Disasters and crises

Good management can avoid crises to some degree, but must equally incorporate strategies for coping with the unexpected event over which the organisation has little control.

Faulkner (1999, p.7)

Aims

The aims of this chapter are to enhance understanding of:

- the difference between a disaster and a crisis
- the potential impact of government and non-government travel advisories
- DMO responses to disasters.

> **Perspective**
>
> No destination is immune to disaster. Every DMO should consider the possibility of a disaster at some stage in the future. Disasters can be man-made or acts of God. They can be short term or long term. Almost all will be unpredictable and beyond the control of the DMO. The level of preparedness for a disaster at a destination will determine the extent to which a management crisis manifests. Since a state of crisis can affect the viability of the destination, DMOs have a responsibility to prepare marketing contingency plans. The level of such planning has until recently been very low. However, the recent increase in acts of war and terrorism has forced more destinations to act. The topic of destination crisis management is an emerging research field within the tourism literature. A number of case studies have been reported in recent years, and provide a valuable resource for DMOs considering contingency planning. Key activities that DMOs should consider include: the formation of a permanent disaster taskforce, scenario building and risk analysis, coordinated marketing responses, market concentration, outsourcing of media relations, and initiatives to support local businesses. Popularisation of visits to such scenes of disaster has led to the emergence of dark tourism.

Disaster or crisis?

Bali was one of Australia's most popular overseas destinations until the October 2002 terrorism bombing of a tourist precinct left the destination in a state of crisis, from which it has still not fully recovered, due in part to a further terrorist bombing in 2005. It is important to note the distinction between the terms disaster and crisis. Faulkner (1999) suggested that a crisis was representative of a self-inflicted situation caused by such problems as inept management practices or the inability to adapt to a changing environment. A disaster on the other hand is a sudden catastrophic change over which the organisation has little or no control. From this perspective a crisis could be considered as occurring during the period between when a natural or man-made disaster strikes a destination and recovery is achieved. The degree of internal crisis caused by the external disaster (see Figure 18.1) will vary between organisations, depending on the nature of the event, and management's preparedness, availability of resources, and ability to react.

Although a destination in crisis is not a modern phenomenon, the field of study has only emerged recently in the tourism literature. As David Beirman stated in the opening line of his text *Restoring Destinations in Crisis*: 'No tourism destination is immune from crisis' (2003, p. xiii). It could be expected that preparing contingency plans for crises would be an important element of any DMO planning. However, it is rare for such a topic to dominate much meeting time among stakeholders until disaster strikes. Observations of publicly available strategic plans for NTOs and STOs also
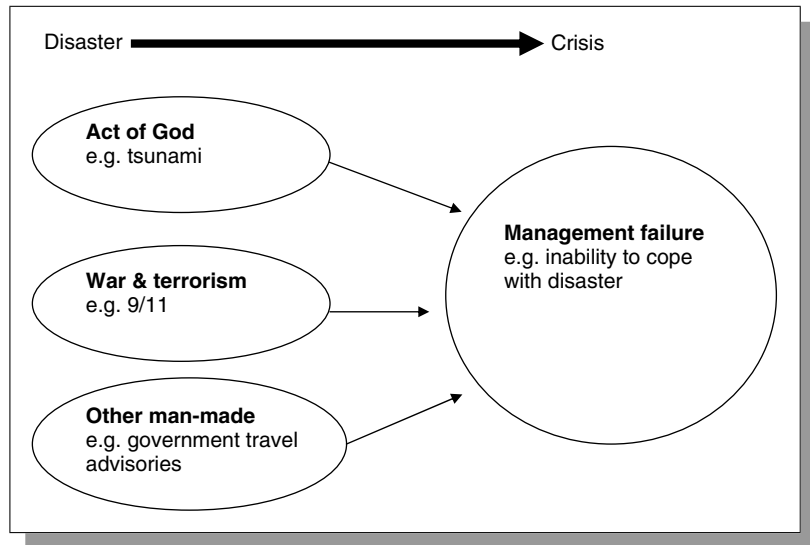
Figure 18.1
Disaster or crisis

Disaster ➤ Crisis

Act of God
e.g. tsunami

War & terrorism
e.g. 9/11

Other man-made
e.g. government travel advisories

Management failure
e.g. inability to cope with disaster

indicate that contingency planning for many has not been a priority until recently. For example, PATA (1991, in Litvin & Alderson, 2003) noted that the majority of its members, including NTOs, did not include crisis management in strategic planning, despite an average estimation that they stood a 40% chance of facing a crisis.

In practise

William Hanbury provided a first-hand account of what it is like to be in the hot seat at the time of a disaster without a contingency plan (see Hanbury, 2005). He had been in the position of CEO of the Washington DC Convention & Tourism Corporation (WCTC) for only five months at the time of the 9/11 attacks. The WCTC was not organised to deal with even a minor disaster at the time, let alone the largest economic crisis to face the USA capital. Having been formed only five months previously, following the under-performance of the previous DMO, the WCTC was in the midst of major restructuring. The new DMO had no disaster response plan. Hanbury described how the team responded to ultimately manage the situation, and outlined a summary of lessons learned.

In the quest for increased visitors and spending, which is how a DMO is ultimately judged, crisis planning may be viewed as a luxury of time if a disaster hasn't actually occurred nearby to stimulate discussion. I am aware of one RTO that had regularly ignored pleas from the local civil defence coordinator to consider contingency plans in what is a recognised earthquake zone. The coordinator's concern was that all entrances to the

destination were via bridges, which risk collapse in a significant quake. This would severely impact on the ability to evacuate visitors. The rationale for contingency planning was that a major earthquake is highly likely to strike the destination at some unknown time in the future – maybe not for 10,000 years, but maybe next week. The approaches literally fell on deaf ears at the RTO. To be fair to the tourism industry however, until recently there has also been an absence of any case studies in the literature to guide such DMO disaster planning.

Some disasters may be of a short-term nature, such as the 1996 massacre of 35 tourists by a lone gunman at Port Arthur in Tasmania, Australia, and the 1992 Hurricane Andrew in Florida. Others might be long term, such as the political ban on USA citizens visiting Cuba. The ban was imposed by President J.F. Kennedy in 1963, but was later lapsed by President Carter, and then re-imposed by President Reagan in 1982 (www.travelmole.com, 27/10/03). The Middle East is a region that has suffered from ongoing acts of war and terrorism. Mansfield (1999) outlined six major cycles of tourism decline and recovery in Israel due to different security situations since 1967. As a result, Israel has suffered the prevailing image of a high risk destination. The cycles were caused by:

- the Six Day War in 1967
- the 1973 Yom Kippur war between Israel, Egypt and Syria
- the 1981 intensification of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's attacks
- the late-1980s double cycle of international and domestic terror
- the 1990–91 Gulf War
- the terrorised peace cycle of the 1990s.

Unfortunately, from his analysis of these events, Mansfield concluded that once each crisis had ended and recovery in visitor arrivals was evident, neither the government nor tourism industry planned for a future crisis event. This is evident in Case Study 18.1, which examines Israel's marketing recovery efforts between 2001 and 2006.

