Degrees or Advanced Diplomas? That is the question
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Abstract

Traditionally, the employees and potential employees of both tourism and hospitality businesses in Australia have had a binary tertiary education system from which to choose. They could either enrol in vocational courses delivered at TAFE or they could enrol in university degrees. As of December 2011 figures suggest that there are seventeen TAFEs delivering hospitality and nine delivering tourism courses, whilst there are two universities delivering hospitality and three universities delivering tourism degrees in Victoria.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine which of these pathways to employment achieve the best outcomes for the graduates from either educational sector. The research concentrates on the short to medium term employment of the research participants. The employment outcomes of those who graduated with an advanced diploma of tourism or hospitality will be compared with those who graduated with degrees in either specialty to try and identify which group is ‘more successful’.

Participants completed an online survey and ten of them participated in focus groups or interviews. Representatives from industry were also interviewed, two from Australia and two from Thailand.

Findings from the research demonstrate that qualifications, whether they are from TAFE or university are unlikely to play an important role in the early careers of employees but that as their careers mature degree qualifications in particular are more useful.

Additionally, the degree graduates have identified that the skills and knowledge gained from the degree studies have enabled them to transfer into other industries and gain higher salaries.

Advanced diploma graduates who have remained in the industries are earning more than their counterparts in the industries who have degrees.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

(i) The thesis comprises only my original work towards the DEd except where indicated in the Preface

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is fewer than 55,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Charles Eller
Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been completed without the backing of many people over the last seven years. I would like to thank the following people:

- my supervisor, Dr Peter Ferguson for his constant support, interest, and chiding when I was occasionally falling off the rails;

- the participants in the research from graduates to industry professionals who generously gave of their time and thoughts;

- my colleagues and friends at various institutions who helped keep me up to the mark;

- and finally to my wife Ann and our daughters, Sophie and Emily. Without their love, friendship, constant encouragement, advice, help and intellect I would have been unable to complete this research.
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTAC</td>
<td>Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre</td>
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<td>ATAR</td>
<td>Australian Tertiary Admission Rank</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>Private provider(s)</td>
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<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>HA</td>
<td>Hierarchically ascending</td>
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<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>Higher National Diploma</td>
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<td>NfP</td>
<td>Not for profit</td>
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1. Introduction

Traditionally, the employees and potential employees of both tourism and hospitality businesses in Australia have had a binary tertiary education system from which to choose. Firstly, the students could enrol in a diploma or advanced diploma in either discipline or they could enrol in a degree in either discipline. The first type of qualifications has been delivered by Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Institutes, whilst the second type of qualification has been delivered by universities. As of 2011 in Victoria, there are seventeen TAFEs delivering hospitality and nine delivering tourism courses, whilst there are two universities delivering hospitality and three universities delivering tourism degrees (VTAC 2011).

This research will focus on students who enrolled and completed their courses in the period between 1997 and 2005 when there was an extra university delivering both hospitality and tourism degrees. At that stage, parents and prospective students were faced with the conundrum of which course would better prepare students for careers in the industry post-graduation, and which was the better course overall. O’Mahony and Sillitoe (2001) reported that there were so many courses from which to choose, and so much conflicting information, that respondents to their study found it almost ‘frightening’ to make a decision about which course they should enrol. They identified further that informational barriers were one cause of failure of potential students to enrol.

This research will focus on the short to medium term careers of graduates from the courses above; the stand alone advanced diplomas delivered by the TAFE (Institute W) and the combined courses delivered by the university (University R) and the TAFE. The employment outcomes of those who graduated with an advanced diploma of tourism or hospitality will be compared with those who graduated with degrees in either specialty to try and identify which group is ‘more successful’.

‘More successful’ could be determined on several fronts; salary, reporting lines, local or international employment, title, and managers/employers perspective of career potential.
Career success can be defined as: “the accumulation of positive work-related and psychological outcomes resulting from one's work experiences” and refers to the subjective and objective elements of the progress and achievements of a person during their vocational lifespan (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). In the past, a permanent job with one employer was the norm. This is no longer the case. Now employees seek changes in their careers through consecutive jobs. Consecutive jobs can be problematic for females if they seek to have a family. Dyke and Murphy (2006) identified significant gender differences in defining career success. Whilst men emphasise material success, women focus on relationships and balance.

Kuijpers and Scheerens (2006) established six career competencies related to success: career-actualisation, career reflection, motivation reflection, work exploration, career control and networking. As will be shown later in this thesis some of the graduates have remained with their industry year employer and thus not explored, as yet, other opportunities whilst other graduates have had multiple jobs since leaving university or TAFE.

Graduates’ careers will be assessed up to and including 2011 when the participants in the research completed a survey and may have also contributed to a focus group.

The tourism and hospitality industry, due to reasonably high attrition, is an industry which can deliver high levels of responsibility at a relatively early age. If employees can stick through the early days the rewards can be high. Therefore it is not be unusual for employees to gain responsible positions within 3-4 years of original employment depending on their initial employment pathway.
1.1 Significance of the Study

Although this research pertains to courses which were delivered almost ten to fifteen years ago, the research is still pertinent. Potential students have many options to consider when making a choice between courses; this is not only true of hospitality and tourism courses but in other disciplines as well. For example, students may enrol in a TAFE (or private provider PP) course, complete a two year advanced diploma and articulate into a degree. This is especially true of students who may not achieve a high enough Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score to enrol directly into university. However, it is still an option for those students who have a high enough ATAR score but wish to undertake the practical aspects of a TAFE or PP before undertaking a university course. There maybe also a cost saving if students participate in a TAFE or PP course before studying at university.

Alternatively, students may enrol straight into a university course or they may enrol into a TAFE or PP course and not study further. These students need to know which courses achieve the best outcomes. However, enrolment into a course does not necessarily result in completion of the course; attrition rates remain high in university courses, especially in first year and those students who drop out from university may then enrol into a TAFE or PP course.

Given the ever changing landscape of changing funding models of both Australian federal and state governments leading to increased fees for students whether they enrol in a TAFE, PP, or university courses stakeholders are entitled to have more informed advice as to which courses offer the best outcomes.

Recently the Labor federal government has reduced funding for Australian universities to further complicate decision making amongst potential students (Davis 2013). Similarly, TAFE institutions across the country have had their funding cut by various state governments.
1.2 Definitions

There is some confusion surrounding the definitions of tourism and hospitality as two distinct industries or one combined industry. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) defines tourism: “Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure.” (WTO 2011). Therefore all hospitality businesses such as cafés, restaurants, hotels, caravan parks, casinos and so on are included under the umbrella term of tourism. However, in education it is apparent that the two sectors are treated, more often than not, as separate as in an Advanced Diplomas of Tourism Management and Advanced Diplomas of Hospitality Management. Similarly, there are degrees in either tourism or hospitality and occasionally degrees in tourism and hospitality or hospitality and tourism.

Hospitality is defined by Brotherton (1999) as “A contemporaneous human exchange, which is voluntarily entered into, and designed to enhance the mutual wellbeing of the parties concerned through the provision of accommodation and food or drink”. An alternative definition is given by Morrison and O’Gorman in Lashley et al 2011:

\[ \text{It represents a host's cordial reception, welcome and entertainment of guests or strangers of diverse social backgrounds and cultures charitably, socially or commercially with kind and generous liberality, into one's, space to dine and/or lodge temporarily. Dependent on circumstance, and context, the degree to which the hospitality offering is conditional or unconditional may vary.} \]

Leiper (2006) argues that the tourism industry is a misnomer and misleading and that the correct nomenclature should be ‘tourism industries’ as “there is not one large industry directly supporting all tourists. In fact there are multiple industries, large and small, overlapping in many locations...”
No matter the definitions, hospitality and tourism have become important areas worthy of research and as particularly important contributors to the nations’ gross domestic product (GDP) more attention is being paid to the education of the industries’ employees and to their careers.

Further definitions in this thesis:
A three or four year degree is called ‘a course’ as is a two year advanced diploma
A unit/module delivered in a course is called a subject whether it is in a TAFE or university course.

A snapshot of the industries is useful to put the research into context. The tourism industry’s share of GDP in Australia in 2007-08 amounted to nearly $41 billion or 3.6 per cent of gross domestic product. In 1998-09 the share of GDP amounted to approximately $27 billion or 4.4 per cent. During the period of research employment in the tourism industry has risen from 941,300 to 1,119,300 in 2005 while in 2011 was approximately 1,335,300 according to Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Skills Info 2011). In these data hospitality is included in the definition of tourism for the purposes of GDP share and employment.

The following table shows the breakdown of employment within the tourism industry which includes traditional ‘hospitality’ jobs such as items (1) accommodation; (2) cafés, restaurants, take away food; (3) pubs, bars, clubs taverns and (9) casinos.
## Table 1 - Total Tourism Employment by Industry Sector (a)

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<td>1. Accommodation (‘000)</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>72.7</td>
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<td>2. Cafés, restaurants and takeaway food services (‘000)</td>
<td>113.4</td>
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<td>115.9</td>
<td>114.4</td>
<td>117.3</td>
<td>119.1</td>
<td>124.9</td>
<td>128.2</td>
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<td>3. Clubs, pubs, taverns, and bars (‘000)</td>
<td>24.0</td>
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<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
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<td>4. Rail transport (‘000)</td>
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<td>5. Road transport and transport equipment rental (‘000)</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>19.6</td>
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<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20.2</td>
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<td>6. Air, water and other transport services (‘000)</td>
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<td>32.5</td>
<td>33.6</td>
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<td>35.7</td>
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<td>36.8</td>
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<td>7. Travel agency and tour operator services (‘000)</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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<td>8. Cultural services (‘000)</td>
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<td>9.5</td>
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<td>9.2</td>
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<td>9. Casinos and other gambling services (‘000)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<td>10. Other sports and recreation services (‘000)</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>18.7</td>
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<td>11. Retail trade (‘000)</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>99.0</td>
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<td>12. Education and training (‘000)</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>31.9</td>
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<td>Total (‘000)</td>
<td>442.6</td>
<td>441.8</td>
<td>449.3</td>
<td>453.5</td>
<td>455.5</td>
<td>468.2</td>
<td>470.0</td>
<td>476.1</td>
<td>488.9</td>
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<td>13. All other industries (‘000)</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
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<td>22.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
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**TOTAL TOURISM EMPLOYED PERSONS**

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<td>462.9</td>
<td>462.3</td>
<td>470.5</td>
<td>475.3</td>
<td>478.1</td>
<td>491.4</td>
<td>493.6</td>
<td>500.2</td>
<td>513.7</td>
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**TOTAL EMPLOYED PERSONS (‘000)**

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<td>9432.1</td>
<td>9557.3</td>
<td>9838.3</td>
<td>10139.9</td>
<td>10441.0</td>
<td>10759.7</td>
<td>10947.1</td>
<td>11084.7</td>
<td>11413.6</td>
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**TOURISM INDUSTRY SHARE OF TOTAL EMPLOYED PERSONS (per cent)**

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<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012)

(a) Tourism employed persons is derived by multiplying the number of employed persons in the industry by the proportion of total value added of the industry which is related to tourism.
The employment figures for items 1, 2, 3, and 9 account for approximately 235,000 employed persons in 2010/11, approximately 45.7 per cent of the total tourism industry employees and 2.06 per cent of total employed persons.

The Accommodation sector is the only sector that shows a substantial decrease in the number of people employed during the specified period (road transport showed a small decrease), decreasing from 77,100 in 2002/03 to 70,500 in 2010/1. Most other areas have shown considerable increases although the industry share of total employed persons has fallen from 4.9 per cent in 2002/03 to 4.5 per cent in 2010/11.

(Hereafter, tourism and hospitality will be treated as separate industries).

1.3 TAFE Institute W

Institute W, according to its website, is the premier tourism, hospitality and culinary arts provider within Australia. The Institute was established in 1940 as a trade school for training butchery apprentices. Since then it has expanded to include Diploma and Advanced Diploma course in tourism and hospitality management together with less advanced courses in cookery, bakery and pastry making. During the late 1990s international students enrolments became a focus for the Institute as educational institutions strove to maintain, and indeed increase, the revenue needed to deliver programs in the face of declining federal and state funding.

In the same period Institute W began to deliver programs in conjunction with University R. Students were guaranteed articulation into specific University R degrees pending successful completion of Advanced Diplomas of either Tourism or Hospitality. In 2003 the agreement between the two providers was updated and students were enrolled into business management advanced diplomas at Institute W and business degrees at University R. Since 2004 University R has withdrawn from delivering courses in tourism and hospitality although the university completed the education of students already enrolled in its courses. No new enrolments occurred after 2004 into Institute W for the dual course.
In June 2002 the Victorian state Labor government enacted legislation permitting Victorian TAFEs to deliver degrees and as a result Institute W applied for and was granted permission to deliver similar degrees. The then Chief Executive Officer of Institute W was quoted in The Age:

Institute W CEO …. sees the open market in higher education as an opportunity which can be turned to public benefit. “We are all (universities and TAFEs) running education and training businesses," he says.

This (degree) initiative is about creating viable education and training opportunities that will bring in revenue and that way we will be able to expand the types of courses on offer. Any net surplus we make won't be paid out to shareholders. It will be reinvested to create more training opportunities.

(“TAFE gears up to deliver degrees”. 2002)

Students in 2013 studying a degree at Institute W pay a minimum of $1750.00 per subject; a student studying for 1 year in an advanced diploma up until 2013 paid no more than approximately $1500 for all the units of competency delivered. This demonstrates the reason why TAFEs are so keen to enter the degree marketplace. The paucity of Federal and State government funding (profile funding) leaves institutes with no other choice than to apply to deliver degrees. However, the more successful TAFEs are in attracting this extra revenue, the more likely it is that their profile funding will be reduced.

1.4 University R

University R, due to a generous benefactor, opened as a Working Men’s College in 1887/88 offering classes in trade areas of architecture, mechanical drawing and plumbing amongst others. In the late 1890s diplomas were offered in engineering and applied science. Departments such as engineering, chemistry and mining were developed. Between 1900 and 1992, the Working Men’s College underwent several transformations and name changes before becoming a university in 1992. It amalgamated in 1979, with a college delivering ‘hospitality’ and tourism courses. Since then it has become a leading provider of education both locally and internationally. The university continued to run its own courses independent of the arrangement with Institute W in the early years but later dropped them.

There has been some research in the tourism and hospitality industry (Purcell and Quinn 1996, Evans (1993) in Petrova and Mason (2004), as to either whether students with degrees are more successful in the workplace than students with advanced diplomas in the short or medium-term, however there has been little discussion in Australia regarding this issue.
My research will attempt to determine in Australia whether in the short to medium term this is the case.

Students with degrees expect to gain better jobs than students without degrees; whether the students use the Higher Education Contribution Scheme or FEE Help or pay upfront fees they expect a return on their investment. Students in advanced diploma courses undertake vocationally oriented courses. Students in a university environment acquire a body of knowledge and are encouraged to challenge their lecturers and learn to think independently and clearly. Tribe (1999) in Airey and Tribe (2000) describes the differences in approaches as “a vocational curriculum is a curriculum for action … a liberal curriculum is a curriculum for study and reflection”.

One of the important selling points of the Institute W/University R programme, to parents, students and employers, was that the students would get the best of both worlds. They would get two years of the competency based model at Institute W; the “vocational-liberal”, Airey and Tribe (2000), followed by two years of the university model at University R, “reflection-action”(Airey and Tribe 2000). Degrees now offered by TAFE institutes in Victoria are traditionally called ‘vocational degrees’, however, in the W degrees the institute has tried hard to combine the vocational with the reflection as a separate niche model. The strong reputation of the institute allows it to overcome the absence of the title university. Degrees in hospitality and/or tourism whether they are delivered in universities or TAFEs deliberately have varying levels of practical subjects in their curriculum. Whether they be under the title of Food and Beverage Management or Food and Beverage Studies, they are conducted in restaurants with food and beverage production and service being undertaken during the classes (Wood 2007).

This research may also assist stakeholders in their examination of the choices of a traditional university curriculum or a TAFE curriculum or a combination of the two.

1.5 Course Development

In 1997, a Victorian TAFE and a Victorian University formed a partnership to encapsulate the best of both TAFE and University education. Students would spend the first two years of the course at the Victorian TAFE (Institute W) and the second half of the course, including an industry year, would be spent at the University (University R). Therefore students would pay TAFE fees for the first two years and University fees for the second two years. Students could access the Higher Education Contributions Scheme (HECS) for the university section of the course but were unable to access anything similar for the TAFE part of the course.
Students would gain two qualifications if they completed the entire course; an advanced diploma from Institute W and a degree from University R. If students elected to withdraw after the first two years they would gain a single qualification; an advanced diploma.

The joint courses were developed by staff from both educational institutes but not without some difficulty as there were opposing views from the separate parties as to how the process should be organised and what emphasis the courses should have. Eventually, although there were some modifications, particularly in the practical areas, TAFE W staff essentially delivered the first two years of Institute R’s original degrees and kept the same nomenclature of the subjects. This, of course, meant that the university ‘lost’ the first two years of the degrees which led to some less than voluntary reduction in staff from the university. At the time I was seconded to the university in a different role but was party to the negotiations and discussions.

Subsequently, there were approximately 600 students who enrolled in courses that Institute W ran in conjunction with University R over the years of the partnership. Whilst University R over time refused to accept more than 44 students each semester originally Institute W had enrolments of 100 students including both hospitality and tourism students. Dependent upon results, at the end of the two years at institute W graduates were guaranteed a place at University R. University R never provided the number of students who enrolled in the degree courses or indeed how many graduated from their courses (some students may have enrolled into other Victorian universities delivering similar courses, or may have left University R’s courses before completion).

The alternative stand alone diplomas and advanced diplomas in tourism and hospitality delivered by Institute W were well recognised qualifications which had been delivered by Institute W and other training providers for fifty to sixty years. Despite being at a lower level in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) than a degree; levels five and six compared to level seven, they enjoyed significant recognition from employers and other important stakeholders within the industry. Successful completion of the qualifications led to a well travelled pathway of successful employment in either discipline.
Between 1997 and 2005 there were approximately 1000 graduates from the TAFE courses at Institute W and approximately 300 graduates from the degree course at University R. It is impossible to be exact about the populations as some information has been denied to the researcher. The cost savings for students enrolling into a TAFE course rather than a degree course are considerable. In the period between 1997 and 2005, the maximum TAFE fees, including books and uniforms would have been approximately $2,000 for the two year advanced diploma. For those students completing a four year degree (including an industry year) fees, including books and uniforms, would have been in the region of $10,000-$12,000 (Parliamentary Library 2000). Thus the total fees of the amalgamated course were considerably less expensive than the stand alone degree course. For the amalgamated course students would have paid approximately $6,000 in total instead of approximately $10,000; a saving of 40 per cent.

As a course coordinator during that time I was often asked about the relative merits of an advanced diploma versus a degree as the costs of the courses, and the length of time spent studying, impacted upon the decisions of the potential enrollees. Parents and their children would visit Open Days at Institute W to determine which course or mode of education would best suit the potential student.

These questions from the parents and their children were a catalyst for me to commence the research. For example, I would have questions such as “What would be the difference in job outcomes from either of the courses?”

The prospective employment situation for graduates from TAFE courses is slowly changing. Wheelahan, Leahy, Fredman, Moodie, Arkoudis, Bexley (2012) describe the declining role diplomas play in entry level employment and state that degrees are now the entry level requirement for jobs, with diplomates competing with university graduates for the same jobs. This calls into question whether people in all walks of life are over educated for the roles they undertake in employment. However, the current federal government’s stated ambition of increasing the number of citizens with undergraduate degrees underpins this state of affairs.

The apparent decline in the need for diplomas also casts doubt on the continuing viability of TAFEs delivering diplomas as their bread and butter; additionally they are heavily funded for the delivery of not only diplomas but also certificates. This funding is declining as this market becomes contestable with more Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and private providers competing for students.
1.6 Purpose

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this research is to ascertain the employment outcomes of the students who completed this ‘dual award’ course and compare them with the employment outcomes of the students who graduated with an advanced diploma from TAFE W. The research does not compare employment outcomes of the graduates with an advanced diploma only from the dual award course. That is, graduates who left the dual award course after two years and did not articulate to University R to complete a degree.

1.7 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following four questions:

- What are the current employment outcomes of graduates with degrees and advanced diplomas of hospitality and tourism?
- What pathways have the graduates taken to get to their current roles?
- What has the value been of their studies to the graduates?
- Does one need a degree to be successful in tourism or hospitality?

1.8 Hypothesis

The hypothesis governing this research is that graduates with a degree in either tourism or hospitality are more successful in their short to medium term careers than graduates with an advanced diploma in the same disciplines. As funding for TAFE's in Victoria is falling (Dunckley 2011) and a recent review of higher education recommending that by 2020, 40 per cent of twenty-five to thirty-four year olds will have graduated with at least an undergraduate degree (Bradley 2008) this research will assist parents, potential students, both state and federal governments, provision, funding and delivery.

The Bradley Review also recommended greater participation amongst under-represented groups in bachelor programmes (Birrell & Edwards 2009; Bradley 2008; Pardy & Seddon 2011). This will impact upon enrolments at TAFE’s as some of these under-represented groups, defined in the report as “Indigenous people, people with low socio-economic status, and those from regional and remote areas” (Bradley 2008) tend to enrol at TAFE’s as their Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) or Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores exclude them from enrolling in universities or because their interests fall outside the scope of university courses. However, they are now being encouraged to look at university courses in a different light and some universities are now lowering their entry scores to accommodate these students.
TAFE clearly caters more for lower socioeconomic status (SES) persons than does the higher education sector (Long & Burke 2002). VET courses have smaller class groups and are often delivered with more face-to-face hours than higher education. The large lecture mode is not often used. This may be appropriate for students who have not achieved high ENTER or ATAR scores or have entered VET without completing secondary school. If lower SES persons are more easily discouraged by fees and an income contingent loan scheme then the case for it is weakened.

Over the last decade in Victoria there have been cuts in funding to TAFE hospitality courses. In the Victorian budget of 2012/2013 the TAFE sector has been hit again by further funding cuts, especially in the area of hospitality and business. In an effort to save $300 million over four years, the Liberal State Government has reduced subsidies from $7.00 per student contact hour to $1.50 per hour (“TAFEs hit hard in battle for public education”. 2012) leading to both staff and course cuts and possible campus closures. Some diploma courses in Victoria may now cost up to $8,000 per annum (depending upon the students’ prior qualification) from July 1 2012. This is an approximate 300 percent increase.

Allegedly ‘secret documents’ released to the media on September 12 2012 disclosed several TAFEs’ campuses are scheduled to be either closed or sold; whilst two universities, Swinburne University and Victoria University are said to be closing campuses in 2012/2013/2014 (“Deeper TAFE cuts revealed in secret documents”, 2012). Swinburne has subsequently closed its Prahran campus.

Victoria University in Melbourne has had about 400 voluntary redundancies partly as a result of the Victorian TAFE funding cuts and Swinburne University has had job losses of approximately 340 since July 2011 (“Victoria University cites deregulation, TAFE cuts for jobs axe” 2012).

Both the new Liberal governments in New South Wales and Queensland have similarly delivered budget cuts. As a result of the budgets, TAFEs in New South Wales have foreshadowed 800 job losses and large increases in course fees (The Australian 12 Sept 2012 p. 34). Queensland TAFEs face a funding fall of $80m whilst the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce report to the government recommends halving the number of Queensland TAFEs from 82 to 44. Subject to both federal and state government approval, Central Queensland University and Central Queensland Institute of TAFE are due to merge (The Australian 12 September 2012) and anecdotally the TAFE Institute is unhappy about the proposal as it perceives the situation more as a takeover than a merger. However, some
students are pleased with the outcome (Greensill 2011) as it simplifies pathway arrangements between the two bodies.

The changing landscape of vocational and further education training is concerning as a “one shoe fits all” policy of as many people gaining a degree as possible has worrying implications for trade based sectors of the economy, of which hospitality and tourism are but two sectors. Some students are not necessarily suited to degree studies however ‘vocational’ the degree may be and students should be offered more choice not fewer.

These funding cuts make educational decisions for prospective students and their parents even starker. Apart from the costs and the employment outcomes of the graduates the length of the courses need to be factored into the decision making. An advanced diploma takes two years to complete whereas the degree in these cohorts took four years. There is a two year delay in gaining permanent full-time employment (although the third year is an industry year and can be full-time employment) for degree students whereas advanced diploma students can gain a two year ‘break’ on those students.

It remains to be seen as to whether these recommendations by Bradley, in particular, will help those students who may not have the necessary skills and attributes to complete higher education, bachelor courses. The latest figures (ACER 2012 ) suggest that although university student enrolments have jumped 25 per cent between 2006 and 2011, the demographics of the students have not changed, casting doubt on the success of goals of achieving greater social inclusion amongst student cohorts.

However, the ACER (2012) report also stated that it believed that the Bradley Review had resulted in an increased focus on higher education which had had “a positive impact on the appeal of university”. Furthermore, figures from the report identified that indigenous enrolments had risen by 43 per cent in the same time frame; well above the overall growth of 25 per cent but it also noted that only 1.09 per cent of university students were indigenous whereas they make up 2.5 percent of the Australian population.

