

**BACKPACKERS:  
THE GROWTH SECTOR OF AUSTRALIAN TOURISM**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION BRIEF NO 21**

**JOHN McCULLOCH**

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# **THE BACKPACKER TOURISM INDUSTRY**

## **SYNOPSIS**

Until comparatively recently no comprehensive research into the Australian backpacking industry had been undertaken, and to date no investigation into the industry Australia-wide has been attempted. The studies completed so far have dealt with Queensland, Northern Territory and Victoria only, and furthermore have concerned themselves to a large extent with an examination of backpackers from the point of view of age, sex, occupation, how much they spend, what countries they come from, which areas of Australia they intend to visit. Legislation relevant to the industry, standards, who controls the industry, as well as its historical background have been largely ignored.

Although concentrating on Queensland, this study is the first to extrapolate the available statistical information onto the backpacker industry Australia-wide. This is possible because statistics which cover the entire backpacker industry are now available for Queensland, Northern Territory and Victoria; and for the Youth Hostels Association (which accounts for about 30% of the backpacker industry) for the whole of Australia.

However, it is appreciated that an absolutely accurate picture will not emerge until a comprehensive research survey Australia-wide has been done.

The present survey explores the early history of the backpacking industry and some of its precursors, and describes how the term 'backpackers' was coined and subsequently nurtured in the Cairns area prior to its Australia-wide explosion. The murky areas of legislation and standards are then investigated, as are the various operators in the industry which, for the first time, are divided into two distinct categories: the Youth Hostels Association (YHA backpackers) comprising the non-profit, volunteer section, and the non-Youth Hostels Association (non-YHA backpackers) comprising the profit-motivated entrepreneurial sector.

The advantages and disadvantages of competition between these two sectors is detailed, together with a discussion on the spectacular success of the non-YHA backpacker industry and the influence of its innovative and imaginative ideas on the more conservative and traditional YHA sector. Finally, an extensive set of statistics is provided which demonstrates the benefits that accrue to both the Australian and Queensland tourism industries from the burgeoning backpacker sector.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Janet Hawley in her article entitled *'Travel's new wave: yuppie backpackers'*<sup>1</sup> gives a vital word-picture of the Australian backpacker industry as follows:

After staying in or visiting some 40 backpacker's hostels, I'd say the good ones are as good as or better than many a Thredbo ski-club lodge. They have two, four and six-bed rooms, new pine bunk beds, kitchens equipped with everything from microwave ovens to electric woks, lounge rooms with TVs, videos, stereos and libraries, and gardens with pool and spa. Many offer free use of pushbikes and surfboards, and free meals or a weekly \$5 barbecue.

The bad hostels, usually unlicensed, are terrible: 50 people packed into a dormitory like battery hens, sharing one bathroom.

These sentiments encapsulate the diversity of backpacker accommodation: the growth area of Australian tourism.

Tourism is one of Australia's largest and most economically significant industries, making an important contribution to employment growth and the nation's balance of payments.

In 1989/90, it contributed an estimated 5.4% of Gross Domestic Product and accounted for about 450,000 jobs. During the year the industry created 20,000 new jobs and generated foreign exchange earnings of \$6.5 billion, which exceeds the earnings of most of Australia's traditional export industries.<sup>2</sup> Tourist expenditure totalled \$22.5 billion, of which some \$16 billion was attributable to domestic tourism.<sup>3</sup>

During the 1990's, overseas visitor numbers are estimated to increase at an average annual rate of 7%, from 2.1 million in 1989, to reach five million by the year 2000. Domestic tourism is also expected to continue to increase over the longer term at an average annual rate of 2-3%.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> p.14.

<sup>2</sup> This represented 9.4% of total foreign exchange earnings. Coal was 8.4%, wool 5.9%, gold 4.1%, alumina 3.9%, wheat 3.7%, meat (bovine animals) 3.4%, aluminium 3.3%, iron ore 1.5%, sugar 1.5% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Balance of Payments, Australia (5301.0)).

<sup>3</sup> Australia. Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, Annual Report 1989-90, p.37.

<sup>4</sup> ibid.

While the backpacker sector of the Australian tourism industry, with an estimated expenditure of \$207 million in 1989/90, accounted for a mere 0.92% of the total tourist expenditure, its disproportionately high component of overseas backpackers actually accounted for 2.23% of the total \$6.5 billion foreign exchange earnings generated by overseas tourists.

The study by Pearce, conservatively estimates that backpackers represent 1 in 12 of Australia's total inbound visitors, and that this amounts to at least 120,000 per year. In other words, backpackers account for 6% of all overseas arrivals in Australia, and close to 8% of the total holiday/VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market.<sup>5</sup>

In Queensland during 1989/90 total expenditure by all categories of tourists was \$2,724 million,<sup>6</sup> of which \$104.78 million was attributable to backpackers.<sup>7</sup> Expressed as a percentage, this represents 3.81% of the total.

If the 1,515,397 overnights by backpackers in Queensland during 1989/90, at an average of 13 nights per backpacker, are accurate figures,<sup>8</sup> then 116,569 backpackers visited the State that year. This represents 1.94% of all visitors to Queensland, however, as backpackers stayed more nights than the average (13 nights as opposed to 5.4)<sup>9</sup> they accounted for 4.70% of all visitor overnights.

The YHA backpacker industry alone, between 1983 and 1990, experienced an average annual increase in overnights recorded by overseas backpackers of 13%, while those recorded by domestic backpackers increased by 3.5%.<sup>10</sup> If these figures are extrapolated onto the whole Australian backpacker industry they are likely to err on the conservative side. Nevertheless, if they are any indication of the likely increase in the number of actual backpackers during the 1990's, then they are considerably in excess of the figures quoted above for the anticipated annual increase in visitor numbers for the entire Australian tourism industry.

The study is most appreciative of the assistance provided by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, especially for permission to use its unpublished statistics.

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<sup>5</sup> Pearce, P.L., *The Backpacker Phenomenon*, p.14.

<sup>6</sup> QTTC, *Tourism Trends in Queensland*, October 1990.

<sup>7</sup> QTTC, *MSRP Survey*, 1990.

<sup>8</sup> ibid.

<sup>9</sup> QTTC, *Tourism Trends in Queensland*, October 1990.

<sup>10</sup> AYHA, *Annual Reports 1983-90*.

## 2. DEFINITION OF A BACKPACKER

A backpacker may be defined as a traveller who stays in budget accommodation, has a flexible travel itinerary, and is predominantly from the 20-35 age group.<sup>11</sup>

This is a simple definition but it does encapsulate the three main, but by no means only, criteria. Other studies attempt more detailed definitions but the additional characteristics, while helpful in classifying who are and who are not backpackers, are not necessarily present in all cases. For example, in a study commissioned by the Cairns Backpackers Association in 1988 and conducted by backpacker businessmen, Green and Higginson, a backpacker is defined as:

`a predominantly young budget traveller who typically stays in shared room accommodation where the overnight fee is less than \$15 per night'.<sup>12</sup>

The study goes on to argue that backpackers are usually:

1. In the age group 15-35 years: about 5% of guests are over 40 with the oldest travellers being in their 70's and 80's.
2. International travellers: only 15% of bednights are recorded by Australians.
3. From the continents of Europe and the Americas: the British Isles, Scandinavia and New Zealand. Japanese numbers have been increasing steadily since 1978.
4. F.I.T., which stands for `free independent travellers': Very few arrange anything in Australia in advance. This of course distinguishes them markedly from other sectors of the tourist market. The majority (of backpackers) stay three to four months.

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<sup>11</sup> This is the author's own personal definition. The word `backpacker' has not yet found its way into any of the mainstream dictionaries.

<sup>12</sup> Cairns Backpackers Accommodation Association, *'The Importance of Backpackers to the Cairns Economy', Annual Report 1988*, [p.2].

5. Bringing into Australia and spending here, an average of AD\$2,000 for expenses. Many seek casual jobs throughout Australia, contributing to tax revenues, and take flats in the capital cities for short stays.
6. The sons and daughters of middle class and upper class parents overseas, they are themselves professionals or semi-professional young doctors, nurses, lawyers, engineers, scientists and university or college students.
7. Using buses as their main form of transport. Some guests particularly Scandinavian and Swiss prefer to buy a cheap car and share expenses. Very few hitch-hike - this is the reverse of Australians on the same trail.
8. Part of a continuous stream of travellers that stretches completely unbroken from London over Europe into Asia and into Australia.
9. Travelling from home for six months or a year and arriving in Australia fairly constantly throughout the year. There is no real season in this market - they leave home with more regard to their local weather or their college or work timetables.

A more recent study (1990) *The Backpacker Phenomenon* by Philip Pearce of James Cook University, agrees broadly with these overall statements, but concludes that further refinement is necessary in matters of length of stay, the background of the backpackers, and the expenditure and financial resources.

Pearce, himself, gives five key criteria for distinguishing backpackers from other travellers:

- (1) a preference for budget accommodation
- (2) an emphasis on meeting other travellers
- (3) an independently organised and flexible travel schedule
- (4) longer rather than very brief holidays
- (5) an emphasis on informal and participatory holiday activities

He points out that backpacking is best defined socially rather than economically or demographically because:

'Being a backpacker is an approach to travel and holiday taking rather than a categorisation based on dollars spent or one's age'.

He stresses that the first of his five criteria is basic and essential in defining a backpacker, and that the others are normally present to a greater or lesser extent.

Graham Russell in *The Development of Backpacker Accommodation in Australia* (1990) takes a different tack:

The word 'backpackers' is purely descriptive wishing to target the users through the suggestion of the facilities/operations which are being provided. In this there are both push and pull factors. The push factors are away from the stigma of the name 'youth hostel' whilst the pull factors are towards an understanding of the new breed of travellers who require to be treated as young adults rather than old children.

'Backpacker' has become a label which more or less translates to 'we understand what you (the backpacker) want and we can provide it because we are not stuck in old ways and traditions. You will get what you want with us and have a good experience'. This message is clearly attractive to people who have spent considerable money in getting to Australia and who will spend significant money over an extended period in Australia in having a good time.<sup>13</sup>

In the Cairns 1988 study, the age distribution is misleading. In their 1990 survey the QTTC show that the 0-17 years group and the 70+ group are probably insignificant, whereas the 40+ group is larger than stated in the Cairns report. The Cairns report may more closely reflect the age distribution of the backpacker population of Cairns rather than either Queensland, or even Australia as a whole.<sup>14</sup> The number of bednights recorded by Australians may also have been understated; though once again this could be more indicative of the local trend than have any wider application.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Russell, G. *The Development of Backpacker Accommodation in Australia*, p.4.

<sup>14</sup> QTTC, *Backpacker travel in Queensland*, p.7

<sup>15</sup> *Annual Report of the Australian Youth Hostels Association*, 1990, p.69.

In addition, perhaps less emphasis should be given to the fact that backpackers are predominantly young or typically stay in shared accommodation. While it may be true that around 80% of all backpackers are in the 0-34 age group,<sup>16</sup> this percentage may well be declining, as is the amount of shared accommodation. In YHA's case, it is their policy to reduce the size of bedrooms in their hostels.<sup>17</sup>

Pearce's fourth criteria concerning long holidays is true for international backpackers who visit Australia, and even here the Japanese may have to be excepted, but it is not necessarily applicable for Australian backpackers. Similarly Australians who backpack overseas will tend to have longer holidays than will, for example, European backpackers holidaying in Europe.