Case study 18.1   Israel tourism's marketing recovery 2001—July 2006

Dr David Beirman, Director of Struan & Associates Tourism Crisis and Recovery Specialists, Australia

International tourism arrivals to Israel reached a peak during 2000, which was the year of Christianity's bimillennium. During that year 2.67 million tourists arrived in Israel. At the end of September 2000 the Palestinian Intifada broke out, resulting in an immediate decline of tourism arrivals to Israel. Much of the decline was based on a fear amongst potential travellers of terrorism, and an overwhelming perception that Israel was a risky and dangerous destination. In fact during the height of the Intifada between 2000 and 2004, a total of four tourists were killed as a direct consequence of political violence. The steep decline in tourism arrivals reached its nadir in 2002, when only 864,000 tourists arrived in the country.

The Israeli Ministry of Tourism and its representative offices around the world undertook a major recovery campaign which resulted in tourism numbers beginning to recover in 2003 to 1.03 million, growing to 1.5 million in 2004, and reaching 1.9 million in 2005. Until the outbreak of border conflict on the Lebanese frontier in July 2006 Israel tourism growth for the first half of 2006 was a further 25%. The key strategic foundation for rebuilding tourism to Israel, which was developed in January 2001, centred on stratifying the market into three key segments:

- Stalwarts – Travellers with high commitment and high affiliation.
- Waverers –Travellers with modest commitment and high affiliation.
- Discretionary – Travellers with low commitment and low affiliation

During the first phase of recovery in 2001–2004, most marketing activity was focused on the stalwart market, which comprised of Jews, Christian Zionists, and business travellers, with many solidarity groups being encouraged and formed. During 2004–2005 there was a focus on the waverer market, which comprised Christian pilgrims and other groups in Europe, North America, East Asia, and Australasia with a high level of affiliation. By 2005 there was a switch in emphasis to attract the discretionary (vacation market) through partnerships with tour wholesalers and airlines, which resumed flights and tour programmes in Israel.

The basic strategy was to build a staircase of confidence in Israel as a safe and attractive tourist destination. This was aided by a reduction in the intensity of political violence from 2004 to July 2006. During the recovery phase Israel hosted many travel agents, travel writers, religious leaders, and high-profile celebrities who readily provided positive testimonials which were publicised by Israel's government tourism offices in targeted consumer and trade media campaigns in their respective markets.

By the beginning of 2006 the Israeli Ministry of Tourism undertook a more aggressive marketing campaign to attract a growing range of tourists in all key source markets. The recovery came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of military conflict on the Israel–Lebanon border in July 2006, but since the end of this conflict in August 2006 the Israeli Ministry of Tourism immediately utilised a similar approach to recommence recovery.

Note: Dr David Bierman was Director of the Israel Government Tourism Office (Australasia and South West Pacific) from 1994 to 2006, and was directly involved in the strategy discussed in this case.

Discussion question

How does the employment of a market recovery based on market stratification build the staircase of confidence in restoring tourism to a destination that has suffered perceptual damage due to a crisis event?

Further reading

Beirman, D. (2003). *Restoring Tourism Destinations in Crisis*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Like Israel, Northern Ireland tourism has suffered a negative image from terrorism over three decades. However, Leslie (1999) found the even though the associated negative publicity of the 1970s had decreased

considerably, Northern Ireland had become increasingly substitutable as a destination for UK travellers. O'Neill and McKenna (1994) found by comparison that in the 1990s, visitor numbers to Northern Ireland had merely re-established the 1960s 'pre-trouble' levels, whereas volumes in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland had increased by over 50%.

Uncertainty

Tourism destinations have always been, and will continue to be, at risk to exogenous events. Such *wildcard* events, have been described by Hall (2005) as being low probability but high impact. Arguably, the greatest impact of these on the tourism industry is uncertainty:

- Uncertainty of travellers to risk personal safety on what is after all a discretionary activity. During periods of insecurity, consumers can choose either to travel somewhere perceived to safe or delay travel plans. For example, Hopper (2002) reported that within hours of the 9/11 strikes in the USA, hotels in London were receiving cancellations from all over the world. In France, visitors from the USA declined by an estimated 90% in the month immediately following September 11, 2001.
- Uncertainty of investors and small business owners to invest or reinvest in repairs, maintenance, upgrades, or new developments.
- Uncertainty of tourism staff on the future of their career. This even extends to tourism degree and diploma courses, which can suffer from concerns held by prospective students and parents.

Resilience

On a global basis the tourism industry has historically proven to be resilient, with remarkably quick recoveries following major crises. For example, IATA CEO Giovanni Bisignani suggested that following the 1991 Gulf War, a year when tourism arrivals only increased by 1%, growth in 1992 was 8% (www.travelmole.com, 26/3/03). Even with the events of 9/11, international arrivals exceeded 700 million for the first time in 2002, representing an increase of 3% over 2001 and 19 million more than 'Millennium year' (WTO media release, 27/1/03).

War and terrorism

In 1997, an unlucky 58 overseas visitors and 4 Egyptians were gunned down outside one of Egypt's most famous temples in Luxor. The attack cost Egypt's tourism industry US$2 billion in lost earnings (Edgell, 1999). One year after the 2002 Bali bombings, a United Nations report estimated the unemployment rate to be up by almost one-third and that street vendors' sales were down by 50% (www.eturbonews.com, 14/10/03). The ILO (2003) estimated the total loss of jobs in world tourism at over 11 million following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, representing a loss of one in every seven jobs in tourism and travel. The CEO of the International

Air Transport Association (IATA), Giovanni Bisignani, predicted that the 2003 war in Iraq would cost the global airline industry US$10 billion in losses, on top of the US$30 billion in losses following September 11, 2001 (www.travelmole.com, 26/3/03). At the time, a survey by the Tourism Association of America estimated that over 70% of Americans were not interested in travelling overseas (www.travelmole.com, 15/4/03).

Events such as these have increased the global profile of the link between terrorism and tourism. Terrorists have recognised the symbolism of tourism and the vulnerability of tourists. Unfortunately, the issue is one that is likely to confront the tourism industry for generations. It therefore behoves DMOs to consider contingencies for the effects of such events in their own region and in other parts of the world.

The emerging literature on destinations in crisis contains a number of case studies that will be of value. For example, in 1999 the *Journal of Travel Research* published a special issue on tourism crises caused by war, terrorism, and crime (Vol. 38/1). The guest editors advised that the 11 published articles represented a cross-section of those presented at the 1997 War, Terrorism: Times of Crisis and Recovery conference held in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The conference was the second, following a meeting in Sweden in 1995, to focus on the relationship between tourism, security, and safety. The first tourism crisis text, by Beirman (2003a), examined the crises and responses of 11 case studies. A special volume on the topic by the *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* generated a further 12 papers. The diverse range of tourism disaster and crisis issues addressed in Bierman's (2003a) text and the journal special issues are listed in Table 18.1. At the

Table 18.1 Disaster and crisis papers

Journal of Travel Research, 1999, Vol. 38 (1)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 2006, Vol. 19 (2/3)	Bierman (2003a)
Classification of crime and violence at destinations (Pizam)	Crisis management: A suggested typology (Laws & Prideaux)	USA and 9/11
Managing the effects of terrorism (Sönmez, Apostolopoulos & Tarlow)	Crisis management in winter alpine sports resorts: The 1999 avalanche disaster in Tyrol (Peters & Pikkemaat)	Egypt's terrorist attacks against tourists, 1990–98
New Orleans tourism and crime (Dimanche & Lepetic)	Quantifying the effects of tourism crises: An application to Scotland (Eugenio-Martin, Sinclair, & Yeoman)	Israel and the Palestinian uprising, 2000–02
Tourism potential of the peace dividend (Butler & Baum)	Tourism and the impact of the foot and mouth epidemic in the UK (Leslie & Black)	Sri Lanka's civil war, 1995–2001
Management and recovery of tourism in Israel (Mansfield)		Fiji's political coups of 1987 and 2000
		Turkey's Izmit earthquake, 1999