According to this report enrolments in regional areas still remained low as 77.7 per cent of all enrollees chose to study in the metropolitan areas, marginally up from 77.4 in the period from 2006 to 2011. Many potential students from lower socioeconomic groups tend to live in regional areas (ACER 2012). If TAFE campus closures occur in regional Victoria; training opportunities for the residents are reduced.
1.9 Structure of Thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. This chapter has provided an overview of the study and provided an introduction to the setting within which the research is contained. The significance and purpose of the study have been identified.

Chapter two reviews the literature paying particular attention to graduate and employer expectations, the return on investment expected by graduates, the pathways graduates take in their employment, the implications of staff turnover and the gap in the knowledge this research will fill.

Chapter three explains the design of the research focusing on the methodology, data collection and discussion about the relative merits of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Chapter four contains a descriptive analysis of the survey data. Graduates from two different cohorts completed a web based survey regarding their educational and employment outcomes.

Chapter five provides a descriptive analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the focus groups and interviews from graduates from Australia and hospitality managers from both Australia and overseas.

Chapter six discusses the themes identified both from the surveys, the focus groups and interviews and their relationship to the research questions.

Chapter seven describes the ethical considerations contained in the research as well as the risks and limitations of the research.

Chapter eight provides a conclusion to the study and discusses the implications for the various stakeholders identified in the research.

- What are the current employment outcomes of graduates with degrees and advanced diplomas of hospitality and tourism?
- What pathways have the graduates taken to get to their current roles?
- What has the value been of their studies to the graduates?
- Does one need a degree to be successful in tourism or hospitality?
2. Literature Review

Chapter one gave an outline of the purpose and significance of this research. It identified also the research questions. This chapter will review the literature surrounding the topics of graduate expectations, return on investment, the implications of staff turnover, the employment pathways of graduates and the knowledge gap the research will fill.

It is important to review the literature surrounding the issues raised in the previous chapter; stand alone advanced diplomas, stand alone degrees and combined advanced diplomas and degrees. Which model provides the best employment outcomes? The literature revolves around four main strands.

- What are the expectations of graduates (advanced diploma and degree) and of employers in employment
- What has the return on investment been of their studies to the graduates?
- What pathways have the graduates taken to get to their current roles?
- What are the implications for both organisations and employees of high staff turnover?

This chapter has identified the main thrusts of the literature surrounding the topics of graduate expectations, return on investment, the implications of staff turnover, and the employment pathways of graduates.

2.1 Graduate and Employer Expectations

Firstly, literature describes that graduates from generation Y become disenchanted with the hospitality industry relatively early if their experiences do not match their expectations. They expect fair remuneration and a clear and structured employment pathway (Maxwell Ogden & Broadbridge 2010). They expect to be engaged and results from a study by Slåtten and Mehmetoglu (2011) show that graduates’ “perceptions of role benefit, job autonomy, and strategic attention were all significantly related to greater employee engagement”.

But employers have different views on graduates’ expectations when first employed in a full-time capacity in hospitality and tourism (Gedye, Fender & Chalkley 2004; Li & Kivela 1998). Employers are not convinced that university education, in particular, adequately prepares students for industry. Li and Kivela found that university curriculum, in general, did not “address issues of leadership, problem solving, strategic planning, marketing management and the development of industry internships and partnerships”.
Raybould and Wilkins (2005), on the other hand, argue that the wrong set of skills is being provided to meet industry needs. Graduates are being provided with strong analytical and conceptual skills which, in the short term, are not valued by employers because they initially recruit staff for low level, frontline operational positions. This was supported some years later in Richardson’s PhD thesis in which several industry members commented that graduates did not have enough practical, operational, or hands on experience. Another comment suggested that much of what the graduates had learnt was out-of-date by the time they started working. (Richardson 2009).

Students, however, after spending between two and four years studying their chosen discipline, expect more senior positions upon graduation. “...graduates become frustrated that the higher order skills learned at university are not utilised by industry...” (Raybould & Wilkins 2005). Brien (2004) and Harkison (2004a) commented that universities, in general, are more likely to focus upon critical thinking skills within a vocation than work-ready skills. A TAFE is more likely to concentrate on the latter than the former in the early part of a course, and the former in the later part of the course although there would not be nearly as much critical thinking skills in an entire TAFE course.

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) study was a comprehensive analysis of a combination of 850 Australian general, human resource and operations managers from 196 hotels in the four and five star bracket who were surveyed using a mail out. A response rate of 43.6 was achieved. They also surveyed 211 undergraduate Hotel Management students during a lecture which ensured a high response rate. Both managers and students identified “deal effectively with customer problems” as the most important skill. However, the managers and students were diametrically opposed when the issue of conceptual and analytical skills was raised. Whilst the students ranked the skill descriptors highly, the managers ranked them in the bottom 20 of the 52 descriptors.

Wang, Ayres and Huyton (2009) conducted a study amongst 200 tourism managers which indicated that the three most important graduate attributes were oral communication, relationship management skills and work ethic. The three least important attributes were research skills, legal understanding and academic grades. This tends to suggest that the vocational ready to work skills were more important than the strategic skills taught by universities. This was a small study as the response rate for the web based survey was less than 19.2 per cent (N>1042) and it did not investigate what attributes graduates thought were important.
It is somewhat disturbing, perhaps, to realise that tourism managers do not regard research skills as being particularly valuable. A large part of TAFE or university education time is spent providing students with research opportunities to enhance their career aspirations. To hear that those skills are undervalued is concerning.

A 1996 study by Purcell and Quinn examined how well equipped graduates were to meet the requirements of industry and whether students who had ‘craft-based’ diplomas adapted more quickly than graduates with degrees. They concluded that the diplomates had more “appropriate practical skills than (university) graduates…” but that university graduates were more likely to transfer their skills into different industries later in their careers. Purcell and Quinn also discovered that although there were factors other than their level of education that influenced their progress, diplomates were more likely to remain in the industry. Evans (1993) in Petrova and Mason (2004) determined that degrees were not necessarily a prerequisite for employment within the industry.

Her study identified that “commitment to the industry was the most important determinant of success for work in the hospitality industry”. This is supported by results, discussed later, from some of the focus group participants in this study. Her study also identified that personality is a key factor for success; again this is supported by my research. Amongst the conclusions was the fact that a hospitality management degree was not an important characteristic for a new employee in the industry. This study was limited to only one international hotel chain. It is not clear whether or not the managers surveyed had degrees or any other formal qualification. This may have impacted on their perceptions for the need of a degree for employment in the industry. Wilkins and Raybould (2005) identified that only about 33 per cent of the manager respondents had a degree, none of which were in hospitality or tourism and therefore the managers’ views may have been coloured.

Collins (2002, also undertook research on the differing career expectations of students and industry personnel. The study found that undergraduates have high expectations of their careers, whereas some managers considered a bachelor of hospitality management degree irrelevant (p.381).

Connolly and McGing’s (2006) study in Ireland of managers of three, four and five star hotels in Dublin and surrounding areas ascertained that managers strongly preferred graduates from courses with a focus on practical rather than analytical skills. The managers also indicated that those courses which provided a practical placement as part of their courses provided a better educational experience. The managers also stated that there was little need
for a degree in order for employees to progress within the industry; “experience is a prerequisite for a supervisory or management position in the hotel sector, whereas a hospitality degree is not” (Connolly and McGing 2006). Sixty eight per cent of the 40 managers who responded to the survey thought that degree programmes did not meet industry needs. A typical response from a manager was ‘there is too much text book learning, not enough practical work’ (Connolly and McGing 2006).

Wood (2007) reignited a debate surrounding the curriculum of hospitality degrees and their underpinning rationale which included subjects such as Accommodation Management and Food and Beverage Management within hospitality degrees. (The same could be said for tourism degrees within which students normally study Ticketing and Destination Studies during their courses). Wood suggested that “…hospitality education in general may be deemed irrelevant, at least in the context of any claims to enhance students’ job prospects.”

There appears therefore, to be some disconnect between graduates’ and employers’ perspectives on what skills and knowledge graduates need to be successful in their early careers and what are needed for their first employment role. However, this research considers that there is a pathway for graduates to undertake to achieve the maximum benefit from their studies.

The focus groups will be able to investigate both graduates and employers’ reactions to this statement and whether they prefer students from the more vocational degree or the more reflective. (It will interesting to identify what qualifications the employers have obtained; it may be that current day employers are less well educationally qualified than today’s graduates).

Nevertheless, employers are generally satisfied with the quality of graduates and therefore continue the practice of employing them in the absence of finding a better source of potential employees (AC Nielsen 2000). The research demonstrated that some employers preferred TAFE graduates because they were likely to be more mature and street smart and therefore more likely to be job ready than undergraduates. Bartlett (1999) indicated that TAFE graduates were more likely to make an immediate impact in an organisation and they were more likely to be up-to-date than their university counterparts. However, it is apparent that graduates tend to have an over inflated opinion of what they can and cannot do in their early careers. Many first jobs are not necessarily at a graduate level but they can be expected to “grow the job” (Harvey 2000).
2.2 Return on Investment

Secondly, the literature focuses also on the reasons why students undertake degree studies and the growing feeling that university studies should be linked to employment outcomes. The 1997 UK National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE) chaired by Lord Dearing stated “the primary purpose of higher education is to prepare students for the world of work”. In more traditional universities in Australia (and in the United Kingdom), this attitude has been frowned upon as university studies have the perception of delivering a higher level of learning. However, TAFE institutes embrace the vocational approach and try to prepare graduates for “the world of work”.

Amongst other findings the OECD (2011) reported that people with higher levels of educational attainment generally lead a happier life, and were perceived to have better health and engage more fully with communities compared to people with lower levels of attainment. Australia spent about 6 per cent of its GDP on all levels of education in 2008 and 1.5 per cent on tertiary education (OECD 2011). Geyde et al. (2004) ascertained that overwhelmingly students studied degrees to improve their career prospects.

Daly, Fleming and Lewis (2006) reported that the 1986 census determined the median income for a male with a bachelor’s degree was 80 per cent higher than a male who left school at the completion of year 12. Similarly, for a female the discrepancy was 30 percent. By 2001 male degree holders’ median income was 98 per cent higher and for females 80 per cent higher. They further posited that “the expected private rate of return to an investment in higher education is the relevant calculation for an individual deciding whether or not to undertake study for a degree”. However, this is only true for some degrees. For example, the private rate of return for a degree in Visual and Performing Arts would be very low (Daly et al 2011). Whether or not students calculate the private rate of return in their decisions to enrol in a particular course is not part of this study but whether they enrol in a degree or an advanced diploma is central to the thesis.

Borland’s (2002) study looking at only Australian-born male wage and salary earners estimated that there would be a lifetime gain of post-graduation earnings of approximately $400,000 after costs and expenses had been subtracted for an undergraduate degree holder. Assuming graduates worked for forty years after graduation this equates to an average of $10,000 per annum. An American study by Carnevale, Strohl and Melton (2011) found that on average, a full-time, permanent employee with an undergraduate degree would earn 84 per cent more over a lifetime than a colleague with a high school qualification. This, therefore, does not include people with post secondary qualifications. They also found, however, that
different degrees had different economic value. They examined 15 major groups; of which one was Business, with Hospitality Management fitted into this category as a major. Also within the category of Business were majors such as Accounting, Business Economics, General Business, Marketing and Operational Logistics. Carnevale et al. found that some majors were more likely to obtain graduate degrees than other majors. The most popular major group was Business with 25 per cent of all majors and median earnings of $60,000; the major with the lowest median earnings was Hospitality Management with median earnings of $50,000.

Additionally, Hospitality Management was amongst the top ten majors least likely to obtain a graduate degree with 12 per cent of students obtaining a degree. 168,020 people studied Hospitality Management as a major compared with 1,511,333 Accounting majors and Hospitality Management majors accounted for a mere 2 per cent of the total percentage of the major group of Business.

As explained above, Hospitality Management also accounted for the lowest median earnings in the group with earnings of the 25th percentile being $33,000 and the earnings at the 75th percentile being $72,000. Eighty eight per cent of students majoring in Hospitality Management did not obtain a graduate degree although there was an estimated percentage earnings boost of 45 for those students who graduated. Ninety four per cent of the graduates were employed of whom eighty six per cent worked full-time. Fifty six percent of Hospitality Management major studiers were female and their median earnings were $42,000 compared to the males whose median earnings were $55,000. At the conclusion of their studies thirty four per cent of Hospitality Management graduates took up management positions, fifteen per cent were employed in sales; office work accounted for a further fifteen per cent whilst a further fourteen per cent took up food services and business related occupations.

However, the analysis further describes thirty five per cent of graduates ended up in food services employment which seems to disagree with the previous statistic. A further seven per cent were employed in retail and professional services, health services and financial services accounted for another 18 per cent. The remaining 40 per cent remained unallocated. A comparison between these statistics and figures from this piece of research will be discussed later.

Weiler and Goyal (2007) found that in some disciplines that not only vocational degrees that included an industry year as part of their course were highly valued by students but also in more traditional degrees. However, Marantz and Warren (1998) determined that “vocational
training has in itself little or no educational value‖. Previous studies have examined the effect of the reputation of the educational institution on graduate employability (Bratti et al. 2004).

An older study by Evans (1993) found that in 1992 no tourism student found employment in the public sector. Weiler and Goyal (2007) found that the branding of a degree influenced relevant employment outcomes; those students who studied a business/commerce degree fared better “in gaining relevant employment than did graduates with a tourism brand”.

TAFEs have long promulgated skills development as a central tenet of their existence and the contribution skill makes to the theory of human capital. “Human capital theory deems that the more skilled and productive individuals are, the more valuable those individuals are to industry and commerce and ... the national economy” (Van der Linde 2008).

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2011 Student Outcomes Survey indicated that graduates from Food, Hospitality and Personal Services achieved a 72 per cent employment rate after completing their training and the average salary for full-time employees was $40,600 which is the lowest for all fields of education included in the survey. The highest average annual income was $70,400 for graduates employed in education. The worrying aspect for the industry is that the average annual salary for graduates with a diploma or higher is $60,800, for graduates with a Certificate III/IV the salary is $53,200 and for graduates with a Certificate I/II remuneration is $48,000 (NCVER2011). This suggests that a graduate from a Certificate I/II in an educational field is likely to earn more than a graduate from Food, Hospitality and Personal Services with a diploma or higher.

Davidson, McPhail, and Barry (2011, p.504) in their paper adapted some research by Drake International in 2006 and identified the work attitudes of Generation Y workers who form the basis of my research. They found the following attitudes:

Table 2 – Attitudes Generation Y

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Generation Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect for elders</td>
<td>Only if earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional respect</td>
<td>Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Want it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Is necessary and expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td>It is my right</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Davidson et al (2010)
Some of these attitudes came through in the focus groups, most particularly regarding promotions and change. The industries tend to be rather inflexible regarding management styles and operations. Managing a 24/7 365 day hotel, for instance, places rather different stresses and strains than a 9-5 Monday to Friday business.

### 2.3 Pathways

Thirdly, research demonstrates that within the hospitality industry rather than the tourism industry, promotion to senior positions, especially within hotels can be relatively quick compared to more traditional occupations due to fast turnover of staff (Guerrier 2001). Pathways to achieve more important roles within the industry are varied. Guerrier (2001) also argues that senior staff within the hospitality industry now require a considerably different set of skills than in the past.

Traditionally, to become a General Manager (GM) within an international hotel, staff needed to start at the bottom of the ladder (not necessarily with any qualifications) and work their way up the ladder slowly and incrementally (Swanljung, 1981 and Ruddy, 1990 in Harper, Brown & Wilson 2005). Similarly in the tourism industry a manager of a small airline in the United Kingdom substantiated this; “nobody was ever recruited externally to come and be a manager of cabin crew they were all people who would have had cabin crew experience”(Petrova and Mason, 2004).

A comprehensive 2001 British study by the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) found that recruiting managers for hotel positions from related industries such as retailing had been unsuccessful but recruitment from contract catering and licensed retailing (‘bottle shops’ in Australia) had been relatively successful.

According to Guerrier (2001) managers are beginning to argue that ‘degrees or diplomas were becoming more necessary in order to progress’, however, on the other hand, Kusluvan and Kusluvan (1999) in Petrova and Mason (2004) state that compared to other industries the proportion of managers with graduate qualifications is low.

Harkison et al (2011) identified in a New Zealand study;

> …the hospitality industry does not generally appear to regard hospitality qualifications very highly. As a result, those who complete hospitality degrees are more often disadvantaged when competing for jobs against those with more industry experience, but without tertiary qualifications (Harkison et al. 2011).
CHME identified three routes by which employees could become managers. Firstly, by rising up ‘through the ranks’ by having entered the organisation as a food and beverage attendant, through housekeeping, or as a receptionist; secondly, by progressing through a management trainee programme (normally as a graduate); and thirdly by transferring from a competitor.

The report identified that mostly career progression does not relate to educational qualifications and the pathway to senior management roles depends on employees’ previous operational roles. The study surveyed and interviewed key industry personnel and managers from six sectors within the hospitality industry and adopted as well as a university’s annual survey of small hospitality and tourism firms. Information about the educational background of the owner managers was also gathered but no recent graduates appear to have been involved. Several issues raised in the report are supported by the focus groups in this research which will be discussed later.

An interesting fact that emerged from the report was that very few ethnic minorities had achieved managerial positions unless they were employed in ethnic restaurants. This is borne out by my experiences with graduates from diverse backgrounds who struggle to find positions in the industry in Australia and in Melbourne and many return to their country of origin to achieve managerial status. Indeed one of the weaknesses in this doctoral study is the lack of input, especially in the focus groups, from international graduates. In a recent conversation with a Fijian graduate from an advanced diploma of hospitality management; he echoed these thoughts.

Self-employed graduates from both universities and colleges (colleges in Canada are similar to TAFEs in Australia) were subjects of a Canadian study by Finnie and Laporte (2002) who were unable to determine if they were self-employed either because of a lack of other opportunities or by choice. Although their study examined graduates from 1982, 1986, 1990 and 1995 (and in Canada) and therefore not particularly recent Finnie and Laporte suggested that self-employment was likely to be a growing trend in the future, and is more likely to be amongst university graduates than college graduates.

My research may be able to substantiate this trend in Australia or negate it. Typically, if one asks students at the commencement of their studies where they want to be in five years, approximately two thirds of them want to open their own businesses whether they be in a degree level or TAFE level qualification.
However, Dolton and Makepeace (1990) quote Creigh et al (1986) as finding that graduates only pick up the skills and knowledge necessary to operate a business several years after graduation from their courses. It should also be acknowledged that graduates are unlikely to have the financial basis upon which to start their own businesses although business in a monopolistically competitive market has low barriers to entry. This could apply to both the tourism and hospitality industries.

Martinez, Mora and Vila (2007) examined the employment situation of young higher education graduates in Europe with an emphasis on entrepreneurs and the self-employed. They identified that men are more likely to become entrepreneurs than women. Those who start up their own businesses undertake further education and training more than other graduates but take longer to complete their studies.

King, McKercher and Waryszak (2003) evaluated the career experiences and perceptions of hospitality and tourism students from both Victoria University and the Hong Kong Polytechnic. They found that it was not the hospitality and tourism subjects that were most useful in the students’ search for employment but the general business and management subjects. Brien (2004) substantiated this in his Opinion piece where he argued that running a food and beverage department in a leading international hotel with an annual turnover of $10 million requires not only a substantial set of technical skills but also a sound knowledge of “accounting, financial, marketing, human resources and strategic planning”. For this, he argued employees need to have a degree. An advanced diploma may suffice in a café or a small to medium enterprise where similar decisions about the operation of the business may have to be made but the consequences of an error are not so far reaching.

Many studies (e.g. Harper et al., 2005; Ladkin, 2000; Steele, 2003) identified food and beverages (F&B) management experience as the main career route to a General Managers’s (GM) position.

In a Mauritian study, 60 per cent of GMs were from an F&B background (Ladkin and Juwaheer, 2000), and although front office experience was ranked second as a career route for reaching a hotel GM’s position (Ladkin and Juwaheer, 2000), GMs are also found to come from sales and marketing, accounting and finance, and housekeeping roles (Ladkin, 2002).
2.4 Staff Turnover

Fourthly, discussion revolves around employee turnover. Hospitality and tourism degrees are popular, not only amongst students with relatively low tertiary entrance scores but also amongst secondary students with high aspirations to be successful in their careers. Those students expect to be well regarded, well accepted and challenged in their workplaces. Graduates understand the rigours of the industry at the beginning of their careers; including low pay, long and anti-social hours and relatively menial work. Despite this they expect to move quickly through the ranks and achieve responsibilities commensurate with their talents.

Most undergraduates taking a degree in hospitality management expect to reach senior management soon after graduating (Brien 2004; Harkison 2004a). Additionally, “A higher level of education appears to ensure entry into the industry at the assistant manager level, whereas those with lower levels of education begin at the supervisor or department head grades. This is clearly where education is of benefit”. (Ladkin as cited in Kim 2008).

My experience is that this is not the case in Australia for undergraduates, unless possibly, the undergraduates have undertaken an industry year at the same establishment and have carried on in a part-time capacity whilst completing their degrees. Upon that completion they return to full-time employment at a higher level. It is rare, in this author’s experience for graduates to be employed at an “assistant management level”. If, indeed that is the case, it is in name only and not in responsibility.

It is in the practical areas such as food and beverage and housekeeping where most of the employee turnover materialises and where most commencing graduates are employed in the first instance.

Management level turnover is growing rapidly (Rejinders 2003; Blomme 2006) in Blomme, Tromp, Van Rheede (2007) and one study (Blomme, 2006) showed that within 6 years after graduation 70 per cent of all graduates, in Holland, leave the hospitality industry. This is an alarming statistic; it is much more expensive to attract new staff than it is to retain them. Walker and Miller (2010) opined that the costs of hiring and supervising a new employee rather than retaining an existing worker can amount to about 70 per cent of the annual salary of the leaving worker.

Van Dijk (1997) in Blomme et al (2007) “distinguishes eleven items in the psychological contract. These are; job content, development opportunities, job security, work climate, intra-organizational mobility, work-family balance, autonomy, salary, performance-related pay,
clarity about the task and promotion opportunities”. In the focus groups that follow some of these points are discussed. In particular, mention is made of development opportunities, salary, and autonomy and promotion opportunities.

The opportunity for self-improvement was the most important factor for employees in deciding whether or not they would remain in their jobs or leave according to Walsh and Taylor (2007); however no distinction was made among the respondents based on age.

Nemiroff and Colarusso (1990) suggest that during adulthood the perspectives of human beings change dynamically as they get older. Different research studies (Gould, 1978; Levinson et al., 1978) suggest that different stages in adulthood can be distinguished. Each stage has a core theme as an attractor for the development process. Roughly three stages for adulthood can be distinguished (Freese and Schalk, 1995). The early adulthood stage (22-33) can be described as the age at which founding a family and building a career are the main themes. In the middle adulthood stage (34-45 years), more attention is given to family life and the education of children. The value of having a career decreases and the importance of work pleasure, social recognition and self-actualisation grows.

In the late adulthood stage (46 years and upwards), besides work pleasure, the balance between autonomy and interdependency becomes more important (Sekaran & Hall, 1989). All of the participants in this research are between the ages of 22-33 except one. As far as is known, only one is married and she resigned in 2012 partly due to the pressures of work-life balance. However, she has returned to work after the birth of her baby.

Additionally, one participant in the first focus group mentioned that she was leaving the industry in order to start a family and was doubtful that she would return given the hours of work.

A New Zealand study (Mooney 2009) identified significant barriers for women to overcome in their careers in hotels (and by extension other hospitality and tourism businesses). The employment model is predicated on the assumption of continuous employment which women who have children cannot achieve regardless of qualification. Mooney (2009) listed the top four barriers in moving to the next position as ranked by respondents; pregnancy at 38 per cent, family commitments at 32 per cent, lack of relevant experience at 27 per cent, other at 24 per cent and no female role models at 21 per cent (respondents could choose more than one barrier). Aside from the participant above, two of the other women in the first focus
group indicated that they wanted to have children in the relatively near future which would lead to a disruption in their careers and be a hindrance to their career aspirations.

Blomme’s et al (2007) study had a response rate of 13.8 per cent from a population of 4192; their paper concentrated on the alumni who were still working in the industry.

Blomme et al (2007) found that job content was the most significant predictor of employees’ intention to leave organisations followed by opportunities for promotion and salary. Therefore the greater the challenges, interest and diversity of the job the less likely the employee is to leave. Similarly, affective commitment played a role. If their jobs encompassed all of these attributes they were more likely to remain at the host organisation even if the salary was a little lower than elsewhere. This supports Walsh and Taylor (2007) who found that a challenging position played an important role in affective commitment and turnover intentions.

The questionnaire was developed after an extensive review of literature relating to hospitality management, travel and tourism students’ career expectations, and assumptions and perceptions of employees in the hospitality industry (e.g. Johns and McKechnie, 1995; Petrova and Mason, 2004, Weaver 2009). Questions were adapted from both Petrova and Mason’s (2004, p. 153) study, which was designed to identify “the value of tourism degrees, comparing students career expectations and aspirations with industry needs and perceptions of travel and tourism degrees and graduates” and Weaver’s 2009 study exploring how New Zealand tourism graduates perceive the quality of jobs in the tourism industry.