Finally, the statistics illustrate that not all young travellers are backpackers, and nor are they the only users of budget accommodation (e.g. itinerant workers, students and the unemployed may also use this kind of accommodation).

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<sup>16</sup> QTTC, *Backpacker Travel in Queensland*, p.7.

<sup>17</sup> AYHA, *YHA Accommodation Guide 1991*, p.6.

### **3. SOME HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

Although backpacker accommodation as we know it today is seen as a twentieth century phenomenon, its precursors were evident in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The twentieth century itself brought rapid industrialisation, improved transport facilities, shorter working hours, greater freedom for women, growing concern for the health of the community, especially the youth, and the rise of the environmental protection movement. These advances have all focussed attention on leisure activities.

In the fifteenth century the medieval students - often referred to as wandering scholars - travelled on foot around Europe from one university to another, finding accommodation on the way in dormitories installed in monasteries. They were allowed to stay for two nights at these monasteries, after which they were required to move on, to ensure that they did not become permanent guests.

Apprentices also travelled widely in Europe in those days. Their craft-guilds required them to spend some years working in other towns and countries while they were learning their trade. In Europe they found accommodation in inns or lodgings provided by their guilds. This compulsory travel period continued in Central Europe until the nineteenth century. Lodging houses to accommodate them were established by pastors, Wichern and Bodelschwing, under the name of Herbergen zur Heimat and by a Catholic priest, Adolf Kolping, under the name Kolpinghauser.

In London, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was founded in 1844 by George Williams, and in 1855 was followed by a similar organization for women (YWCA). Centres were established in all the major towns of Britain, and offered a wide range of cultural activities, but also provided inexpensive accommodation for young people newly arrived from other parts of the country or from overseas. Interestingly, these two organisations seemed to have been responsible for reviving the word 'hostel' to describe their accommodation. The word apparently not having been used in this sense since the sixteenth century, but is now a household word in the modern backpacker industry.

These movements spread throughout the world, especially in those countries of Anglo-Saxon origin, and their familiar red and blue triangular logos became a common sight in many of the world's major cities.

The nineteenth century also saw a proliferation of bushwalking clubs in Europe, particularly German speaking Europe, which were collectively called 'Homeland and Rambling Clubs'. Their task was to open up the hill country of Germany, and they marked out footpaths, constructed hostels to provide accommodation and refreshments, and even published guide books and maps for bushwalkers.

In Britain, in particular, Public Rights of Way have existed for centuries with a network of public footpaths covering the entire country. They are now maintained

by local authorities, which also supervise landowners' duties to repair stiles and gates. In England and Wales there are some 225,000 kms. of public footpaths and another 580 kms. in Scotland.<sup>18</sup> No doubt this network has provided a ready-made system of paths over the years from the time of the early walking and rambling clubs down to the present backpacker era.

In 1857 the first Alpine Club was established - in London - to promote mountaineering in the Alps and elsewhere, and was soon followed by similar clubs in Germany, Italy and Switzerland. They built mountain huts, marked out paths and published literature about their own particular areas. Other organisations, which called themselves Touring Clubs, provided similar functions and were founded in various countries in Europe (e.g. the Swedish Touring Club 1885, and the Czech Touring Club 1888). 'Friends of Nature', an organisation closely linked to the Labour movement, was established in 1895 in Vienna, and very soon spread to the other German-speaking countries and France. It also built mountain huts and centres for bushwalkers in the Alps and other hilly regions. However, none of these mountaineering or bushwalking organisations catered specifically for 'youth', and were generally comprised only of adult men.

In fact, it was not until the turn of the century that young people were being taken on excursions into the countryside. Once again Germany seems to have provided the impetus, and it started as a boys-only affair (though girls were included later on). These school children travelled on foot carrying all their own provisions and cooking equipment on their backs, sleeping in barns or in the open air, singing folk-songs to the guitar or lute. This new life-style awoke an immediate response, and it was soon being adopted by groups of young people throughout Germany. They called themselves Wandervogel (Birds of Passage) and they formed the nucleus of a wider movement, with its own philosophy of life, the German Youth Movement. The Wandervogel produced a generation of teachers, officials and citizens who were to be receptive to the idea of youth hostels when it appeared.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Britain 1991: an official handbook*, p.227.

<sup>19</sup> Grassl, A. and Heath, G., *The Magic Triangle*, p.11.

In 1908 the Boy Scouts Association was founded in England, and two years later was followed by the Girl Guides Association. These two organisations spread rapidly around the world and between them soon formed the largest youth organisation on earth. The Scouts and Guides, like the Wandervogel before them, promoted an outdoor lifestyle and a love of nature, but with their adult leadership, standardised uniforms, and their segregation of the sexes, they contributed only incidentally to the subsequent establishment of youth hostels, except in some of the developing countries, although relations were always friendly.<sup>20</sup>

All these movements and organisations helped to create the appropriate climate in which the concept of youth hostels and youth travel could germinate. However, for a direct precursor of the youth hostel movement we must turn to the first 'Scholars' and Students' Hostel' opened in Germany in 1884. Its founder was Guido Rotter, a factory owner, who was a keen bushwalker and who set about establishing a chain of these hostels in Germany and Austria.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, use of these hostels was restricted to secondary-school and university students and no females or groups were admitted. These hostels therefore lacked the universality which was to be the basic feature of youth hostels.

In 1909 the idea of youth hostels was born when a German school teacher, Richard Schirrmann, hit on the idea of building a chain of shelters for the young all over the country. Since 1907 he had converted his classroom into a dormitory during the summer holidays, and with his encouragement other teachers followed suit.<sup>22</sup> In 1910 he opened the first real youth hostel in Altena Castle (still in use), and from this point the movement flourished. By 1911 there were 17 hostels recording 3,000 overnights during the year, overnights from German youth hostels soared rapidly from this point: from 60,000 in 1919 to 186,000 in 1920 to 500,000 in 1921, and by 1932 Germany had 2,124 youth hostels which recorded 4½ million overnights.<sup>23</sup>

From Germany the youth hostel movement spread throughout Europe and overseas, and by 1990 had reached more than 60 countries, with 5,300 youth hostels, which recorded 36 million overnights, around the world.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>22</sup> Coburn, O., *Youth Hostel Story*, p.10. 'Schirrmann' is the correct spelling. Green and Higginson, and Pearce in their studies all spell it 'Shermann', without referring to YHA historical publications.

<sup>23</sup> Grassl, A. and Heath, G., *The Magic Triangle*, p.29.

<sup>24</sup> *Annual Report of the International Youth Hostel Federation, 1989/90*, p.28.

#### 4. ORIGIN OF BACKPACKERS

The evolution of the modern backpacker was a gradual process which drew from the experiences of many disparate groups and organisations over a considerable period of time.<sup>25</sup> 'Backpacker' has become a generic term, and seems to have originated during the 1980's in North Queensland.<sup>26</sup> It appears to have been used for the first time when a hostel known as the Backpackers Inn at 255 Lake Street, Cairns was opened in 1983.<sup>27</sup>

Cairns was essentially the cradle of the non-YHA backpacker industry, and from here it spread rapidly south to Sydney where it took firm root at King's Cross. From Sydney its progress was not as fast, but nevertheless by 1990 it had spread to all States and the Northern Territory.

Cairns' evolution as Australia's backpacker capital began in the mid-1960's when YHA was given permission to use the Young Australia League Hostel (YAL) located at 158c Martyn Street. This hostel contained 78 beds, had only cold showers, charged \$1.00 per night (in 1975),<sup>28</sup> and was used by YHA until the early 1980's (it still cost a mere \$3.00 per night in 1980).<sup>29</sup> Then in the late 1970's Mrs Miller made her house at 282 Draper Street available to YHA members until she moved up to Kuranda where she still operates a YHA Associate Hostel.<sup>30</sup> About 1980 too, a property at 123 The Esplanade was listed by YHA as providing alternative accommodation for members, as was subsequently number 77 The Esplanade which continued until 1987.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix A for flow chart illustrating origins.

<sup>26</sup> Hawley, J. *Travel's new wave: yuppie backpackers'*, p.13, in which Michael Higginson claims to have coined the word 'backpackers'.

<sup>27</sup> Pearce, P.L. *The Backpacker Phenomenon*, p.10, says the first corporate registration of the word 'backpacker' was in Sydney in 1981 by John Cook. However, he offers no supporting evidence. The *Annual Report* of the Cairns Backpackers Association in 1988 states Corporate Affairs records indicate that the Cairns Backpackers Inn was the first corporate registration of the word, 'backpacker' in Australia [p.6].

<sup>28</sup> AYHA, *Youth Hostels in Australia*, 1975, p.21.

<sup>29</sup> AYHA, *Australian Youth Hostels Handbook*, 1980, p.29.

<sup>30</sup> AYHA, *Australian Youth Hostels Handbook*, 1977, p.79.

<sup>31</sup> AYHA, *Australian Youth Hostels Handbook*, 1980, p.29.

In 1983 the backpacker industry started to expand in Cairns. Later that year an associate YHA hostel was opened at Cape Tribulation,<sup>32</sup> 145 km. north of Cairns, and Australia's very first hostel bearing the backpacker name: the Cairns Backpackers Inn at 255 Lake Street, Cairns was opened.<sup>33</sup> The Cairns Backpacker Inn revolutionised the industry: it offered a free courtesy pick-up bus, travel agency on the premises, free videos nightly, gardens, barbecues, a swimming pool, and large, modern, individually compartmentalised refrigerators. The following year the same people converted a former private hotel, the 'Parkview', situated at 174 Grafton Street, into another YHA Associate Hostel.<sup>34</sup> In less than a year 220 YHA associate beds were suddenly available in Cairns.

These YHA associate hostels were soon to go their own way, however, and by 1986 non-YHA backpacker hostels had proliferated around Cairns, until by 1990 there were 42 establishments of varying size, shape, price and standards offering accommodation to backpackers. YHA, Club Walkabout/Pink Crocodile, Caravella Family, Conti Family, the Bunn Brothers and others had become household names in the industry.

Meanwhile, in 1986, YHA leased the 'International Hotel' at 67 The Esplanade, giving it 100 beds, and learning from the new non-YHA backpacker industry, installed a swimming pool, free courtesy bus and a travel agency.<sup>35</sup> From that moment the focus of the Cairns backpacker industry moved to, and has remained at, the Esplanade in Cairns. Towards the end of 1987 YHA left the 'International', and took out a three year lease on the 'Bellview Motel' at 85-87 The Esplanade, and effectively doubled the number of beds it offered in the city. These were further expanded when it opened Cairns' first purpose-built hostel, which added a further 120 beds, in McLeod Street, the following year.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the non-backpacker industry in the city was expanding at an even faster rate, and by this stage there were perhaps 2,000 beds available in Cairns alone.

However, although the term 'backpacker' is of comparatively recent origin, backpacking as a concept, with hostels specially built to accommodate those who participated in this activity, can properly be traced back to the beginning of the Youth Hostel movement in 1909. Of course, as the Youth Hostel movement spread around the world it was inevitable that its evolution would vary from country to country. In some countries it was taken under the wing of the government, in others it received government subsidies, while in most countries its establishment

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<sup>32</sup> AYHA, *Australian Youth Hostels Handbook*, 1983, p.37.

<sup>33</sup> AYHA, *YHA Hostels in Australia*, 1984, p.35.