(*Continued*)

Table 18.1 (Continued)

Journal of Travel Research, 1999, Vol. 38 (1)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 2006, Vol. 19 (2/3)	Bierman (2003a)
The Northern Ireland situation (Leslie)	The impact of foot and mouth disease on a peripheral tourism area (Irvine & Anderson)	Britain's foot and mouth disease, 2001
Lessons of rebuilding tourism in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Pakistan (Richter)	Canadian seasonality and domestic travel patters: Regularities and dislocations as a result of the events of 9/11 (Smith & Carmichael)	South Africa's crime wave, 1994–2000
Dark tourism (Lennon & Foley)		Australia's Port Arthur massacre, 1996
Political instability, war, and tourism in Cyprus (Ionnides & Apostolopoulos)	The significance of crisis communication in the aftermath of 9/11 (Fall & Massey)	Croatia and the Yugoslavia war, 1991–1995
The role of tourism in the aftermath of violence (Anson)	Crisis management strategies of hotel managers (Yu, Stafford & Amoo)	Philippines' multiple crises, 1990–2001
USA policy on traveller safety and security (Smith)	Privation as a stimulus to travel demand? (McKercher & Pine)	
	Japanese tourism and the SARS epidemic of 2003 (Cooper)	
	Tourism industry employee work stress: A present and future crisis (Ross)	
	Tourism crises and disasters: Enhancing understanding of system effects (Scott & Laws)	

time of writing, a 2007 *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* special issue on tourism crises was in press.

Natural disasters

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) listed over 50 declared natural disasters that occurred in the USA during 2003. The FEMA website (see www.fema.org) provides a valuable resource on disaster management, including education and training information. The range of other natural disasters to impact on destinations have included:

- The 2006 tropical cyclone Larry, which caused an estimated half-a-billion dollars damage in North Queensland, Australia.
- The 2005 Hurricane Katrina that devastated New Orleans, USA.

- The 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, which directly affected 11 countries. Appendix 18.1 provides a summary of lessons from the disaster, as written by someone involved, just a week after the event.
- In 2003 Bermuda's worst hurricane for 80 years struck the destination, forcing the tourism industry to virtually shut down due electricity failures and road closures (www.travelmole.com, 8/9/03).
- During 2003, overseas visitors were injured by a 15-minute tornado in Costa Blanca (www.travelmole.com, 8/9/03).
- The 2003 bushfires in northeast Victoria, Australia, which devastated over 1.1 million hectares.
- The 2002 outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK highlighted how other destinations can suffer from a disaster in another country. For example, one politician from the Republic of Ireland labelled Britain as the 'leper of Europe' for the negative image being tagged to the wider region (Frisby, 2002). Ironically, it was London, an urban destination with minimal farming activity and no incidence of foot and mouth, which experienced the greatest negative economic impact of the foot and mouth disease (Hopper, 2002).
- The 1999 Izmit eruption in Turkey (see Beirman, 2003a).
- The 1995 Kobe earthquake.
- The 1993 Sydney bushfires (see Christine, 1995).
- Hurricane Andrew hit Florida in 1992 and forced the closure of Miami Beach for a week (Portorff & Neal, 1994).
- The Philippine's 1991 Mt Pinatubo eruption.
- Hurricane Gilbert in Cancun, Mexico, during 1988.
- The 1982 Mt Usu eruption in Japan (see Hirose, 1992, in Faulkner, 1999).
- In the winter of 1981–82, Florida's STO was forced to spend US$600,000 on an emergency three-week advertising campaign to counter negative media publicity about a brief and unseasonal cold spell (Pritchard, 1982).

SARS-induced panic

During the first half of 2003, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) caused panic in the travel industry worldwide. SARS was estimated to have affected over 8000 people and was responsible for over 800 deaths (Manning, 2003). China was the worst affected, with the emerging destination giant experiencing its first decline in international visitor arrivals in 2003 (www.eturbonews.com, 7/8/03). Other than the loss of life, the most significant aspect of the SARS outbreak to impact on the tourism industry was the mass-media coverage. A March 2003 press release by PATA called for 'accurate, restrained and sensible travel advice and media reporting' of SARS (patanews@pata.th.com, 17/3/03). PATA urged all those reporting to be geographically specific and avoid alarmist statements. The following day in an e-mail to the TRINET online tourism research community, Professor Bob McKercher of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

lamented how the global media frenzy was feeding perceptions of a 'disaster':

> *While the health scare is no doubt of concern, we must keep a proper perspective on it. The local and global media is in something of a feeding frenzy. As a resident of HK, it is worrying, but remember that, out of a population of 7 million, only 100 people have fallen ill, so far.*

McKercher (2003) later introduced the term SIP (SARS induced panic) to the tourism lexicon, arguing strongly that SIP was a greater threat to tourism than SARS. A KPMG report estimated that Toronto's tourism industry lost C$190 million in the first two months of SARS (McClelland, 2003).

Man-made disasters

In addition to acts of God, destinations are at the mercy of man-made disasters such as travel advisories and others that are representative of management failures such as an economic crisis, violence, anti-social visitors, and poor planning.

Travel advisories

All national governments have a responsibility to provide an advisory service for their citizens, identifying potentially risky destinations. Most countries provide regularly updated travel advisories on government websites, and the implications for the DMOs of these countries are significant in terms of the damage to the image of their destination and the necessary recovery marketing efforts. The extent to which promotional efforts are negated by government travel advisories is a contentious issue. It is important to consider that the negative images created by publicity surrounding a disaster can last far longer than any physical destruction to infrastructure or tourism facilities.

During 2003 the travel advisory website of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (see www.fco.gov.uk/travel) provided citizens with a list of some of the major terrorist attacks that had occurred around the world during the previous 18 months. These are shown in Table 18.2. In 2007 the same site advised against all travel for any reason to parts of 25 countries.

The extent to which travel advisories contributed to the loss of jobs in different parts of the world following 9/11 is debatable. However, government travel advisories have been regarded as extremely controversial in many quarters for their significant role in exacerbating negative economic impacts, particularly on poorer nations. Rarely is a travel advisory posted about western industrial countries. For example, few countries issued advisories against visiting the USA after 9/11, or the United Kingdom during the 2002 foot and mouth outbreak. Unfortunately, most advisories

Table 18.2 Global terrorist attacks during 2002–2003

A suicide car bomb against a synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, in April 2002 that killed 18 European tourists and local Tunisians

A suicide attack against a bus in Karachi carrying French engineers in May 2002

A series of ETA bombings during the summer of 2002 in resorts on the Costa Blanca and the Costa del Sol and other cities in Spain

The bombs in Bali in October 2002 that killed over 200 tourists and local Indonesians

The attacks in Mombassa in November 2002 that killed 17 Kenyans and Israelis

The shooting of three American medical charity workers in Yemen in December 2002

An attack on a hotel nightclub in Colombia on 17 February 2003

A British national was shot and killed in Saudi Arabia on 20 February 2003

A campaign of terrorist bombings in March and April 2003 in the Philippines and Indonesia, including attacks on an airport and a ferry terminal in the southern Philippines and at Jakarta airport