The graduates’ questionnaire included questions about industry’s perceived needs, its perceived requirements of potential employees, and the perceived value of an hospitality degree. Questions asked in the employers’ focus groups asked what employers expected from hospitality management graduates, what they believed to be the essential skills for graduates entering the hospitality industry, the desired attributes of recruits, and the value of a hospitality management degree to employers (Harkison et al 2011).

2.5 Knowledge Gap

This chapter has identified the main thrusts of the literature surrounding the topic. I have found little evidence of Australian research comparing graduate outcomes from degree courses with graduate outcomes from advanced diplomas in hospitality or tourism. King et. al discussed the comparisons of degree graduates in hospitality and tourism in Hong Kong and

The fact that the numbers of students enrolled in TAFE and in university are so high demonstrates the need for stakeholders in all disciplines but particularly hospitality and tourism to be aware of the results of this research. According to the Victorian TAFE Association nearly 2 million students enrolled, Australia wide, in TAFE and private providers in 2011 in all disciplines. Enrolments for the same period, in universities totalled approximately 1,100,000.

Enrolments in hospitality, tourism and events courses totalled approximately 225,000 in TAFE and Private Providers whilst there were 8,000 students enrolled in university courses (King 2010).
3. **Research Design**

The previous chapter identified, outlined and critically analysed the relevant literature to this research and helped to frame the research design.

This section describes the rationale behind using a mixed methods approach to answer the research questions and describes the links between the research questions and the survey and interview questions.

Mixed methods research is a relatively recent addition to the research methodology family. Creswell (2009) suggests the “multitrait-multimethod matrix” (p.204) of Campbell and Fiske in 1959 as its inception and Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003), Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), and Onwuegbuzie (2003, 2004) have become major proponents of the paradigm.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) identified some of the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of mixed methods research. Those strengths and weaknesses which are relevant to this research are summarised below:

**Table 3 - Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed Methods Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can provide both quantitative and qualitative research</td>
<td>Can be difficult for a single researcher to manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can answer a broader range of questions because researcher able to use more than one method</td>
<td>Can be a problem for researchers to understand how the methods are combined to provide meaningful results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One method can compensate for the weakness of the other</td>
<td>May be antipathy from purists who believe only one method should be used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can add insights that might be missed when only one method utilised</td>
<td>Can be more expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can increase generalisability of results</td>
<td>Can be more time consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can provide a stronger conclusion through convergence or not of findings</td>
<td>Maybe difficult to interpret conflicting results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.19)
On the weaknesses side of the ledger, it has certainly been time consuming although it is possible that it would have been more difficult to encourage participation in the focus groups if the volunteers had not already been part of the research through the survey. The survey helped build a relationship of sorts with the participants through email and Facebook.

The research has not been financially expensive but has been time expensive. It has not been difficult to manage because of the nature of the research but because of the hurdles faced over recruitment of the participants.

Other strengths specific to this study include the analysis of the focus groups bringing depth and insights to the findings from the survey.

3.1 Pragmatism

Pragmatism has been identified as the preferred partner in mixed methods research (Cherryholmes 1992; Onwuegbuzie, Johnson & Collins 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2003). Appropriate methods suited to their purpose without being constrained by either quantitative or qualitative parameters. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) assert that there are three main areas in which mixed methods are superior to stand alone quantitative or qualitative methods:

- mixed methods are able to solve research questions unable to be answered by other methods
- mixed methods research can give stronger inferences
- and mixed methods research can afford opportunities for presenting a greater range of conflicting opinions (pp. 14-15)

According to Biesta and Burbules (2003) “educational research, ……,is not so much research about education as it is for education” (pg 1). They argue Dewey’s position of dealing with “questions of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge within the framework of a philosophy of action, in fact, a philosophy that takes action as its most basic category” (p. 9).

i.e. the research should make a difference; some action should come out of it and the research should be relevant and practical to the educational sphere.

James (1967) uses a famous instance of pragmatism using the example of a squirrel and a human observer and asks whether if the squirrel and the human go around the tree in opposite directions, does the man go around the squirrel? James argues that it depends on how you define ‘going around’. If it is defined in one way the answer can be yes, but if is defined in another way the answer can be no. Similarly, another example features Henry Kissinger and a
The reporter asks Kissinger when the war in Vietnam will end (during the Vietnam conflict). Kissinger replies that there is no war with Vietnam; the reporter is incredulous and states that there have been almost 50,000 Americans killed and surely America is at war with Vietnam. Kissinger responds by saying that America is not at war until the congress declares that America is at war and that Congress had not declared that state. (Stanley 2009).

In this way James suggests that pragmatism can be used as a technique for “clarifying concepts and hypotheses” and “The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable”, although he admitted that he uses examples to define pragmatism rather than defining exactly what pragmatism entails (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pragmatism). He is quoted also as saying “Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude” (James 1967).

Creswell (2003) provides a condensed explanation of the knowledge claims of pragmatists and called pragmatism an “Alternative Knowledge Claim Position” (p. 6) and states that there are many manifestations of pragmatism; in my situation the knowledge arises out of situations. Creswell goes on further to postulate seven knowledge claims including that:

pragmatism is not committed to any system of philosophy and reality; ...pragmatic researchers look to the “what” and “how” to research based on its intended consequences; ...pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political and other contexts. (p12)

In his later book (2009) Creswell suggests that pragmatism is one of four “Worldviews” (the other three being Postpositivism, Constructivism and Advocacy/Participatory). Worldviews were originally defined by Guba, 1990 as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action”.

The most relevant explanation to this research lies in the fact that there are political, historical and social overtones inherent in it. There are aspects of the Bradley Review and aspects of the 2012 Victorian Government decision to cut funding to TAFEs that are central to the themes of the research.

The study is a longitudinal sequential retrospective cohort study and follows a Quan/QUAL model whereby the initial quantitative research forms the basis for the more influential qualitative phase. Punch (1998) in Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) argues that “quantitative research can be used for theory generation, and qualitative research can be used for verification” (p.15). The study uses the quantitative survey to investigate the hypothesis that
“students with degrees in hospitality or tourism are more successful in the workplace than students with advanced diplomas in the same disciplines”. The qualitative research attempts to verify the quantitative findings. Therefore the research will be both inductive and deductive.

I have chosen mixed-methods as the methodology as pragmatism does not ‘fit’ any one system of philosophy (Cherryholmes 1992) and both quantitative and qualitative research can be utilized to answer questions. Pragmatists are ‘free’ to use whichever methods they like. Pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity and therefore do not subscribe to any one method, be it qualitative or quantitative, to gather their data. Pragmatists believe that research occurs in many contexts including social, political and historical.

Pragmatism fits my own views on issues; Teddlie and Tashakkori (1998) in (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2003) identify pragmatists as people who believe the research question is more important than the methods used; they further argue

pragmatism presents a very practical and applied research philosophy
...and study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you deem appropriate, and utilize the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system (p.21).

I am trying to supply to the various stakeholders, as mentioned earlier, sufficient data for them to be able to make informed decisions about the best way forward for TAFE and higher education funding, primarily for tourism and hospitality courses, but possibly for other courses as well.

Dewey (1931) in Cherryholmes (1992) expressed that ideas have a more important part to play than just “reporting and registering past experiences. They are the basis for organizing future observations and experiences”. My research examines sets of students from Institute W and University R and maybe used to examine other phenomenon at other institutes. This could include the employment outcomes of degree graduates and advanced diploma graduates from business courses.

Pragmatics consider the existence of causal relationships but that in most cases it is impossible to pin down many of those relationships. Furthermore, pragmatists are prone to utilising both inductive and deductive logic whilst electing to adopt explanations that deliver
the optimum outcomes. Pragmatists also embrace informal and formal writing styles using the personal and impersonal voice (Onweugbuzie 2002).

I have chosen the Quan/QUAL (where QUAL is the more dominant practice) strategy with the quantitative and qualitative data findings being integrated at the analysis rather than the collection stage, as illustrated below in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Sequential Explanatory Design (Adapted from Creswell 2003 p.213)**

The impetus or catalyst for this research was my experiences as a coordinator for the dual award programme at Institute W. It was extremely difficult to give some stakeholders important information regarding employment choices for potential students and I could not find relevant information or research that would help in answering the question of “what jobs are available for the graduates?” This research was also originally designed in consultation with a director of Institute W as one method of tracking and keeping in touch with graduates as well as it being useful research for the institute.

Initially, I was going to use Institute W’s student database as a method of recruiting graduates as participants for the research. Unfortunately, once I resigned from the Institute in the early stages of the research this avenue was closed and consequently an alternative recruitment strategy as well as another ethics approval was needed from the university. I tried various strategies to convince Institute W that I could advance the research without breaching privacy concerns but it was immune to my appeals. I suggested that I could place a message in its Alumni newsletter or email but that too was rejected. Names, addresses and or email addresses of graduates could not be released to me without prior permission being sought by the institutes concerned. This had not been done.
Originally I had assumed that 40 per cent of W advanced diploma graduates would have continued their studies at any university and had I had a response rate of sixty per cent of that 40 per cent I would have expected to obtain a sample of about 140 students from which to gain data. However, this proved not to be the case.

Had I been able to gather a larger sample I would have followed Dillman’s model. Dillman (2007) describes his Tailored Design Model from which he has “obtained response rates ranging from 58 per cent to 92 per cent with an average of 74 per cent” (p. 27). Dillman’s survey methods include a pre-questionnaire letter, the questionnaire; follow-up letters and replacement questionnaires and in some cases small inducements to encourage participation (p.7). Most importantly he stresses both the need to gain the trust of the participants and also describe the importance of the survey.

Describing the importance of my research would have been one of the keys of my initial letter; I would have emphasised the benefits to future students (and Institute W) if the survey was completed online. (When students are surveyed in-house during their course, response rates are much higher if students are confident that their replies will assist future students). Whilst it would have been expensive to have sent out pre-questionnaire letters, reminders and additional questionnaires the benefits would have been tangible. I was confident I would have obtained responses from a large enough sample using Dillman’s model. As there are 220 students who enrol in first semester advanced diploma hospitality studies at Institute W and a similar number in tourism studies I did not foresee an issue in obtaining a similar number of responses from advanced diploma students with which to compare.

Because the resource of Institute W’s database had been closed, I sought information from University R for contact details of its graduates, but this too lead to a dead end as I was told that the university did not keep records of the students who articulated from Institute W to University R.

I tried alternative strategies to improve the sample size by contacting other institutes/universities regarding communicating with their graduates about my research. Unfortunately, all providers stated that for privacy reasons I was unable to contact graduates directly and none of them was prepared to allow me to write something for their alumni mail outs/emails.
Therefore I decided to utilise Facebook, a social networking site, to recruit participants. Facebook is the second most visited internet site in the world and the third most visited in Australia according to www.alexa.com (Comprehensive information regarding web information statistics can be found at www.alexa.com). There are 10,985,080 Australian users, with an increase of 281,740 in the period February to August 2012, as stated by www.socialbakers.com. This accounts for 1.2 per cent of all Facebook users worldwide (alexa.com) and 27 per cent of the age group 25-34 are users, with 54 per cent being female and 46 per cent male (Comprehensive information about social media statistics can be found at www.socialbakers.com). This age group is similar to the age group of the sample population. Golder et al (2007) in Joinson (2008) reported that almost 91 per cent of all messages sent in social networking sites were to friends. I hoped that the graduates contacted via Facebook would pass on my contact details to their friends and therefore I would be able to increase the size of my sample.

I remembered some of the students’ names in the courses and tried to contact them via Facebook. Once I had contacted the graduate via Facebook and the graduate agreed to participate, the graduate was asked to recommend other friends of the graduate, using the social networking site, to me i.e. using the snowball or chain referral recruitment technique. This is a purposeful sampling strategy when probability sampling is not possible and can be used in the absence of a sampling frame. According to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) chain referral sampling “yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest”. Chain referral sampling is often used for hard to find populations (Heckathorn 2002, Platt et al., 2006, Volz and Heckathorn 2008, Browne 2005). Biernacki and Waldorf noted five specific problem areas in chain referral sampling:

1. finding respondents and starting referral chain
2. verifying the eligibility of potential respondents
3. engaging respondents as research assistants
4. controlling the types of chains and number of cases in any chain
5. pacing and monitoring referral chains and data quality.

Firstly, I found the first area the most concerning. Although Facebook is meant to be a relatively quick method of contacting people it is impossible to know whether the target population log into Facebook every day, week or more or less regularly. Additionally, just because they login does not mean they are necessarily going to answer a request immediately. There may be a lapse of three or four days before action is taken as they mull over the
decision whether to participate or not. My experience is that an email is sent to the email address linked to Facebook to ‘warn’ him/her that a message has been posted to him/her. That may not be the case for everyone as it depends how a Facebook site is set up as to whether you receive an email or not. Therefore there can be an indeterminate delay between the Facebook request and the response from the possible participant.

Secondly, there was less of a problem in verifying the “eligibility of potential respondents” as looking at the lists of friends associated with any one potential participant it would be most unusual to have so many friends in common who would agree to be a friend if the person was a false identity. It was difficult to remember all the names of the graduates but by searching through the list of ‘friends’ it was not impossible to identify some of them.

“Engaging respondents as research assistants” was an issue as all contact had to be through email or Facebook rather than face-to-face or via the telephone. It is easier to persuade someone to participate in research in a face-to-face meeting or discussion than it is through an email or similar. The benefits being associated with the research can be difficult to explain or articulate in what is a ‘social’ networking entity. Although, as the participants are much more used to this form of communication than the researcher’s generation, this may not have been an issue.

However, there were some potential candidates who did not appreciate receiving a message out of the blue from me and two people asked me to desist from contacting them. They may not have associated the referral from their friend and subsequent acknowledgement by them to the reception of the message.

“Controlling the types of chains and numbers of cases in the chain” was not a problem. Rather, the problem was the difficulty in gaining enough cases rather than too many and as there were only two chains the process was manageable but very time consuming.

“Pacing and monitoring referral chains and data quality” was also less of an issue. Although it had been some time since meeting all the students who became graduates, I was able to remember their names. It would have been extremely unlikely for Facebook users to fabricate friendship groups and friendships to deliberately mislead me.

Additionally, had graduates had the intention of entering data deliberately incorrectly in the survey, I would have spotted it as my knowledge of the course and its participants was well grounded; it would have been quite obvious.
van Meter (1990) uses the term “hidden populations” and states that “snowball sampling and hierarchically ascending (HA) classification analysis and its more advanced form of cross classification analysis together form a coherent and rigorous ascending methodology for studying hidden populations”. However, there is discussion about how representative population samples from chain-referral are, as well as how generalisable findings are to a larger population from snowball sampling. Bryman (2012, p. 203) identifies that it is highly unlikely that samples will be representative of the population and also quotes Becker (1963) stating that the “sample is, of course, in no sense “random”….. since no one knows the nature of the universe from which it would have to be drawn” (p. 46). In this research the “universe” is known but because of the issues highlighted above, the population is hidden. Becker was researching marijuana users in his study and that population “shifts” all the time as users cease and begin using marijuana all the time. This research population may have shifted, but using Facebook as a medium helps to overcome the “shiftiness” but the population is still hard to find.

What was disappointing and somewhat surprising was the number of people who I thought would be interested in the research who did not participate. Some indicated that they would assist but did not and some ignored messages even though they had actively contacted me in the first instance and then did not reply to follow up emails. Browne (2005, p. 47) states “Snowball sampling…. relies on individuals’ willingness to be involved in research and consequently some people will always be excluded”. These non participants self-excluded; they had the opportunity but refused it.

I have no knowledge of the numbers of graduates who did not access or join Facebook and am concerned about the unrepresentative nature of the sample. However, there is nothing to suggest that had I had access to the graduate database that the people who did not respond to my Facebook request would have acceded to a request through the database or the alumni of either institute. But providing the contact details of the graduates were still relevant, I would have been able to contact a larger percentage of the graduates from all the courses and the sample size would have been much greater with possibly the same percentage of responses.

Dahlbäck and Karsvall (2000, p.49) suggest that volunteers who participate in research are not “a representative sample of the general population”. The use of Facebook in this instance may have resulted in selection bias as non Facebook users could not be contacted and there is no guarantee that all Facebook users use Facebook regularly.
Snowball sampling is conducive to qualitative research and according to Bryman (2012) the method’s external validity and application to generalisation is less worrisome in qualitative rather than quantitative research. However, the graduates in this research who were recruited via snowballing have become part of quantitative research. Bryman does not completely discount snowballing in quantitative research but prefers the strategy in qualitative research. Noy (2008) in Bryman (2012, p. 203) demonstrated in his research of Israeli backpackers that one of the advantages of the chain-referral technique was that it is able to take advantage of and to reveal the “connectedness” of people in networks.

In another effort to attract respondents for the research I placed an advertisement on Facebook for almost nine months at a cost of $975.00 asking for graduates from either Institute W or University R to contact me regarding research into the courses studied. This strategy did not realise one useful contact. It is difficult to know whether this was as a result of the quality of the advertisement or whether Facebook is not a useful marketing tool. One person responded but was unsuitable as she did not fit the required population criteria. Bicen and Cavus (2011) identified that students are immersed in web technologies including Facebook and twitter in their online lives both in a social and academic context. This does not appear to be the case in this study. If graduates are “immersed” in web technology one would have expected a reasonable number of them to have acted upon the advertisement. This could be an avenue for further research in future studies. However, many educational institutes in Australia have thriving and active alumni which would be more useful for research purposes.

Using the chain referral technique, a total of fifty one graduates from the dual award programmes completed the online web survey whilst a total of sixteen from the advanced diploma programmes completed the survey. Of those fifty one, thirty three (65 per cent) agreed to participate in a focus group. However, when the focus groups were arranged nine actually participated. Seven out of the sixteen, from the advanced diploma programmes, agreed to take part in focus groups but only one (6 per cent) eventually did.

The recruitment process halted when all avenues to other graduates were exhausted; a total of 137 graduates were contacted but as stated above 51 degree graduates completed the surveys and 16 completed the advanced diploma surveys.

Figure 2 below demonstrates the steps taken for recruitment through Facebook and subsequent graduate participation.
Figure 2: Facebook Recruitment

1. Researcher locates graduates on Facebook
2. Researcher sends invitation to Graduates
3. Friend contacts researcher
4. Graduate responds to invitation?
   - Yes: Friend accepts invitation?
   - No: Graduate invites friend?
5. Yes: Researcher asks graduate to refer fellow graduates
   - Graduate accepts invitation?
   - No: Researcher sends link to graduate
   - Yes: Graduate completes survey?
     - Yes: Researcher invites graduate to focus group
     - No: Graduate accepts invitation?
       - Yes: Graduate participates in focus group
       - No: Graduate participates in focus group
6. Yes: Researcher sends reminder
7. Yes: Graduate responds to invitation?
   - Yes: Graduate participates in focus group
   - No: Graduate participates in focus group
8. No: End
3.2 Interviews

The semi-structured interviews with employers attempted to obtain data regarding the reasons why they may employ a graduate with a degree as opposed to a diplomate or whether they do not distinguish between the two. I hoped to get a range of employers ranging from small business operators, whether they were in hospitality or tourism, large 5/6 star hotels and resorts, and government agencies. It was not intended that I would ask specific questions about individual employees, however in order that I gained access to the right employers it was important that they were employers of Institute W or University R graduates. Hence the need to gain students’ permission to talk to them. There was reluctance amongst the focus group participants to allow me to interview their managers, perhaps understandably. However, I was given permission to talk to two managers in Melbourne and two in Thailand.

Examples of some of the information I would have liked from the students included whether their qualification had been useful in gaining the position(s) they have held or currently hold; what extra benefits (if any) do the degree holders have over diplomates; where did they think their careers were headed; will they remain in the industry (it is important to know whether their degrees give them transferable skills); it is just as relevant for me to know whether they are working in accounting, marketing teaching or any other occupation as it is if they are working in hospitality or tourism.

Universities (and TAFEs, but not to the same extent) set great store by students’ secondary school university entrance scores; in Institute W’s advanced diploma courses (and now degrees) there are students with scores in the high 90s; some of whom have tried commerce, business, architecture, marketing or accountancy degrees and found them not to be what they wanted; and some of whom have hospitality as a first preference. It is interesting for me to gain data about their expectations of employment and future careers; do they expect to be fast-tracked because they have a degree; do they understand that they (normally) start their careers doing fairly menial work before gaining “management” positions whilst their friends in other careers are already “accountants”. It is almost impossible for somebody to gain an important position in the industry if they have not started at the bottom.

3.3 Quantitative versus qualitative

The data I gathered from the quantitative phase related to age, gender, local or international students, current employment; first or subsequent employment or study or home duties, business ownership, was either/and/or the studies at Institute W, University R or other, expectations of course outcomes regarding first employment, and career aspirations (see Appendix 1). This gave me a picture of the students’ employment outcomes from both
cohorts and enabled me to compare the outcomes according to the variables above. Data from the qualitative phase attempted to flesh out some of the issues arising from the quantitative data; I asked the students if their expectations of the courses were delivered; what their first job was compared to what they thought it might be; was it the right job; how had their career progressed since graduating; where did they think they would be going in the future; does the hospitality and tourism industry deliver on its intentions; would they recommend the courses or the industry to future students or employees (see Appendix 1).

3.4 Surveys

Once the graduates had accepted the invitation to participate in the research they were sent a hyperlink to the online survey on SurveyMonkey. The survey had previously been piloted for logic, relevance and applicability. It was sent to ten people at my place of work. One mistake was found in the verb tense of one of the questions; the relevant question was modified. In the consent form sent to graduates they were informed that they were free to withdraw from their participation in the research, at any time without explanation or prejudice See Appendix 3. They were also informed that the data collected, including the information from any focus group they attended, would be used solely for academic purposes and stored safely at the researcher’s home in a safe and at the University of Melbourne and would be destroyed after five years.

A separate Plain Language Statement was also emailed to the participants outlining the scope of the research and its’ intended objectives see Appendix 4).

It was impossible to draw a probability sample using this method of recruitment as there is no form of random selection (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). Not everyone to whom the researcher was referred accepted the opportunity to participate. There were 112 referrals; 26 (23 per cent) of whom, completed the survey.

There are several advantages and disadvantages of web-based surveys. Advantages according to Fricker and Schonlau (2002) are that they are easy to use, offer the researcher opportunities to include multimedia and interaction with the participants and they are an improvement on email surveys. Subsequently they have become popular because of three assumptions: they are less expensive to conduct (Carini et al.2003, Dillman 2000); they are faster to complete and “when combined with other survey modes, Internet-based surveys yield higher response rates than conventional survey methods alone” (Fricker & Schonlau 2002). However, Fricker and Schonlau found that the assumptions were not necessarily correct. The web-based
surveys were not necessarily cheaper to administer depending on the programming costs, but could be less expensive as they save on data entry costs depending on the size of the survey.

Fricker and Schonlau (2002) also concluded that the implementation of web-based surveys was technically more involved than telephone or mail outs because there may be mechanical difficulties of moving between questions, pages and the entry of passwords. Yun and Trubo (2000) confirmed this in Umbach (2004). These studies are relatively old and technology has improved since 2000. Platforms are more stable, the usage of the internet has risen and the general population has become more proficient in the use of web based surveys. However, there is some debate about the surfeit of surveys people are asked to complete and this may have led to some reluctance of graduates to participate.

In this instance I paid a small monthly fee to SurveyMonkey in order to be able to use the platform in a more advanced state.

They are certainly faster to deliver to the intended respondent than using the postal service. The turnaround time is much quicker than a postal survey; in a postal survey the respondent completes it and posts it back which can take several days (Umbach 2004). Fricker and Schonlau (2002) further concluded that response rates, where no other survey method is used, are “moderate to poor”. The reasons for this poor response rate are unclear.

Couper, Traugott and Lamias (2010) identified web survey design as a key component in response rates and data quality. According to Manfreda et al. (2006) there is a “common perception” that compared to other survey methods, response rates of web surveys are lower. Their study concluded that on average, there was an 11 percent lower response rate compared to other methods of data collection. They highlighted possible over-surveying of internet users as a possible cause as well as direct marketing activities that negatively influence end users. Shih and Fan (2008), in their meta-analysis, concluded that although college (university) students were more responsive to web surveys, generally mail out surveys have higher response rates than web surveys.

My research commenced with a survey administered via the web and the same survey by post to graduates without or with limited access to the world wide web (in fact there were only two graduates in this situation, neither of whom returned the survey). Graduates answered a combination of closed and open ended survey questions (see Appendix 1). Their answers provided information about the qualification studied at only Institute W and Institute W and
University R combined; gender and age of participants; whether they were local or international students; and finally employment pathways and outcomes and salary ranges.

This was followed up, firstly with semi-structured interviews with students involved in the survey who indicated that they were willing to participate further; and secondly, semi-structured interviews with employers of the students involved in the focus groups. As employers were not surveyed during the quantitative phase the most important part of the research was during the interview phase. The employers’ interviews covered issues around how they select employees; for what reasons would they select a degree qualified student as opposed to a diplomate student and vice versa. The student interviews attempted to flesh out issues arising from the answers to the web or postal surveys.