<sup>34</sup> AYHA, *YHA Hostels in Australia*, 1985, p.35.

<sup>35</sup> AYHA, *YHA Hostels in Australia*, 1986, p.35.

<sup>36</sup> AYHA, *YHA Hostels in Australia*, 1988, p.35.

was entirely due to the fund-raising efforts of volunteers.<sup>37</sup> In most of the Australian States, with the exception of Queensland and the Northern Territory, the Youth Hostel Associations developed under the auspices of the National Fitness Council.

The development of National Fitness Councils in Australia can be directly attributed to the recommendations of the first meeting of the National Health and Medical Research Council held in 1938. That Council recommended to the Commonwealth Government that a national body should be set up with responsibility for the promotion of physical fitness in Australia and that each of the State Governments should also form Fitness Councils.<sup>38</sup>

As a consequence of the above recommendations, the Commonwealth Council for National Fitness was convened in 1939, with Sir Raphael Cilento attending as the first Queensland delegate. On 25 August of the same year, the first meeting of the State Council for Physical Fitness was held in Queensland. The State Council was constituted by an Executive Council Minute which imposed certain duties and functions on the Fitness Council. However, the Council never acquired any corporate existence. Under its Executive Minute provisions the Fitness Council was required to 'correlate facilities for physical education' and to 'correlate inquiries into all aspects of physical education' and report to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs. The Executive Minute gave authority for persons to be employed as officers in the carrying out of the above functions. A State organiser was appointed in April 1940 and the Council began a program immediately which led to the establishment of National Fitness promotional committees throughout Queensland.<sup>39</sup>

The Commonwealth Government assumed the responsibility of co-ordination and the provision of finance in the form of grants to the States. Consequently on 4 July 1941 the *Commonwealth National Fitness Act* received Royal Assent.<sup>40</sup>

In December 1940, to conform with the name used by the Commonwealth Council for National Fitness, the name of the Queensland Council was changed to National Fitness Council of Queensland. National Fitness Camps were progressively established throughout the State and included Tallebudgera, Beaudesert, Warwick, Yeppoon, Magnetic Island, Tinaroo Dam, Currimundi, and Fick's Crossing (South

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix B for a list of member countries of the International Youth Hostel Federation.

<sup>38</sup> Queensland National Fitness Council for Sport and Physical Education *Terms of Reference ...*, [1977] [p.2].

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> National Fitness Council of Queensland, *Information Handbook*, [1970] [p.3].

Burnett), to name but a few.<sup>41</sup>

However, conducting camps was by no means the Fitness Council's only function, and it organised married women's classes, 'open' youth clubs for those unattached to recognised youth groups, leadership training, sports coaching, financial and equipment assistance to youth and sporting groups, technical advice, physical education, film and book libraries, meeting rooms, and a typing and duplicating service to all sport and youth organisations. In addition it conducted the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in Queensland.<sup>42</sup>

In 1972 responsibility for the National Fitness Council passed to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services, and in 1973 its name was changed to Queensland National Fitness Council for Sport and Physical Recreation, and its functions were expanded to include wider provisions for research and youth service.<sup>43</sup> By 1984 its role was largely incorporated into the Queensland Recreation Council.

Although the Youth Hostels Association of Queensland did not evolve under the auspices of the National Fitness Council as was the case in all other States (Northern Territory excepted), it did receive considerable help from the Council. A section of the National Fitness Camp at Magnetic Island is used as an Associate Youth Hostel. Accommodation was made available, from time to time, for YHA members at other National Fitness Camps including Leslie Dam (Warwick), Tinaroo Dam (Atherton Tableland), Dilli Village (Fraser Island) and Tallebudgera (YHAQ's very first hostel), and the Australian Youth Hostels Association's Annual National Conference and Rally was held in 1968 at the Tallebudgera National Fitness Camp. In addition, it provided YHAQ with office accommodation and ancillary facilities at its Brisbane headquarters in Melbourne Street, South Brisbane, and later at 147 Ann Street, City, from 1963 to 1979.

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<sup>41</sup> QNFC for SPR, *Terms of Reference ...* [1977] [p.4].

<sup>42</sup> NFCQ, *Information Handbook*, [1970] [pp.7-11].

<sup>43</sup> QNFC for SPR, *Terms of Reference ...* [1977] [p.5].

The following table shows foundation dates of the Youth Hostel Associations in the various States:

Victoria	1939
New South Wales	1942
South Australia	1949
Tasmania	1950
Western Australia	1951
Queensland	1962
Northern Territory	1976

From its establishment in Australia in 1939 the Youth Hostels Association depended on the domestic market for the majority of its backpacking clientele. However, this changed dramatically during the late 1970's and early 1980's, until by 1990 two-thirds of its customers came from overseas.

The late 1980's in particular saw an enormous increase in inbound tourism into Australia including backpackers attracted by important international events such as the America's Cup, World Expo 88, and the Bicentenary Celebrations. In addition, the opening of Townsville (1981) and Cairns (1984) International Airports provided greater flexibility for overseas travellers who now had a choice of seven points of entry into Australia. All these factors and the perception of Australia as being a relatively inexpensive, environmentally responsible, and a safe destination combined to place us high on the international backpacker travel agenda.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Cairns Port Authority, *Annual Report*, 1989/90, p.8, shows the incredible growth in passenger movements at Cairns Airport 1984/85-1989/90.

## 5. BACKPACKER INDUSTRY

Basically the backpacker industry can be divided into two parts:

Youth Hostel Association	(YHA)
Non-Youth Hostel Association	(Non-YHA)

It is estimated that by 1990 non-YHA backpackers had captured 70% of budget accommodation Australia-wide. In Queensland this figure could be as high as 85%.<sup>45</sup>

### 5.1 Youth Hostels Association (YHA)

YHA is a voluntary, non-profit, membership organisation. The Australian Youth Hostels Association (AYHA) is a federation of the seven State associations, and is affiliated to the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF) which gives the Australian members access to a network of 5,300 hostels in over 60 countries around the world. There are around 3.5 million members throughout the world, and these record some 36 million overnights annually. In Australia there are around 139 thousand members, 150 hostels, and an annual overnight turnover of about 900 thousand.<sup>46</sup>

As Pearce points out<sup>47</sup> youth hostels traditionally offered cheap but rather austere accommodation. The range of buildings were varied but the rules of their operations were not, and early curfews (usually closed between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.), limitations on guests, segregated bunkrooms, imposing a 3 day limit of stay, a prohibition on the use of filled sleeping bags and alcohol consumption were the norm. In addition, in order to keep costs at a minimum, guests were expected to do a chore (e.g. sweeping the kitchen floor) each day before they left. However, in the mid 1980's AYHA made a number of changes; and most of its hostels are now open 24 hours a day, clean filled sleeping bags are permitted at the manager's discretion (provided they are not prohibited by local council by-laws), length of stay have been greatly extended, and the market's preference for more privacy, and greater facilities has been taken into account.<sup>48</sup> Australia now has one of the world's most progressive YHA organisations.

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<sup>45</sup> Cairns Backpackers Accommodation Association Report, [p.9].

<sup>46</sup> Annual Report of the Australian Youth Hostels Association, 1990.

<sup>47</sup> Pearce, P.L. *The Backpacker Phenomenon*, p.9.

<sup>48</sup> Refer to Appendix C for a comparison of YHA's (fairly negative) rules in 1983 compared with their (more positive) ones in 1991.

## 5.2 Non-Youth Hostel Association (Non-YHA)

The emergence of a non-YHA backpacker industry is a relatively recent phenomenon which seems first to have appeared about 1983, probably in Cairns. They emerged at this time in response to a massive increase in backpackers coming from overseas which YHA had neither the capacity nor the flexibility to cope with.

Historically, YHA had acquired buildings where it was assumed that members would like to go, rather than establish hostels in central locations close to public transport, especially buses. One obvious advantage to the non-YHA backpacker industry has been the ready availability to old guest houses, motels, hotels or even caravan parks, particularly in metropolitan areas where changing economic conditions had reduced their profitability. Very often these were old, run down buildings which had not been fully utilized for accommodation for many years, and provided perfect business opportunities for non-YHA backpacker entrepreneurs. What these entrepreneurs were keenly aware of, and what YHA was tardy in coming to terms with, was the three things which the real estate industry considers critical to any business which involves property: location, location, location.<sup>49</sup>

YHA had been the sole market operator of backpacker accommodation in Australia for over 40 years and had grown complacent. Its borrowing policies were very conservative and as the inbound market gained pace, YHA did not keep up with the demand for backpacker accommodation: nor did it undertake appropriate market research which would have allowed it to assess the changing attitudes of its members and was therefore ill-equipped to deal with the non-YHA competition.<sup>50</sup>

Non-YHA, on the other hand was run by forceful market-oriented entrepreneurs who ran their hostels as profit making businesses. There was no membership requirements, no duties, no curfew, alcohol was allowed, and, in addition double rooms, mixed dormitories, courtesy buses from train, plane and coach terminals were instituted, and shops, tour agencies, swimming pools, discos and many other facilities such as cheap meals, free use of pushbikes and surfboards were made available. Even simple marketing strategies like accepting credit cards and building smaller bunkrooms were to prove very popular.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Russell, G. *The Development of Backpacker Accommodation in Australia*, p.13.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, pp.15-16.

<sup>51</sup> Hawley, J. *Travel's new wave: yuppie backpackers*, pp.13-14.

To the casual observer the non-YHA backpacker industry may give the appearance of a single cohesive chain operating as a massive conglomerate 'backpacker' entity. In fact the non-YHA industry is an extremely diverse industry which markets itself under the 'backpacker' label in an attempt to show that it has an empathy with, and an understanding of the needs and experiences demanded by the actual backpackers.<sup>52</sup>

The non-YHA backpacker industry lacks the national and international hostel network of YHA, and tends towards a loose alliance of private owners with two or three or even a single hostel, who co-operate for promotional purposes. However, the forceful and imaginative marketing strategies of the non-YHA industry projects it as the innovator in this aspect of the tourism industry. Even the poor quality non-YHA hostels, which were often characterised by poor fire and environmental health standards, overcrowded rooms, run down buildings, and bad security, were able to compete effectively with high standard YHA hostels because of YHA's image problem. Non-YHA hostels, on the other hand, had few rules, no chores, often had licensed bars, generally provided food, and often provided the source for casual employment.<sup>53</sup>

The promotional strategies of the non-YHA backpackers are as innovative as they are successful with backpacker newspapers and accommodation guides, backpacker nightclubs and restaurants, a backpacker discount card, and until recently a backpacker coach which operated from Sydney to Cairns. Even in the actual advertising itself the language used tends to be more descriptive, more enticing, more dynamic than that used by YHA.<sup>54</sup>

The greatest marketing strength of YHA is its annual *YHA Accommodation Guide*. Substantially upgraded in the last couple of years, it provides a detailed guide to all YHA accommodation Australia-wide, and is packed with useful information about discounts, transport, tours, YHA in New Zealand and Fiji, and general information for the backpacker traveller. It's great advantage is that it is a national publication, the print-run of 150,000 per year ensures its distribution to all YHA members in Australia, as well as to selective outlets overseas (e.g. a Japanese edition is available in Japan). The quality of the YHA guide shows that YHA is capable of producing a better publication than anything currently available from the non-YHA sector, but it does have the disadvantage of being a little large for the average back pocket or purse.

