysis, to highlight the overall effects. Larson and Wikström (2008) note that events are often organised by stakeholders with divergent and sometime conflicting interests, requiring collaborative alliances or partnerships to be developed between the parties. Stakeholders who

might take part in this process include sponsors, community groups, relevant government agencies or departments and venue or land managers, depending on where the event is to be held.

The literature is divided as to whether the existence of a shared purpose across the stakeholders is critical to achieving true cooperation. Watt (1998), for example, observes that all the various stakeholders need to be agreed on the purpose and benefits of an event, to ensure its success (see also the general partnerships literature, e.g. Dowling et al. (2004) and Imperial (2005) on the importance of shared aims and vision for partnership success). On the other hand, Axelrod (1984), cited by Larson and Wikström (2008), suggests that the potential for cooperation exists where arrangements or relationships are likely to be long-term in duration and the parties are aware of this fact, notwithstanding the lack of a shared purpose/objectives. Festivals, due to their 'repetitive nature' are likely to be long-term arrangements, thus facilitating cooperation (Larson and Wikström, 2008).

Actively engaging stakeholders, through vehicles such as round tables, may encourage and promote communication, build consensus and minimise conflict (Driscoll, 1996; Poncelet, 1998). Macbeth et al. (2004: 515) argue that the existence of a partnership 'between different levels of government and local communities' is a *measure* of social capital. The partnership may also *build* a sense of identity or social capital in a community, where a partnership is developed with local residents and supporters of the event (Beeton, 2006; Flora, 1998). Social capital is based on the idea that 'interaction and connections develop shared norms, trust and reciprocity that in turn foster cooperation to achieve common ends' (Jones, 2005: 321). Green events may play a key role in this process, perhaps due to a sense of the various stakeholders working together for a significant purpose; namely sustainability. As Getz (2009: 70) notes: 'Sustainable events are not just those that can endure indefinitely, they are also events that fulfil important social, cultural, economic and environmental roles that people value. In this way, they can become institutions that are permanently supported in a community or nation. Green events are part of this movement'.

The importance and difficulties of working with stakeholders can be illustrated by the case of the Burning Man Festival, NV, USA (Kozinets, 2002; Sherry and Kozinets, 2007). It is an annual alternative festival that features hundreds of visual and performance artists linked by the broad theme of fire. Faced with criticism for its large carbon footprint, organisers are now tasked with the challenge of trying to reinvent it as the Carbon Neutral Burning Man Festival. This involves convincing thousands of anarchic participants to switch to renewable power sources for their art and camping (Burning Man, 2009). True participation from event-goers can only occur in the context of a greater understanding of their needs, wants and profile/characteristics. At present, we have a paucity of information about the type of person who may be attracted to green events and their motivations for attendance, as well as likely levels of demand for these events in the future. This makes it difficult to know how best to promote green messages to event-goers and to gain their commitment to and support of green innovations, as is discussed in a later section of this paper.

The antithesis of seeking stakeholder agreement/input in green events is the situation where the stakeholders themselves are seeking a green element. Potential attendees may be important in seeking out or requesting green initiatives. In the UK, surveys for <http://www.agreenerfestival.com> found that 56% of UK fans planning to attend outdoor festivals thought that these events had a negative environmental impact and 48% stated that they would pay more to attend greener events. Interestingly, 36% of fans said that they consider a festival's environmental policy before deciding to buy a ticket. Further research is required to examine

whether these findings are representative of a wider trend towards seeking out green events. Sponsorship decisions may also be made on the basis of an event's green focus. Getz (1997: 36) observes that some sponsors may wish to be associated with this type of event and may even 'help provide the cash or technology to improve environmental practices'. They might demand pertinent information on the green elements of an event, as well as material in support of the green credentials of event planners and managers.

Performers are also key stakeholders who might require changes to the way events are managed. For example, the band Radiohead initiated a carbon audit of their performances (McLean, 2008; Radiohead, 2008). Key findings were that the major carbon contributors were their transport of audio equipment and in fans driving to performances. As a result, Radiohead announced that they would forsake large stadium concerts for smaller inner city venues serviced by public transport. They also announced that they would not be playing at the iconic Glastonbury Festival that year, due to the poor public transport links that exist for transporting attendees to the venue (BBC News, 2008).