The studies of the two different cohorts, the advanced diploma graduates and the degree graduates, will endeavour either to corroborate each other or indeed negate each other. Erzberger and Prein (1997) in Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) asked what happens if the qualitative findings do not support the quantitative research? They speculate that each supporting the other is likely to be infrequent. Erzberger and Prein state that there are likely to be three outcomes of mixed methods research: the results can converge, diverge or complement each other, with each outcome leading to new knowledge about the issues being researched (pp. 16-17).

My research initially was supported by my then employer, Institute W but subsequently permission to access the graduate database was refused due to privacy concerns. An application to insert a request into the Alumni newsletter for graduates to contact me was similarly rejected. Gedye, Fender and Chalkley (2004) found the alumni database as the most effective tool for locating graduates. One of my roles at Institute W was to manage the students not only in the current degree programmes but also the past programmes delivered in conjunction with University R. This is an advantage in one respect as I have maintained contact on a social level with a few of them. It may also have been a disadvantage as it could have been difficult for me or them to remain detached. However, I was able to remain detached once the importance of the study was explained to the participants.

However, the focus group interviewees were honest and forthright in their answers to the questions and there was no hint of holding back in their answers. I have had relatively little contact with students who were enrolled in advanced diploma programmes; therefore there were no issues to confront with those students. I attempted to overcome the possibility of my
influencing the students by emphasising the importance of the study for future students of Institute W rather than it being for my doctorate.

In the web (and postal) questionnaire there was an opportunity for graduates to provide their contact details if they wished to participate in the focus group interviews. A letter was written to the students informing them of the reasons for the research and the perceived benefits for them to participate. They needed to know that the findings of the research may well lead to improvements for future students at Institute W.

I was hoping that I would be able to interview at least 10 students from each cohort with international students included. From those students who accepted the invitation to participate I asked if I could interview their employers. I let the students know that they were not identified to the employers as the interviews with the employers will not be specifically about them but more about how the employers identify potential employees. I hoped that this would overcome any barriers.

King et al. (2003) in their comparative study of hospitality and tourism students from Australia and Hong Kong used a self-response questionnaire based on a previous study by McKercher (1995). McKercher’s (who was researching the career progression of only tourism undergraduates) response rate was 34.7 per cent which was identified as ‘acceptable’. The response rate for King et al. (2003) was described as “low” as their study revolved around graduates over a twelve year period and they received only 107 responses (the total population was not revealed). One of the reasons given for the low response rate was that the questionnaire took some graduates over two hours to complete. My survey, in pre testing took about 45 minutes to complete and although there were some questions unanswered by the graduates, they related to the areas of salary and employment outcomes which could be described as personal issues which they were not keen to describe.

Porter and Umbach (2006) determined that students with higher secondary school scores are more likely to reply to surveys as are women compared with men and ‘Whites’ (their research was conducted in the US which possibly has a more diverse school population than Australia). Additionally, they recommended that although the administration of web surveys is quick and inexpensive, a paper based survey should also be used to capture those graduates who may be in remote locations or who have restricted access to computers. Furthermore, Porter and Umbach suggested that students are more likely to find it difficult to refuse to answer a mail-out survey than a web based survey. As mentioned earlier, with the advent of new technology and the increased reliance on computers my survey was distributed via the
web. If graduates had access to email to Facebook, they must by definition have had access to the internet.

The graduates who did respond to both the initial inquiry and the survey were mostly high achievers in their courses. The research could have been improved had “non high achievers” felt confident in responding to my requests. It may be that no one is completely sure that web based surveys are confidential. In which case, a postal survey may have alleviated their concerns although the possibility that someone could be identified, for example if they lived overseas, by the postal stamp on the letter may also have caused misgivings.

There has been some discussion about the prevalence of spam (Kopytoff 2004, Zeller 2005 in Porter & Whitcomb 2007) and how it affects response rates. Kopytoff in 2004 estimated that spam emails accounted for nearly 40 per cent of all emails; recent research suggest that this has increased to 90 per cent (Whitney, L. 2009 http://news.cnet.com/8301-1009_3-10249172-83.html). Although because of snowballing, potential respondents would have been expecting an email from me, they may have seen something in the subject title of the email that deterred them from opening it and therefore deleted it instead. As the emails were sent under the auspices of the university this may be unlikely.

Porter and Whitcomb (2007) suggested a “mixed-mode contact approach” which involved prenotification of the arrival of an email via a letter or postcard. This, of course, presupposes that the addresses of the potential surveyee is known to the surveyor. They found, however, that there was little effect on response rates whatever the mode of contact. Schaefer and Dillman (1998) (in Porter and Whitcomb 2007) may have identified the reason as to why this may be the case was because the respondents did not connect the prenotice with the subsequent questionnaire especially if there was a gap of, for instance, a day in between the arrivals of the messages. It could also be, that the prenotice was identified as spam and as such, if an email with the same sender name as the letter sender arrived the following day the email was deleted without being read.

Garavan et al. (2004) used a cross-sectional design questionnaire mailed out to 1,400 hotel managers with response from 337; a response rate of 25 per cent. A similar comparison, albeit in the medical field, Pearson et al. (2002) again used a validated mail-out survey, using graduates from a 16 year period from 1983-1998. They gained a response rate of over 66 per cent from 3747 questionnaires which appears extremely high, although presumably doctors are reasonably easy to find using various databases. Pearson et al. (2002) stated “the length of time between educational training and outcome measurement makes it difficult to
differentiate between admission, curricular and other influences” (p.985) as to determine medical school and career outcomes. By the very definition of doctors’ training it is relatively unlikely that they would move into other areas of employment compared to, for example, a graduate from a business degree who may have many options from which to choose. My research investigated graduates who have been in the workplace for no longer than 10-11 years and in some cases as short as six years.

Petrova and Mason (2004) used a questionnaire to determine the value of tourism degrees in the United Kingdom. They admitted, however that there were some limitations using this method and included some open-ended questions allowing graduates to answer using their own words (p.155). But relying on questionnaires only in this case “leave(s) out the dynamics of meaning-making, both sense-making and sense-giving in a local context” (Bartunek and Myeong-Gu 2002 in Petrova and Mason 2004). Therefore Petrova and Mason (2004) embarked on a series of semi-structured interviews with, at the time of their writing, six participants. This translated later into Petrova’s PhD thesis which concluded suggesting that tourism degrees were not particularly useful in the graduates’ first employment.

Annunzio-Green (1997) conducted a study into the development of international managers in the hospitality industry using both self-completed mail-out questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

McKercher (1995), King et al. (2003), Garavan et. Al (2004) and Pearson et al. (2002) used surveys for their quantitative research; none of the research groups followed up with qualitative research. Petrova and Mason (2004) and Annunzio-Green (1997) used a combined approach of questionnaires and interviews; a model followed in this research.

Table 4 below indicates the passage of graduates through their combined advanced diploma and degree if they completed the whole course. For example, students commencing in March 2000 would have completed their advanced diplomas in December 2001; they would have commenced officially their industry years at the beginning of 2002 (although they may have begun with the employer at the end of 2001). They would have completed their industry years at the end of 2002 or early 2003 and would have completed their degrees at the end of 2003. By the time they were surveyed as a part of this research they may have been in the full-time workforce for up to twelve years.

Correspondingly, students who commenced their advanced diploma only courses at the beginning of 2000 would have completed their courses by the end of 2001 and therefore
would have had a head start on full time employment of 2 years, assuming they entered the workforce immediately upon graduation.

Table 4 – Student study structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dual Award Students commence</th>
<th>Dual Award students complete</th>
<th>Students commence University R</th>
<th>Students complete University R</th>
<th>Length of Time in Workforce as of 1/12/2011*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1999</td>
<td>Dec 2000</td>
<td>Mar 2001</td>
<td>Nov 2002</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2001</td>
<td>Dec 2002</td>
<td>Mar 2003</td>
<td>Nov 2004</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma Students</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute W</td>
<td>Institute W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1998</td>
<td>Dec 1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1999</td>
<td>Dec 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2000</td>
<td>Dec 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2001</td>
<td>Dec 2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2002</td>
<td>Dec 2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Assuming graduates do not commence employment immediately after completion of their course.

Table 4 illustrates the path students took from enrolment to graduation.

The student intakes varied; University R did not want Institute W to enrol more than 44 students into the courses at the beginning of the first two years as it refused to accept that there would be any attrition in those two years. It surmised that if more than 44 students were enrolled the university would be faced with non-government funded students being accepted into the second two years. However, Institute W was aware that there would be some attrition and enrolled larger numbers than University R wanted it to enrol. Had the initial enrolments been kept to 44, final numbers articulating to University R could have been as few as 20. University R has never released figures to Institute W about the numbers of students who enrolled at University R.

There is likely to have been some attrition during the University R course as well. Attrition can be defined as students who decided not to pursue a career in the hospitality industry and
thus did not accept enrolment at University R in the first place; students who deferred and never took up their place and students who decided to articulate to other educational institutions or course of study. Furthermore as there was an industry year component of the University R degree some students may have elected to stay at their place of employment rather than return to study. A further study of those students who did not complete the course would also be useful in the future.

A report in The Australian (21 Sept 2011), (some years after these graduates completed their courses) identified University R of having an attrition rate for all commencing undergraduates of 11.6 per cent, made up of 15.8 per cent of domestic students commencing and 8.3 per cent of international students commencing. Thus, assuming the statistics to be approximately the same in the earlier years; if 44 students enrolled in their courses, between four and five students would have departed before the completion of the courses.

3.5 Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2003) there are five steps to analysing the data from the quantitative components of this research.

Step 1 – Reports on the number of responses to both the web and postal surveys.

Step 2 – Assuming there will be some No Reponses to the surveys, analyse the effect of those non-responses on the data.

Step 3 – Provide descriptive analysis of data relating to the independent and dependent variables. The dependent variable will be employment outcome; age, gender, and degree or advanced diploma studies. The analysis of this data will include the “means, standard deviations, and a range of scores for these variables” (p.160).

Step 4 – Scale analysis – my research instrument will not include scales.

Step 5 – Ascertain the relevant statistics and statistical program egg. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for testing the research question.

Statistical analysis was completed using excel.
Similarly Creswell (2003) discusses data analysis for the qualitative section of the research; in the focus groups I shall be trying to qualify the quantitative data and will attempt to explore any outliers identified during the quantitative phase.

Creswell (2003) identifies six steps in data analysis of the qualitative stage of research:

Step 1 – Transcribe the interviews from the focus groups

Step 2 – From the data gained during the focus groups try and gain a “general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning” (p. 191).

Step 3 – Code the material; categorise the data and label it.

Step 4 – Use the coding process to generate themes

Step 5 – Determine how the themes will be depicted in the writing up.

Step 6 – Interpret the data and in this case this includes both the quantitative and qualitative data.

Mixed methods research as Creswell describes it (2010) as “an intuitive way of doing research that is constantly being displayed through our everyday lives”. The advantages of mixed methods are various; it overcomes the weaknesses of the singular method of either qualitative or quantitative research. Quantitative research alone does not record the voices of the participants whereas qualitative research alone can be weak as bias can creep into the research. Furthermore, by its very nature qualitative research tends to rely upon small samples and findings cannot be generalised from small numbers of participants.

This chapter has described the research design, methods and methodology. The following chapter will analyse the survey data.

The analysis of the focus groups and the interviews with the managers will pose the greatest problem as the challenge will be to marry the data between the various groups and individuals to obtain themes and patterns.
3.6 Reliability

Chapter five covers in detail the issue of generalisability from the data; however, mention needs to be made here regarding the reliability of the data obtained and how the research questions have been linked to the survey and focus group questions.

The focus groups and interviews with industry personnel were designed to follow, sequentially, the data retrieved from the survey research (see Appendices 1 and 2) to explore more fully the survey findings. The areas covered in the surveys included a section about the individual participant; their current work situation, including salary; their previous employment positions; their further studies (if applicable) and whether they would be interested in participating in the focus groups.

These survey questions were designed to form a basis for not only answering the original research questions but also to provide data for follow up in the focus groups (for those willing to participate) and the industry personnel.

The questions to the focus groups were able to be adapted according to the responses from the survey questions. As the focus groups and interviews were semi-structured there was flexibility in the approach.

The survey questions, the focus groups and the individual interviews covered in detail all the four original research questions and provided sufficient data for supportable conclusions to be drawn.

Hanson (2008) suggests that the most important question is whether the research has assisted “to find out what (the researcher) want(s) to know”. This research has helped me find out what I want to know and Feilzer (2009) states “Pragmatists, do not “care” which methods they use as long as the methods chosen have the potential of answering what it is one wants to know”.

Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) argue that validity should be redefined as “legitimation”. As they put it “the problem of legitimation refers to the difficulty in obtaining findings and/or making inferences that are credible, trustworthy, dependable, transferable, and or confirmable”. I suggest that the findings from the focus groups and discussions are all of the above.
Chapter six explores in detail the themes identified from both the quantitative and qualitative data.
4. **Descriptive Analysis of Survey Data**

The previous chapter described the research design, methods and methodology. This chapter will describe the data obtained from the www survey for both sets of graduates. The survey focussed upon graduate employment outcomes and educational outcomes.

This chapter has concentrated on the data obtained from the surveys completed by both the diplomates and the undergraduate degree holders. The data will be analysed in conjunction with the focus data to develop themes and patterns.

### 4.1 University R Graduates

A total of fifty one students who enrolled in the dual award programme responded to the survey on Survey Monkey; thirty five (69 per cent) of whom were Australian whilst other countries represented in the sample included South Africa (4 students); two from Indonesia, Macedonia and England and one each from Germany, South Korea, Denmark, Hong Kong, France, and Norway. Thirty five students (69 per cent) were female of whom seventeen (49 per cent) studied tourism. fourteen males studied hospitality and one studied tourism. Two students did not state their gender. Twenty five students (58 per cent) completed the entire dual award programme; five students (10 per cent) completed the industry year but did not complete the fourth year of the course, whilst four students (8 per cent) completed their degrees elsewhere. Eleven students (21 per cent) graduated from Institute W without going on to either the industry placement year or the fourth year at University R while the remaining student gained Recognition of Prior learning for the industry year and went straight into the fourth year of the degree. The student found the course unsatisfactory and dropped out of it altogether.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To get a job</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop my own business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To start my own business</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get a better job or promotion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted extra skills for my job</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For interest or personal reasons</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 51$ but two people skipped the question and nine gave more than one response.

Respondents could tick more than one answer.
Three of the graduates who responded “Other” articulated that they did not know what they wanted to do and chose hospitality as an interim measure. Almost half of the respondents claimed that their prime reason for starting the course was to obtain employment. Only 12 per cent stated that the primary reason was to start their own business. As stated previously when asked at the beginning of their course what students wanted to do, many stated that they wanted to open their own business. Their thoughts must have changed as they went through the course and commenced employment. A 1996 study by Purcell and Quinn compared the preferences of degree graduates and Higher National Diploma (HND) graduates for their first jobs and found that 41 per cent of degree graduates answered obtaining employment in hospitality and 9 percent answered becoming self employed in the industry. 45 per cent of HND graduates wanted to obtain employment in the hospitality industry whilst 14 per cent wished to be self employed.

Three of the graduates are now running their own business; one as a restaurant owner in outer suburbs of Melbourne, one as a food manufacturer in metropolitan Melbourne and one as a scuba diving teacher in Brisbane. None of the others had run a business since graduating. Although students appear to like the thought of developing their own business when they first enrol in a hospitality course, it may be that the subsequent career pathways deter them from the idea.

Subsequent to completing the questionnaire and the focus group, the highest earning graduate has left his then job to commence his own business providing a healthy fast food concept based around nutritionally sound pasta meals.

Respondents were then asked whether the course helped them achieve the Main reason for studying it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know yet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 51

Students tend to make decisions on what courses they study before experiencing the field in a meaningful manner. Before commencing tertiary courses they may have worked in a supermarket or a fast food outlet during their secondary school years but only on a part-time or casual basis and probably without supervisory authority. They may have enjoyed the
experience and that experience may have played some role in determining their course of study. Industry years, as part of a four year course, can help students to clarify their thinking as to whether their chosen course is actually delivering what they anticipated. Of the fifty one respondents, twenty one (44.7 per cent) are no longer working in the hospitality or tourism industry. Their occupations range from Remedial Masseur to Fundraising Manager for a Charity.

Results from the focus groups will be analysed separately, however some of the responses are pertinent to this question. Some sample quotations from degree graduates include; “Definitely helped me (achieve my current position)”; “I didn’t find the learning helped me very much. Very much like textbook stuff. But having done the course helped me get my first job”. “Business subjects were a little generic; …practical subjects good”; “the base hospitality subjects helped for me”; “OH and S was useful; but some was really useless the computer subject…”; “I hated business stats”; “I hated stats too but now I use it at work every day…”

Would you have recommended the course to your friends?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 51 (1 no response)

Do you have a full-time or part-time job of any kind at the moment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I work for payment or profit</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, unpaid work in a family business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, other unpaid work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I do not have a job</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 51 (1 no response)

A 92 per cent affirmative response to this question could suggest that graduates from these programmes are in high demand or that they are willing to work whatever the job. Some of the comments in the later focus groups about the industry demonstrate that the graduates are used to long and anti-social hours and sometimes demeaning work and therefore are content to work in less well-paid roles such as luggage porter, kitchen hand, and supermarket customer service.
On what basis are you employed in your MAIN job at present?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wage or salary owner</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting own business – with employees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting own business – without employees</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helper not receiving wages</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 51$ (3 no response)

Is the employer/business you have the same one you had during your industry placement year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete industry placement year</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 51$

Four graduates are still employed at the same employer as they had during their industry placement. One who worked at a restaurant as a waiter during his industry year now owns the restaurant; one who was employed as a food and beverage attendant is now a Reservations Sales Agent at an hotel; another who was originally in marketing is now a Marketing Coordinator whilst the last is a Contract Manager having started originally as an Event Manager. (She has resigned since completing the survey).

In teaching and some other professions, for example nursing, it is common for graduates to return to the school or hospital where they commenced their training to work. However in other industries there does not appear to be any research into the incidence of graduates returning to their industry (or Work Integrated Learning) placement employer. The graduate who is now operating his own restaurant graduated at the end of 2004 whilst the remaining three graduated at the end of 2005. Therefore they have been at their original employers for six to seven years (not including the industry year).
How many people work for your employer/business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more people</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 51 (4 no response)

Graduates in both courses are more likely to be working in organisations with more than 100 employees. It is difficult to obtain accurate data concerning employment levels in businesses by size in Australia in the tourism and hospitality industries. Hotels and accommodation providers, by their very nature, are likely to have a larger number of employees, than for instance a restaurant and therefore are more likely to recruit in larger numbers and provide more opportunities for graduates. A 2007 New Zealand report by Whiteford and Nolan stated: “The ‘Hotels’ and ‘Cafés, Restaurants and Commercial Caterers’ sub-industries employ a significant number of people in businesses larger than 100 employees” (p 6). I find it difficult to believe that there are many cafes or restaurants that employ more than 100 employees.

In your main job, do you work full-time or part-time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time (38 hours or more per week)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time (fewer than 38 hours per week, including casual)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 51 (4 no response)

Three graduates are not working (all female) whilst one is a helper not receiving wages. Thirty seven graduates are working full time whilst the remainder are either part-time or casual. A limitation in this research is that I did not ask if participants had taken time out of work in order to take maternity or paternity leave as this may have influenced their careers in terms of positions gained or salaries earned.
What kind of industry, business or service is carried out by your employer/business in your MAIN job?

Twenty one graduates (44.6 per cent) are not working in the hospitality or tourism industries whilst twenty six (55.3 per cent) are working in tourism and hospitality or related industries. There were four non responses to any of the questions relating to employment and salary and two further who did not respond to the question about salary. Graduates who are not working in hospitality or tourism are working in diverse areas such as the mining industry, media, finance and banking, community services and water conservation. Two non industry graduates are working in London, England and one is working in Thailand. Four industry graduates are working overseas; three in London, England and one in Doha, Qatar.

Career changes are rarer than job changes and can involve considerable expense, training or re-education. There may be a loss of income during the transitional phase but job satisfaction tends to be improved. Career changers tend to be imaginative, sociable and talkative. (Carless and Arnup 2011) These traits quite easily characterise hospitality and tourism employees who change their careers to improve job satisfaction and job conditions.

In your MAIN job, how much do you usually earn per year (before tax or anything else taken out)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$79,999</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-$59,000</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$39,999</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$29,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1-$19,999</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 51 (6 no response)

One graduate with a Masters qualification is earning over $80,000, two graduates with a Masters qualification are earning between $60,000 and $79,999. One is earning between $40,000 and $59,999 and another is earning between $1 and $19,999. The graduate works in an Asian country where salaries are lower than those of Australia.

As mentioned previously the master’s graduate who was earning more than $80,000 is now running his own business.
No hospitality or tourism industry employee is earning more than $80,000 but five graduates working outside the industries are earning over $80,000. Five other graduates working in industries such as human resources, finance and banking or a charity are earning over $60,000 whereas only three employees in the tourism and hospitality industries are earning similar salaries. Eighteen of the hospitality and tourism employees are earning over $40,000.

Salaries by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$79,999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-$59,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$39,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$29,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1-$19999</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N= 51 (6 no response)

Assuming the midpoint for the people earning over $80,000 is $90,000 then the mean salary for the males in this sample is $54,600 whilst for the females the mean salary is $49,500 for all occupations.

The female mean is skewed because at least one female is at home and not working. When the mean is calculated for only those employees in the tourism and hospitality industries then the figures are as follows:
Total mean = $45,000 when all employees are used, but when part-timers omitted the mean is $50,000 and the male mean = $46,500 and female mean = $52,000

Graduates from non-hospitality/tourism jobs have a mean salary of $58,400 and if part timers are omitted the mean rises to $60,700. Additionally, there is one international graduate who is earning the equivalent of $10,000 in a full-time capacity in Thailand. If that is omitted as an outlier, the mean salary for non-hospitality/tourism rises to $64,600; a substantial increase of almost 30 per cent from the hospitality/tourism mean salary of $50,000.

However, graduates from the advanced diploma courses have better results. The mean salary for all graduates is $53,200 with hospitality/tourism graduates mean salary equalling $60,000 including part time workers and $64,300 excluding part time employees. Non-hospitality/tourism employees have a mean salary of $44,200 including part-timers and $55,000 excluding them.
Male hospitality/tourism graduates have a mean salary of $62,000 with no part-time employees. Male non hospitality/tourism graduates had a mean salary of $30,000 including part-timers and $50,000 excluding part-timers. Female hospitality/tourism graduates had a mean salary of $55,000 with part-time employees and $70,000 without part-time employees. Female non hospitality/tourism graduates had a mean salary of $51,000 including part-time staff and $56,650 excluding part-time staff.

Interestingly, there are four international graduates in the sample, three of whom have elected to remain in Australia whilst one did not respond to some questions regarding location, salary or employment position. Their mean salary is $48,300 including one part-time employee with a mean salary of $60,000 excluding the part-time worker. They are earning much more than the Thai degree graduate who returned home and is earning approximately the equivalent of $10,000 per annum.

There have been a number of studies concerning the pay differential between men and women in hospitality, tourism and alternative occupations (Campos-Scoria et al. 2009, Blomme et. al 2010, Pinar et.al 2011, McCuddy et al. 2012, Zhong & Couch 2007, Roberts & Butler 2010, Cave & Kilic 2010) however the studies are based upon research in Europe and especially Turkey. Roberts (2002) reported a tracking study in the United States of America which identified that at the executive level in hotels when general managers were included, about 66 per cent of the team members were men and on average they earned US$76,835 whereas the women earned US$65,818. When general managers’ salaries were removed the salaries were US$71,147 and US$62,020 respectively. A differential of over US$11,000 in the first instance and just over US$9,000 in the second. Over 63 per cent of all managers held a four year college (university) degree.
According to http://content.mycareer.com.au/salary-centre/ the average salary for a range of positions in Australia is as follows:

### Table 5 - Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Salary Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsector</th>
<th>Avg.Min ($)</th>
<th>Avg Max ($)</th>
<th>Average ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airline</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>54,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar, Food and Beverage</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>50,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>54,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>37,939</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>50,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events/Functions</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>55,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Office</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>50,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel and Gaming</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>67,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Supervisory</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>62,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>49,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>54,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Operators</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>49,039</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6 - Average salaries of some of the other industries in which the graduates are working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Avg. Min$</th>
<th>Avg. Max$</th>
<th>Average$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>78,563</td>
<td>244,875</td>
<td>158,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>40902</td>
<td>195,000</td>
<td>87,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>35725</td>
<td>163,750</td>
<td>85,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources and Recruitment</td>
<td>38959</td>
<td>185,455</td>
<td>85,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking and Financial Services</td>
<td>42927</td>
<td>194,415</td>
<td>83,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, Advertising</td>
<td>38483</td>
<td>189,182</td>
<td>81,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, Sport and Leisure</td>
<td>32048</td>
<td>128,076</td>
<td>65,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>39139</td>
<td>117,043</td>
<td>60,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hospitality, Travel and Tourism</strong></td>
<td><strong>37,041</strong></td>
<td><strong>101,429</strong></td>
<td><strong>54,675</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spectrum International Hospitality Services ( Comprehensive information can be found at http://www.spectrum-international.com/sites/) produces an annual salary survey of Australian
hotels and resorts. Although the sample of Victorian employees is small (n = 39) for categories of 5-Star Hotels, 5-Star Resorts, 4-Star Hotels, 4-Star Resorts and Apartment/All Suite Hotels and Resorts, the results are revealing.