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<sup>52</sup> Russell, G., *The Development of Backpacker Accommodation in Australia*, p.4.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.

Although less informative, its rivals like the *Aussie Backpacker Free Accommodation Guide* or the *Independent Travellers Guide to Australia*, do provide essential information and do fit snugly into pocket or purse. Various other publications are available which advertise both YHA and non-YHA backpackers, and include *Backpackers Guide to Australia* (A4 size) which includes absolutely everything from accommodation to tourist attractions, but is rather bulky to carry around; *For Backpackers by Backpackers* (approximately YHA guide size) also contains lots of valuable information; and the *Aussie Backpacker* (newspaper format) is published every two months and is not only an up-to-date accommodation guide, but also gives details of the best bargains, current tours, and a wealth of other information.

Having demonstrated with its *Accommodation Guide* that it can produce an outstanding marketing tool, it is time for YHA to implement the findings of its own research which indicates that the production of a national magazine is economically feasible. This would give it another valuable marketing tool which would be available to the entire backpacker market and the public at large. In fact, a couple of years ago there were seven separate State YHA magazines ranging in standard from glossy format to duplicated. Moreover, most of them tended to be parochial in outlook and of little value as promotional tools for attracting overseas or interstate visitors. However, the Queensland, Northern Territory and Tasmanian YHA State Associations have now combined to produce a single magazine as an interim (at least partly national) marketing tool while waiting for AYHA to produce a national magazine which can compete with the much more sophisticated and universal non-YHA product.

The largest of the non-YHA backpackers is Backpackers Resorts of Australia Ltd. (B.R.A.) which brings together about 85 hostels under an identifiable name and logo, making it the second largest chain (after YHA) of budget accommodation in Australia. Individual hostel owners pay a fee for a listing in the accommodation guide, and can display the B.R.A. logo on their premises if they so desire, even though they are not required by B.R.A. to conform to any particular set of standards, unlike YHA Associate Hostels. In other words the individual operators have no particular allegiance with B.R.A. except identification with the chain by advertising in the same handbook and displaying the same logo. However, what the B.R.A. lacks in terms of quality control it certainly atones for with energetic and effective marketing, and YHA may well ask why 85 backpacker hostels chose not to join as associate hostels and enjoy all the benefits of YHA's national and international network.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p.7.

Another Sydney based entrepreneur called 'Backpacker Headquarters' which started operations with seven properties, but has now decided to forego outright ownership in favour of a franchise network, is yet another variation in the Australian backpacker accommodation industry.<sup>56</sup>

### **5.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Competition**

The emergence of a non-YHA backpacker industry has been very positive in some respects and less so in others. The customer has benefitted in that the non-YHA industry has provided an alternative to the conservative and often inflexible traditions of YHA, and faced for the first time with an aggressive, market-oriented competitor YHA was forced to come to terms with its structure and update the facilities and services that it offered. This was not easy, bearing in mind that as a federation of seven State Associations YHA agrees unanimously on any course of action about as often as do the States at a Premiers Conference, but nevertheless it has responded positively, if rather slowly, to the non-YHA challenge.

YHA has formulated a national marketing plan designed to win back some of its market share. It has concentrated on upgrading existing hostels by providing smaller rooms, family rooms, and better laundry, food, recreation and travel facilities. Top priority has been given to opening state-of-the-art hostels in all key tourist locations around Australia, and to overhauling its outmoded rules.<sup>57</sup>

Unfortunately, unlike YHA which tends to self-regulate, many of the non-YHA hostel entrepreneurs operate independently with scant regard to fire and health safety regulations. This has become tragically apparent during the last couple of years with fires in non-YHA backpacker accommodation in Sydney, Brisbane and Surfers Paradise, and Australia's virtually unregulated backpacker accommodation industry is now about to enter a new phase in its development which will ensure that it adheres to certain standards in respect to space requirements, registration of guests, fire and environmental considerations, and so forth. As an inevitable consequence many backpacker hostels will be required to spend considerable sums of money to bring their establishments up to a suitable standard, reduce their number of beds, or close down. This may reduce the number of available hostels and beds in the short-term, but in the long-term should benefit the industry as a whole.

Quite apart from standards, however, there are signs in Australia that the rapid proliferation of non-YHA hostels has left an over-supply of beds in some areas. Townsville, where the 200 bed establishment above the Transit Centre is in the hands of receivers, is a good example.

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>57</sup> See Appendix C for a list of YHA rules.

## 6. LEGISLATION

Until comparatively recent initiatives in New South Wales and Queensland, no legislation existed in Australia which was specifically designed to regulate the activities of the backpacker accommodation industry.

The extant legislation dealing with accommodation has, in the main, been drafted in fairly broad and general terms, usually in State Local Government, Health and Fire Services Acts. Where particular kinds of accommodation terms such as 'lodging house', 'rooming house', 'guest house', and the like tend to be used. Only in Tasmanian legislation does the term 'hostel' appear,<sup>58</sup> and the *Liquor and Accommodation Act 1990* also defines 'tourist accommodation' and requires a licence to be obtained by anyone seeking to establish such premises.

With this exception, the following Acts are silent on the subject of hostels or tourist accommodation, and would seem ill-suited and inadequate to deal with the contemporary backpacker accommodation industry:

New South Wales:	<i>Local Government Act 1919-1984</i> (Ordinance No.42)
Tasmania:	<i>Liquor and Accommodation Act 1990</i> (No. 44 of 1990)
Victoria:	<i>Rooming Houses Act 1990</i> (No.33 of 1990)
South Australia:	<i>Public and Environmental Health Act 1987</i> (No.36 of 1987)
Western Australia:	<i>Health Act 1911-1990</i>

However, the necessity for legislative action to control the burgeoning backpacker industry has become apparent in both New South Wales and in Queensland, albeit prompted by differing sets of circumstances. Not only were the circumstances leading to the introduction of the legislation in New South Wales and Queensland different, but also the processes of its introduction were dissimilar. In the former it was the State Government which took the initiative with the introduction of the *Local Government (Backpackers Hostels) Amendment Act 1990* (No.89 of 1990). In the latter, it was the local authorities that initiated legislation to control the industry. Legislative action in New South Wales was triggered by a tragic fire in the Downunder Backpackers Hostel at Kings Cross in which six backpackers died.

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<sup>58</sup> In actual fact the term appears in the *Queensland Health Act* (Section 76B), albeit in a different context. It is defined therein as "a premises, other than a nursing home, used for the aged, infirm, or for those suffering from drug or alcohol abuse".

The fire received widespread media coverage, and the New South Wales coroner, in his findings, was highly critical of the owners and managers of the premises, as well as of the South Sydney and Sydney City Councils for allowing an unsatisfactory fire safety situation to persist without rectification. In addition, the Councils, he said, had permitted an inadequate system to continue which could not prevent the use of buildings which were not fire safe.

Some of the recommendations made by the coroner were:

- . Councils should have the power to close buildings until their fire safety procedures are fully investigated;
- . Councils and fire brigades be allowed to remove any fire hazard immediately during inspections;
- . Statutory authority be given to fire brigades to make snap inspections to buildings and report to Councils;
- . Continual 24-hour supervision in hostels or hotels with accommodation for more than eight people;
- . At least two fire exits in buildings which provide accommodation unless exempted by fire brigades on the grounds that the building has an automatic sprinkler system, labelled fire doors, internal and external fire alarms and suitable fire-fighting equipment.<sup>59</sup>

After such a damning indictment on the inability or unwillingness on the part of local authorities in Sydney to regulate the backpacker accommodation industry, the New South Wales government moved to introduce appropriate legislation. Consequently, on 13 November 1990 the *Local Government (Backpackers Hostels) Amendment Bill* was introduced into the New South Wales Parliament where, with all-party support, it passed all stages and received Royal Assent on 7 December 1990. Thus, for the first time in Australia a statute was enacted to regulate the backpacker accommodation industry. The Act defines a backpackers hostel as: any premises used for the purpose of accommodating tourists (for fee or reward) for periods of less than a week, but does not include:

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<sup>59</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 5/5/90, p.5.

- (a) premises the subject of a licence under the *Liquor Act 1982* or a certificate of registration under the *Registered Clubs Act 1976*; or
- (b) a motel; or
- (c) a boarding house; or
- (d) a house let in lodgings.

Under the Act a local council is empowered to serve a 'rectification order' in writing on the owner of any premises being used for the purposes of a backpackers hostel and being managed or used in such a manner as to give rise to a life-threatening fire hazard, to take specified measures to eliminate the hazard within a specified time. The measures may include erection of notices, the provision of fire extinguishers and other fire-fighting equipment, the maintenance of fire doors, and the removal of combustible material from fire exits. The time allowed by a rectification order for the taking of any such measures must not be less than 24 hours.

Should the measures specified in the 'rectification order' not be complied with within the time allowed by the order, the Act provides that the local council may then issue an 'emergency closure order' which effectively prevents the premises being used as a backpacker hostel. Any contravention of an 'emergency closure order' may result in the evacuation of all backpackers from the premises. The Act similarly increases the powers of entry and inspection by officers of the New South Wales fire brigades.

Prior to the drafting of this legislation the New South Wales Department of Local Government undertook a review in respect of fire hazards in backpackers hostels.<sup>60</sup> However, it appears that the review process did not undergo an exhaustive consultation process with members of the YHA and non-YHA backpacking industry as was the case in Queensland.

Queensland, in fact, approached the problem from a different perspective. Firstly, it was initiated at the local government level, more or less contemporaneously, by three separate councils: Cairns City Council (where there are approximately 42 backpacker establishments), Brisbane City Council (around 30 establishments), and Gold Coast City Council (about 9). Secondly, the legislative process evolved over a considerable period of time and was not precipitated by a specific disaster as in the case of New South Wales.

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<sup>60</sup> New South Wales. Legislative Assembly. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 November 1990, p.9480.

Nevertheless, two fires in Queensland did serve to emphasize the need for legislation. One of these fires occurred in a non-YHA backpackers hostel at Surfers Paradise and resulted in the death of one of the guests.<sup>61</sup> The other fire, which caused the death of a fireman, was actually next door to the Club Walkabout Hostel at Highgate Hill. However, although it was saved from the fire, it was found to be operating without a licence which had been withdrawn following its breaches of health and fire regulations.<sup>62</sup> Both of these fires occurred in 1989, but by that time all of the above local authorities were already working on their respective by-laws. Thirdly, all three local authorities went through an extensive process of consultation with representatives of the YHA and non-YHA backpacker industry as well as the local health, planning and fire authorities, to ensure that the finished product would be appropriate and relevant for the regulation of the backpacker industry.

Queensland YHA had already published a comprehensive and strict set of standards some years previously, based on the standards laid down by the International Youth Hostel Federation. This set of standards was used by local authorities throughout Queensland when formulating their own standards.

The eventual by-laws produced by the Cairns City Council,<sup>63</sup> Brisbane City Council (*Ordinances*, Chapter 5, Part 9)<sup>64</sup> and Gold Coast City Council (*By-Laws*, Chapter 25, 'Special Provisions for Boarding Houses used as Hostels or Backpackers' Inns)<sup>65</sup> were consequently carefully drafted. They are comprehensive and detail precisely what is expected of a premises used as a backpacker hostel, particularly regarding health and fire safety aspects.<sup>66</sup> Of the three, the proposed ordinance of the Brisbane City Council is the most detailed and comprehensive, and may well become the basis for an Australian Standard in the future. Most of the other local authorities in Queensland have not introduced any provisions specifically to regulate backpacker accommodation, and rely on their existing by-laws which govern accommodation in general. There are some exceptions, Noosa Shire Council, in addition to applying its by-law dealing with furnished houses, motels, flats, tenement buildings and self-contained units, let or intended for rent,<sup>67</sup> has

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<sup>61</sup> **Gold Coast Bulletin**, 4/6/90, p.1.