Al Qa'ida were almost certainly responsible for the suicide bombings in Riyadh on 12 May that targeted the homes of westerners, including British citizens, living in the kingdom (Saudi Arabia)

Over 40 people were killed in a series of suicide attacks in Casablanca on 16 May, including at a hotel and restaurant used by westerners

There were suicide bomb attacks in Istanbul on 15 November and further attacks on 20 November, which were on British-related targets: the British Consulate General and the HQ of HSBC in Turkey

are issued against less developed countries that can ill-afford the resultant tourism downturn. Philippine Tourism Secretary and PATA Associate Chairman Richard Gordon suggested that travel advisories reward the terrorists (Alcantara, 2003):

> *It is really a cover-your-behind memo issued by a foreign bureaucrat. Jobs have been lost and it's time issuing countries take responsibility for their actions.*

Opanga (2003) strongly suggested that travel advisories from the UK and USA governments were responsible for the collapse of tourism in Kenya:

> *The irony is, it is Kenyans, not Americans or Israelis , who have borne the brunt of terrorist attacks on Americans and Israelis.*

Jordan Tourism's worldwide director reacted strongly to a 2003 travel advisory of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

recommending against travel to the country, claiming misperceptions of what was a safe country:

> *Whenever there is trouble in the Middle East we expect the FCO to issue a statement that inevitably includes Jordan…but for us it is business as usual. Jordan is a safe country.*

In practise

Beirman (2003b) reported on a recovery seminar in Kenya during 2003, which was convened by the Kenyan Association of Tour Operators to 'establish what was required to alter the negative travel advisories which had crippled Kenyan tourism during the first half of 2003'. Beirman questioned the motives for the continuation of travel advisories by the USA and Australian governments that warned of an 'imminent terrorism attack', even though this had not materialised after six months. Kenya's minister of tourism visited the UK in mid-2003 in a failed attempt to urge the government to change the travel advisory (www.travelmole.com, 6/6/03).

In response to member states' concerns about the nature of government travel advisories, PATA established a website in 2003 to disseminate 'impartial' advice for travellers (see www.travelwithpata.com). PATA recommended to travellers that the best advice regarding travel advisories was to use a wide range of sources. However, travel advisories are also announced by organisations other than governments:

- The World Health Organization issued SARS travel advisories for a number of destinations in 2003, including parts of China, Toronto, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.
- Universities now provide travel advisories for students and staff.
- Public pressure groups can also exert pressure on private tour companies. Australian environmental groups have been urging tourists to boycott travel to Tasmania, in a protest against the felling of native forests there (www.travelmole.com, 23/3/04). Leading UK tour operator Abercrombie and Kent reportedly bowed to pressure from pressure groups and agreed to stop promoting tours to Burma (www.travelmole.com, 29/7/03).
- Travel warnings may also come from terrorist groups. For example, a report in the UK's *Independent* newspaper cited the Basque separatist terror group ETA as warning foreign travellers not to visit Spain in 2003 (www.travelmole.com, 4/8/03):

> *In 2003 ETA will once again strike hard against the Spanish tourist industry and it cannot guarantee that anyone who enters the war zone will not be injured.*

Economic crisis

During 2001, Turkey experienced one of the country's worst economic crises, initiated through an argument between the President and the Prime Minister (see Okumus & Karamustafa, 2005). Neither the government nor the tourism industry had in place any plans to manage such an event. This resulted in ad hoc responses, and did not result in any shift towards planning for future disasters in Turkey.

One of the most recent significant man-made disasters to impact negatively on the tourism industry was the 1997/1998 Asian economic crisis. Heavy and, some would argue, reckless, short-term borrowing by banks and businesses in the region for investments in real estate and the share market were poorly managed (Henderson, 2002). Consequently, the withdrawal of capital and loss of confidence in the region's financial sector created a domino effect through national economies, which at one point created fears of a collapse of the world economy. Prior to the economic crisis, the Asia-Pacific region was experiencing the world's fastest growth in international visitor arrivals. As a result of the boom in intra-regional travel within the Asia-Pacific region many businesses and destinations became over-exposed to markets within the region, and paid the price when the crisis emerged.

Violence

In 1996 at a popular tourism attraction in Tasmania, Australia, a lone gunman killed 35 people, including domestic and overseas tourists. During October 2003 there was violent rioting in the streets in the leading Jamaican destination of Montego Bay (www.eturbonews.com, 28/10/03). A month earlier, the tranquil Maldives was hit by rioting that led to late-night curfews (www.travelmole.com, 23/9/03). Arguably, violent crimes such as these are representative of the failure by government to manage security.

Excessive crime and unruly behaviour can affect the image of a destination, and crime against visitors has led to negative reputations for many urban destinations around the world. For example, violent crimes in Miami and Orlando reached such a level in 1993 that they caused a decrease in visitor arrivals to the entire state (Pizam, 1999). Dimanche and Lepetic (1999) provided a case study of the impact of crime levels on tourism in New Orleans, where the murder rate was eight times the national average and five times that of New York. In 1997 the New Orleans CVB hired an outside consultant to develop a marketing plan to address the negative crime image of the city. However, Dimanche and Lepetic found that while the tourism industry in the city was under siege from a high-crime rate, there was a lack of concern among the tourism community, due to no noticeable drop in revenues. They strongly urged operators to heed the warning signals before the situation became a crisis.

Anti-social visitors

Ironically, the source of a crime problem at a destination can often be the visitors to the area. For example, business in the Greek Island of Faliraki was estimated to be down by almost one-third in 2003 as a result of anti-social behaviour by visitors (www.travelmole.com, 21/7/03). Travel-Mole.com was citing a report in the *Daily Telegraph*, which suggested that British tourists in particular were responsible for the high levels of bad behaviour that included sexual assaults, drunkenness, and lewdness. Initiatives introduced by authorities to counter the resultant 'image problem' included extra police on the beat, and a requirement for tour operators to provide police with details of planned pub crawls.

Poor planning

Poor planning can also eventually lead to a crisis phase for a destination, such as in the case of Rotorua, New Zealand, during the 1980s and 1990s, as outlined in Case Study 6.1 in Chapter 6 and Case Study 18.2 below. Other examples of destinations in decline or stagnation that have been discussed in the literature have included Hamm in Germany (Buckley & Witt, 1985), Majorca (Morgan, 1991), Cleveland, USA (Rubel, 1996), Canada (Go, 1987), Bermuda (Conlin, 1995), Amsterdam (Dahles, 1998), Gold Coast, Australia (Faulkner, 2002), Atlantic City and Coney Island, USA (Cross & Walton, 2005).

Case study 18.2   Blackpool's next 'resort cycle' stage: Rejuvenation or decline?

John Clarke, Liverpool JMU

Blackpool in England (www.blackppoltourism.com) is often seen as the world's first and biggest working-class holiday resort. The destination grew up in the 19th century, and in the hundred years from 1870 to 1970 its massive and rapid expansion made Blackpool virtually synonymous with the popular English seaside destination.