Salaries in middle management in the following positions grew by as much as 15 per cent over the last two years:

- Restaurant Manager
- Revenue Manager/Direct of Revenue
- Sales Managers
- Executive Housekeepers
- Chef de Partie
- Sous Chefs (Spectrum 2012, p.2)

The survey offers a number of reasons (but does not provide substantiating research) to account for this increase. It suggests that some companies are employing people with strong operational expertise to run their operations as business units. It states that companies are finding it hard to attract high quality staff and are therefore paying better salaries. Finally, it suggests that companies are offering tangible rewards to encourage staff loyalty. The employment categories in the Spectrum survey largely correlated with the employment categories articulated in the hospitality graduates research sample.
The following table shows data from the Spectrum analysis of salaries. Selected employment categories have been identified pertaining to the employment positions of the graduates working in four and five star hotels.

Table 7 - Data from the Spectrum analysis of salaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Hotel Classification</th>
<th>Minimum offered $,000 only</th>
<th>Maximum offered $,000 only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front Office Manager</td>
<td>Victoria 5 star</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria 4 star</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations manager</td>
<td>Victoria 5 star</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria 4 star</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty/Assistant Manager (Rooms)</td>
<td>Victoria 5 star</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria 4 star</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Victoria 5 star</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria 4 star</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have used data from Victorian hospitality businesses as this is where most graduates from this study are based.

Hospitality, Travel and Tourism salaries, amongst thirty industries, are ranked second lowest by average Australian salary ahead of only Admin/Office Support. The retail sector is ranked immediately above hospitality et al. (http://content.mycareer.com.au/salary-centre/)

Salaries in the hospitality industry are typically low compared to other industries for a number of reasons. A paper by Sturman (2001) relating to compensation in the United States for graduates from a Bachelor of Science Hospitality Management found that graduates in non-hospitality jobs were “paid on average US$11,000 more in base pay”. His conclusion was that hotels, especially for operational positions (where many graduates gain their first employment) are not drawing the best graduates.

Long and Shah (2008) identified that the rates of return for graduates with advanced diplomas and diplomas was high but did not compare those rates with degree graduates. This research was completed in 2008 and would need to be updated to reflect the increase in fees that TAFEs have been forced to make in order to stay financially viable; although the authors
state that the rates of return would remain healthy even if there was an increase in fees. The research did not mention the industry specific qualification e.g. Advanced Diploma of Hospitality Management or Tourism used for the analysis.

The rates of return for an advanced diploma low cost course ($1,000 per annum) for males was 23.6 per cent and for females 19.7 per cent.

Fees, as of 01/03/2013 for an advanced diploma of hospitality management at a Victorian TAFE, assuming no previous qualification, could cost as much as $6,500 per annum.

The graph below shows the salary by discipline for the degree graduates:

**Figure 3:** Salaries $ by Discipline Degree graduates

![Salaries by discipline $ degree graduates](image)

Selected quotations from the focus groups include: “I could do a similar job in a different industry and get paid twice as much and do less (sic) hours”. “I’m on the same page too. I think this will probably be the last year I will stay (company name omitted) and then resign and look at doing something totally different.”

O’Leary and Deegan (2005), in a study of Irish tourism and hospitality graduates, found that 60 per cent of females and 55 per cent of males left the industries because of poor pay and unsuitable or anti-social working hours. The literature has been recommending for some years that in order to keep talented staff, companies should be rewarding their staff better and
improving their working hours, however the advice has been ignored and staff turnover has suffered accordingly (Panwar et al 2012, Withiam 2005, Walsh & Taylor 2007).

A recent study by Williamson (2012) concerning staff turnover in hotels in New Zealand found that it accounted for more than twice the level of turnover than the national average. Davidson, Timo and Wang (2010) examined the costs of turnover in Australian four- and five- star hotels and estimated that it was costing hotels on average, to replace per executive per annum, $109,909 and to replace each operational staff member $9,591. Annual turnover levels of nearly 51 per cent for operational staff and nearly 40 percent for managerial employees were reported in the research.

Pavesic and Brymer’s (1990) follow up paper to their 1989 research diagnosed why young managers were leaving the hospitality industry in large numbers. It stated “no longer can executives expect their subordinates to put in long hours and sacrifice family and personal time for the sake of their jobs”. Their respondents articulated two messages to the industry; better pay and more appreciation and respect. One comment encapsulated much of what the focus group members articulated in my focus groups; “Pay us for the job we’re doing and the education and experience we have”.

Table 8 - Mean Salary by Course and Length of Employment as at 1/1/2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of graduation</th>
<th>Degree $ Salary (n)</th>
<th>Advanced Diploma $ Salary (n)</th>
<th>Length of time in workforce (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40,000 (2)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>40,000 (3)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>65,000 (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>47,143 (7)</td>
<td>35,000 (1)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>55,833 (12)</td>
<td>70,000 (1)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>50,625 (8)</td>
<td>63,333 (3)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>41,000 (5)</td>
<td>58,000 (5)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>23,333 (3)</td>
<td>37,500 (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 no response 2 no response

As can be seen from the table above, advanced diploma graduates are earning in excess of the degree graduates in 2004, 2005, and 2006. The unclear data refers to participants who entered incorrect data in their responses to the electronic survey by not completing the question
relating to their year of graduation. Their data will be ignored. The degree graduates are earning more only in 2003 where there is data regarding both cohorts.

For the purposes of this research, I am going to concentrate on analysing the graduates from the courses in 2005 and 2006 to try and identify why the advanced diploma graduates, despite the small sample are earning much more than the degree graduates.

The 2005 graduates from the advanced diploma courses have achieved their current positions in a number of ways. There are two salary earners with a mean salary of $70,000. The first one worked her way up a chain of command to where she is now as a Revenue Optimisation Manager in a large business. The second is now a Sales Executive at a well known 5 star hotel in Melbourne, having worked his way up from being a cook in a fast food business to a Bar Manager and then to his current position. The third graduate, earning between $40,000 - $59,999 is a Project Officer within a construction company. The fourth graduate has completed a Bachelor of Hospitality and Human Resources subsequent to him completing his advanced diploma. The fifth graduate did not answer the questions regarding either her employment or her salary.

Two 2006 graduates from the advanced diploma are earning a mean salary of $70,000; one of whom has risen from Guest Services to Duty Manager to Front Office Manager to Revenue and Yield Manager at a leading 4.5 star rating hotel in Melbourne. This had been a progressive career and he has been well rewarded for his patience. The average weekly earnings for males for the June quarter of 2012 in Australia was $1236.50 ($66,825.20 p.a) http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/MSB/22

The second graduate in this salary bracket worked his way up in a similar manner to become an Operations Manager at a well known golf club. The other three graduates have a mean salary of $50,000. One of them did not answer the question relating to her former employment but is now in an Assistant Accountant role in an automotive business. Of the other two; one is an English tutor and governess in Germany and the other is a Hospitality Consultant. Of the total of sixteen graduates from the advanced diploma courses, two did not describe their current job function; nine (56 per cent) are still in the hospitality industry or allied industries whilst the other five (31 per cent) are in other businesses.

Amongst degree graduates from the same years, in 2005 there were eight graduates but one did not disclose her salary or her occupation. The highest salary was in the $60,000 - $79,999
bracket and was achieved by a graduate who had worked in the same company during her industry year before progressing through several roles before becoming a manager for corporate events. She has subsequently left that role. She has had a six month break before accepting an Event Management role with a well known sporting code.

Three graduates were earning in the $40,000 - $59,999 salary bracket and none of them participated in the focus groups. One is now a teacher in a secondary college having worked for a hotel chain and may well have taken a pay cut to teach but that is her passion. One is working in marketing/communications in the Not for Profit (NfP) sector but did not give evidence of previous occupations; and the third graduate is working in Sydney as an events coordinator for an hotel.

Two graduates were earning between $30,000 - $39,999, one is a part-time Social Planning Consultant in Community engagement having previously worked in the NfP sector and the second is running his own business as a Food Manufacturer having worked in a number of hospitality jobs previously.

One graduate is a part-time Tour Guide in Rome, Italy having performed a range of jobs in hospitality in Melbourne before working in an administrative role at the British Consulate in Melbourne.

As identified previously, one drawback in the survey was the lack of questions about the psychographics and demographics of the participants which may have helped to explain some of the employment characteristics of the samples.

The 2006 degree graduates comprise five students, two of whom were working part-time (although one has subsequently achieved full-time work) at the time of the survey. Interestingly, four out of the five are tourism graduates. One of the part-time employees is working in a cinema complex whilst the other is in London working as a tour guide around Europe.

The three full-time employees are working variously as a reservation Sales Agent in a five star hotel in Melbourne; as a marketing coordinator for a well respected travel guide and a sales manager for an adventure tourism company. If part-time salaries were omitted the mean salary would be $56,666 for the 2006 graduates.
Why are there reasonably large differences in the mean salaries of the advanced diploma graduates compared with the degree cohorts despite being in the industry for the same length of time?

A number of the degree graduates are working part-time which skews the salary levels. Once the part-time staff are withdrawn from the sample the salaries are more closely matched. See table below:

**Table 9 – Full time employee salaries.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of graduation</th>
<th>Degree $ Salary (n)</th>
<th>Advanced Diploma $ Salary (n)</th>
<th>Length of time in workforce (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>60,000* (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>70,000 (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>47,140 (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>55,833 (12)</td>
<td>70,000(1)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>57,500 (6)</td>
<td>63,333 (3)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>56,666 (3)</td>
<td>58,000 (5)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 employee working in Thailand, where salaries are considerably lower, has been omitted although she works full-time.

However, the advanced diploma graduates are still earning more than their degree counterparts. But the degree graduates who have moved out of the hospitality or tourism industries are performing much better. Five of them are earning over $80,000 whilst no advanced diploma graduate is earning more than $80,000. This is supported by participants of the focus groups when they say that they could earn more by transferring to other industries.

The extrinsic benefits of a job in the tourism industry are not the sole reasons why people work in the industry (Weaver 2009). Intrinsic rewards can be as important or more important depending on the individual. Weaver (2009) established that employees make a conscious and deliberate decision to work in the industry despite some of its inherent drawbacks. But overwhelmingly graduates are thinking of leaving the industry for better returns.

This, however, does not explain the reasons for the discrepancy in salaries as both cohorts are working in the same industry. The results tend to support the idea that in the early careers of both tourism and hospitality employees they do not need a degree. But some of these
graduates are now in their six to eight years of working and are well over their “early careers”.

The applicants for the degree courses would have needed an ENTER score of 78 for the tourism course and 72 for the hospitality course; applicants for the advanced diploma courses would have been accepted with considerably lower scores. It may be that the degree holders have not taken as many risks in their careers as the advanced diploma holders. Ladkin’s (2002) study identified that it was likely there would be more rapid career advancement to hotel general manager if the employees “had undertaken vocational education to a master’s level”.

Another factor that may contribute to the disparity between the two groups may be the self-efficacy of the groups. The advanced diploma graduates may perceive that they do not have the skills and knowledge to be able to change their careers or move to alternative occupations. This may motivate them to work harder and take opportunities when they arise to further their careers in the same organisation or occupation. On the other hand, the degree graduates may realise that due to the business focus of the degrees they undertook that they have the requisite skills and knowledge to make a career change.

The analysis of the focus groups, which follows, suggests that reasons graduates leave the industries relate to compensation, lack of opportunity and an under-appreciation of their efforts by superiors.

Which of the following job related benefits do you feel you have received as a result of undertaking the course shown at the beginning of this survey?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Got a job</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An increase in earnings</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A promotion (or increased status at work)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of job</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was able to set up my own business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 51(4 no response)
The high response of 68 per cent for “getting a job” is pleasing for the courses deliverers as preparing graduates for work is now a key component of education. The fact that the restaurant owner did not answer “Was able to set up my own business” is puzzling. That 11 graduates perceived that they achieved a promotion as a result of the course is gratifying.

How long did it take you to find a job relevant to your course after completion of the course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Already had a job</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 month</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 months</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 12 months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job is not relevant to this course</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N=53 (2 no response)

Over half of the graduates already had part-time employment which skews the data.

Have you enrolled in any course leading to an educational qualification or trade certificate SINCE you completed the course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the following BEST describes the level of qualification you have enrolled in SINCE completing the course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters or higher</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad Certificate or higher</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma or Adv Dipl</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificates or other</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 24 skipped question
Five graduates have since enrolled and completed a Masters degree; three of them in Marketing, one in Occupational Therapy and one in Administration Technology. Six graduates have completed additional bachelor degrees; one each in Arts, Planning, Pharmacology, Tourism, Event Management, and Marketing whilst thirteen others completed courses ranging from Certificates to Graduate Diplomas. None of the Masters graduates are working in tourism or hospitality; one is working as an Occupational Therapist, one as an Account Executive in media (since left), one as a Marketing Account Executive in Entertainment Ticketing and one as a National Marketing Executive in a non for profit organisation.

Graduates completing alternative qualifications after their initial studies is not uncommon as part of life-long-learning. Some graduates find that they become disillusioned with their original choice of study and their employment outcomes and hence return to study in order to change employers or industries. Graduates from business disciplines, however, have transferable skills and knowledge into other industries and may not need, in the short-term to return to study. This may account for the heavy influence of business type subjects in hospitality and tourism curricula. Subjects such as, marketing, financial management, human resource management, and economics are common in hospitality and tourism degrees, albeit with a focus on discipline related studies e.g. Economics for the Tourism Industry.

What is the MAIN reason for studying the qualification reported above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To get another job</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To start my own business</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get a better job or promotion</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a requirement for my job</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted extra skills for my job</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get into another course of study</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For interest or personal reasons</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously stated, opinions about starting a business amongst students at the beginning of their studies were popular; however, it is apparent from these statistics that the option of starting a business does not rate highly amongst graduates. Whether this has to do with their subsequent experiences in the workforce, the financial aspects or the opportunities available could be worth further research. It maybe that the opportunities for small business ownership lie in restaurants cafes and other similar organisations and these graduates initially did not
have the requisite skills to open such establishments. However, after several years in the workforce they should have the skills and knowledge to enable them to open businesses. Again this shortfall in intention versus action may be worth further research.

In your opinion, which three skills are most important for the workforce?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work planning</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written/oral communication skills</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical skills</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=29

Graduates who had continued with further study were asked which three skills were most important for the present day workforce. The three most popular were Team Work, Written/Oral Communication skills and Problem Solving skills. Employers, as stated previously, rank problem solving and interpersonal skills as most important skills for employees to obtain through their education.

4.2 Institute W graduates

Unfortunately the sample of graduates from Institute W was small; it may be for a number of reasons that this was so: the graduates who were contacted but did not volunteer may have perceived their careers were less than successful and might be embarrassed; they may have felt that the research was not worth their participation; or they could not be bothered or did not see the value of the research. Baruch (1999) relates two instances when 100 per cent of potential respondents agreed to participate in a piece of research yet the response rates were ‘only’ 80 per cent and 83 per cent.
It was presumed that most of the target population would have had access to a computer and be fully conversant in its use as this generation has grown up with computers, especially in their school years. Therefore it is unlikely that the low response rate is due to people feeling ill at ease with computers (Denscombe 2010). However Denscombe (2010), suggest there is “non-response through refusal”. If those who do not respond are:

“consistently of a different type from those who tend to provide responses e.g. in terms of age, (sex), gender, social class, religion, then there is a likelihood of a bias in the survey findings” (p.20)

Therefore the survey will over-represent the findings from the graduates more likely to respond. As stated previously, the participants who did respond appear to be relatively successful.

In which country were you born?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (please specify) Singapore</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$

Approximately one third of the respondent were born overseas.

Which study stream did you undertake?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$

It was disappointing to only achieve one response from a tourism graduate; therefore nothing can be extrapolated from the data provided by the responses as the sample is not large enough.
Indicate your gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 16

This compares with the degree holders of whom 72.5 per cent were female and 27.5 percent male. TAFE programmes, especially in Tourism and Hospitality appear to attract females disproportionately to males. According to NCVER (2011) data in 2011 there were 142,000 Australian students enrolled in Tourism, Hospitality and Events training packages. In all courses males accounted for nearly 52 percent of all enrolments whilst females accounted for 48 percent. However, as indicated above females are disproportionately attracted to hospitality, tourism and event courses.

What was the MAIN reason for studying the Advanced Diploma of Hospitality or Tourism Management?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To get a job</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop my own business</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To start my own business</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get a better job or promotion</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted extra skills for my job</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For interest or personal reasons</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify) Gain access to university</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six graduates ticked more than one box in answer to this question.

Three graduates selected “starting my own business”, as yet one of them has managed to perform that task.
Did your course help you achieve your MAIN reason for doing the course as reported in the previous question?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know yet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$

Would you have recommended the course to your friends?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$

This compares with the eighty per cent of the degree graduates who would recommend the course to their friends. Despite the misgivings expressed in the focus groups (analysed later) about the industries, graduates overwhelmingly would recommend the courses.

Do you have a full-time or part-time job of any kind at the moment (including casual, temporary or part-time if it is for one hour or more)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I work for payment or profit (includes being self employed)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, unpaid work in a family business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes other unpaid work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I do not have a job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (2 skipped question)
On what basis are you employed in your MAIN job at present?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wage or salary owner</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting own business – with employees</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting own business – without employees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helper not receiving wages</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 16 (2 skipped question)

What are your MAIN occupation and two previous occupations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Most recent</th>
<th>Second recent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor, School of Hospitality</td>
<td>Manager Workforce</td>
<td>Research officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Optimisation Manager</td>
<td>Receptionist</td>
<td>Account assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage Attendant</td>
<td>Food and beverage attendant</td>
<td>Tenant Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Hotel Manager</td>
<td>Revenue and yield Manager</td>
<td>Front Office Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
<td>Food and Beverage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Complex Manager</td>
<td>Student administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality Consultant</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Consultant services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Coordinator</td>
<td>PA to General manager</td>
<td>Guest Service Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Accountant</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Tutor and Governess</td>
<td>Bar Manager</td>
<td>Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Executive – Crown Hotels</td>
<td>Food and beverage manager</td>
<td>Food and Beverage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Office Manager</td>
<td>Office admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Hand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 16 (2 skipped question)
What kind of industry, business or service is carried out by your employer/business in your MAIN job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business intelligence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banquets</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council owned facilities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive Finance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational supplier</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 16 (2 skipped question)

How many people work for your employer/business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-99</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more people</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note N = 16 (2 skipped question)

These percentages are similar to those of the degree cohort. Fifty five percent of the degree graduates are working in establishments with more than 100 employees and although these statistics are based on a small sample 78 percent of graduates are working in organisations of more than 20 people. This is exactly the same percentage as for the degree graduates.
In your main job, do you work full-time or part-time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time (38 hours or more per week)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time (fewer than 38 hours per week, including casual)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (2 skipped question).
These again are exactly the same percentages as for the degree graduates.

In your MAIN job, how much do you usually earn per year (before tax or anything else is taken out)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 – $79,999</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 – $59,999</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 - $19,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (2 skipped question)

This is a small sample and there is only one tourism graduate but none of the Advanced Diploma graduates is earning over $80,000; however 43 per cent of graduates are earning between $60,000 and $79,999; one of whom has obtained a Masters qualification and is not employed in the hospitality or tourism industries. Out of the 16 graduates, four are working outside the sectors whilst two others did not respond with either their salaries or their employment status.

Three graduates are working part-time; one overseas, one in education supplies and one in banquets. Of the five graduates who are working in hospitality and are earning more than $60,000; one works in an Hotel Business Intelligence department, three work in hotels, and two in clubs. There are two graduates working in the hospitality industry who are earning between $40,000 to $59,999 and two graduates in the same salary bracket who are working outside the industry, one in the automotive industry and one in building council owned facilities and community assets. One graduate is earning between $20,000 and $29,999 who is working part-time. Two graduates are working overseas; one in Canada and one in Germany.
Figure 4 below depicts the comparison of salaries between the graduates of the two courses. A higher proportion of graduates from the advanced diploma course are earning in the bracket of $60,000-$79,999 whilst the greatest proportion of earnings in the degree programme lie in the bracket of $40,000-$59,999.

**Figure 4: Salary Comparison by Qualification**

Which of the following job related benefits do you feel you have received as a result of undertaking the course shown at the beginning of this survey?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Got a job</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An increase in earnings</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A promotion (or increased status at work)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was able to set up my own business</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of job</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify) 1. Enhanced knowledge of hospitality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A different qualification</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (3 skipped question). Respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.
Five of the graduates identified that they think that the course gave them the skills to open their own businesses. Despite this, as mentioned above only one person has.

How long did it take you to find a job relevant to your course after completion of the course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Already had a job</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 month</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 months</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 12 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job was not relevant to this course</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (2 skipped question)

Institute W encouraged students to gain work as quickly as possible to enhance the course experience and had a dedicated office working to assist students in gaining employment. Hence the high response rate to “already had a job”.

Have you enrolled in any course of study leading to an educational qualification or trade certificate SINCE you completed the original course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes but course cancelled or withdrew</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N=1$ (2 skipped question)
Which of the following BEST describes the level of qualification you have enrolled in SINCE completing the original course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters or higher</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate or higher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate IV</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other certificate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Attainment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (8 skipped question)

What is the full title of the course reported above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma of Tourism Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate IV of Training and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Business Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Hospitality and Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters of Business Marketing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (9 skipped question)
What is the MAIN reason for studying the qualification reported above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To get a job</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop my existing business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To start my own business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To try for a different career</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get a better job or promotion</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a requirement for my job</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted extra skills for my job</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get into another course of study</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For interest or personal reasons</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $N = 16$ (9 skipped question). Respondents were able to give more than one reason.

Seven of the diplomats have undertaken further studies with six of them identifying either “to get a better job or promotion” or “I wanted extra skills for my job” as the reason.

This chapter has analysed the data from the surveys sent to both cohorts; this analysis will be combined with the analysis from the focus groups and interviews to provide a complete picture of the research.
5. **Descriptive analysis of Focus Groups and Interviews**

The previous chapter described the data obtained from the web based surveys completed by both diplomates and graduates. This chapter will focus on the descriptive analysis of the focus groups, interviews of diplomats and graduands and interviews with hospitality managers from Australia and Thailand.

As stated earlier, graduates were asked at the end of their survey on Survey Monkey whether or not they would be prepared to participate in focus groups. They were assured of complete confidentiality. Thirty five graduates indicted that they would be prepared to participate. Eventually, two focus groups were convened; seven graduates attended the first one and two graduates attended the second. Two other graduates responded by email to the same questions asked of the focus group participants. Initially, 10 graduates indicated that they would attend the first focus group and seven the second. It is disappointing that those figures did not materialise.

This chapter focuses on the descriptive analysis of data gathered from the focus groups and interviews.

There are some criticisms of focus groups; the inability to achieve in-depth data because of the context of the group (Powell & Single 1996 in Webb 2002) and the members may take the path of least resistance and agree with the majority view (Crawford & Acorn 1997, in Webb 2002).

According to Nyamathi and Shuler (1990) in Webb (2002), focus group comments have high credibility however there are doubts about the generalisability of qualitative research from focus groups (Vicsek 2010, Falk and Guenther 2007). Vicsek (2010) raises three key issues pertinent to this research and relating to the analysis of focus groups; firstly, can results from focus group be generalised? Secondly, in the evaluation of the data should quantification be used? Finally, which formats should be used when using quotations from focus groups?

In this research there is a convergence of views across the groups on the topics of what is needed for someone to be successful in the industries, and about the need for education. Vicsek (2010) calls this tentative incidence generalisation but also states that if the convergences are strong that “the results have significance beyond their particular situated location”.

On the issue of quantification, Vicsek (2010) leaves it up to the researcher as to whether this technique should be used.

On the subject of using quotations, Vicsek asks to what extent should the quotations be edited, how should they be selected, how should the researcher refer to the participants and how long should the quotations be?

Vicsek (2010) outlines some of the concerns about the transcriptions of the data; there may be half completed statements, poor wording and some repetitions because the spoken word differs from the written word. If the text is massaged to make it more digestible for the reader the data could be compromised. One suggestion is to prepare two versions of the transcriptions; one that is used for analysis and one that is used for the report with additional comments to aid the reader.

She further addresses the selection of quotations and in her research tries to utilise “quotations where expressions are relevant and interesting in terms of the purpose of the study are voiced by the participants of the groups themselves”. These quotations should not need to be amended to make them understandable. Some parts of the quotation can be omitted if irrelevant. In my research, immediately after the focus groups I made notes about the sessions. When the transcriptions arrived I compared them with the recordings as soon as possible to clarify any omissions by the transcribers.