<sup>62</sup> **Courier Mail**, 28/9/90, p.3.

<sup>63</sup> *Queensland Government Gazette*, Vol.CCXCIV No.51 p.752-4 (13 Oct. 1990).

<sup>64</sup> Awaiting gazettal.

<sup>65</sup> Awaiting gazettal.

<sup>66</sup> See Appendix D for details of some of the specific requirements in aspects of Brisbane City Council, *Ordinance* Chapter 5, Part 9.

<sup>67</sup> Queensland. *Government Gazette*, Vol.CCXLI No.22, pp.537-8 (30 Sep. 1972).

instituted a policy on the development of [backpacker] hostels.<sup>68</sup> In this policy document required standards in respect of dormitories, ablutions, laundry, kitchen, dining and common area facilities are defined.<sup>69</sup>

In other Australian states there is a dearth of any regulatory framework specifically designed for backpacker hostels. The nearest that approaches regulation of them is the City of Adelaide *By-Law* No.33 which, although it is designed 'for controlling, licensing, inspecting and regulating lodging houses', would also appear to be applicable to backpacker hostels. Nevertheless, it is a slight document which contains very little detail and is silent regarding fire safety.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Adopted on 19 April 1988.

<sup>69</sup> These standards seem generally to have been based on the standards already in force in YHA backpacker hostels. The document specifies, for example, dormitory ceiling height 2700 mm, sleeping space 12.5 cubic metres per person, double bunks to be spaced not less than 900 mm apart, 1 toilet and 1 shower by sex per 8 lodgers, etc.

<sup>70</sup> South Australia. *Government Gazette*, 21 October 1983.

## 7. STATISTICS

The following statistics, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation's Major Survey Research Programme (MSRP) 1989/90:

### 7.1 Number of backpacker beds in Queensland by region as at 30 June 1990

Brisbane	1,175 beds
Mackay/Proserpine	1,113 beds
Townsville/Bowen	1,511 beds
Cairns/Tablelands	3,537 beds
Other Queensland	1,916 beds
<b>TOTAL QUEENSLAND</b>	<b>9,252 beds</b>

Of these 9,206 YHA accounted for 1,333 (14.41%) and non-YHA for 7,919 (85.59%).<sup>71</sup>

### 7.2 Backpacker Overnights by region in Queensland for the twelve months to 30 June 1990

These figures also indicate the number of overseas backpackers compared to those of domestic origin. In the category Other Queensland, the Gold Coast/ Sunshine Coast, and Rockhampton/Gladstone areas would account for the bulk of these overnights.

BRISBANE REGION	
Australian	41,701
Overseas	156,579
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>198,280</b>
MACKAY/PROSERPINE	
Australian	52,246
Overseas	123,691
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175,937</b>
TOWNSVILLE/BOWEN	
Australian	36,772

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<sup>71</sup> AYHA, *YHA Accommodation Guide 1990*

Overseas	148,449
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>185,221</b>
CAIRNS/TABLELANDS	
Australian	121,673
Overseas	434,222
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>555,895</b>
OTHER QUEENSLAND	
Australian	208,364
Overseas	191,699
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400,063</b>
TOTAL QUEENSLAND	
Australia	460,756
Overseas	1,054,640
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,515,396</b>

These above figures indicate that overseas backpackers accounted for 69.6% of all backpacker overnights in Queensland in 1989/90.<sup>72</sup> This MSRP figure is supported by the Pearce study (1990) which states 65% but claims that this is a very conservative estimate, and by YHA's own backpackers figures for Queensland of 72.25%.<sup>73</sup> However, the figures are at odds with the study done by the Cairns Backpackers Association (1988) which claims that 85% of backpackers are from overseas.<sup>74</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not possible to accurately compare YHA and non-YHA

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<sup>72</sup> AYHA, *Annual Report*, 1990. The YHA backpacker industry's Australia-wide figure is 67.64% which tends to indicate that Queensland YHA receives a higher proportion of overseas backpackers. Nevertheless, both the Australian and the Queensland YHA figures debunk Pearce's contention (pp.14/15) that the YHA backpacker industry has a higher proportion of Australian backpackers using its facilities compared to the non-YHA backpacker industry.

<sup>73</sup> The N.T. Tourism Commission sponsored *Backpacker Survey*, 1989/90 concluded that 80.37% of backpackers' overnights recorded in the Northern Territory during that year (i.e. 489,000) were from overseas, and only 19.63% (i.e. 96,000) were Australian. These figures may or may not be relevant to the rest of Australia, but they do indicate that more research is required on this aspect of the backpacker industry. Incidentally, the above percentages do not agree with the YHA figures for the Northern Territory (viz. 73.35% for overseas YHA backpacker overnights), which are also consistent with YHA backpacker percentages in Queensland.

<sup>74</sup> *Annual Report of Cairns Backpackers Accommodation Association 1988* [pp.3,9].

backpacker overnights as the MSRP figures are based on financial year figures whereas YHA figures are based on the calendar year. Suffice to say it is estimated that YHA accounts for around 15% of total backpacker overnights in Queensland and non-YHA 85%.<sup>75</sup>

### 7.3 Backpacker overnights in Queensland by country of origin for the twelve months to 30 June 1990

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	MSPR FIGURES MARKET SHARE OF B/PACKER NIGHTS IN REGION	YHA SHARE	BACKPACKER NIGHTS
Australia	30.4%	27.8%	460,757
New Zealand	3.9%	2.9%	59,627
Japan/S.E. Asia	4.1%	7.9%	62,573
U.S.A./Canada	9.2%	9.8%	139,301
United Kingdom	29.6%	27.1%	448,951
Germany	5.6%	5.9%	85,308
Other Europe	14.8%	16.1%	224,906
Other	2.2%	2.5%	33,974
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	1,515,397

The percentages in the middle column, which represent the origin of backpackers who used YHA accommodation, are provided for comparison purposes.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> While this 15%-85% split is in accord with both the Cairns Backpacker Accommodation Association study (1988), and only reflects the Queensland situation, a later study by Russell (1990), not only gives 15% from his assessment of the Sydney YHA market share, but also maintains that this figure is fairly representative of the complete Australian picture. Although this author believes this figure to be too low, the YHA market share Australia-wide is unlikely to reach 30%.

<sup>76</sup> AYHA, *Annual Report*, 1990. Although these percentages roughly correspond, the Japanese/S.E. Asian backpackers appear to have a marked preference for YHA accommodation while those from the U.K. and Australia tend to lean in the opposite direction.

#### 7.4 Average expenditure per backpacker overnight in Queensland during 1989/90

EXPENDITURE CATEGORY (\$ per Visitor Night)						
REGION/ Market Sector	Accom.	Food/ Beverage	Pleasure Shopping	Local T/port	Other	AVERAGE
BRISBANE Backpacker Exp.	\$15.11	\$21.55	\$11.57	\$18.11	\$1.48	\$67.82
MACKAY/PROSERPINE Backpacker Exp.	\$9.39	\$36.54	\$10.72	\$26.93	\$29.03	\$112.61
TOWNSVILLE/BOWEN Backpacker Exp.	\$8.88	\$11.61	\$6.00	\$9.43	\$2.49	\$38.41
CAIRNS/TABLELANDS Backpacker Exp.	\$9.99	\$15.20	\$6.47	\$32.41	\$1.55	\$65.62
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Exp.	\$10.74	\$19.12	\$9.69	\$23.18	\$6.23	\$68.96
% of Backpacker Exp.	15.6%	27.7%	14.1%	33.6%	9.0%	100.0%

On average each backpacker in Queensland spent \$68.96 per overnight during 1989/90, according to the MSRP study. This figure is supported by Pearce (1990) who states \$67.24, the Victorian Tourism Commission Study (1990) gives \$62.81, but the Northern Territory Backpacker Figure gives a lower figure (\$52).

There is general agreement, however, on how backpackers apportion their average expenditure per visitor night. If the figure of \$68.96 expenditure per backpacker overnight is accurate, and YHA (whose overnights are accurately recorded) does in fact account for 30% of the Australia-wide backpacker market, then backpackers spent around \$206,880,000 Australia-wide last year.

Assuming that 70% of the Australia-wide backpacker market consists of overseas visitors, then the following table gives some indication of the foreign exchange being brought into the country.

Bearing in mind, too, that backpackers tend to pay in cash, and that the figures do not include air fares to and from Australia:

#### **7.4.1 Backpacker expenditure within Australia**

By overseas

backpackers \$144,816,000 (foreign exchange)

By domestic

backpackers \$ 62,064,000 (Australian currency)

---

\$206,880,000

---

The study conducted for the Cairns Backpacker Accommodation Association (1988), estimated that total backpacker expenditure in Australia was \$264 million per annum.

If YHA only accounts for 15% of the backpacker market in Queensland, as some speculate, then the following table applies:

#### **7.4.2 Backpacker expenditure within Queensland**

By overseas

backpackers \$67,013,000 (foreign exchange)

By domestic

backpackers \$11,827,000 (Australian currency)

---

\$78,840,000

---

However, these amounts are not consistent with the figures shown in the following MRSP table, which if accurate, would indicate that YHA's share of the total Queensland backpacker market is, in fact, only about 11-12 per cent. furthermore, if the MRSP total expenditure figure for Queensland of \$104,780,097 is extrapolated Australia-wide, on the basis that Queensland accounts for around 30% of all backpacker overnights in Australia, then the figure of \$206,880,000 may be closer to \$320,000,000. Nevertheless, this is only an estimation which will require on-going research Australia-wide before more accurate figures become available.

#### **7.5 Total Expenditure by Backpackers in Queensland during 1989/90:**

The MSRP study covers all expenditure by backpackers using commercial accommodation (i.e. YHA and non-YHA), with the exception of expenditure on the main transport used to come to Queensland. However, it does include transport within Queensland.

REGION/ Origin	BACKPACKER EXPENDITURE
BRISBANE REGION	
Australia	\$ 2,991,906
Overseas	\$ 9,801,899
TOTAL	\$ 12,793,805
-----	
MACKAY/PROSERPINE	
Australia	\$ 3,439,752
Overseas	\$ 15,437,004
TOTAL	\$ 18,876,756
-----	
TOWNSVILLE/BOWEN	
Australia	\$ 1,044,011
Overseas	\$ 5,835,165
TOTAL	\$ 6,879,175
-----	
CAIRNS/TABLELANDS	
Australia	\$ 8,323,595
Overseas	\$ 27,837,524
TOTAL	\$ 36,161,119
-----	
OTHER QUEENSLAND	
Australia	\$ 14,248,779
Overseas	\$ 15,820,462
TOTAL	\$ 30,069,241
-----	
TOTAL QUEENSLAND	
Australia	\$ 30,048,043
Overseas	\$ 74,732,054
TOTAL	\$104,780,097
-----	

In the category Other Queensland, the Gold Coast/Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton/Gladstone would account for the bulk of this expenditure.