3. Operational issues

Operational issues that need to be considered by an event aiming to improve its green rating relate both to the event itself, as well as its location, inputs and outputs. Selecting a location or venue is an opportunity to consider issues such as access to transport, waste management and availability of green power. The availability and management of carbon offsets is another operational decision. Other important areas for consideration include type and quantity of materials and products used, logistics and marketing. A number of events are also undertaking audits of their green credentials, to benchmark and improve their performance. The results of implementing some of these initiatives can be tracked and monitored, to ensure that they are resulting in tangible and measurable benefits.

Accessibility to reliable public transport is of increasing interest to event organisers. Robbins et al. (2007: 304) note that travel is a key issue for events management due to the effect transport can have on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as other negative impacts of a more local nature, particularly focused on the use of cars to reach event venues: 'Congestion, noise, visual intrusion and deterioration of local air quality are all important externalities generated by high car shares'. Some event locations are almost impossible to reach other than by car, particularly the remote or rural locations favoured by many outdoor concerts or festivals, such as wineries or farms. According to Mason and Beaumont-Kerridge (2004), almost all (94%) of attendees of the Sidmouth Folk Festival use cars to get there, whereas larger urban events such as the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games or an open air concert by 'The Who' in Hyde Park were more likely to be patronised by users of public transport (Robbins et al., 2007). Traffic snarls at the Glastonbury Festival may lead to delays of up to 7 h in exiting the festival site and negatively impact on the local area (Robbins et al., 2007). The organisers are acutely aware of the problem and heavily promote car-pooling, claiming that they have succeeded in eliminating 15,000 car journeys (Glastonbury Festivals, 2008). Events in locations not well serviced by public transport might consider alternatives such as hybrid charter vehicles, shuttle buses or encouragement of car-pooling. Various Websites have been set up such as Liftshare (<http://www.liftshare.com>) and My Spare Seat (<http://www.myspareseat.com>) to assist with the latter. Parking discounts might also be offered for multi-occupied vehicles. Bicycle racks can be provided, as well as security for bicycles. Some events, particularly conferences, also provide delegates with a free local public transport pass for the duration of the event, to encourage usage.

Waste management is also high on the agenda for events, particularly those catering to large numbers of individuals in fragile environments. The use of composting toilets is an option at the latter, as well as using grey water for flushing toilets and minimising the amount of water used per flush. Recycling could be encouraged, with benefits in reduced requirement for hire of skips and payment of tip fees, as well as potentially providing an income stream through aluminium recycling. The All Points West Music and Arts Festival provided incentives for recycling at their TRASHed Recycling Store on-site, where concertgoers exchanged their plastic bottles and aluminium cans for merchandise such as T-shirts and beachballs, and used volunteers to handle the process. Being precise with catering numbers can reduce wastage, and excess food can be offered to charities rather than being thrown away to landfill. Compostable cutlery has also been considered as a more sustainable option for festivals (Razza et al., 2009). The annual Australian National Folk Festival has been recycling since 1992. They have developed a system in which all drinks sold on-site are served in distinctive green mugs. These can be deposited in specific bins, from where they are collected, washed and returned to beverage stallholders for reuse. In adopting this system, the organisers claim that they save 35,000 disposable cups each year. In addition, since 2006, the festival has been plastic bag free (National Folk Festival, 2009).

Power options that minimise environmental impacts include the use of biodiesel fuelled generators and solar or wind power. Green power providers are increasingly being active as sponsors and exhibitors of festivals as they recruit new customers (Getz, 2005, 2009). Some festivals also offer carbon offsets to attendees to minimise their carbon footprint. The Highland Fling, a mountain bike event in New South Wales, runs its own offset program and encourages participants to contribute when registering. Funds raised are donated to a landfill diversion program, which removes compostable material from urban household waste (Highland Fling, 2009). Companies such as Greenfleet provide carbon offset services, including forestry offsets (planting of trees to soak up carbon and reduce the quantity of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere), projects to reduce the quantity of methane in the atmosphere and renewable energy offsets (wind, solar, biomass and other renewable energy sources).

Logistical issues might include examining ways to more efficiently make deliveries on-site or minimise 'food miles' (how far food has been transported from the place of production). The Peats Ridge Sustainable Arts and Music Festival uses bicycle couriers with trailers to move equipment around the festival site, as well as biodiesel in festival vans (Peats Ridge, 2009). They have also set up bulk food service deliveries for food stall holders, to minimise the number of trips to and from the site to deliver produce. Bluesfest in Byron Bay, Australia, use local firms where possible (Bluesfest, 2008), as do the Hillside Festival in Guelph, Canada (Sharpe, 2008).