The destination's growth coincided with the coming of the railways and the development of northern industrial towns, whose 'wakes' weeks released the cotton hands and other industrial workers for brief intervals of 'fresh air and fun'. Through this period Blackpool dominated people's images of what a seaside holiday was like. It's entertainments attracted top stars, the famous Illuminations lighting extravaganza extended the summer season into autumn, and the Golden Mile and Pleasure Beach provided the attractions of side-shows, amusements, and fairgrounds to the mix. Walton (1998) estimated that visitor figures rose from 7000 per season to 58,371 between 1871 and 1911. By the 1930s, visitor numbers were averaging 7 million a year, and in the 1950s and 1960s these numbers were sustained.

In the second half of the 20th century, however, Blackpool began to experience two related transformations, due to social, economic, and demographic forces that were reshaping the British mass-holiday market. The first was the switch in visitors from 'long-stay' holidaymakers,

who stayed in hotels or boarding houses for a week or a fortnight, to short visits by people who came for the weekend. Many others increasingly visited the Pleasure Beach or drove along the promenade during the Illuminations without staying overnight at all. At the same time, research showed clearly that the profile of Blackpool's visitors was rapidly ageing; the people who came, mostly the un-affluent working class, were from an older generation who had 'always gone to Blackpool'. Their children and grandchildren were not following suit. This worrying pattern seems to fit the model of the resort-cycle outlined by Goodall (1992), with many people identifying the changes in the last quarter of the twentieth century as representing the fifth stage of 'stagnation', or even the sixth stage of 'decline'.

However, as Walton (1998) pointed out, Blackpool had survived as a major leisure destination for so long because of its ability to innovate and change. The famous tower, the three piers, the annual Illuminations, and the Pleasure Beach were all evidence that the resort was able to adapt its attractions to what people wanted.

In the early years of the new millennium it appeared that a new opportunity had opened up for Blackpool to renew its attractiveness. The British government undertook to reform UK gambling laws in ways that would make it possible for casinos to operate without the restrictions created by the need to be a member to be able to play. A significant proposal was to site one Super-Casino in Britain, with towns and cities invited to bid for the licence. For Blackpool this seemed promising, particularly given the destination's existing accommodation and infrastructure. At a more cynical level, many argued that Blackpool already had a reputation as a place with a high transient population, relatively high crime rates, and the free availability of what were seen as 'tacky' leisure activities. People talked of Blackpool as the British answer to Atlantic City, the US seaside town that is the location of a major gambling industry. Blackpool assembled a bid despite the objections of some residents who feared the social and environmental consequences, and its local politicians were very optimistic. Blackpool's bid was for…

> …a 24-hour casino with around 70 gaming tables and 2500 slot machines. There would be a 500-room hotel to accommodate the expected influx of visitors. Councillors say the development would kick-start regeneration of the area, allowing increased funding for the tram network and renovation of the famous seafront (Guardian Unlimited, 2007).

In January 2007 the government's decision was to locate the Super-Casino in the city of Manchester. The leaders of the Blackpool bid were devastated. A common response was that the decision meant that there was no future for the town other than the long-predicted decline. Steve Weaver, the local council's chief executive, said: 'The future of the town now looks far more uncertain – no easy answers' (Ward, Carter & Topping, 2007).

Discussion question

Imagine you are a member of a working party set up by Blackpool's local council to advise it on ways of coping with decline after the Super-Casino failure. Recognising the socio-economic changes in the British holiday market, how else could Blackpool market its assets of recognisability, plentiful accommodation, a range of pubs, theatres, amusement arcades, and the most popular 'free entry' funfair in the UK?

Further reading

Goodall, B. (1992). Coastal resorts; Development and redevelopment. *Built Environment*, *18*, 5–11.
Walton, J. K. (1998). *Blackpool*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Walton, J. K. (2000). *The British Seaside –Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Other examples of man-made disasters impacting on the tourism industry include:

- The 2002 collapse of Australia's major domestic air carrier Ansett Airlines.
- Pacific nuclear testing in the South Pacific in 1995 (see Elliott, 1997).
- Labour strikes such as those by Australian airline pilots in 1989–90 (see Lavery, 1992) and USA air-traffic controllers in 1981.
- The 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill at Prince William Sound, Alaska.
- The 1989 political uprising in Tiananmen Square, China (see Gartner & Shen, 1992; Roehl, 1990).
- The 1970s global oil crisis. The impact in New Zealand was so significant that the government ordered the closure of petrol stations on Sundays. Another initiative that impacted on tourism was the introduction carless day stickers, where every car was forced to carry a sticker indicating one day of the week when it could not be used.
- The nationalisation of Mexico's oil industry in the 1930s caused an immediate decline in self-drive tourists from the USA (Berger, 2006).

DMO responses to disasters

> *The intensity of the moment during a crisis is clearly not the time to commence such planning*
>
> *(Litvin & Alderson, 2003, p. 189).*

Any destination thrown into a crisis situation will be forced to implement recovery strategies to avoid or minimise a crisis situation in the future. Since no destination is immune to disasters, it surely behoves the DMO to develop some form of strategy, in conjunction with civic authorities, in advance of an admittedly unknown exogenous event. Research Snapshot 18.2 highlights the difficulty in not having a plan for a 'surprise crisis'. However, until recently there have been few resources available to advise DMOs. While some guidelines have been developed for recovery from natural disasters there has been little published on crisis management strategies following acts of terrorism (Sönmez et al., 1999). Clearly the purpose of a crisis management plan is to be prepared. A plan should guide the DMO at a time when distress and panic are likely. Sönmez et al. suggested that a guidebook can include: roles and responsibilities, action

checklists, a directory of contacts, and media guidelines such as sample press kits and what to do/not do at media conferences.

In practice

Following a recommendation of the PATA Bali Tourism Recovery Taskforce, PATA created a crisis manual for member governments (see PATA, 2003). The manual provides a checklist of critical tasks to be undertaken during a crisis, as well as a directory of crisis specialists.

Research Snapshot 18.2   Katherine's 1998 Australia Day flood

Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) examined the role of a tourism disaster management plan in the case of the 1998 Australia Day flood at Katherine. Located in the Northern Territory, in Australia's tropical north, Katherine receives heavy rainfall that is a routine of the wet season. However, the 1998 flood was the worst in the town's history, inundating half of the homes, all of the CBD, and most tourism businesses. This natural disaster challenged the survival of the local tourism industry, and occurred so quickly that the Katherine Regional Tourism Association (KRTA) was involved in a 'surprise crisis' with a very limited decision time (p. 343):

> The urgency of the disaster situation means that operators and the RTA did not have the luxury of reflecting on the most appropriate action to take. Nor was there time to engage in the consultations necessary to produce a fully coordinated response.

Faulkner and Vikulov found that despite the possibility of a '100-year flood' no tourism operators had disaster management plans, other than regulatory evacuation plans. Following the recovery period, the KRTA proceeded to develop a destination disaster management plan in conjunction with emergency service organisations. Concurrently, the RTO also decided to be more proactive in enhancing disaster awareness among local operators. The downside however was that as a result of directing resources to these efforts the KRTA's ability to continue strategic marketing planning was restricted.

Source: Faulkner, B. & Vikulov, S. (2001). Katherine, washed out one day, back on track the next: A post-mortem of a tourism disaster. *Tourism Management*, *22*(4), 331–344.