## 7.6 Length of Stay for Backpackers in Queensland

LENGTH OF STAY							
REGION/ Market Sector	1 Night	2 Nights	3-7 Nights	8-14 Nights	15-21 Nights	22+ Nights	Average
BRISBANE REGION Backpacker Visitors	29.6%	29.5%	30.0%	4.3%	2.4%	4.3%	5.0 Nights
MACKAY/PROSERPINE Backpacker Visitors	5.6%	20.9%	51.3%	17.6%	2.7%	1.9%	6.0 Nights
TOWNSVILLE/BOWEN Backpacker Visitors	13.6%	22.1%	52.1%	9.1%	1.5%	1.7%	5.0 Nights
CAIRNS/TABLELANDS Backpacker Visitors	5.4%	7.9%	47.6%	24.7%	7.1%	7.3%	9.7 Nights
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	10.8%	9.7%	30.3%	22.8%	10.6%	15.9%	13.0 Nights

The MSRP survey found that the average number of overnights spent in Queensland by backpackers was 13.

Extrapolating the YHA backpacker industry figures, which show that Queensland and New South Wales account for 50% of the total overnights spent by backpackers, to the entire Australian backpacker industry, then the figure of 13 will be lower when applied Australia-wide.<sup>77</sup>

### 7.7 Age of Backpackers in Queensland

REGION/ Market Sector	AGE GROUP							
	<14 years	14-17 years	18-19 years	20-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-59 years	60+ years
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	5.1%	.9%	6.5%	35.7%	36.1%	7.3%	4.3%	4.1%

This MSRP table finding shows that during 1989/90, 78.3% of backpackers in Queensland were in the 18-34 age group. Other studies such as Riley (1988), Cairns Backpackers Accommodation Association (1988) and the Northern Territory Backpackers Survey (1990) support this. The Pearce study (1990) gives a much greater percentage (%) of backpackers in the under 30 age group. It is reasonable to assume that the above table would be applicable Australia-wide.

### 7.8 Distribution of Backpackers by Sex

REGION	MALES	FEMALES
BRISBANE REGION Backpacker Visitors	63.9%	36.1%
MACKAY/PROSERPINE Backpacker Visitors	54.0%	46.0%
TOWNSVILLE/BOWEN Backpacker Visitors	56.9%	43.1%
CAIRNS/TABLELANDS Backpacker Visitors	49.1%	50.9%
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	53.2%	46.8%

This MSRP table indicates that in 1989/90 male backpackers (53.2%) in Queensland slightly outnumbered females (46.8%). Again there is little reason to doubt that these figures would reflect the Australia-wide distribution.

<sup>77</sup> See Appendix E for list of YHA backpacker industry overnights for 1990.

## 7.9 Occupation of Backpackers in Queensland during 1989/90

OCCUPATION									
REGION/ Market Sector	PROF.	TECH/ TRADE	CLER/ SALES	SELF EMPLOY	MANAGER /EXEC.	SEMI/ UNSKIL	HOME DUTIES	UNEMPL/ RETIRED	STUDENT
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	26.8%	15.2%	15.4%	5.3%	9.1%	6.4%	.8%	9.8%	11.2%

This MSRP table shows quite clearly that, contrary to popular misconception, backpackers are mostly from middle class backgrounds and choose to stay in cheap accommodation.<sup>78</sup> In addition, as indicated by Table 8.4, the myth that backpackers don't spend any money has been debunked. It is just that they carefully target the areas where they spend it.<sup>79</sup>

## 7.10 Transport used by Backpackers to enter Queensland 1989/90

REGION/ Market Sector	Internat Air	Dom. Air	Rail	Bus/ Coach	Priv. Vehicle	Rental Vehicle	Other
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	18.2%	7.7%	2.9%	38.1%	29.2%	2.8%	1.1%

The above MSRP table indicates that bus/coach was the most popular mode of transport to enter Queensland.

<sup>78</sup> Hawley, J. *Travel's new wave: yuppie backpackers*, calls them the 'walking wallets' of the world, (p.11).

<sup>79</sup> *Whitsunday Times*, 10 October 1990, p.3.

### 7.11 Entry Point into Australia by Country of Origin for Backpack Travellers in Queensland - 1989/90

OVERSEAS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	ENTRY POINT INTO AUSTRALIA (%)								TOTAL BACK- PACKER VISITORS
	BRISBANE	CAIRNS	T'VILLE	SYDNEY	M'BOURNE	PERTH	DARWIN	OTHER	
New Zealand	68.6%	3.1%	.0%	19.7%	6.5%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	6,148
Japan/S.E. Asia	14.9%	44.3%	1.7%	32.7%	1.0%	2.2%	3.2%	.0%	5,437
U.S.A./Canada	9.9%	19.3%	.0%	58.2%	8.2%	.8%	3.6%	.0%	16,192
United Kingdom	5.3%	4.4%	.2%	59.7%	10.9%	13.5%	5.2%	.8%	29,234
Germany	7.4%	3.9%	.0%	60.0%	16.2%	9.4%	2.3%	.9%	9,294
Other Europe	19.9%	4.6%	.6%	54.7%	7.2%	6.6%	6.1%	.2%	19,003
Other	3.9%	7.1%	.0%	11.6%	73.4%	1.1%	3.0%	.0%	12,788
Total	14.2%	9.9%	.3%	49.7%	14.1%	7.1%	4.2%	.5%	98,096

This MSRP table shows that, as with all international travellers, Sydney is the most important entry point into Australia for backpackers.<sup>80</sup> The high proportion of U.S.A./Canada and Japan/S.E. Asia backpackers flying directly into Cairns compared to those from other countries may be explained by the greater availability of direct flights from Japan and North America. However, a very high proportion of New Zealand backpackers fly into Brisbane, but the reasons are unknown.

### 7.12 Attraction to Backpacker Regions in Queensland - June Quarter 1990

REGION	ATTRACTION TO REGION							OTHER
	CLIMATE	LIFESTYLE /CULTURE	DIVING/ WATER SPORTS	TOURS & CRUISES	BEACH/ ISLAND VISITS	NATURE/ BUSH- WALKS	NIGHT- LIFE/ENT ERTAIN.	
BRISBANE REGION Backpacker Visitors	21.2%	18.5%	2.3%	10.8%	7.8%	.8%	5.0%	33.7%
MACKAY/PROSERPINE Backpacker Visitors	22.1%	.5%	17.6%	23.2%	19.7%	4.3%	3.1%	9.5%
TOWNSVILLE/BOWEN Backpacker Visitors	12.6%	.7%	13.6%	18.8%	34.3%	7.0%	.4%	12.6%
CAIRNS/TABLELANDS Backpacker Visitors	11.0%	1.6%	26.4%	27.4%	15.4%	9.7%	5.5%	3.1%
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	12.5%	3.6%	16.8%	18.8%	22.2%	12.1%	3.2%	10.8%

The above table sets out some of the reasons why backpackers visit the various regions of Queensland, however, MSRP advises caution regarding the influence of

<sup>80</sup> So does VTC, *The \$10 Tourists ...*, p.8 - but see other variations.

'climate', which may be a factor in some of the other categories.

### 7.13 Information Source on Backpacker Accommodation in Queensland - June Quarter 1990

REGION	INFORMATION SOURCE					
	BACKPACKER MAGAZINE	OTHER BOOK/MAGAZINE	YHA	TRAVEL AGENT/WORD OF MOUTH	BROCHURE	OTHER
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	31.8%	8.0%	6.5%	38.4%	8.0%	7.3%

The importance of 'word of mouth' in this MSRP survey is confirmed by other studies such as Hawley (1988) and the Northern Territory Backpacker Survey (1990) and Victorian Tourism Commission Survey (1990).

### 7.14 Other States/Territories Visited by Backpack Travellers in Queensland - June Quarter 1990

REGION	OTHER STATES VISITED						
	N.S.W.	VIC.	S.A.	W.A.	N.T.	A.C.T.	TAS.
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	84.9%	50.6%	38.7%	19.8%	45.1%	26.9%	9.2%

These figures support the fact that the main international backpacker routes in Australia, in order of popularity are:<sup>81</sup>

- A. Sydney - Brisbane - Cairns
- B. Sydney - Brisbane - Cairns - Darwin - Alice Springs - Adelaide - Melbourne - Sydney
- C. Either of the above but including Perth.

### 7.15 Level of Satisfaction with Backpacker Accommodation in Queensland - June Quarter 1990

REGION	LEVEL OF SATISFACTION				
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	JUST ACCEPTABLE	UNSATISFACTORY	VERY UNSATISFACTORY
TOTAL QUEENSLAND Backpacker Visitors	14.8%	72.7%	12.5%	.0%	.0%

<sup>81</sup> Hawley, J. *Travel's new wave: yuppie backpackers*, p.12; Pearce, P. *Backpacker Phenomenon*, p.38; VTC, *The \$10 tourists ...*, p.8 (see also p.9 for other States intended to visit, from the perspective of backpackers in Victoria).

## 8. CONCLUSION

This study clearly indicates that the backpacker industry, which contributes an estimated \$207 million annually to the total Australian tourism market (i.e. 0.92% of the total), and brings in an estimated \$145 million annually in foreign exchange (i.e. 2.23% of total foreign exchange generated by the tourism industry), is making a very significant contribution to Australia's economy.

As the 1989/90 MSRP study points out:

'The expenditure by international Backpack travellers is directly contributing to Australia's balance of trade as foreign revenue. It can also be implied that much of the revenue generated by Backpack travellers in Queensland remains within the local economies of Queensland, with the highest proportion of the Backpack travellers average daily expenditure spent on local transport (including tours), food and beverages.'

Unfortunately, apart from the ongoing statistical analysis conducted by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation regarding backpackers in Queensland, very little statistical information about the non-YHA backpacker industry is available. It is apparent from the MSRP data provided in this study, that there is a requirement to undertake a similar analysis of the backpacker industry in all the other States. However, to date only the Northern Territory Tourist Commission (1990) and the Victorian Tourism Commission (1991) have published any data, and neither are nearly as comprehensive and detailed as the QTTC research.