Audits are often used to monitor progress in achieving green objectives or goals. The Peats Ridge Festival used the University of NSW's Eco Living Centre to carry out an environmental audit of their operations in 2006. According to the Festival Website: 'Every facet in the process of making the festival happen is examined, with a view to accurate and complete data collection and continuous improvement' (Peats Ridge Festival, 2009). Festivals can also monitor whether they are meeting industry benchmarks and/or seek accreditation. Schemes such as Green Globe help the tourism industry address climate change and sustainability issues, including development of a sustainability policy and analysis of strategies to ensure minimal energy/water use and waste production (Honey, 2007). Some venues are now using their green accreditation as a marketing tool, such as conference venues that have received Green Globe Benchmarking (e.g. Perth Convention

and Exhibition Centre) or received green ratings for their facilities (e.g. Melbourne Convention Centre). Getz (1997) notes that some event organisers are actively seeking out these green venues, to be consistent with their underlying green platform, and this trend might require further research, to determine how widespread it is and explore the needs of the organisers in venue selection.

There is a tendency for a *disconnection* between green intentions and operational practice with respect to events. This is well illustrated by rubbish disposal practices observed at three events by the authors. When a popular international musician performed at an idyllic regional vineyard, 'green' featured in the marketing, but there was no separation of rubbish for recycling. Similarly, a family event at a major attraction specifically encouraged recycling and had an educational agenda aimed at changing patterns of behaviour, but the catering contractors emptied all their rubbish into one bin. Thirdly, a major sporting venue introduced recycling bins, but made no provision for non-recyclable rubbish, resulting in patrons putting all rubbish in the recycling bins. This suggests that some event organisers lack an awareness of how to implement green issues in a practical sense and an understanding of the importance of consistency of green themes across the board. This may leave them vulnerable to allegations of *green-washing*, where the claims made about green content overstate or misinform consumers about the true situation (Henderson, 2007; Ongkrutraksa, 2007; Utting, 2005). It may also undo the good work carried out on other fronts, particularly green elements occurring 'behind the scenes' and not obvious to the average event-goer.

The green focus of the event should be demonstrated consistently and clearly across all promotional material and information provided to the public, the local community and the media; emphasising the green elements as a point of difference and possible source of competitive advantage. Awards connected to the event's green emphasis can be showcased, such as success at the Greener Festival Awards, where the award entrants are judged by environmental auditors across seven categories, including event management, CO₂ emissions, fair trade and recycling. Thirty-two festivals won a Greener Festival Award in 2008 (eight international and 24 from the UK). Four of the eight international award winning festivals were Australian, including The Falls Music and Arts Festival in Victoria's Otway Rainforest, who also won a Banksia Award for Australia's greenest festival. Whether this award has a great deal of meaning for event-goers has yet to be measured in an academic sense, and it may be that there is low brand awareness, as is the case with eco-labelling or certification (Font, 2002).

4. Promoting a message through green events

Developing a green event involves more than just ensuring that the operations and venue are environmentally or culturally sensitive. The event itself can be used to promote a green message, through avenues such as themed displays or stalls, presentations and sale of food and beverages that fit with the green theme, as discussed in the previous section of this paper. Events have often been seen as liminal spaces (Goulding and Saren, 2009; Kim and Jamal, 2007), which facilitate radical, almost subversive experiences, based on their roots in the festival or fair (Franklin, 2003; Getz, 1997; Shone and Parry, 2004). They are often 'political in nature' (Getz, 2009: 63) and may liberate participants from social constraints and 'lead them towards an authentic sense of self' (Kim and Jamal, 2007: 184). Lewis (1997: 75) refers to festivals as being 'infamous for presenting unconventional images and experiences'. The 'mountain man rendezvous' in the Rocky Mountains, examined by Belk and Costa (1998), provides a setting for 'adult play' through re-enacting the past, while festivals such as the Asparagus Festival in Stockton, CA are focused on providing 'a safe

place for an individual to let off steam' (Lewis, 1997: 75). Sharpe (2008) notes that festivals can be a wellspring for rebellion and counter-culture, epitomised by outdoor festivals such as Woodstock in the 1960s and, in more recent times, the Glastonbury Festival. Combining political messages with events thus makes intuitive sense, based on their association with 'resistance and social protest' (Sharpe, 2008: 219), despite some reservations canvassed below.