In the transcriptions there is no mention of laughter or nodding or shaking of the head; listening again to the transcriptions enables these metacommunications to be recognised and added to the transcripts to give a fuller picture of the focus group dynamics.

Other weaknesses identified in the interpretation of qualitative data have included the selection of the quotations used; the possible bias of the researcher; the body language of the participants may go unreported as does the lack of, or the engagement of eye contact and the physical presence of the researcher Gill (1996).

In general there are concerns about the generalisability of data in qualitative research (Greenhalgh & Taylor 1997 in Webb 2002). This is supported by Kilbourn, 2006 in Ercikan and Roth (2009); however Eisenhart in the same publication disputes this and identifies the following types of generalisations; probabilistic, transferability, user, synthetic, meta-analytical, grounded and theoretical (p.59). Eisenhart questions why qualitative researchers
would spend time and resources to studies that cannot be generalised in some form. If the purpose of their research is to improve education then their findings need to be able to be generalised.

Eisenhart suggests theoretical generalisability is the best fit for qualitative research. As she describes it, “the selection of a group or site to study is made based on the likelihood that the case will reveal something new and different, and once this new phenomenon is theorised, additional cases will expose differences or variations that test its generalisability”. In this research two different cohorts have been chosen to try to explain something new.

It may be useful for other researchers to compare the employment outcomes of graduates from other disciplines.

A copy of the questions asked can be found in Appendix 4. Quantitative researchers might wish for the information supplied in research to speak for itself but “let the data speak for themselves, these scientists say. The trouble with that argument is, of course, that data never do speak for themselves”; (Fox Keller 1985, p. 47), therefore the following sections will not be a selection of quotations with no analysis or evaluation. These sections are critical to the focus of the research.

There were five central questions that participants were asked in the focus groups;

- *I am interested in your careers since you completed your fourth year at university R: can each of you please describe the pathway you have taken to obtain your current position?*
- *How do you think your tertiary education helped you achieve your position?*
- *Are the skills and knowledge you gained from your studies transferable into other industries. Can you give me some examples?*
- *Do you think degree studies in hospitality/tourism are necessary for people to make a success of their careers in tourism/hospitality?*
- *What would you advise a student interested in tourism/hospitality to do to improve their career prospects?*

Supplementary questions were asked based on the responses to these five questions.
Bryman (2012) describes qualitative research; “qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (p.36) and added that it is an inductive approach “in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories”. The focus groups formed part of the qualitative stage of the mixed methods approach and will be utilised to form a theory.

Bryman (2012) identifies several limitations of focus groups; two of the limitations are pertinent. One is that they can be difficult to organise and the other is that participants are not necessarily representative of the population (e.g. no international graduates were present in either group). Various reasons for non-participation were given by the graduates who had originally agreed to participate in the focus groups. Despite having been asked earlier when would be a suitable time and/or location, and their thoughts having been taken into consideration, most non participants gave those reasons as the reason for being unable to turn up. Others reasons included a change in job role and moving interstate.

The unrepresentative nature of the groups was beyond my control; I asked for volunteers and could only contact those who indicated they were interested.

The Chatham House Rule (Comprehensive information about the rule can be found at [http://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chathamhouserule](http://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chathamhouserule)) was explained and emphasised to the groups. Material raised at the focus groups could be raised outside the forum but could not be attributed to anyone. This rule encourages people to be frank and honest about their thoughts and feelings without fear of being quoted externally to their detriment.

Robson (2011) pointed out the deficiencies of humans as analysts including positive instances which tend to be overlooked if they conflict with the existing hypothesis; if information is difficult to obtain it tends to receive less attention than information that is easier to obtain and inconsistency when some data evaluation is different (p.468–469).

With regard to data analysis he draws attention to the issues of representativeness, researcher effects, triangulation and evidence weighting (p.486–487).
In this situation representativeness is a potential issue as using the snowball technique relies upon the choice of the individuals in the first instance (Kumar 2011 p.208). The majority of the graduates in this sample were relatively recent graduates whom I remembered and it was difficult to contact graduates from earlier intakes. All of the participants were ones that I had contacted initially. No one who was referred by anyone elected to participate.

### Table 10 - Composition of the first focus group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>“Domestic goddess”</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Hotel Sales</td>
<td>Home duties</td>
<td>Unrelated</td>
<td>Venue Manager</td>
<td>Kitchen Steward</td>
<td>Hotel Sales</td>
<td>Manager Not for Profit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “Domestic goddess” refers to living at home prior to having a baby.

None of the members were international, which is a drawback.

### 5.1 Descriptive analysis of first focus group with University R Graduates

The first question asked was: *I am interested in your careers since you completed your fourth year at university R: can each of you please describe the pathway you have taken to obtain your current position?*

One travelled immediately after completing her course; she ‘did’ a summer camp in the United States and obtained a position with the company back in Australia. From there she moved to another company as a marketing coordinator and later as a brand executive. She continued in marketing and is now a development manager at a not-for-profit organisation. She is a tourism graduate. Another graduate had worked in Melbourne with a large hotel group and went to London and worked in the same group. Thereafter he travelled, and then travelled and worked on a cruise ship for six months before returning home and going back to working in international hotels. Currently, he is in hotel sales.
The third graduate worked in Institute W waitressing during her industry year but began work immediately after graduation by “putting her resume about” and landed a job in events. She started as a receptionist/event coordinator and has developed into an exhibition manager. Currently, she is on maternity leave.

A further graduate is in roughly the same position, a kitchen steward as he was some ten years ago when he started working at a large hotel. He has accomplished an extra degree in Marketing and has started applying for apprenticeships in the motor industry having completed a motor mechanics course earlier in 2011. He has been very loyal to the hotel but now feels that it has taken advantage of him as it knows he is loyal.

The fifth focus group member had worked intermittently in events and entertainment and has just completed a Bachelor of Event Management in Melbourne. She has worked with an entertainment service provider and works part-time in a non related industry.

The sixth member started at an international hotel during the second half of her industry year in food and beverage and remained there whilst completing her degree at University R. She stayed there for six months after graduation before going travelling for eighteen months. She returned to Australia and went straight back to the international hotel albeit in a different role in restaurant reservations. She transferred to accommodation reservations and is now a groups’ coordinator.

The final member started at a large event management company during her industry year and subsequently deferred her last year at university to stay with the company. During her final university year she worked at the company part-time before returning there full-time as an event manager, after graduation. She has grown with the company and was a Venue Manager in a large Melbourne facility before resigning shortly after the focus group because of a lack of work life balance.

Each of the members has taken a different pathway to get where they are now but three of the seven undertook some form of travel rather than work during the early part of their careers. In my experience it is now a common experience for young undergraduates to take either a gap year during their studies in order to travel or to travel, and work part-time or to take time off after graduation and travel.
Three of the group have remained at their industry year employer although in two cases they had a break in between. In an English study, albeit in 1990 Clark et al. determined that only 4 per cent of graduates (from a geography course) “were offered and accepted jobs with their sandwich (industry) year employers on graduation” (n = 183). There appears to be limited research into the first employment destinations of graduates who have completed an industry year and therefore it is difficult to analyse if three out of seven (43 per cent) is a high or low figure, despite the small sample.

- The second question asked was: How do you think your tertiary education helped you achieve your position?

Legend FG1FP1 = Focus group1 female participant 1
FG1MP2 = Focus group 1 male participant 2
FG1FP3 = Focus group 1 female participant 3
FG1FP4 = Focus group 1 female participant 4
FG1MP5 = Focus group 1 male participant 5
FG1FP6 = Focus group 1 female participant 6
FG1FP7 = Focus group 1 female participant 7
I = Interviewer

It is important to identify the gender of the participants because each gender may have different ideas about the same topic.

Although some participants are mentioned less often than others does not mean that they did not participate as much but that what they said was not as pertinent or interesting. Additionally FG1FP7 arrived thirty minutes late.

| FG1FP1  | I didn't find the learning helped much. Very much like text book. But having done the course helped me get my first job. Looking back all I use is the accounting bit. Not hospitality subjects...but as a course not especially relevant or fantastic. |
| FG1FP3  | Definitely helped me achieve where I am today. Marketing subjects practical work at TAFE W |
| FG1MP2  | Business subjects were a little bit generic; TAFE W practical subjects good – industry year helped a lot thrown into it and given that practical experience. Looks good on resume too. |
| FG1FP4  | The base hospitality subjects helped for me; once you get a job in Hospitality it is up to the individual to use that knowledge or to build on it themselves and use the experience and mix it with what they learnt then to create your own path; it is so generic which is why we have ended up in such different fields |
| FG1FP3  | OH and S was useful, been relevant in my career; but some was really useless the computer subject.... |
| FG1FP3  | Feasibility studies was really useful and risk management. Feasibility studies you could assess from woe to go and see whether its actually going to be feasible before you even start planning |
| FG1MP5  | By the time I finished I had the same teacher 3 or 4 times it was like I said generic and repetitive but it certainly has been a springboard; I hated business stats. |
| FG1MP2  | I hated stats too but now I use it at work every day; just part of revenue management analysis; I hated it at the time but now it's really useful. I thought I would never use it. |
| FG1MP4  | I remember doing a whole assignment on how to play two up. Games studies. That was a waste of ... |

There is no course that will please all the people all of the time. Comments here describe that the course was useful in some aspects but not in others. Three out of seven (43 per cent) found the practical subjects useful whilst five out of seven (71 per cent) found some of the business based subjects not especially useful in their early careers but have now found that they have relevance. As the focus group progressed it became evident that their undergraduate degree did not assist them in their work immediately after graduation, but as their careers progressed those qualifications become more important.
The graduates have focused on the Institute W part of their education although there has been passing comment on the usefulness of the industry year by one participant who has gone on to achieve highly in the industry. The researcher has noted that in most cases the graduates with ‘personality’, good communication skills and a desire to succeed have done well in whatever career they have pursued. It is likely they would have been successful in whatever they had chosen to do. Harvey’s (1999) United Kingdom research underlined that graduate attributes determined the success or otherwise of graduates in the workplace rather than the graduates degree.

Graduate attributes have become the focus of recent research in Australia and educational institutes are stressing to their students the importance of them. In some cases, my role as the Course Coordinator was to select teachers to teach the students. Institute W made a decision to only use teachers, where possible, with at least a Masters qualification in the chosen subject. This does not necessarily mean that the best teacher was used to teach a particular subject. In at least one case above, the computer subject, the teacher would have had a considerable influence on the success or otherwise of the subject.

I: Are the skills and knowledge you gained from your subjects transferable into other industries?

| FG1FP3  | I did marketing. The computer – like, website design and computer ones are definitely career transferred and as I said, OH&S, risk management. |
| FG1FP6  | Even law. The subject, as well. |
| FG1FP3  | The majority of ones we did at University R could definitely be transcended (sic). |

(Note: by transcended she means transferable).

| FG1FP6  | Even just general customer service. That’s just – speaking to customers, speaking to clients. |
| FG1FP1  | Change management |
| FG1MP5  | But Institute W waitressing and wine studies were a waste of time but we missed cookery which I would have liked to have done; it was dropped before we started. |
| FG1MP2  | But doing both BoH and FoH was useful for me; if you have only done one you don’t understand the pressures of the other one; but we did a course evaluation and some of the students said cooking was a waste of time. |
(BoH stands for Back of House, normally kitchen and FoH stands for Front of House, normally restaurant)

Most of the University R subjects were transferable because it wasn’t hospitality it was business. TAFE some of it was very specific.

The overall feeling was that the business subjects gave the graduates the skills and knowledge to be able to transfer into other industries without the need to gain an undergraduate degree in for example, business. The qualification they graduated with was the Bachelor of Applied Science in either Tourism or Hospitality but in the surveys they completed they all answered a Bachelor of Business in either Tourism or Hospitality. Either they have forgotten the nomenclature or they are confused.

In law, for instance; students would have covered tort and contract law, amongst other curriculum; with a hospitality or tourism emphasis. However, the elements of contract law can be applied in other industries. Similarly although a marketing subject would have concentrated on services marketing the principles could be transferred to other situations.

However, it is true to say that if a graduate was considering a career change, learning Food and Beverage would not be particularly useful (unless one needed a part-time job); however for a student studying ‘Hospitality’ it should be a mandatory subject. Whilst graduates may expect to be managers once they graduate they still need to know the rudiments of food and beverage. ‘Cookery’ was included in the course for the very good reason that is articulated above; so that each section of a restaurant, for example, could understand the pressures the other section was under at any particular time. However, the subject was dropped after much criticism in the subject evaluations.

I: Do you think degree studies in hospitality and tourism are necessary for people to make a success of their careers in tourism or hospitality?

Lots of laughter. This despite the fact that eighty per cent of responses in the survey indicated that they would recommend the course.

I think so it gives you self confidence; a belief that you can (do) things that others can’t.
An example of a comment in the CHME (2001) report supported this; “...one of the ladies I interviewed had a degree in hospitality management...she was much more confident and had more transferable skills”.

FG1FP7 You don't have to have the (university) section to be a manager in the business. What might be a better option, if you just did advanced diploma, would be some kind of mentoring system, because if you were mentored with the managing director of the business, you would have just as equal business learnings for that few years that you were there.

FG1FP1 I agree

FG1MP2 Yeah, I agree

FG1FP4 So you could supplement it with courses on the side of accounting and things like that, but I think that might be a better insight than having an extra year at uni, when it might be an option for you.

A mentor, as described by Kram (1983) in Ayres (2006) is a process where a person in a higher position in the organisation commits to “providing upward mobility and support to an employee’s professional career”. One of the key aspects of a mentoring role is that of supporting and counselling the employee. In discussions with students at Institute W they suggested shadowing a general manager as a viable option for their industry year. A combination of mentoring and shadowing could be an interesting model for institutions and industry to adopt.

As all of these students completed their four year course; the decision they have made that a degree is unnecessary has presumably been made post their studies and during their employment otherwise they would not have completed the second half of their studies. What became clear during the focus group was the fact that the degree studies has enabled them to apply for positions outside the industry, as stated above, because they have studied business subjects in their course and have picked up skills and knowledge during their hospitality employment.

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) reported the fact that many of the best graduates from hospitality degrees leave the industry early because of “unfulfilled expectations”. Much of their research focussed on larger businesses but they identified that university curriculum could be tailored to better meet the requirements of small to medium sized businesses as well. Pavesic and Brymer in an earlier 1990 study ascertained that the primary reasons why employees left their positions to go elsewhere in the industry were either personal or for lack of opportunity of advancement in the organisation.
The study further determined that graduate expectations were not being met. Positions were not challenging enough. They were not necessarily dissatisfied with the industry or their career choice. The second reason employees gave was related to pay whilst the third was management issues or the politics of the environment. Hours and work-life balance were the next most frequent answer. A study of the University of Cornell graduates found that they quickly became disillusioned with the fact that they had to wait so long before attaining a senior position within the industry as they felt that their management training was not being put to its best use (Walsh and Taylor 2007).

Of those who had left the industry the results were quite different; hours, shift and rosters (28.9 per cent) accounted for most of the complaints whilst financial reasons (24.1 per cent) and personal reasons (21.9 per cent) also featured strongly.

Pavesic and Brymer’s study was completed almost 25 years ago and the same reasons are being given by today’s graduates for leaving the industry. McKercher, Williams and Coghlan (1995) found that over 50 per cent of tourism graduates were no longer employed in tourism within 5 years of completing their studies.

The next question in the focus group drew attention to these issues.

I: Why hasn’t the industry fixed some of the obvious problems, such as low pay, anti-social hours?

| FG1FP4 | It’s just the industry; it’s a choice that people make |
| FG1FP6 | You choose to study tourism or hospitality. You’re choosing that lifestyle. Unless you decide to choose something (else), you know? |
| FG1FP7 | That’s what you look at, you know, as you say, people who want to (be) supervisors, it is because they understand the hierarchy and start from bottom and understand, “Yes, I have to work crappy hours. I have to do the dishes and do all of that” and then work up to a level and then have sort of energy for those next recruits that come up beneath you. So even though I didn’t stick it out, my experience with the uni course, I was doing tourism, I was working hospitality. Whenever I went to a job in the – you know, they’d would ask me, “What makes you think that you can do the job” because I’ve worked from the bottom and I’m going to work my way up to the top and I think developing that kind of rapport with the next lot that come through, I think that’s really important. So then, with the TAFE, you had your theory, you had your – the practical kind of theory from the TAFE and then, all you do anyway, you had to do industry experience. You had to work down the bottom and that’s been a building block to go towards and that’s important. |
FG1FP3 | That even though the hospitality industry hasn’t really changed, there’s still an old school mentality that’s been taken up with who still remains in management. And a lot of people do leave, because they don’t want to work those hours. They could say, “I got so sick of working until 1 o’clock in the morning and cleaning up after people throwing up and stuff.” You know? It’s a – yeah.

This question provided the most animated discussion and provoked the most interest. Data from this question was supported by interviews subsequent to this group. The most evident impression was of passion. People are particularly passionate about the hospitality rather than the tourism industry, and it tends to blind people to its evident shortcomings when one is young and impressionable. It is an exciting and vibrant industry; there is always, regardless of how mundane the position may be, something happening wherever one works. As young graduates it is a fascinating industry in which to work. However, it becomes apparent that the gloss wears off after a period of time. This is where the industry lets itself down by not recognising that staff need to be given more responsibilities and challenges as they become more mature.

As Walsh and Taylor (2007) state “…the real culprit may be the industry’s failure to develop career ladders and jobs with meaningful learning activities….. While reasonable hours and compensation figure into the young managers’ calculations, the chance for self-improvement was the top factor in whether they would stay in a job or move”.

Cognitive over qualification, which is described as “the possession of a higher level of cognitive ability than is required for a given job” (Fine and Nevo, 2008, p.346) has been identified by Feldman and Turnley (1995) and Groot and van den Brink (2000) in Fine and Nevo (2008) to account for almost 25 per cent of the working population in industrialised countries. Overqualification can refer to one or more of the following terms: “over-education, over-experience and skill under-utilization” (Fine and Nevo, 2008). It is likely in this research for the former and latter of the three criteria to be relevant to the members; if they are not moved, transferred or promoted relatively quickly they perceive themselves as being over-qualified for the roles they maintain. Similarly they may be under-utilised. Under-utilisation in this context is represented as the individual possessing “more skills than necessary to do my job” (Fine & Nevo 2008).
Unfortunately employees, unless the labour market is extremely tight, are unlikely to wait for better opportunities in their place of employment and will move to where they are likely to be better appreciated. Indeed Walsh and Taylor (2007) found that some graduates were terminating their employment within a couple of years and some left the industry altogether because their needs were not being met and because no clear management pathway had been identified.

It is surprising in 2012 that ‘the old school mentality’ still exists. It is almost as if the industry does not want to change or become more flexible in its’ dealings with the new generation of workers.

Stalcup and Pearson (2001) conducted a study to develop and test a model that could be utilised to analyse the reasons for turnover of staff in hospitality organisations. Their study concentrated on Abelson’s (1987) avoidable-unavoidable dichotomy where some cases of employee turnover are unavoidable but many cases are not. Stalcup and Pearson (2001) made two modifications to Abelson’s structure, with the most important in this case being midcareer changes. Abelson (1987) included this as unavoidable whereas Stalcup and Pearson quoted Pavesic and Brymer (1980) and Sarabakhsh (1989) as finding evidence that this was a result of alterations to employment conditions. Stalcup and Pearson’s (2001) research focussed on management turnover but this can be applied to these participants. The graduates in this research could be classified under the term of lower to middle managers although they may not have these titles on their business cards.

According to Goodwin (2007) employers’ expectations of Gen Yers went beyond the technical skills but also wanted these employees to be associated with other benefits including; reduced absenteeism, and lower labour turnover. It is my experience that Gen Yers are more likely to have a higher number of disputes with their employers and also to have higher absenteeism as their work values, in some cases, are not often aligned with the employing organisation. Often Gen Yers are interested in quick promotion and are unlikely to tolerate perceived or actual incompetence from their managers.

There is some debate about the definitive classifications of birth dates for Gen Yers (Kinnunen & Turunen 2012, McCrindle 2012) who are generally described as having been born between 1979/1980 and 1994. Thirty percent of Gen Yers are likely to attend university, whilst 24 per cent are likely to have studied at TAFE or other education forms (McCrindle 2007) and are likely to have shorter careers and more of them than their parents and grandparents. Kinnunen & Turunen (2012) conducted a survey of Queensland hospitality
workers both of Gen Y and non Gen Y generations over twelve measures including; engagement, job satisfaction, intention to quit and job security. They found that in every measure Gen Yers rated significantly lower than non Gen Yers employees for constructs in which employers would want to maximise in their employees. But the opposite was also true. For the two constructs that the employers would wish to minimise in its employees, the intention to leave the organisation and the intention of switching jobs, Gen Yers rated significantly higher than the non Gen Yers.

Goodwin’s (2007) research focused on Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) and will be further discussed later in this research when the emphasis will be on the graduates from the Advanced Diploma courses.

I: Why don’t companies ring hospitality training institutes and say, “Have you got some students?” rather than employing medical students for example?

FG1FP1 | It just depends on who applies for the job.

FG1MP2 | Exactly right.

FG1FP3 | Who’s there at the time. Who’s looking more willing.

FG1FP4 | Well, it must demand a lot of personality.

FG1FP7 | Who’s keen

FG1MP5 | Yes. It’s a commitment

FG1FP1 | And a medical student, for example, might be desperate for that money and show more enthusiasm and more – because they have to ...

Again, this is quite surprising; with the contacts many staff has at hospitality training institutes, a five minute telephone call could save hours of time advertising and/or interviewing other potential candidates from other disciplines. If people who are trained in training institutes are more likely to remain in the industry once recruited than egg medical students why would you not take the trouble to find highly motivated staff with a short telephone call or inquiry?
I: To run a hotel, the…… (hotel name deleted), for example, what qualifications do you need?

**FG1MP2** We had a – the MD before this one, was a female who started out as a kitchen hand.

I think our current one, as well; he just started at the bottom and just worked up. I think hospitality really is starting from the bottom and working up

**FG1FP1** Yeah. But those – like that’s two very smart individuals, as well. They’ve got a business brain. It’s not just work your up. It’s they had the acumen and the knowledge and the personality for it, so it’s not for everybody

**FG1FP1** A commerce or something above a top management, because it’s they’re not based they’re not hospitality people–

**FG1FP6** I think more the higher positions, like your CEOs and things, you hear about a lot who go from one industry to a completely different industry, but just because they have those management skills, leadership skills and business skills and it might not be specifically relevant to the industry they’re working in, but they’re overseeing other people who do have specific knowledge of that industry. They’re just overseeing the big picture of the business, the management and the leadership.

It may well be the case in other industries that “a lot who go from one industry to a completely different industry” but that is not the case in hospitality or tourism. As discussed above, it is highly unlikely that a person who had never been a flight attendant would be brought in to manage flight attendants. Similarly, it would be extremely difficult to manage a Food and Beverage team without having had some experience working in the same environment.

**FG1FP3** And there’s transference of skills.

**FG1FP1** Yeah, definitely

**FG1MP5** I was going to say, certainly within my – the hotel I work in though, there’s certainly a lot of the management tend to – like I know for several of them, the – sort of – the department managers, none of them have degrees and whatnot. They’re just based on experience or whatnot. So – but yeah.
FG1FP6  *Not for Profit Organisation (NFP)*. We had an interesting leadership change last year. We had a CEO who had been there for a number of years and sort of rode the storm through the fires, which was a bit crazy, but she didn’t have very much managerial experience at all, before that role. Because we grew so much as a team, she really was out of her depth and it showed by her results, and so she was sacked by the board and then I was actually acting in the CEO role for a few months while they recruited someone else, because it was very sudden. So yeah, and then they recruited a really good CEO who’s good. Amazing experience and you know, multiple degrees and I learned a lot from her, so the difference is amazing and the leadership skills and management experience really does make a difference.

I:  *Does she have experience in (that area of NFP) or ...?*

| FG1FP6 | No |
5.2 Descriptive analysis of second focus group with University R Graduates

This was a small group of two who happened to be high achievers who were unable to make the first focus group. One is now Assistant Hotel Operations Manager in Melbourne (he has now been appointed as an Hotel General Manager for a new hotel opening in Melbourne in November. He is 32 years of age) whilst the other works for a large Australian media entertainment company as a Sales Manager. He has since resigned to open his own chain of organic fast food cafes.