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## APPENDIX A

### Some historical influences in the evolution of the Backpacker

PERIOD	TRAVELLER	PURPOSE	REGION	ACCOMMODATION
15-17th century	wandering scholars	travel from one university to another	Europe	dormitories attached to monasteries
15th-19th century	craft-guild apprentices	required to work in another town/country	Europe	lodgings provided by their guilds
19th century	'Bushwalking and Rambling Clubs'	self explanatory	German-speaking Europe	established suitable huts in the countryside
1844 1855	YMCA YWCA }	inexpensive accommodation for recently arrived young people - cultural/christian activities	Britain Britain	hostel accommodation - first use of word since 16th century
1857	Alpine Club	to foster mountaineering	Britain - spread to Germany, Italy, Switzerland	established suitable huts in the mountains
1884	'Scholars and Students Hostels'	walking, climbing, rambling	Germany - spread to Austria	established network of hostels (727 by 1914)
1885 1888	'Touring Clubs'	walking, climbing, rambling	Sweden Czechoslovakia	established suitable huts in the countryside
1895	'Friends of Nature'	walking, climbing and rambling	Austria - spread to Germany and France	established suitable huts in the countryside
1900	'Wandervogel'	walking and rambling reviving old customs	Germany	established suitable huts in the countryside
1908 1910	Boy Scouts Girl Guides }	practical skills, self reliance, cooperation, practical nature study, observing, open-air life	Britain - spread to USA and Commonwealth and around the world	camping out
1909	YHA	Objects are: To promote the education of all young people of all nations, but especially young people of limited means, by encouraging in them a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside and an appreciation of the cultural values of towns and cities in all parts of the world, and as ancillary thereto to provide hostels or other accommodation in which there shall be no distinctions of race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, class or political opinions and thereby to develop a better understanding of their fellow men, both at home and abroad.	Germany - spread around the world	established hostels first in the countryside then in the towns
1939	YHA reaches Australia	-	-	-
1950	working holidays	Australians to Europe	-	cheap accommodation

1960	YHA expansion	-	Worldwide	-
1970	Drifters/hippies	'escape theme'	-	cheap accommodation
1983	First use of the name 'backpacker'	Seems to have been chosen to depict the new trend in budget accommodation, in that it actually describes the main user group.	Queensland	-
1983 ↓ 1984	First accommodation to use the 'backpacker' name opened in Cairns	Up-dated version of the YHA hostel	Queensland	hostel accommodation
1985 ↓ 1988	Non-YHA backpacker industry expands rapidly	Compete with YHA by providing extra facilities - smaller rooms, courtesy buses, alcohol on premises, no membership, minimum rules, etc.	Queensland ↓ All States ↓ Overseas Cairns becomes Australia's backpacker capital.	hostel accommodation ↓ boarding houses ↓ converted flats ↓ converted motels ↓ purpose built hostels
1989 ↓ 1991	Non-YHA still expanding with investors driven by potential capital gains until collapse of real estate market in 1989/90 ↓ YHA maintains steady policy of upgrading hostels, and establishing others in key locations	YHA continues to lose market share - barely 30% of Australian market (maybe less than 15% in Queensland) ↓ YHA updates rules - but still doesn't publish a national magazine - can't compete with non-YHA's aggressive marketing.	Sydney offers most backpacker beds of any region in Australia (5000 beds available) ↓ non-YHA concentrated in Kings Cross ↓ YHA concentrated at Glebe ↓ 3500 beds available in Cairns area	more purpose, built backpacker facilities ↓ centrally owned hostel chains ↓ hostel complexes develop as part bigger developments (e.g. Townsville Transit Centre)

**APPENDIX B****Member Countries of the International Youth Hostel Federation**

Algeria	Kenya
Argentina	Korea - South
Australia	Libya
Austria	Luxembourg
Bahrain	Malaysia
Belgium - CWAJ	Mexico
Belgium - VJH	Morocco
Brazil	Netherlands
Bulgaria	New Zealand
Canada	Norway
Chile	Pakistan
Colombia	Peru
Cyprus	Philippines
Czechoslovakia	Poland
Denmark	Portugal
Egypt	Qatar
England & Wales	Saudi Arabia
Finland	Scotland
France	Spain
Germany	Sri Lanka
Greece	Sudan
Hong Kong	Sweden
Hungary	Switzerland
Iceland	Syria
India	Thailand
Ireland - Republic	Tunisia
Ireland - Northern	United Arab Emirates
Israel	United States
Italy	Uruguay
Japan	Yugoslavia
<u>Associate Members</u>	
Bangladesh	Nepal
Costa Rica	New Caledonia
Ecuador	South Africa
Guatemala	Taiwan
Indonesia	Zimbabwe

## APPENDIX C

### RULES IN YHA ACCOMMODATION 1983-1991

#### 1983

#### HOSTEL OPERATING RULES

1. Hostels are normally closed during the day from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm. Restricted hours are designed to keep costs down and encourage members to be out and engaging in some activity during the day.
2. A regulation sleeping sheet *must* always be used. Hostels provide at least three blankets per bed and a pillow. If you do not have your own sleeping sheet, some hostels hire them at a nominal charge. Refer to this handbook if in doubt. In the long run, you should provide your own sleeping sheet for the reasons of hygiene and economy.
3. Only financial members of the Association may use hostels. Under no circumstances will an out of date membership card be accepted. If you have lost or forgotten your card, you will be expected to pay another membership. This will normally be refunded to you on application to the State Office in your home state.  
Your membership card is precious - *look after it.*
4. Youth hostelling is based on a self-help system. All members are expected to leave a hostel clean and tidy with every facility ready for the next member's use - this means performing at least one domestic duty each morning before leaving - without being told to do so. A clean and tidy hostel is a welcoming place to everyone - *it is your responsibility to keep it that way.*
5. Separate dormitory and bathroom facilities are provided for males and females.
6. The consumption of food and drink is not permitted in hostel dormitories. Smoking is not permitted in kitchens or dormitories. Intoxicants, alcohol and drugs are *prohibited* on hostel premises. Firearms, weapons and animals are not to be brought on to hostel property.
7. Normally, hostel fees are paid in advance by pre-booking or, if not booked in advance, on arrival at the hostel. Credit is not extended for hostel overnights. No fee - no bed! Length of stay is normally three nights but this may vary at the Warden's discretion. Handbook will give details, or if in doubt, ask the Warden.
8. On arrival at the hostel your card will be taken by the Warden who will hold this until you leave. Members are expected to register correctly at every hostel to ensure that YHA records are accurate. The Warden has the right to hold the card should some serious breach of rules or disruptive conduct be perpetrated by the member.
9. The Association is not responsible for any debts incurred by a member and takes no responsibility for loss or damage to hostellers' property or person.

Observation of these general procedures and any special rules applying to a particular hostel will ensure easy operation and an enjoyable stay by every member. If you are in doubt about the rules applying to a hostel, ask the keyholder or Warden. Always read your handbook and again, if in doubt, contact the State Office concerned for explanation or extra information.

Should you have a complaint, it should be directed to the State Office concerned with the name of the hostel, your name and address and full details of the complaint.

Source: AYHA, *Handbook*, 1983, p.7.

## 1991

With a few exceptions, YHA hostels provide self-catering facilities, a dining area and a large common lounge room. Some hostels provide a meal service at very reasonable cost.

YHA has developed a special 'sleeping sheet' which combines upper and lower sheets and pillow case. These can be bought or hired from hostels. Either the sleeping sheet, conventional linen or clean filled sleeping bags must be used.

### Open All Day

Most large hostels are staffed throughout the day and all facilities are available to members who have booked in. At other hostels, staff will be off duty between 10.00 am and 5.00 pm but access to communal facilities will normally be available.

### Your Role in Creating an Enjoyable Stay

It is our job to make your stay as pleasant as possible and therefore, out of courtesy to fellow hostellers, we request that you do not smoke in the rooms, kitchen and dining areas. As self catering facilities are available with fridges and storage areas, please, no food in the bedrooms. We want to encourage the two legged visitors and nothing else! With that in mind, pets are unable to become members so unfortunately they cannot stay (with the exception of guide dogs - they receive general exemption). Alcohol isn't eligible for membership either so no alcohol in the hostel please.

To encourage a friendly and helpful atmosphere in all hostels you may be asked to help with small cleaning tasks before you leave for the day.

### Length of Stay

As hostels are designed to cater for travel and recreation, length of stay is limited to 5-7 nights, however, according to availability, extended stays can be arranged at the discretion of the hostel manager.

### Booking Overseas Hostels

For bookings at overseas hostels, you can buy International Booking Vouchers from your State Membership and Travel Centre. You then send these to the hostels, together with your booking requirements and the voucher acts as a deposit.

The taxed booking system described under booking Australian Hostels is also available from the listed Australian Hostels to those listed outside Australia.

### Overnight Fees

Overnight fees are kept as low as possible. Fees should be paid when booking in as credit is not available. While staying in the hostel, your membership card will be held by the Manager. To ensure you can take advantage of discounts available, you will be given a concession card on request.

### Hostel Facilities

Separate sleeping accommodation and bathroom facilities are provided for men and women. At present, YHA is aiming to reduce the size of bedrooms and many, particularly city hostels, have two and four person share rooms, especially suitable for families and couples.

**Source:** AYHA, *Handbook*, 1991, pp.6-7.

**Note:** At its Annual General Meeting on 2 March 1991, AYHA passed the following resolution:

(Alcoholic drinks may not be brought into or used at youth hostels other than in a dining area within a youth hostel in accordance with the terms of any applicable licence).

## APPENDIX D

### The Brisbane City Council. Summary of their Ordinances for the regulation of backpacker hostels:

In brief the ordinances provide for a new Part 9 to be inserted in Chapter 5 of the Council's ordinances and for certain consequential amendments to be made to Chapter 1 of the Council's ordinances and to Part 3 of Chapter 5.

The new Part 90 of Chapter 5 regulates the use of buildings as hostels.

The Part is divided into 6 Divisions which are numbered sequentially.

**Division 1** indicates briefly what the object of the Part is and otherwise defines or explains terms and expressions used in the Part and provides for the appointment of officers of the Council as authorised officers. The term hostel is defined in ordinance 3 (contained in the Division) - that definition is such as to include within the term 'hostel' what are now commonly termed 'backpackers' hostels'.

**Division 2** provides for and with respect to the licensing by the Council of hostels. The Part, by ordinance 5, makes it an offence for a person at any time more than four months after the Part comes into force to conduct a hostel, to receive guests in a hostel on behalf of another person, or allow premises of which that person is the owner to be conducted by another as a hostel unless the keeper of the hostel is the holder of a license under the Part in respect of the hostel. As hostels are presently operating, it would be unfair to virtually require them to stop operating when the Part comes into force and until a license is obtained from them: the period of four months after the Part comes into force is considered sufficient for those hostels to establish they warrant a license and to obtain that license.

Ordinance 18 allows the Council to suspend or cancel a license for good cause.

Ordinances 34 to 38 provide with respect to conditions to which a hostel license may be made subject and how, apart from ordinance 10, a license is made subject to a particular condition.

Ordinance 38 allows for the imposition of a condition that prescribes the maximum number of guests that may be accommodated at the relevant hostel at any time or a condition that prescribes the maximum number of guests that may be accommodated in a particular bedroom of the relevant hostel at any time.

Ordinance 42 requires the licensee of a licensed hostel to display in a conspicuous place on the outside of the hostel a notice containing the words 'LICENSED HOSTEL'.

Ordinance 43 forbids any person from having a notice containing the words 'LICENSED HOSTEL' on the outside of a hostel which is not a licensed hostel.

Ordinance 44 requires obedience to any condition to which a current hostel license is subject.

**Division 3** provides with respect to the keeping of hostels.

Ordinance 45 prescribes what are effectively standards to be observed in the keeping of a hostel and in particular with respect to the fitting and equipping of the rooms contained in a hostel.

Ordinance 46 contains provisions whereunder the Council may from time to time require the keeper of a hostel to obtain and furnish to the Council a report from The South East Queensland Electricity Board or a licensed electrical contractor relating to the electrical installation and all electrical fittings, appliances, equipment and apparatus in the hostel or a report from an authorized fire officer relative to matters connected with the safety of guests in the event of a fire breaking out in the hostel. The ordinance allows the Council to require the keeper of the hostel to take certain action which the Council considers is warranted in the light of any such report. The ordinance demands that the keeper of the hostel comply with any requirement imposed by the Council under the ordinance.

Ordinance 47 requires that the keeper of a hostel to have kept at the hostel an Accommodation Register in which are to be recorded particulars of each guest received at the hostel. Such register is to be kept up to date at all times and the correctness of its entries certified.