There are a number of examples of the use of green events to promote political ends. The All Points West Music and Arts Festival featured green messages through environmental awareness booths and eco-friendly art, as well as their recycling initiatives. One of the festival organisers noted that 'In a pretty easy way, it creates a little consciousness about what happens when you throw it away... Let's pick it all up, let's get a little reward for doing so, and it will also keep the grounds looking a lot nicer for everyone throughout the weekend' (Mastronardi, 2008). The Glastonbury Festival raises funds for various charities, such as Oxfam and Greenpeace (Shone and Parry, 2004), while the JakJazz Festival in Jakarta launched a Zero Waste campaign in 2009, with volunteers stationed at waste disposal points to help attendees put their garbage in the correct recycling bins (Messakh and Simanjuntak, 2008).

Events may allow green messages to be directed towards audiences traditionally not seen as green. The Melbourne Formula 1 Grand Prix is working with Earth Hour to promote green messages to motor racing fans. Both events share the same weekend and Formula 1 racing gains credit for promoting social responsibility (Ker, 2009). Similarly the Australian Sheep and Wool Show tries to educate farmers about opposition to the practice of mulesing (removing part of the sheep's tail to prevent fly infestation). While farmers generally approve of the practice, European and North American consumers actively campaign against it as being cruel to animals.

The organisers of the Highland Fling Mountain Bike event see it as an opportunity to promote a message about carbon offsets. They have chosen not to hide a carbon offset in the general registration fee, but instead highlight it as a separate payment. As they argue in their Website:

Why not just increase the entry fee? Wild Horizons believes we should individually take responsibility for our own actions, including our contribution to the state of the planet. Cycling is the most energy efficient means of transport ever devised (after putting one foot in front of the other!). But flying and driving (to go biking) are not. Choosing to drive and fly less are two of the most significant personal actions you can take to reduce global warming. Making the decision to offset your emissions when you do drive or fly to the Fling is one way of also helping (Highland Fling, 2009).

There are events that use slow food as their overarching theme (i.e. 'A Taste of Slow' Festival in Melbourne, Australia, the Slow Food Nation Festival in San Francisco, USA and 'Salone del Gusto' in Turin, Italy), while others incorporate the slow food message in more subtle ways into their event, possibly alongside allied concepts such as 'fair trade', organic food and 'food miles'. The slow food movement has its roots in Italy (Richards, 2002; Scarpato, 2002), but has now expanded across the globe. It can be viewed in part as a response to the 'McDonaldization' of food, as well as the increasing pace and stress of modern lives, as noted by Richards (2002: 7): 'The Slow Food Movement sees food not just as a question of nutrition, but as part of a broader lifestyle statement'. Food is one plank within this philosophy, which advocates 'slowing down life in general', with implications for quality of life (Richards, 2002). It is also linked to a greater connection to place and to one's

local community: 'Slow Food is all about real food, regional identity, something that is ethical, natural and honest' (Yeoman et al., 2007: 1135).

'Fair trade' refers to another global movement that considers 'a more stable and advantageous system of trade for agricultural and non-agricultural goods under favourable social and environmental conditions' (Raynolds, 2000: 297). The most successfully developed 'fair trade' market to date has been coffee (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Renard, 2003; Rice, 2001). As Yeoman et al. (2007: 1130) observe, this trend also has a broader social dimension: 'By using the principles of ethical purchasing and citizen brands, individuals are contributing to the society they live in'. Incorporating fair trade coffee into an event, such as occurred at the Hillside Festival in Guelph, Canada, might involve showcasing this product alongside other 'environmentally friendly products, sellers and services' to build awareness (Sharpe, 2008) or alternatively could be served alongside or instead of 'regular' coffee. One might argue that not serving purely fair trade coffee at a festival is at odds with a green theme and might suggest a lack of commitment to the green message on the part of the organisers. The 'organic' movement is based on the production of food without pesticides and reflects a desire to return to basics, which Xie and Lane (2006: 557) associate with a desire for authenticity, 'and what is presumed to be original, driven along by a belief that the original must somehow be best'. Pretty et al. (2005: 3–4) define it as 'a defined and certified system of agricultural production that seeks to promote and enhance ecosystem health whilst minimising adverse effects on natural resources. It is seen not just as a modification of existing conventional practices, but as a restructuring of whole farm systems'. The concept of 'food miles' focuses on 'farm to plate transport costs' (Pretty et al., 2005: 2). This might involve sourcing local produce, where possible, for catering purposes. Priority for on-site food sellers might also be given to those who operate small, local, independent businesses, rather than huge global chains. The Hillside Festival organisers saw this catering decision as an example of 'supporting community' (Sharpe, 2008: 224).