_I’m interested in your career path since you completed your fourth year at University R, can each of you please describe the pathway you have taken to obtain your current position?_

Legend FG2MP1 = focus group 2 male participant 1.
FG2MP2 = focus group 2 male participant 2.

| FG2MP1 | I went up to Lizard Island in Queensland for a couple of months and worked with P&O resorts, came back and worked at the Como Hotel, started as just a room service attendant. Over the next couple of years moving my way up to food and beverage supervisor. Then I moved to London for seven months and started work as a receptionist in a 64 room hotel, moved up to duty manager. |
| FG2MP1 | …it was only a small hotel, and it was sort of – I needed money over there. I’d just spent a month travelling, it was the first sort of job available, and I got promoted pretty quickly to duty manager, just I was good at my job but I could also speak English and a lot of the people there couldn’t basically, in London at that time. Then came back and got a job as a duty manager at ……… I then moved from (there) to……. where I am now as duty manager, got promoted about two years ago to front office manager, and promoted about a month ago to assistant operations manager of the hotel. |

Similar to members of the first group P1 travelled before returning to Australia to find permanent work although he did this after almost three years of working full-time in the industry. He had already identified that this was the sector for him during the industry year of the course. (However, he has not remained in the industry as he has continued to receive offers of employment that are too good to refuse).
My path has been a little bit different now, I think the industry – I went to (a five star hotel), and I stayed there through the fourth year at University R, and then following on after that I still stayed at there. I was there for probably close to two years. But while I was working in the hotel industry I was also doing work for ......... Catering, so I was doing the major events. I would do spring racing, I would do Moto GP and Formula One. ...

I: What did you do at the hotel during your Industry Year?

It was a mixture, so I asked for a bit of variety for everything, and I actually did a bit of housekeeping as well. I did bell, I did front office, I did a little bit of the whole lot. It was a good experience, and then I stuck mainly to door, to belling, after that while I was there I was also doing those major events, so I was supervising corporate marquees at these different events. – and the year after, the last year at University R, I was asked to supervise the ..... Formula One marquee, which was four days, it was 150 people within – 150 or 200 every day across...

So I was supervising – I think it was 12 or 15 staff across the four days, and made sure that ..... and their clients, and everyone had a lot of fun during that period. And then a week or so later somebody from ......... called me saying that somebody at ..... was trying to get my contact details, was I okay with it, I said yes, go for it.

So I was contacted and they said that they were really pleased with – I guess the way I operated at the marquee, and the relationship I’d built with people within four days. You know, just meeting and greeting a lot of the people within the business, and that they had a – and yeah that they wanted to bring me in for an interview for an opportunity at ..... in Melbourne.
FG2MP2 | So I went in for that opportunity, and it was to manage the ....... Team, which was the cars and the 22 promo staff, which was an interesting couple of years. I got a bit bored with that and then moved into sales at ........., and then I finally got the – my last year there I was the field marketing manager, so I was basically responsible for implementing all the sports and cultural events for ...... in Victoria. So I had a budget to use to either sponsor events, or build or create my own events, and then use the ...... and the student brand managers, the kids on campus, to sort of bring it all together.

FG2MP2 would be an interesting case study to follow in the future; mainly through his own endeavours he has established a career in a separate but allied industry to hospitality. He has moved from working at major events for a catering company to becoming an account manager at a leading media and entertainment company and now to his own chain of cafes. He is at a relatively young age although he is a bit older than the remainder of the graduates in the sample.

FG2MP2 | So – and yeah, then moved into sales because I just got bored, and it was just a natural progression for me, and then I moved into the marketing world because what I had started doing with ..... is I grew to love marketing, and had a real passion for it. So I started doing my masters through Open University. So that sort of linked into my final role there which was the field marketing manager, which is as I said; managing the local sports and cultural events, and the seeding of ..... as much as I could within Melbourne scenes.

Participant FG2MP2 commented “...because I just got bored, and it was a natural progression for me...” Baron (2008) recognises that the industries have always found it difficult to attract and retain qualified and trained personnel to deliver promised services to customers. The graduates in this research are members of Generation Y who expect to be recognised for their skills and knowledge from the commencement of their employment (Barron 2008). Martin (2005), (in Baron 2008), describes how Generation Y students are unwilling to “put in years of service in order to gain any significant reward from their employer”. This is almost the exact opposite of baby boomers who traditionally have had very few employers in their careers. The baby boomers are possibly likely to be the employers, but not immediate supervisors, of these graduates and may be unimpressed by their attitudes; thus giving rise to
tension within workplaces. If Generation Y graduates feel that they are not valued they will seek alternative opportunities outside the industry.

| FG2MP2 | But eventually I’d had enough, I was there for five years ....... I went for a trade marketing role at ......, which is where I am now. But at the interview she said we’d like you to go for a sales role and account manager role within our business rather than the trade marketing role, is that something you’re interested in? So I wasn’t too sure but went in and had a chat to them, and ultimately ended up being the role that I’m in now and have been for nearly a year and a half. |

I: How do you think your tertiary education, so that’s the third and fourth years, helped in.....?

| FG2MP1: | For me it was really important, that third year was – I think it made a lot of people decide if they wanted to work in the industry or not. Full time work 40 hours a week, getting up at 4:30 – 5:00am to go in and run room service trays up. I know we’d lost a few people after ..... when they got the advanced diploma, we lost quite a few more that year that – it wasn’t for them. I’d thought it was for me already and that year just proved it. I’d say I’d still be in the industry anyway, but that – that sort of year off from uni, besides that I think we had an assignment or something to do that year, but... |

| FG2MP1: | But yeah it was really important for me, as I said it made me decide that I actually wanted to really progress in the industry |

The third year appears to be a defining point for many of the students and this piece of research does not examine those who dropped out at that stage of the course. But the industry year may well have persuaded many students that the industry with its anti social hours and poor remuneration, was not for them.
**I:** Did any of the subjects that you studied particularly help or could you have – not what you do now, but could you have taken an alternative path without any of the education and got to where you are?

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<tr>
<th>FG2MP1</th>
<th>I think especially the first two years at ......, the subjects we studied were so broad that they really – we did everything from accommodation management, and checking in and checking out, to carrying plates, to doing – touching on media and marketing, and accounting. You go in and look at a hotel now and sort of every one of those things is in there. So I think it was a great range of subjects for me to end up in the industry, like, you know, we touch base on them, and it’s not until you’re actually in the industry that you start to really learn about them all.</th>
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Education cannot replace the tangible aspects of working in the industry on a regular basis. Working part-time whilst studying does not expose to people the full extent of day-to-day, five days a week ‘grind’ of full-time employment. Employees can gain an unrealistic picture of the industry whilst working as a casual and be unprepared for full-time work during the industry year. Anecdotally, I am aware of one student in her industry year that peeled onions for 8 hours a day in a five star restaurant in Melbourne. She is particularly dedicated but work such as that is likely to put a lot of people off restaurant work.

| FG2MP1 | I’ve now done stints in accounting, I’m heading in for a stint in sales, I’ve done [F&B], I’ve done operations and stuff like that. So maybe if you were looking to really sink your teeth into one of those departments, like say, sales in a hotel or something, that’s all you wanted to do, then probably not the best course for you, because you’re better off just doing a sales and marketing course. Obviously you need to know a little bit about the hotel, but you learn most about what’s your brand when you start working with it. |
**I:** That’s interesting

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<th>FG2MP2:</th>
<th>Yeah look it’s an interesting question. I guess if you look at it really quickly you could say media sales role and advanced diploma in hospitality management, how they even lead into each other. But strangely enough it feels like it’s just – I wouldn’t be where I am now without that because I was in hospitality and the reason I was working for …. at the time because I was in hospitality and that was my passion at the time. I wanted to manage a hotel, that was where my head was going, and then from that I got the opportunity to work for …., and I guess as a young 22 year old who would say no to working for one of the biggest brands in the world. Took that opportunity on, through that I grew a passion for marketing, so I started doing my masters in marketing.</th>
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<th>FG2MP2:</th>
<th>When I was sick of …. I was going for a marketing role at ….. because of that synergy, and then ended landing something different. So I guess you could say, or a little bit deep, and then it was maybe meant to be or whatever. But if you looked at it really quickly and you said what’s media sales got to with a hospitality management, not much, but if I wasn’t in the industry at the time studying what I was studying, the several doors that have opened up along the journey probably wouldn’t have been there.</th>
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Being at the right place at the right time is part of the story but one has to have the personality, passion, professionalism and drive to make an impression on the people who were representing one of the “biggest brands in the world” which this graduate did and it has paid off for him. He is the highest paid graduate from any of the courses.

**I:** Do you still want to manage a hotel?

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<th>FG2MP2:</th>
<th>Not anymore no, no it’s not a passion of mine anymore</th>
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**I:** Are the skills and knowledge you gained from your studies transferable into other industries, if so can you give me some examples?

| FG2MP2: | Yeah look it’s funny, I think quite a lot of its transferable because a lot of what we learnt in those sort of – across those four years was about how to talk to people, it wasn’t a course but it was part of the process of going through working in hospitality, is you had to have an ability to talk to humans. What I do now is very much relationship selling, it’s getting to know people, getting to know their business, being able to open a dialogue |
with them so that they trust you to spend their money with you. So for me as a young kid who didn’t know what he wanted to do, I mean I finished high school and took three years off and I did nothing basically for three years. So I initially started doing it just because I liked hotels and resorts and it gave me some certain skills to – you had to talk to people every day so even if you were a shy or introverted person you were forced to talk to people, and if you were that shy you’d probably get out of it pretty quickly, but it gave me those sort of skills that I use now on a day to day basis. Whether I use some of the other skills such as carrying three plates, and making coffees, and pouring beers, no I don’t use those, but it’s kind of good that I know those things, I can still carry three plates when I’ve got friends over for dinner, and I can still pour a beer better than most people behind a bar, so I kind of go yeah that’s cool.

The transferable skills and knowledge gained from any degree are beneficial. Students gain critical thinking skills, research skills, communication skills and analytical skills which are valued by employers external to hospitality or tourism. But these skills are under utilised in operational positions in the hospitality and tourism industries and despite the relative fast turnover of staff, employees may take time to gain promotion.

Institute W offered a vocational post graduate certificate in hospitality management. A senior employee in a large telecommunications company desired a career change and completed the course. She was recommended to apply to a well known Melbourne Hotel where, despite her wealth of experience, albeit in a different industry, she was told that she had to start employment in an extraordinarily low position. This would have necessitated a drop in her salary of many thousands of dollars. Unsurprisingly she maintained her position in the telecommunications company despite her wish to join the hospitality industry. Neither the skills nor knowledge she had obtained during her previous academic history nor were any of her life experiences taken into account.

FG2MP2 But do I use those certain skills, no probably not, but certainly some of the further skills that we did in the fourth year, a little bit of the marketing, a little bit of the accounting that we did in the first couple of years, certainly. I deal with marketing, and figures, and numbers all the time now, and I think I had a little bit of a base from the course that helped me – A, be able to study what I’m doing in my masters, and B, use in my role now.
This particular graduate is a bit more mature than the others as he took three years off before starting his studies at Institute W.

| FG2MP1:  | I think they’re definitely transferable, I know that ……touched on the people skills, and a lot of what the course was about was management, not just managing new clients, and customers, and managing your staff. I mean with my new role I now have 120 staff that we have that I now oversee, hire, fire, deal with day to day, and the amount of stuff that comes up is just phenomenal, little things, issues between staff, all sorts of things that – without that course and a few of the things we touched on, wouldn’t really know how to deal with. Obviously the customer was is a big thing when we were working in the restaurant, at ….. and stuff none of us wanted to do it, |
| FG2MP1:  | You quickly found out if you could deal with customers, and deal with other people like having 50 – 60 – 100 people in the restaurant, and there was obviously parts of the course that I hated. I mean I hate cooking, and I… |
| FG2MP2:  | I loved it. |

This is an indication, as with the previous group, that it is impossible to design a course that will please everyone. Each student will gain different skills and knowledge from their course.

| FG2MP1:  | Yeah he loved it, he was a good cook. I used to walk in, I just didn’t want to be there, I’d be anywhere else except for that part, but that gives me an idea and I now have to oversee the kitchen as well so… |
| FG2MP2:  | You know what they go through. |
During your career moves have you knowingly come across students who may have graduated with advanced diplomas, or diplomas, in any area really? If so how do you think you’ve progressed compared to them?

FG2MP1:  
I sort of only really know the ones that I went to school with, ..........., a few others

FG2MP1:  
I hired ......18 months ago, he came in looking for an assistant concierge role, I had an assistant night manager’s role I had just given away, had an assistant concierge role that he jumped at, took, and then I promoted him to duty manager a couple of months later, and he screwed me over and left.

This is another example of how quickly it is possible to attain a relatively responsible position.

FG2MP1:  
He’s about the only one that sort of I’ve come across. I know I go out of my way to hire casuals that are at ..... for our front office team and our food and beverage team. You know for at least a year or two they’re interested in the industry. You know at ..... they’ve got a pretty rock solid timetable and stuff from my experience that we can sort of work around with shifts and stuff, and they want to work in the industry for the moment. Of course some of them are going to change their minds after a year or two, which happens, but for that 12 to 18 months you’ve got them actually keen to work there, so – but as for actually coming across anyone that had finished a degree besides......

FG2MP1:  
I know of others that –. I know ...... went and worked the cruise lines for years for three or four years, made an absolute fortune. Came home, got married, had a kid, bought a house, and life over!

This is an interesting comment “life over” as if there is no coming back from having a family.

When you say you employ students or graduates do you employ the ones with a degree, or doing a degree, or ones with advanced diplomas?

FG2MP1:  
Usually ones that have just gone into ...... I’ve just – we employed one last week, he’s only doing a two year course at ......, it’s six months sort of study then six months work experience, six months study, six months work experience, I’m not sure exactly what...
FG2MP1: So as I said the ones we – our casuals we tend to hire first year uni because you know you’ve got them locked in for a couple of years nine times out of ten. So we’ve had a lot of luck with even ones that have just sort of moved down from the country and are studying something totally different, you’ll get them locked in for two or three years on the job, 25 hours a week type thing so...

I: You put a fair amount of training into them.

FG2MP1: Yeah absolutely, I mean like any of my receptionists, the staff that come in our front office get just about two weeks training. But if they stay for 12 months, you’ve got it back, if they still for three years it’s massive. I have very little turnover in front office, I think we’ve lost two full time staff members in just over two years so – which is amazing for a hotel.

Rather than hire an experienced front office operator, this manager would rather hire a new student with little or no experience because it would be likely that the employee would stay for up to 2-3 years because they are locked into their course.

FG2MP2: I’m not sure if I could answer that question any better than he did. The question was have we come across anyone that we’ve done the course with.

I: Or anyone with an advanced diploma as opposed to a degree, so is there anybody at for example who had a diploma of marketing?

FG2MP2: Yeah, versus a degree in marketing and who’s done better in that?

FG2MP2: Yeah, look it’s a good question. I guess you always ask somebody like what have you done, or where have you been for study and they mention it, but whether it’s something that you personally recall, unless it’s important for you hiring someone, I don’t think it’s something that you recall, and you base results and base who does better in things on the work that they provide. So I think it’s all individually dependent as well. So you might have someone that’s got a Dip versus somebody that’s got a degree, but the person with the degree might have no social skills and the person with the Dip does a better job. But whether I can personally recall or recount anyone or any difference, no I probably couldn’t.
I: Okay, if there are colleagues of yours who don’t have specific qualifications in either marketing or hospitality, or other colleagues of yours who don’t – as far as you’re aware, who don’t have qualifications in either hospitality, or marketing, or...

| FG2MP2: | We certainly do in sales because that’s where I’m in now, in sales. It’s amazing how many of the guys there don’t actually have a degree of any sort. They might have started a couple of things and not finished them or anything like that, yet these are some of the highest earning people I know in my life, they’re making $300,000 - $400,000 - $500,000 a year, and they don’t have a degree. |
| FG2MP2 | Sales is I guess one of those weird things where if you’ve got the ability to talk shit to people, and people like you, they’re going to do business with you, and as long as you understand the process of that, and the process of what you’re selling, and the product that you’ve got in front of you, then you probably don’t necessarily need a degree. So I know people at ..... that were more qualified that are making nowhere near as much versus people at ..... now who are in sales and have shit kicked around for a couple of years after uni, and then landed in a used car sales role, and then moved into a booklet sales role, and all of a sudden they’re selling media and they’re making hundreds of thousands a year, so it’s interesting. |
| FG2MP1: | My two – my operations manager and my general manager both at the hotel, both were on six figures, neither – one was an apprentice chef that went through the navy and is now our ops manager, my GM never got a degree in anything, he’s the best GM I’ve ever had, very, very smart person. |
| FG2MP2: | Where did he start, what was his progression, was it simply getting a casual job somewhere and working the way up the ladder. |
| FG2MP1: | Casual job, worked as a porter, went into night management, came through rooms division to GM. And he got poached from another company and he was living in Sydney – got poached from another company ten years ago I think to come and work with........ He came to ......– came down and headed it, and ten years later they’re still paying half his bills, half his mortgage and all that, plus his salary and his car. So he’s... |
| FG2MP2: | Wow. |
| FG2MP1: | Yeah, no qualifications, I mean I look at some of the – I think my reservations manager did the same course that we did, my finance manager got... |
| FG2MP1: | My restaurant manager, food and bev manager, we’ve got two that don’t have any sort of university qualifications. But we’re from a company that promotes from within, like my sales – director of sales and marketing was a porter, and my finance manager was a porter. My restaurant manager and conference and events manager both started as floor staff. My ops manager was our head chef who was hired as just one of the chefs, made head chef, our exec sous chef at the moment started as an apprentice eight years ago. So we’re big on experience in the industry and in the hotel rather than – I mean degrees obviously gets looked at when you get hired but if you get through that hurdle and there’s plenty of room. |

I: So a bit of a question you’ve already answered, do you think degrees, studies in hospitality are necessary for people to make a success of their career?

| FG2MP1: | I think they’re becoming more necessary, I don’t think 10 years ago, 15 years ago, they were. I think there’s definitely a change. I think it depends who you work for, I mean a hotel like us, we rarely hire into head of department positions where we try and promote from within. I mean we just did hire a head chef, but apart from that it’s usually promoted from within. They still tend to look for degrees, I mean – but again if you start as a floor staff and prove it, then once you’re in your resume never gets looked at again ever, so... |

Those finance skills that most managers need, they can be picked up on the job.

| FG2MP1: | Yeah they can, I’m picking them up, I hated accounting at ….., anything to do with figures. I’m just now learning how to deal with spreadsheets, and sort of stuff – I can read it but I just can’t write it. So I’ve spent the last six months sort of really honing those skills. But if you’re smart enough it can be picked up, absolutely. |

Typically, hospitality and to a degree, tourism students are weak at accounting or financial subjects. These subjects are where most fails are recorded.
FG2MP2:  
*Look, I think they really are useful in the industry, I mean maybe you don’t – you’ve got to think about all the people that are being promoted from within that do – have done a Dip, or a bachelor, or something like that, and you kind of don’t think about them because they get progressed through the business but the reality is they’re in that industry, and they’re in that business, because of what they studied. If that’s a direct link and relevance to how they’re performing versus somebody else within the business that’s not performing as well because they don’t have the skills, or they don’t have the knowledge, or the – you know what it’s like when you’re promoting someone internally, if someone’s studying that and they’ve showed more interest in it, they’re more likely to get the job because you go well this person is dedicating themselves to wanting to be better in that industry. So I think you have to look at it that way as well, just say that hey look if they’re already in the industry and they’re getting promoted from within that’s fine, but why were they in there in the first place, probably because they were studying something. Maybe it was a short course, maybe it was a two year course versus a four year course or whatever, but I think there’s certainly merit for having it, there’s no doubt.*

FG2MP1:  
*Absolutely, I’m not saying that everyone that we promote from within doesn’t have a degree, and doesn’t have any education, I just don’t ask them. I mean there are probably a few that do, and did them quite early and just got them out of the way sort of like I did. But you look at someone that is from within that you know can do the job, someone comes into an interview with a degree, and has been in the industry – I mean it’s always going to be tough to weigh up if, you can only make it on the people that are there at the time.*

This discussion between promoting from within or looking externally is a problem for hospitality and tourism organisations. As alluded to earlier companies are reluctant to hire non hospitality/tourism personnel; naturally they will take personnel from other hospitality/tourism businesses but to a certain extent it the industries operate a ‘closed shop’ mentality. Hotels would much rather hire a marketing person for example who has worked in an hospitality organisation rather than a marketing expert with no hospitality experience. Therefore, for current staff with a degree there would be an option for them to move into any of the business areas of an hotel e.g. marketing, sales or finance.
I: Does ....... promote from within?

FG2MP2: Yeah quite actively. It’s the same sort of thing, it’s if the person understands the brand, or can show that they know what the next role that they’re applying for is all about, and that they can do the job, and that they’ve shown interest, and passion, and dedication, and all those things that you look for internally, then great. But we also hire a lot externally because we’ve got some pretty specific skills that are required such as PR managers, and marketing people, that have real current marketing skills because marketing changes at such a quick pace as well. Whether it’s someone in production, production is completely different now than it was to five years ago, so would you hire someone from another station who’s been in the game for 20 years who’s still stuck in the old habits or do you want someone who’s got all the digital savvy and can put together a commercial a lot quicker with better sound effects. So there’s certainly – in our area of work there’s a need to hire externally a lot because there’s some specific skills that you need to bring to the table outside of just our little sales teams, so there’s no doubt.

An article about a small airline in England said – he would never hire a cabin crew manager who hadn’t been a cabin crew member. Can you relate to that?

FG2MP2: Because that experience is invaluable, and often they say that, they say experience wins over a piece of paper at the end of the day, but I think that both of them together is a lot more of a powerful proposition because you’ve just got that – I don’t know, that extra little bit of knowledge, or that extra bit of skill. The things that you learn along the way across two or four years or more, it’s easy to forget what you’ve learnt but I think they’re within you somewhere, and part of the way that you operate, or part of what you know, or part of the knowledge that you bring to the table, they’re something that you’ve learnt. You’re not going to remember it all, it’s impossible, but there’s bits of it there that stick with you, and I think that gives you an advantage over someone else.
I never promote or hire someone who’s a manager that hasn’t done the work, that they have to manage the people – because they’re going to have to go back and then do it, and they’re still going to have to go back and get their hands dirty and do it. So unless they’ve done it before and are still prepared to chip in and do it again then there’s no point them managing it at all.

Okay where do you think you might be in five years time?

I’d say a hotel operations manager or GM within five years, we’re looking at buying another couple of hotels this year. So my role that I’m doing at the moment is to get me prepared for that, don’t know where, hopefully Melbourne but I doubt it unfortunately. We’re looking at a couple in Sydney, maybe one in Queensland, so...

How many hours of work do you...

Do I work a week?

Average around 50, so nothing major, we’re pretty good like that, no one comes in and does 65 – 70 hour weeks, we staff it quite well, but...

“So nothing major” but the hospitality industry is renowned for paying no overtime for managerial staff; therefore it is possible that this particular graduate is working approximately 500 hours (10-12 weeks) extra per year for little reward. It is this feature of the industry that causes the most angst among other participants in the first focus group.

.....but since I got the FOM job I was – I’ve been pulling 50 hours a week asking for extra work, taking stuff off the boss, to just make them sit up and realise it’s clear he can. And I’ve gone and learnt all the stuff I need to do be an operations manager now. My ops manager is away for a fortnight so I’m doing his job. If you just come in and do your 38 hours, or your 40 hours, and you do your job, if you do it quite well no one is going to question you but you’re not going to get that step up given to you if you don’t go and basically learn everything that you need to do.
Some of the girls I’ve spoken to have said – and they’re doing similar hours to you, and they’ve said it’s just too much, I want to get married, have a family, so on and so forth. I can’t do this kind of work any longer.

One of their gripes is that they’d be happy to do 40 but 50 is just out of the question.

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<tr>
<th>FG2MP1:</th>
<th>Well you only have to do – you have to do – I choose to do 50. I could easily get away with 40 as a front office manager, but I’d still be a front office manager, and I could easily get away with 40 as an assistant ops manager, but I know we’re within six months of buying another three hotels, and I want to run one of them, and I’ll get my chance to if I work some extra hours at the end of the day.</th>
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<tr>
<td>FG2MP2:</td>
<td>The difference between those people that you were speaking to and this guy here is that he wants to be at the top of the food chain and he will do what he needs to do to get there, whereas they’re probably just happy treading along, doing their hours, earning the same pay cheque.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FG2MP2:</td>
<td>They might fall into it four years later whereas he’ll get it in four months rather than – and I think that’s a difference in people rather than anything else.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FG2MP1:</td>
<td>I mean I look at my general manager, he comes in at – walks in at nine o’clock, leaves four o’clock most days. Plays golf from ten and rocks up at one o’clock on Wednesday after playing golf for the morning, he’s out there by 2:30 – 3:00 on a Friday. And runs a tight ship, great place to work, so you can’t – he’s got there, he’s made his position, so...</td>
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The long term benefits maybe there for those who are prepared to put in the extra effort and hours early in their careers and then stay in the industry; however this maybe an isolated incidence. Further research in five years time to identify where this particular graduate is working would be interesting.

| FG2MP2: | He’s probably earned his stripe to do that. |
| FG2MP1: | Yeah absolutely, and at some stage I’ll be there and I’ll be able to do my 35 – 40 hours a week, pull in my ridiculous money, and – yeah, one day. |
It would have been interesting to have had one or both of these participants in the earlier focus group to determine if they would have changed the dynamics of the first group. There tended to be a bit of ‘group think’ in the first group with most participants, despite being high achievers as well, down on the industry and its lifestyle. These two, on the other hand are more optimistic and buoyant about their careers albeit only one is in the ‘hospitality’ industry.