Ordinances 49 to 52 impose responsibilities upon the person in charge of a hostel. Those responsibilities touch upon matters connected with public health or the health of guests received at the hostel.

Ordinance 53 empowers the Council to order that hostel premises be closed if it is satisfied that the interest of public health or safety demand this be done. Any such order is to be put into effect by the Council's putting up in some place near the entrance to the hostel a notice that the hostel is closed. A closure effected under the ordinance is to remain in force until the grounds upon which it was made have been removed or no longer exist. The ordinance makes further provisions to ensure the protection of a notice put up under the ordinance, to forbid the offering or accepting of accommodation at a hostel which is subject to a closure order and to declare that the closure of a hostel under the ordinance does not by reason only of the closure confer a right to compensation upon any person.

Ordinance 54 empowers an authorized officer of the Council to require, by notice in writing, the keeper of a hostel to take action with respect to the cleaning or sanitation otherwise, painting or repair of the hostel. The keeper of a hostel is obliged to comply with the requirements of such a notice in writing.

**Division 4**, by the ordinances 55 to 57 contained therein, makes provision for the determination of fees to be paid to the Council in connexion with its administration of the new Part 9 and for the determination of forms to be used for the issue of licenses and otherwise.

**Division 5**, by the ordinances 58 to 67 contained therein, gives certain power to authorised officers of the Council to be exercised in the implementation of the new Part 9, creates a number of offences and in respect of some of the offences under the Part makes them infringements which may be expunged by the payment of a penalty of \$100 upon the service of a notice of the offence as provided for by Part 14 of Chapter 4 of the Council's ordinances.

**Division 6** contains ordinance 68 which is a provision aimed at facilitating proof of certain matters in proceedings under the new Part 9.

## APPENDIX E

### Country of Origin of Overseas Backpackers using YHA Accommodation in Queensland 1983-1990

COUNTRY	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
United Kingdom	24.11 (15.86)	22.82 (14.86)	24.38 (15.91)	26.31 (18.10)	26.14 (17.39)	29.74 (17.57)	35.05 (25.30)	39.51 (28.54)
Japan	3.86 (2.54)	4.18 (2.72)	5.82 (3.80)	5.54 (3.81)	7.45 (4.96)	8.69 (5.13)	12.42 (8.97)	9.71 (7.02)
Canada	21.00 (13.81)	17.98 (11.71)	14.16 (9.24)	12.53 (8.62)	11.12 (7.40)	9.31 (5.50)	6.61 (4.77)	5.45 (3.93)
United States	8.53 (5.61)	12.12 (7.89)	9.80 (6.40)	10.17 (6.99)	9.88 (6.57)	9.44 (5.57)	7.30 (5.27)	8.07 (5.83)
New Zealand	10.58 (6.96)	10.97 (7.14)	12.77 (8.33)	11.54 (7.94)	9.93 (6.61)	8.77 (5.18)	5.99 (4.33)	4.02 (2.90)
Germany	10.92 (7.18)	8.82 (5.74)	8.09 (5.28)	6.94 (4.77)	7.00 (4.66)	8.31 (4.91)	8.91 (6.43)	8.19 (5.92)
Sweden	3.69 (2.43)	5.37 (3.50)	6.75 (4.41)	8.65 (5.95)	10.03 (6.68)	7.19 (4.24)	6.04 (4.36)	4.91 (3.55)
Switzerland	5.90 (3.88)	6.41 (4.18)	4.90 (3.20)	4.44 (3.05)	4.48 (2.98)	4.83 (2.85)	4.88 (3.52)	5.54 (4.00)
Other Europe	9.62 (6.32)	7.37 (4.80)	11.46 (7.48)	11.86 (8.16)	11.69 (7.78)	11.59 (6.85)	10.32 (7.45)	11.05 (7.98)
Other Asia	0.81 (0.53)	1.28 (0.83)	1.11 (0.72)	1.35 (0.93)	1.19 (0.79)	1.42 (0.84)	1.09 (0.79)	1.51 (1.09)
Other	0.98 (0.64)	2.68 (1.74)	0.76 (0.47)	0.67 (0.46)	1.09 (0.71)	0.71 (0.43)	1.39 (0.99)	2.04 (1.49)
Totals	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -

A. Numbers are given as percentages of overseas overnights recorded by overseas backpackers.

B. Numbers in brackets are given as percentages of total overnights by overseas backpackers.

Source: AYHA, Annual Reports, 1983-1990.

## APPENDIX F

### Country of Origin of Overseas Backpackers using YHA Accommodation Australia-wide 1983-1990

COUNTRY	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
United Kingdom	24.07 (12.24)	23.75 (12.15)	26.85 (14.60)	27.12 (16.50)	28.14 (17.84)	33.74 (22.74)	41.15 (27.39)	45.31 (30.65)
Japan	4.22 (2.14)	4.87 (2.49)	5.88 (3.20)	5.31 (3.23)	6.67 (4.23)	7.10 (4.78)	8.84 (5.89)	7.74 (5.23)
Canada	21.00 (10.68)	16.93 (8.66)	13.21 (7.19)	11.79 (7.17)	10.36 (6.57)	8.19 (5.52)	6.72 (4.47)	6.34 (4.29)
United States	8.70 (4.42)	10.77 (5.51)	9.61 (5.23)	10.13 (6.16)	10.28 (6.52)	8.37 (5.64)	6.58 (4.38)	6.22 (4.21)
New Zealand	10.31 (5.24)	11.08 (5.67)	13.21 (7.19)	12.33 (7.50)	9.42 (5.97)	8.60 (5.80)	6.31 (4.20)	4.34 (2.94)
Germany	10.99 (5.59)	9.32 (4.77)	8.17 (4.45)	7.39 (4.49)	7.08 (4.49)	7.52 (5.07)	7.83 (5.21)	7.28 (4.92)
Sweden	2.85 (1.45)	4.03 (2.06)	4.77 (2.60)	6.54 (3.97)	7.88 (4.99)	6.34 (4.27)	4.93 (3.28)	3.60 (2.43)
Switzerland	6.34 (3.22)	6.96 (3.56)	5.33 (2.90)	4.78 (2.91)	4.73 (2.30)	4.48 (3.02)	4.34 (2.89)	4.76 (3.22)
Other Europe	9.38 (4.75)	9.79 (5.01)	10.30 (5.61)	11.99 (7.29)	11.88 (7.54)	12.08 (8.14)	10.69 (7.12)	10.06 (6.81)
Other Asia	1.13 (0.57)	1.37 (0.70)	1.45 (0.79)	1.19 (0.72)	0.95 (0.60)	2.35 (1.58)	1.83 (1.22)	3.01 (2.23)
Other	1.01 (0.55)	1.13 (0.57)	1.22 (0.68)	1.43 (0.87)	2.61 (2.35)	1.23 (0.82)	0.78 (0.50)	1.34 (0.71)
TOTALS	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -	100% -

A. Numbers are given as percentages of overnights recorded by overseas backpackers.

B. Numbers in brackets are given as percentages of total overnights by overseas backpackers.

Source: AYHA, Annual Reports, 1983-1990.

## APPENDIX G

### Percentage of Overseas Backpackers in total States' overnights: YHA Accommodation 1983-1990

STATE	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
New South Wales	54.28%	47.73%	55.78%	57.69%	65.37%	68.22%	67.47	71.41%
Queensland	65.76%	63.21%	62.87%	68.78%	68.53%	59.07%	72.18%	72.25%
Western Australia	50.74%	45.91%	51.71%	56.72%	62.28%	57.25%	57.62%	60.77%
Victoria	41.27%	40.74%	44.53%	51.80%	52.56%	59.31%	66.86%	67.15%
Northern Territory	72.73%	68.82%	69.16%	70.35%	74.00%	79.29%	77.32%	71.78%
Tasmania	36.00%	31.83%	29.59%	36.31%	40.67%	48.65%	52.74%	51.45%
South Australia	28.26%	51.39%	53.66%	53.21%	64.06%	63.09%	60.93%	64.46%

Note: To obtain percentage of Australian backpackers subtract above figures from 100%.

Source: AYHA, Annual Reports, 1983-1990.

## APPENDIX H

### States' share of Backpacker overnights in YHA Accommodation 1983-1990 Australia-wide

STATE	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
New South Wales	24.30 (24.87)	24.33 (22.78)	23.29 (23.86)	23.34 (22.14)	25.09 (25.87)	28.09 (30.61)	26.03 (26.40)	28.29 (29.86)
Queensland	24.82 (30.80)	28.33 (35.07)	28.75 (33.20)	31.59 (36.86)	30.83 (33.39)	28.40 (26.80)	23.08 (25.04)	19.07 (20.37)
Western Australia	14.26 (13.23)	12.91 (11.59)	14.15 (13.44)	14.14 (14.08)	14.82 (14.56)	15.46 (14.14)	17.76 (15.38)	19.03 (17.09)
Victoria	17.31 (13.24)	14.75 (11.75)	14.24 (11.64)	12.78 (10.88)	12.00 (9.94)	10.14 (9.61)	15.94 (16.02)	15.96 (15.85)
Northern Territory	6.46 (9.24)	7.03 (9.45)	7.48 (9.50)	6.46 (7.47)	6.61 (7.72)	8.76 (11.10)	8.73 (10.15)	9.50 (10.08)
Tasmania	10.68 (7.56)	8.77 (5.46)	8.22 (4.47)	8.92 (5.32)	8.64 (5.54)	6.56 (5.10)	5.76 (4.56)	5.74 (4.37)
South Australia	1.92 (1.07)	3.87 (3.89)	3.88 (3.83)	3.70 (3.24)	3.00 (3.04)	2.59 (2.61)	2.69 (2.46)	2.41 (2.30)

A. Percentages indicate share of total Australia-wide overnights by all backpackers.

B. Percentages in brackets indicate share of Australia-wide overnights by overseas backpackers.

Note: Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: AYHA, Annual Reports, 1983-1990.

**APPENDIX I****Backpacker Accommodation in Queensland 1989/90: Number of Establishments and Number of Beds**

REGION	TOTAL ESTAB.	% OF TOTAL ESTAB.	TOTAL BEDS	% OF TOTAL BEDS	AV. BEDS PER ESTAB.
Gold Coast	9	6.0	532	5.9	59.1
Brisbane	30	19.9	1175	13.0	39.2
Sunshine Coast	10	6.6	340	3.8	34.0
Maryborough/Bundaberg	7	4.6	346	3.8	49.4
Darling Downs	3	2.0	63	.7	21.0
Rockhampton/Gladstone	10	6.0	461	4.8	48.6
Mackay/Proserpine	12	7.9	1113	12.4	92.8
Townsville/Bowen	22	13.9	1511	14.7	62.9
Cairns Tableland	42	27.8	3537	39.3	84.2
Western Queensland	10	5.3	174	1.6	18.4
TOTAL	155	100.0	9252	100.0	59.7

Source: Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, *Major Survey Research Programme 1989/90*

## **GLOSSARY**

AYHA	Australian Youth Hostels Association
BRA	Backpackers Resorts of Australia
IYHF	International Youth Hostel Federation
MSRP	Major Survey Research Programme
NFC	National Fitness Council
NON-YHA	Non-Youth Hostels Association
QAC	Queensland Agricultural College
QNFC	Queensland National Fitness Council for Sport and Physical Recreation
QTTC	Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation
VTC	Victorian Tourism Commission
YAL	Young Australia League
YHA	Youth Hostels Association
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association