There are, however, challenges associated with combining a political message with an event, including the development of a 'green' theme. Sharpe (2008: 219) notes that the increasing commodification of festivals might affect their role as a space for dissent and 'vehicle for social change', particularly the emphasis on economic returns. There might also be problems with linking a hedonic experience such as a festival with heavy or overt political messages. Sharpe (2008) illustrates this point by a case study of the Hillside Festival, whose financial independence has allowed the festival organisers to forego sponsorship (with the lack of logos regarded as 'refreshing' by attendees). They chose to present their 'green' message through the use of space for different 'causes' ('community tent', women's tent, youth tent) and kept some of the more overt political messages at the peripheries of the festival site. The music however was not chosen with the political values of the bands or musicians in mind, which Sharpe (2008: 226) observes could have too subtle and resulted in some people missing the message: 'Embedding politics in the festival content would have ensured that patrons received the political message, whereas enacting politics through the means of production created a context in which the political message tended to be discovered by patrons as they went about their festival experience. ... this process was less reliable'. This aspect of staging green events warrants exploration through future research.

5. Conclusion

The growing interest in green events, illustrated in this paper, should be matched by a research agenda that seeks to understand several fundamental aspects of this phenomenon. This paper

explores some of these areas and suggests priorities for research, including those with strong links to hospitality management. Without this body of knowledge, growth of green events may be atrophied and public enthusiasm become jaded in the face of inaction. This is a concern, given the importance of events to many destinations, not just in terms of attracting visitors, but for their influence on community or regional identity (Derrett, 2003; Hall, 1989; Mayfield and Crompton, 1995).

With respect to the 'green tourist', current research suggests that there are 'shades of green' (Bergin-Seers and Mair, 2009; Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007), with not all tourists being heavily committed to green causes, but there is acknowledgement that more work needs to be done to examine this type of tourist in greater depth. Similarly, there is scope to examine the green event attendee, including how 'green' they really are, as well as whether a continuum of 'greenness' exists, given the likely diversity of preferences and interests (Morgan, 2007). Research is needed to explore aspects of behaviour of green event-goers, including their motivations, the influence of their interest in green issues on their decision-making processes with respect to attending events, and their expectations as to the green 'content' of events, as well as levels of satisfaction with current offerings. Profiling the green event-goer (i.e. gender, educational background and socio-economic status, as well as motivations) might also prove a useful basis for segmenting the market and assist event organisers to more effectively meet attendee needs and wants.

Future research on the supply side of the events industry could look at the growth of 'environmentally themed events' (Getz, 1997), as well as the ways in which event organisers have adopted various green messages and elements into their management and operations and how successful this strategy has been. The use of green messages in marketing events is particularly an area that requires further analysis, given the difficulties of implementing some of these strategies and the potential liability for claims that might amount to 'green-washing' in some instances. Case studies on green events could focus on success factors, as well as studying examples of failure (Getz, 2002), to provide some guidance as to best practice in this area. These case studies should be chosen from a range of different types of events, in order to build a more complete picture of the 'green event'. It might also be valuable to compare green events in different countries, to explore whether the concept of a 'green event' varies, as well as the incidence of green events, the value placed on them, and any barriers to staging them in some parts of the world. The role of 'green' events in attracting sponsorship could be considered as an example of socially responsible corporate behaviour, which could in turn form part of a discourse on green events as a form of 'responsible tourism' (Getz, 2009). Green events could also be studied in terms of their potential role both in building and as a measure of community identity and social capital, particularly where partnerships and collaborative arrangements are used to develop these community links.

As explored in this paper, from a hospitality perspective, food and beverages can play a vital role in delivering green themes or messages at events, but may be overlooked in favour of more visible elements, such as waste management or recycling. Issues to consider include the type of food and beverages served, the way they are produced, how they are transported on-site, the distance from production to service, and how they are served to event-goers. Research may be needed to examine the most efficient ways to do this, as well as to understand the level of awareness of event-goers with respect to green issues connected to food and beverages. These issues reflect a philosophy or ethos of social responsibility and a desire for change that is consistent with the heritage of events as places of ferment and political dialogue.

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