Resources

While ensuring the safety of visitors and rebuilding infrastructure and tourism facilities will be paramount, these activities are beyond the scope of the vast majority of DMOs. This section is therefore limited to discussing the marketing aspects of recovery from disasters. One RTO that did have a crisis plan on September 11, 2001, was Charleston in South Carolina (Litvin & Alderson, 2003). The first meeting of the Charleston Area Convention

& Visitors Bureau (CACVB) crisis team took place on the afternoon of September 11. However, the CACVB plan immediately proved to be of limited value as all scenarios were based on local events such as hurricanes and floods. There was no scenario for an incident 500 miles away.

Clearly, a DMO's ability to respond effectively will depend on the level of resources available. Depending on the scale of the crisis, this will likely require strong lobbying by DMOs for government intervention. Examples include:

- Following the events of 9/11 the Southern Governors' Association adopted a resolution that endorsed six points, involving federally funded advertising, tax credits, policy development, and passenger security screening (Kubiak, 2002, p. 19).
- In 2002, the British government announced a £40 million marketing package to reverse the estimated £2 billion drop in tourism revenue from the foot and mouth outbreak (Kleinman & Bashford, 2002).
- In response to the 1989–90 pilot's strike in Australia, which resulted in a decrease of over 100,000 international visitor arrivals, the Australian federal government provided an additional 'Recovery Plan' fund of A$18.5 million to the NTO (Lavery, 1992).
- In 2003, Hong Kong Tourism Board Executive Director Clara Chong announced funding of HK$400 million for a series of special events to repair the post-SARS image of Hong Kong (www.eturbonews.com, 19/8/03).
- The Indonesian government allocated $44.6 million for a global campaign to lure visitors back to Bali following the October 2002 bombings (Osborne, 2003).
- At the height of the SARS publicity the Canadian federal government pledged an additional C$15.5 million to promote Toronto and Canada as safe destinations (www.eturbonews.com, 17/6/03).
- The Florida state government provided US$20 million for tourism advertising following 9/11 (Word, 2003). This stimulated a further $25 million in private-sector funding (Bush, 2004).
- The *Financial Times* reported that the Thailand government took the unusual step of promising US$100,000 to any tourist catching SARS while visiting the country (www.travelmole.com, 21/5/03). Authorities made the offer due to concern over the April arrival figures which were down by almost half, even though Thailand had been declared a SARS-free zone. The initiative followed a $US100,000 SARS-free guarantee by Thai Airways.

Not all DMOs are fortunate to receive extra funding following a disaster. For example, as discussed in Chapter 5, destinations reliant on a bed tax for revenue generation, such as North American CVBs like Las Vegas, face a decline in budget when bed nights are down. During the Asian economic crisis, the Indonesian Tourist Promotion Board was forced to close important overseas offices in Frankfurt, London, Los Angeles, Singapore, Taipei, and Tokyo, as a result of a lack of funding and huge debts (Henderson,

2002). The CEO of the British Incoming Tour Operators Association criticised the British government for failing to adequately support the tourism industry during the foot and mouth crisis (www.travelmole.com, 13/3/03). The criticism was fuelled by reports that the tourism industry received £20 million in additional funds while facing a loss of £5 billion, and yet the agricultural sector received compensation payments of £1 billion.

Successful tactics implemented by DMOs in following disasters have included:

- a disaster management taskforce
- scenario building
- public relaions
- autsourcing expertise
- cooperative campaigns
- travel trade familiarisations
- providing support for local businesses
- stimulating discounts and adding value
- market concentration

Disaster management taskforce

The purpose of a management taskforce is to minimise the level of guesswork during a disaster. The DMO is in an ideal situation to coordinate immediate and ongoing marketing responses, working closely with any damage response entity to ensure consistency of messages.

DMOs at all levels may form a taskforce that fits within the existing governance structure. Meetings need not have the same frequency as other panels, but should draw on expertise from relevant fields, such as civil defence, public health, and infrastructure. Sönmez, Apostolopoulos and Tarlow (1999) suggested organising teams within the taskforce with different responsibilities, such as: public relations, promotion, information coordination, and fundraising. Other initiatives worth considering, particularly in high-risk areas, include:

- working cooperatively with neighbouring destinations
- communicating the current contingency plan to industry
- providing annual workshops for DMO staff and industry on crisis management and scenario building

In most cases a taskforce is instigated following the disaster. For example, the PATA Bali Recovery Taskforce was established immediately following the October 2002 bombings to assist Indonesia. Within a week of the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK, the BTA had set up its Immediate Action Group (Frisby, 2002). Two weeks after 9/11, the London Tourist Board (LTB) established the London Tourism Recovery Group (London Tourist Board, 2001, in Hopper, 2002).

The first role of the taskforce is to assess the situation for impact on visitor arrivals. Primary impact concerns will be the level of visitation decrease (visitor numbers, nights, spend) and for what period of time. The second

role is to respond as quickly as possible, initially focusing on information dispersal in a manner that fosters a sense of trust in the DMO by the media and travelling public. This may be necessary to clearly demarcate where the problem is, particularly if a number of areas have been unaffected. For example, Florida has a coastline of over 1000 miles, and Hurricane Andrew in 1992 only affected 10 miles of beaches (Portorff & Neal, 1994). Portoff and Neal cited a UK newspaper headline that read 'Hurricane Bearing Down on Disney Beaches', and yet the distance between Orlando and the affected beaches was over 200 miles.

Scenario building

Disasters, whether natural or man-made, are rarely predictable. If destinations are to prepare contingency plans for possible disasters, it is important to look forward as well as backwards, with the caveat that history is no predictor of the future. While it would be futile to attempt to predict the future (Drucker, 1995), what can be valuable is the use of scenarios. Scenario building attempts to construct views of possible futures, in an effort to better plan for uncertainty (see Schwartz, 1992; Johnson & Scholes, 2002). Strategic choices can be made based on how the different scenarios might unfold. In theory, this then offers the relative security of being prepared for, to varying degrees, whatever type of scenario happens. Scenarios should be seen as carefully constructed plots, rather than predictions. When attempting to envision the future, assumptions must be made for each scenario. Since the assumptions are the key elements in determining the basis for each plot, the number should be kept to a minimum, to reduce complexity. For each scenario, a number of questions can be developed, including:

- What might lead to success or a speedy recovery where others may fail?
- What might happen to current customers?
- What might happen to future suppliers?
- What type of businesses will fare best/worst?
- What are the most important activities that need to be addressed first?
- Where should marketing resources be directed?

In practice

During 2005 a media 'frenzy' developed over the threat of Avian Flu spreading from Asia to Europe in the form of a pandemic. Visit Scotland undertook scenario planning for such an eventuality. Page et. al. (2006) provide a rare insight into the scenario building exercise from the perspective of a DMO. The case is an example of best practice in the tourism industry, both in terms of the planning process and the sharing of information with other NTOs.

Public relations

Clearly, the media play an important role in communicating the impacts of disasters to the public. Therefore public relations initiatives are a critical component in any disaster response strategy. This issue was addressed in Chapter 16.

Outsourcing expertise

Few DMOs are likely to have the resources to employ a permanent disaster management specialist, and few DMO staff are likely to have been trained in crisis management. Depending on the level of disaster/crisis, such a specialist might need to be outsourced to work with the taskforce. In 2003 the London Tourist Board took the step of offering a three-month contract for a marketer to focus on encouraging Londoners to spend more in their own city during the war in Iraq (*Marketing*, 6/3/03). The temporary position reported to a committee formed by the LTB, the Greater London Authority, and the London Development Agency.

Likewise, outsourcing of PR specialists may be needed to temporarily coordinate public information dissemination. For example, at the RTO level, the Katherine Regional Tourism Association employed a journalist to work with the media following the 1998 Australia Day flood (Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001). At the NTO level, during the 2001 UK outbreak of foot and mouth disease the BTA contracted a global PR agency to minimise the negative perceptions of Britain overseas (Frisby, 2002). However, BTA PR director Frisby candidly acknowledged a post-crisis recommendation to not outsource to a global agency in the future (p. 99):

> *Although the appointed agency performed well in the initial rebuttal phase, after six weeks it became clear that a lack of product knowledge meant that enormous inputs of time and expertise were required in order to continue to produce results.*

Coordinating cooperative campaigns

Key advantages of a coordinated marketing response include (Mansfield, 1999): economies of scale, consistency of image-related messages, more effective assessment of performance, reduced infighting between different tourism sector groups, and positive signals for the travel industry and target markets. Regarding the last point, during the 2001 UK foot and mouth disease outbreak a feature of the BTA's response was working closely with national and regional tourist boards and key government departments, in an effort to minimise negative media coverage and to provide reassurance to the public (Frisby, 2002).

The events of 9/11 enabled the CACVB to successfully implement cooperative packages, which it had previously been unable to stimulate in more settled times (Litvin & Alderson, 2003). Similarly, Hopper (2002) reported that one of the key lessons learned by the London Tourism Board in the wake of 9/11 was the need for effective dialogue with tourism operators.

Hopper suggested a legacy of the improved public–private sector relationship established during the crisis has become a model for future marketing of the destination.

Travel trade familiarisation visits

Trade familiarisation visits are also an important function coordinated by DMOs. Following the 2003 terrorism attacks in Turkey, the Balkan Federation of Travel and Tourist Agencies Associations planned such initiatives to develop solidarity with intermediaries in the region. On the assumption that negative images of Turkey would affect tourism to nearby member countries, the federation planned familiarisation visits to Istanbul for leading world tourism authorities during 2004 (www.eturbonews.com, 25/11/03). Hosting large groups of travel industry personnel on familiarisations by the Turkish Ministry of Tourism was a major reason for that country's rapid recovery following the 1999 Izmit earthquake (Beirman, 2003a).

Supporting local tourism businesses

Mansfield (1999) suggested that governments in high-risk areas should provide financial incentives for tourism investors, given the probability of future losses. A number of cases in the literature have reported initiatives to support local tourism operators during a crisis:

- In China, post-SARS initiatives included visa exemptions for some nationalities (www.eturbonews.com, 7/8/03).
- VAT was reduced from 13% to 3% on hotels in Jordan during the 2003 war in Iraq (www.travelmole.com, 9/6/03).
- The Israel Ministry of Tourism has provided subsidies for tourism operators marketing the destination (Beirman, 2002).
- Following 9/11, the CACVB enlisted an online booking company to conduct workshops for local tourism businesses (Litvin & Alderson, 2003).
- During the 2001 UK outbreak of foot and mouth disease, the BTA used the organisation's website to update industry with information and advice (Frisby, 2002).
- In 2006 the Australian government invited businesses affected by tropical cyclone Larry to apply for financial assistance.

Stimulating discounts and adding value

The introduction of special deals has been a regular component of Israel's post-crisis recovery programmes (Beirman, 2002). Beirman (2003a) cited the examples of Delta Airlines, which provided 10,000 free seats to New York following 9/11, and Insight Vacations, which provided a one-week package in Egypt for US$1 as a value add-on to its European tour product following the 1997 Luxor massacre. During the 2001 UK outbreak of foot

and mouth disease, the BTA used the organisation's trade website to ask operators to provide details of special deals, details of which were used in media releases and publicised on the organisation's consumer website (Frisby, 2002). Following 9/11, one of the recovery initiatives of the London mayor was a £500,000 contribution towards free and discounted tickets to the city's theatres.

Market concentration

As highlighted in Case Study 19.1, one of the most important crisis decisions concerns trade-offs about which markets to focus recovery efforts. During the Asian economic crisis the Singapore Tourism Board concentrated on markets unaffected by the economic downturn (Henderson, 2002). During the UK foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001 the BTA focused attention on 11 key markets (Frisby, 2002). On the correct assumption that Americans would be reluctant to fly in the short term following September 11, the CACVB focused attention on cities within a 10-hour drive (Litvin & Alderson, 2003). All scheduled advertising was pulled immediately and replaced with a new campaign featuring the tagline: 'A short drive down the road, a million miles away'.

During the foot and mouth disease outbreak in the UK, the London Tourism Board (LTB) directed attention towards the domestic market (Hopper, 2002). The LTB particularly focused on promoting domestic short breaks to the capital. However, by February 2002, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) had stated concern at the trend towards stronger domestic promotion in many PATA countries (PATA, 2002). The concern was due to the potential for discouraging outbound travel, resulting in lower inbound arrivals within the region, which would further impact on airline profitability.

Dark tourism

At first you might wonder why a section on dark tourism should be included in a chapter on disasters and crises. Well, there is a dark side to image marketing, where some travellers are attracted to the negative images of places that have suffered disasters (Ahmed, 1991c). This phenomenon has been labelled *dark tourism* (see, for example, Lennon & Foley, 2000) and *thano tourism* (see Seaton, 1996), where tourists visit scenes of death and disaster for reasons of remembrance, education, or entertainment. In 2005, the level of academic interest in the topic led to the launch of a dark tourism website www.dark-tourism.org.uk, with the goal to become the 'one-stop shop' for researchers and students interested in accessing information on the topic.

That so many travellers are attracted to scenes of disaster is perhaps representative of our innate sense of curiosity, which in part manifests in our desire for travel to explore, rather than a purely morbid inclination. An example of the latter however was the report of 'ghoulish Aussie tourists flocking to the jail housing convicted drug smugglers Schapelle Corby and

the Bali Nine' (Wockner & Weston, 2006, p. 9). The Indonesian jail was becoming a must-see for some 'jail tourists', wanting a glimpse of the 10 infamous young Australians, some of whom are on death row.

Alternatively, the visit might represent a pilgrimage or merely a photo opportunity. In some cases curiosity might be immediate to view the devastation. Incredibly, shortly after the war in Iraq in 2003, UK travellers were signing up for tours of the country. A report in the *Daily Express* cited bookings by travellers to a tour organised by Hinterland Travel to 'see what has happened to the country' (www.travelmole.com, 6/8/03).

In other cases a sustained curiosity is developed. For example, the site of the 1985 air crash in which 256 members of the US 101st Airborne Division were killed remains one of the most popular visitor attractions in Gander, Canada (see Butler & Baum, 1999). In Rotorua, New Zealand, disaster struck in June 1886 when Mount Tarawera erupted, destroying three Maori villages with the loss of 150 lives and obliterating the fledgling destinations' most notable tourism attraction at the time, the Pink and White Terraces. This was a devastating blow for tourism (Stafford, 1986), only 40 years after the first tourist arrivals. However, within two years Rotorua's annual visitor arrivals were higher than pre-eruption levels (Reggett, 1972). Part of the continued interest in Rotorua was the eruption aftermath and new volcanic craters, which remain attractions today. The city of San Francisco marked the 100th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake with a series of events and promotions. Similarly, the city of Napier in New Zealand strongly promotes its art-deco architecture, which was a result of rebuilding after a devastating earthquake in 1931.

The diversity of other examples of sites of death or disaster attracting visitors include:

- Alma tunnel in Paris where Princess Diana was killed in 1997
- Robin Island, near Cape Town in South Africa, where Nelson Mandela was jailed
- The site of Pompeii in Italy
- World War II death camps in Poland
- The site of US President John F. Kennedy's assassination
- Holocaust Memorial Museum, USA
- Lenin's tomb in Moscow
- The house in Winchester, England, where Jane Austin died
- Hawaii's USS *Arizona* memorial
- New York's Ground Zero
- Elvis Presley's gravesite in Memphis
- World War II prisoner-of-war camps, such as Colditz Castle, Germany
- USA's civil war Petersburg National Battlefield
- Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, Poland
- Turkey's World War I battlefield at ANZAC Cove, Gallipoli
- Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan
- Nanjing Massacre Memorial, China

Visits to sites of death is not a modern phenomenon (Seaton, 1996). There have been suggestions that the World War of 1914–1918 was the start of

the modern dark tourism era, due to the introduction of movie cinemas around the same time. The popularity of sites of death and disaster has demonstrated there can also be a positive effect of such events. Admittedly, with some moral dilemmas DMOs should (sensitively) be alert to new marketing opportunities.

In practise

In 2005, the government of Phnom Pehn in Cambodia signed a deal with Japanese entrepreneurs to manage the Cheung Ek Memorial, which proved contentious with some local residents (Cripps, 2005). The 'killing fields' genocide memorial houses a tower of an estimated 8000 human skulls, some of the estimated 3 million victims who died at the hands of former dictator Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. Cripps cited relatives who suggested victims were being 'sold for profit'. However, the local mayor argued that the decision was justified since most package tours feature the memorial as a regular stop:

> *This project will benefit our country's tourism as some tourists do not just want to visit our historic temples. They also what to see with their own eyes the past violence of the 'Killing Fields'.*

Key points

1. Disaster or crisis?

No destination is immune to disaster. Every DMO should consider the possibility of a disaster at some stage in the future. Disasters can be man-made or acts of God. They can be short term or long term. Almost all will be unpredictable and beyond the control of the DMO. The level of preparedness for a disaster at a destination will determine the extent to which a management crisis manifests.

2. Travel advisories

All national governments have a responsibility to provide an advisory service for their citizens, identifying potentially risky destinations. Most countries provide regularly updated travel advisories on government websites, and the implications for the DMOs of these countries are significant in terms of the damage to the image of their destination and the necessary recovery-marketing efforts. The extent to which promotional efforts are negated by government travel advisories is a contentious issue. It is important to consider that the negative images created by publicity surrounding a disaster can last far longer than any physical destruction to infrastructure or tourism facilities.

3. DMO responses

Since a state of crisis can affect the viability of the destination, DMOs have a responsibility to prepare disaster response plans. The level of such planning has until recently been very low. However, the recent increase in acts of war and terrorism has forced more destinations to act. The topic of destination crisis management is an emerging research field within the tourism literature. A number of case studies have been reported in recent years, and provide a valuable resource for DMOs considering contingency planning. Key activities that DMOs should consider include: the formation of a permanent disaster taskforce, scenario building and risk analysis, coordinated marketing responses, market concentration, outsourcing of media relations, and initiatives to support local businesses.

Review questions

- Discuss the extent to which your DMO has a disaster response strategy published in the public domain.
- Has your destination ever been affected by a disaster? Analyse the effectiveness of the recovery strategy.
- What are the potential risks to your destination that could lead to a disaster and crisis in the future?
- What travel advisories are currently in place by your government? To what extent do you agree with these warnings?
- Why have DMOs in general been slow to develop a disaster response strategy?

Appendix 18.1 10 lessons learned from the South Asia tsunami of 26 December 2004

Sálvano Briceño, Director, Inter-agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

1. We are all vulnerable to natural disasters

The tsunami affected a total of 50 countries, of which 11 were directly affected. An additional 39 developed countries were indirectly affected by losing nationals who were present in the region, either tourists or expatriates.

2. Coastal zones and small islands are often densely populated areas that increase people's risk and vulnerability

Nearly 3 billion people, or almost half the world population, live in coastal zones which in many cases are prone to hazards including tropical cyclones, floods, storms, and tsunamis. Often coastal populations are dependent on the sea for their livelihoods and do not have the choice to live elsewhere. Small island countries such as the Nicobar and Andaman islands are barely a few metres above sea level, which means that evacuation to higher land is almost impossible.

3. Public awareness and education are essential to protecting people and property

In Thailand more than 1800 people were saved because a tribal chief recognised there was something wrong and decided to evacuate his people up to the hills. A 10-year-old girl from England saved 100 tourists on a beach in Phuket after alerting her mother of the imminent tidal wave and prompting a speedy evacuation to safety. She recognised the signs after learning about tsunamis in her geography class. In Japan, Hawaii, and Cuba children know from an early age what to do if tropical storms, cyclones or earthquakes strike.

4. Early warning saves lives

In Kenya, thousands of people were immediately evacuated in Mombassa because they were alerted to the wave making its way across the Indian Ocean. While the appropriate technology to detect seismic activity already exists, a failure in communication meant that the relevant authorities and local communities were caught unaware by the tsunami.

5. Countries need to work together at the regional and international levels ahead of time, instead of waiting until disaster strikes and then to respond

There is a need for countries in the Indian Ocean to develop a regional early warning system that focuses on tsunamis. The tsunami highlighted that other regions at risk have no regional early warning in place, such as the Caribbean and countries along the Mediterranean coastline, and need to have one as quickly as possible.

6. Reducing risk depends on communication and information exchange between the scientific community and politicians

The disaster showed that in the absence of an open dialogue, valuable information and research from technical sectors is redundant. We need to strengthen the link between scientific institutions and national and local authorities that need to react to avoid human, economic, and social losses from disasters.

7. Develop and enforce building codes in areas where earthquakes and tsunamis are common

The damage to buildings was huge, and could have been reduced if building codes and retrofitting measures had been taken. After the Bangladeshi flood in the 1970s, government decided to build all the key buildings with two or more storeys. In the Maldives, a lot of people who escaped went up to the top floor. Clearly, the further away you are from the sea the safer you are, and so new legislations may need to be considered for the construction of hotels and tourist sites in coastal zones.

8. Humanitarian aid needs to invest more in prevention and go beyond food, medicine, and immediate needs

Donor funds need to think about the longer-term and include prevention in aid packages. If we are able to collect 3 billion dollars in two weeks we should be able to spend 10% of it in prevention. We are trapped in a reactive rather than proactive development trajectory.

9. International, regional, and national organisations should work better together and be better coordinated

Coordination is an essential element of disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response by the entire UN system, governments, and non-governmental organisations. Efforts need to be made to promote complementarity and avoid duplication. Governments need to demonstrate their political will and commitment to disaster risk reduction through concrete measures.

10. The media have a social responsibility to promote prevention

Journalists need to be sensitised and maintain an ongoing focus on prevention aspects of disasters. We must remind ourselves of the disasters happening on an almost daily basis around the world, such as locusts in western Africa and drought.

Source: http://www.reliefweb.int (7/1/05)