**FG2MP2:** Look I’ve got a plan in place for where I’ll be in five years, whether or not I get to that I’m not sure. My life is going to go in one of two ways, either – I honestly feel that I’m at home in the job that I’ve got now. I feel like it was almost made for me, I’m not blowing my own trumpet but I’ve been told that my first year there is the best first year they’ve ever seen out of someone that hasn’t done media sales before. I know that there’s a career for me there if I want it, and they’re pushing and training me in other skills and things like that. But there’s another part of me that actually very much wants a different lifestyle, which is having a few different revenue streams within my life that allow me to do the things that I really want to do. Such as travel in greater depth, and learn how to scuba dive, and do all the things that I can’t do now because of time restraints. So I’m working actively on the side, I’ve got three or four different business ideas that I’m trying to generate, and if they start to bring in enough revenue for myself I’ll probably leave the nine to five, I don’t really want to be in the rat race anymore. I haven’t been doing it for that long but a big passion of mine is not to be stuck in the rat race, and my plan is at 35 to be out of it.

Currently, how many hours would you work?

**FG2MP2:** Currently now my hours are really good, they’re probably 40, but I’m very disciplined at walking out the door at 5:30 every day because I go to the gym, and I’ve got my masters still that I do. So I’ve got to devote a lot of my time to other things. I’m not willing to let my masters slip in my last year, I’m willing to let my health and fitness slip for a job, never have been, never will be.
So at 5:30 I walk out the door but there’s guys there that are there from seven til seven so it can be easy to be stuck in the office for hours and trying to get your prop right your schedule right and call in more and more people. I’m not interested in that I do quite well and I’m happy to walk in at 8:00 and walk out at 5:30. But my dream is not even to have that 9:00 to 5:00 or 8:00 til 5:00 job it’s to have the freedom to get up and go to a café one day and open my laptop and I have to work on that business for a couple of hours and then I go and check out a property I’m developing somewhere else. And then an iPhone app that I’ve got on the side and then a little product that I’m bringing in from the States work my own hours to my own desires and that’s where I plan to be in five years whether it happens or not is a completely different thing.

Again, these two appear to have clear goals about what they want to be doing and when they want to be doing it. Whether they achieve these goals would be interesting to follow.

**Do you feel valued at your workplace?**

| FG2MP1: | Absolutely, I mean I’ve worked – I think it’s about hotel number six or seven I’ve worked at, and I’ve been here for just about four years now, and never worked in an organisation that values their staff so much. We have a saying; that happy staff equals happy customers equals more money, and we keep our staff happy. That keeps them happy, that keeps them treating the guests well, keeps guests happy, that keeps them coming back. We start with our staff and our staff with our guests, yes they’re important obviously, they bring in all the money, and without them we’re nothing, but without our staff we’re nothing as well, and they’re the ones I see face to face each day, so... |

This is almost in exact opposition to five out of the seven of the first focus group. Two of the members of the first group work at an hotel with a higher star rating than where FG2MP1 works and yet they feel far less valued and indeed have not progressed as far as this member has in his career. It may be that the higher star rating properties tend to retain their staff for longer and therefore there are not so many opportunities for advancement. Alternatively, at the higher rating property there are fewer opportunities for advancement.

Or he may be better at his job than they are.
**I:** We were chatting before you came about the number of football teams that come, the number of grand prix teams and so on and so forth, and I said this must be good, but obviously the staff are good because they wouldn’t come back.

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<tr>
<th>FG2MP1:</th>
<th>The staff are great, I mean our sales – we’ve got a new director of sales and marketing for the last 12 months, and he’s good, and he’s finding his feet and getting some really good deals in. The one before him was ruthless, he was fantastic, he was an arsehole but he was fantastic at his job, we got three AFL teams in, had a couple of grand prix teams, we’re now up to four grand prix teams this year. It helps we’re situated right next to the track, but there’s eight hotels along there, there’s what – 12 teams maybe...</th>
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<tr>
<td>FG2MP2:</td>
<td>Especially with those kind of organisations, they wouldn’t come back if there wasn’t something right about the place.</td>
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<tr>
<th>FG2MP1:</th>
<th>No, but they ask huge money. I mean the AFL teams actually give up a massive grant from the AFL, each AFL team gets I think just on five figures to stay at one of the AFL hotels, which I believe is a ……. brand, and ……. in Melbourne, at the one we worked at, screwed up too many times, these teams started looking somewhere else. We found them, got them, and they give up five figures each time they stay with us from the AFL to stay with us, the players are happy, the food is great, so obviously from a nutrition point of view for them – is really big. They have a specialised nutritionist that’s there every trip checking the food, all that sort of stuff, so we can’t just put any sort of food out, we follow a specialised diet and all of that, so...</th>
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**I:** Where did ..... stay?

| FG2MP2: | We used to stay at – it was in St Kilda on Fitzroy Street, the ..... It was sheik, and cool, and uber sort of inner city kind of thing which just suited the brand, it’s kind of where they had to stay to keep up image and things like that so... |
And you feel valued?

**FG2MP2:** I feel more valued now in this job than I have in any job I’ve ever had. Now I don’t know if it’s an engagement thing, because I’m so engaged and so into the job, that obviously what you put in is what you get out. But the training I get, the feedback I get, the positivity I have around me, around my management team, around everyone, I just feel extremely valued. I feel that if I had told them tomorrow that my dream has come true and I’ve got my revenue streams up I think they would fight to keep me within the business, and I don’t think I’ve ever felt – I mean at ..... would have for a while, probably not in the last year because I didn’t give a shit anymore. But I certainly felt valued at ..... for quite a long period of time, hence why I had sort of three different roles in five years, but here more than anything I feel extremely valued.

Okay what would you advise a student interested in tourism or hospitality to do to improve – what would you advise them to do, would you advise them to undertake studies or sales, or would you advise them to just start working?

**FG2MP1:** It depends if they know what they want to do, I mean if they just want to get in and get into hospitality management like I did, and happy to be a food and bev manager, and a front office manager, and duty manager, and all this sort of stuff. The course we did for that was fantastic, I mean if they say all I want to do is get into sales and marketing in a hotel I’d say well take up a sales course and work part time in a hotel, just get the feel for a hotel and stuff. But if they’re not quite sure – if they want to end up running a hotel they’ve got to get an idea about the whole business, and to start with that first five or six years is the operations – is the business they’ll be in, start carrying plates, and pouring drinks, making beds if they have to, that sort of stuff. I mean absolutely still study, but get into the industry as early as possible, don’t study til 22 -23, if you start at 18, work at Macca’s and then get into a hotel – get into a hotel your first year and do both side by side.

I: Because at Open Days I talk to parents and potential students, with parents asking what jobs can my daughters and sons get during and after the course.

**FG2MP2:** Typical parent question.
Yes, and at ...... we could never tell because we never did any tracking of graduates, that’s part of the reason I’m doing this, is to see where people have ended up after five – seven – ten years, whatever it is since they’ve left.

But I for one am a fan of studying in some way, shape or form.  I did not know what I wanted to do when I started that course but slowly but surely it gave me some tools, and some skills, and some confidence, to go in certain directions, and yes it was running a hotel at one stage.  And it’s clearly moved across the seven years or whatever it’s been.  But if I hadn’t stuck my foot in the door and started studying who knows where I’d be now, I might be in the street with a needle hanging out my arm, you have no idea.  So it’s given me some direction, and the good thing is by starting a course, or getting into a TAFE or a uni, if after the first year or two you don’t like it you just shift into something else, and that’s the ability to do that, and you can find your own path, and determine your own path that way.  But call me a traditionalist, I think it’s great that everybody studies and gets work experience in the field they’re interested in as well.

“I did not know what I wanted to do when I started that course” is a common refrain from school leavers. They have a vague idea what they want to study but as the attrition rates show from university courses, many students enrol in the wrong course and after one or two semesters change their minds or drop out altogether for a period of time and work full-time. However, by completing a TAFE or university course, graduates pick up vital skills and knowledge that can be transferred to many occupations.

As ...... said so much relies on the individual, I mean I could still be carrying plates and checking people in and out each day if I didn’t put my hand up and say I want to do more, I want to learn more, I want to do this.  If you don’t do that, if you don’t – I can see potential in people, but if they don’t...

See it themselves and then – exactly, and then come out and say to me this isn’t for me, I want to do more, I want your job.  I want my staff wanting my job, I want my bosses job, and he wants my GM’s job.  And if you’re sitting there – if you’re one of my duty managers – I’ve got two duty managers at the moment, and two vastly different people, one’s just bought the house and quite happy just doing shift management for the next year or two, and
he’s very good at it, very capable, can easily leave in charge and not a problem. The other one is just itching to kick me out of my chair, and wants my job, and just will do my rosters, will do everything, and I’ve handballed 95 per cent of my work off to him. I keep an eye on it obviously but – because if I move to another hotel, or move back to Europe or something like that, he then jumps straight in. So much relies on the individual, you don’t get given anything these days, you’ve got to earn it.

I: Different people at different stages of their life cycle have different motivations and approaches to their work.

FG2MP2: Yeah, and what I find really interesting – it was a bit of a light bulb moment in my life, I reckon it was probably about three to three and half – four years ago. When I was in sales at ..... I never had the conversation about how bad do you want things in your life with anyone, it’s never sort of a discussion that I had for whatever reasons. I always thought that everyone was like me and that you always wanted to be at the top of your field, or do a bit of managing, or to be a boss, sort of be making big money, all those sort of things. When I got into sales at ..... and I was selling to off premise, which is like milk bars, and cafés, and things. It was the first real sales role that I had. There was maybe 16 sales guys who were employed at that time because the structure of the business had changed, and within a few months I’d identified that out of those 16 guys maybe me and one other guy at the most had eyes on either selling for on premise, which was a step up, or a managers role.

FG2MP2: So out of all those people it was two people that actually had a desire to be more than what they just were, and it was a bit of a light bulb moment for me to think that actually a lot of people are happy just to tread through life and just be a blip. Just be mediocre at what they do, and not have a desire to be anything more.

I: Irrespective of one’s education; some people want to achieve whether it be through lifelong learning or by experience at work whilst others are happy to coast along in their careers and do enough to get by.

FG2MP1: And you need those people, you need a balance, you need them...

I: Quite correctly, a balance is needed for organisations to achieve their goals.

FG2MP2: Absolutely.
FG2MP1:  
But it astounds me that people are like that, I couldn’t stand it.

FG2MP2:  
It does, it astounds me as well.

FG2MP1:  
I’m always looking for the next step, but there are some people – I’ve got a barista at work, she’s making coffees, she’d be 30 something. Brilliant, great coffee maker, guests love her, the outside people and businesses around us love her, we make a fortune off coffee, but just not interested in doing anything else.

FG2MP2:  
It’s amazing isn’t it?

FG2MP1:  
But for stability in businesses you need those people, I don’t agree with them but...

FG2MP2:  
No neither do I, but I just found it amazing that there’s just...

FG2MP1:  
Yeah.

FG2MP2:  
Yeah, it’s very interesting.

I: I suppose it depends where you are in your family lifecycle, it depends whatever external.

FG2MP2:  
Yeah but even if it’s about wanting to work after the kids now I would have still thought that in mind’s eye is, okay, when the kids are a little bit older I want to get back into being better than I am, or getting an extra job, or – but it’s also a boredom thing. Once I know how to do a job subconsciously without trying, that 18 month mark I reckon is when it kicks in, that’s immediately when you look for another challenge in something new because it’s just a boredom thing, it’s like repetition, and I know what I’m doing now, and I’m done. It’s just interesting. So coming back to it, it comes down to the individual.
I don’t think I could study again, I went back I think – when was it, it would have been about five years ago, I studied, did a couple of criminology subjects. I thought I wanted out of the industry, I had a six month period where I thought – over it. Went and did criminology, was going to join the feds. So I sat the Victoria Police exam, and the Federal Police exam, sat the army reserve officer exam, passed them all but just by the time I got round to it, it had taken me six months to do a couple of subjects, and passed it, but to get into the feds you really need to do a degree in that sort of industry. I thought it’s another three to four years before I get to finish it. Glad I didn’t, I mean it’d be interesting, but quite happy where I am for the moment.

It’s pretty rare though for someone to stick to hospitality for a long time, it burns you out that industry, there’s no doubt about that.

It’s the hours, like you said, that whether it’s the hours that you put in, in terms of wanting to get somewhere, you’ve got to put in 50 or 60 hours, always waking up at weird times, or it’s working weekends while your friends are out, all those kind of things.

It was the social life thing that really got to me for a while there, and now my weekends are like gold. I have every weekend off, and I just – when I first got them about 18 months ago, just the most amazing thing in the world.

Walking out at half past three on a Friday and you’re not back til Monday morning, and I just couldn’t comprehend it, and I have a lot of sympathy now for my – guys under me. I’ve trained up that many that there’s four of them now for – basically so two work each weekend and two have them off just because I know how tough it is.

It sucks. I’ve had it six years ago and I vowed never ever to work a weekend again, even at home I get a cleaner, bugger it, my weekends are my weekends, it’s funny.
It appears towards the end of the conversation that the hours involved in the hospitality industry become an issue but FG2MP1 understands the problems it raises for his staff and has them working one weekend on and one weekend off.

The themes of passion and commitment were clearly articulated as being important to being a success in the industries. However, there was also evidence of disenchantment with the industries amongst most of the first group. Issues raised included hours of work, poor pay, work life balance and perceived lack of recognition.

5.3 Descriptive analysis of interviews with Hospitality Managers

The previous chapter dealt with the data from the focus groups which will be compared with the information gained from the following interviews with key hospitality managers. There was a noticeable difference between the attitudes of the first and second group with the second group being much more positive about the industries than the first group.

Four hospitality managers were interviewed; one Australian Operations Manager working in Melbourne (M1) and one Rooms Division Manager also working in Melbourne (M2); one General Manager in Thailand (GM) and one Human Resources Director (HRD) working in Thailand.

The most important questions they were asked were:

I: From your experience as an employer what do you look for initially in a hospitality/tourism graduates in their early stages of employment?

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<tr>
<th>M1</th>
<th>We look very strongly for the right person. We want helpful people with cheerful dispositions……if they have done some kind of study, or they’ve got a demonstrated work history that shows that they have an interest in hospitality over a longer period, then that is a bonus….But the thing I always look for is personality…</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>So for an entry-level person, I don’t need any particular skills….We’re happy to train them….in hospitality all jobs are easy.</td>
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This is the crux of the problem that hospitality graduates face; they have been studying and training for anything up to four years and their skills and knowledge are largely unappreciated by skilled professionals in the industry. However, M1 went on to say “...the complexity is that there’s so many jobs and that they’re interpreted in so many ways by 300
different customers in the hotel every night. That’s where the complexity comes in. ...if I had someone who had come in and had Two Michelin Star experience, and somebody had just started a ....vet science degree....and the person with the Michelin Star experience was quite snooty a little bit better than the guests.....then I would hire...people who do veterinary science are caring people. They like to help and I’ve got her for probably five or six years while she does her studies”.

This supports comments from both graduate focus groups that the passion for the industry is the overriding entry level prerequisite, not the qualification. According to the CHME report (2001) passion and especially ‘commitment’ to the industry are especially important. However, it was difficult to tell from the report exactly which managers from which sectors of the industry had made some of the comments.

M2 | I would expect them to be far more familiar with industry specific terminology and ideas.....I... expect their presentation and professionalism to be superior to that of a non-graduate.

Again this was supported by some of the comments from the CHME (2001) report. Graduates from hospitality degrees were more likely to “understand the industry”; and “more likely to stay the course”.

The industry has no shortage of prospective employees as students, no matter what qualification they are studying, are always looking for part-time employment and the largest employer of part-time employment is the hospitality industry. It is an inescapable fact that employers will not necessarily choose a student studying hospitality to fill an immediate gap in their business. If a highly motivated, enthusiastic student studying archaeology, for example, applies for a position serving beers, (s)he could be trained in 30 minutes how to serve a glass of beer but it is the later more challenging positions for which employers should be training their staff not the short term jobs.

However; the qualification may help the employees in the long run as they have more opportunities to move through the different hotel areas. For example if the graduate has a penchant for accounting or marketing or human resources, as evidenced by results from their studies, more opportunities to specialise are likely to fall their way.

M1 | ...out the front with guests you want people who only see shades of grey ....you don’t want people who look in black and white. But when it comes to accounting, (they’re out the back) shades of grey ...doesn’t work well in that discipline.
This is somewhat at odds with a Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) 2001 report which used data from a survey by Leeds Metropolitan University of 4,000 firms, of which 1,400 had usable results. Some of the comments from the survey pertaining to recruitment included “We do seek graduates out” and the report stated that all of the companies in the sample recruited graduates although one manager stated that a degree in the discipline of hospitality was not mandatory “it would be nice to have”. (CHME 2001).

I: Do you agree with the comments that hospitality/tourism graduates “are over qualified but under experienced.”

| M1 | No, I don't agree. I'm glad that they don't bring a lot of experience. That's often worse than no experience - somebody that, Oh, that's not the way we did it at ......./ that's not the way we did it at .......; ....... we’d do it like this - that can be even harder. So it's not necessarily - to me it's not a bad thing. What I've got is someone who's demonstrated to me a commitment to the industry and the basic native intelligence to get through the degree, and the perseverance that that can require. |

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) found that graduates were sometimes viewed as “over qualified but under experienced”, even for entry level management roles. However, industry is its own worst enemy in this regard as it hires staff who have no qualifications or experience in the industry and trains them accordingly.

| M2 | I do not believe they are qualified enough in the areas of Front Office/Rooms Division/Reservations-Revenue Management. I have found most of the graduates I have worked with to be more proficient in F & B than Rooms Division. And I feel it is always short-sighted to accuse people of being under-experienced in an industry as diverse as ours |

At Institute W the focus of the practical training was undoubtedly upon Food and Beverage training rather than Front Office; students typically want to apply for jobs in Front Office but there may be over a 24 hour period a dozen people working in reservations whereas in food and beverage there may be as many as 60 positions. The likelihood is that the first employment position gained will be in food and beverage and if that position in front office the positions are predominantly held by young women. Bird et al (2002) survey reported that in four and five star hotels in the United Kingdom and Ireland 63 per cent of all employees were between the ages of 21 and 30. Knox (2008) identified that in the front office area of four and five star hotels in Melbourne’s central business district “females
overwhelmingly worked in administrative roles (in excess of 90 per cent female employees) while males worked as porters and concierge (75-100 per cent male employees)

I: If you have two final candidates for a position and assuming all other things remain equal are you likely to look more favourably on a graduate with a degree in hospitality/tourism or an advanced diploma. Why would this be so?

| M1   | Yes, I guess it's, if I'm finding it difficult to split two people - you know, they've both got good attitudes - I'm sure they have got different personalities - but they've got good attitudes and there's - I suppose that's where it comes down to you might decide to take an Anglo over an Indian; you might decide to take a guy over a girl. Depending on your team mix as well and the role you want, I'd take a degree over a diploma. |
| M2   | It would be my opinion that someone who has studied for a number of years for a certain industry would be more likely to last the distance than the non-graduate (as long as all other criteria being equal). |
| M1   | You know, if there's very little between people, that's when you start looking at things like that, saying, "Well, geez, I like them both but I've only got one role. How do I choose between them?" They're the kind of - that's when you start splitting those hairs. So, yes, look, I guess it depends where does that fit on the ladder. It depends - I guess if they're both Anglo guys of similar age, then yes, I would take the degree over the diploma. |
| M1   | If one was a guy and one was a girl, I'd probably take the girl at the moment because I've got the three duty managers - assistant night manager, assistant front office manager, head concierge, one of my receptionists are all guys - so I've only got kind of two girls working at the department so it's a little unbalanced. It's just the way it's fallen - I mean, they've been the best candidates. So if I had nothing else between them - the girl had a diploma, the guy had a degree - I would probably take the girl because I would value the gender balance in the team a little better. |
| M1   | If it come down - if I had a - yes, look, it's hard to say in the exact situation. If nothing else separated them, then yes, I would take the degree over the diploma. But there would be other factors at play as well once you get down to that splitting. I'd try to find a job for the two of them if I could. I'd say, "Well, what else can I do with this one?" you know, offer them both something. |
Because the people are what makes the hotel. Most of the time in a hotel you're lying down with your eyes shut; you've got no idea what's going on. So it's those few moments here and there where you actually interact, when you're walking around with your eyes open and you're actually interacting with someone that means whether or not you like it.

So for me, trying to fill 206 rooms every night, I've got to have 50 per cent repeat business. I can't find 200 new people every single night to fill the hotel up. I've got to have them wanting to come back and telling their friends, and their friends telling their friends about how great it is - and to do that, that's about the people, you know, making them feel welcome. So if I've got two really good people, I'd see what I could do - you know, how could I jam both of them in? That would be my first thought. If I couldn't, then yes, I would take a degree over a diploma, all other things considered equal.

In my experience, graduates I have worked with do seem to be more committed to a career in the industry, as opposed to it just being a job. I think the graduates have a better understanding of the diversity of the industry and therefore the different career paths they may end up taking graduates from other disciplines?

There appears to be a number of factors at play here; one is gender balance, the experience of one applicant over another, the manager who would try to take both, the issue of similar attitudes, the ethnicity preference, and the ability of someone to make people welcome. But what does appear to be evident is that the degree applicant is not going to be employed purely because of their ‘superior’ qualification.
But the final comment from M2 “they may end up taking graduates from other disciplines” is interesting depending on the position being advertised. Maybe marketing or financial positions could be suitable for non-hospitality graduates but it would be disappointing if a frontline operative was chosen from a non-hospitality background.

Facilitator: You mentioned earlier that you thought that if you wanted to rise up the ladder, that if you hadn't got those qualifications, you would advise somebody to go back and perhaps get a degree, and MBA or…

| M1:  | To go into it, because that will become important later, particularly if you want to move beyond the individual unit level or the regional level or a head office role where those kind of skills - organisational management skills - become important, and that she won't get working, she'll need to study for those. So I think you can get all the skills you need to run a hotel in a hotel. You don't really need to go outside that if you're intelligent and you do some reading and you apply your experience. |
| M1:  | As long as you've got the native intelligence to start with, beyond an individual hotel - I think you'll struggle without more theoretical underpinning after that - and that's where the degrees and the postgraduate stuff becomes very important. |

If you had to recruit a middle manage, in whichever department you were looking for, would you be more likely to choose somebody with a degree rather than somebody without a degree - so not the lower-level positions but a middle manager?

| M1:  | Again, I suppose it depends on the applicant - well, and the position. I just recruited 12 months ago a new executive chef. You don't care if he's got a degree; I just want to know what kind of food he's cooked and how he deals with his team and that kind of thing. So depending on the position, if I was looking, say, for a conference and events centre manager or a new front office manager, it would, again, be a combination. |
| M2:  | I would not be keen to answer one way or the other, as it would depend on their knowledge of some of the more complex ideas prevalent in our industry. Once again in particular I would want to know how well versed in ideas such as Revenue & Inventory management, profit and loss analysis & reporting, etc. They maybe a non-graduate who worked under a Manager who provided them with a grounding in these areas, conversely them may be a graduate who was fortunate enough to have been lectured in these areas. |
**M1:** If somebody came in and they had a terrific personality and a good philosophy, and they were articulate and intelligent and they had good experience - maybe they had worked their way up from a porter at Crown and become a receptionist and duty manager and assistant front office manager or something like that - and they were looking for the next step and they wanted to settle, had bought a house, have a couple of kiddies now maybe - that kind of thing - and I could see a good fit, I wouldn't care what their education or qualifications were.

**M2:** Would I be more likely to look for someone? I would see it maybe as an advantage for that kind of person. But, again, for me I would be trying to find someone who would fit the team, someone who I think might be here for five years. That's the kind of person that I'd be looking for - so someone who had a degree, who'd risen quickly, they'd only been out of uni for a couple of years and they were assistant front office manager at Crown and they were looking to be GM by the time they were 30, I wouldn't hire him. I'd be wasting his time and wasting my time.

**M1:** So I'd be looking for someone who'd fit our business better and that would tend to be someone who was looking more to settle a little and happy to find a good role in a good organisation. You know, I don't like my guys to work overtime; pretty much they're out on time every day - and if you can't get your job done in 7.6 hours, then maybe they're the wrong person or you're not doing it very well - and they find it easy.

**M1:** You know, the job - I've got a guy, ...., who's kind of ....'s assistant now and we're grooming him for the - should there be an opportunity for .... somewhere else, that we can move him up into .....'s role as our front office manager. He spent nine years at the ..... and he was the last four or five as a duty manager and assistant front office manager for about his last 12 months. He said it was 12 hour shifts. They were rostered for eight, he said, but it was - you started at seven - if you started on the early, at seven in the morning, you usually didn't get out before about six in the afternoon.
M1: I said, "What did you do?" He goes, "I don't know. I just don't know. Like there was always jobs I had to do after my shift was finished." But, again, that was staffed a bit differently, too, so it was only him and the receptionist, whereas here it's him and a receptionist, a telephonist and a porter, so you've got a bit of support as well, to answer the phone and run bags and park cars and so on. It gives you a little bit more freedom.

M1: We're a fairly unique environment in terms of the strategic direction that we set is a happy staff plus happy customers equals profit. So everything we do should be addressing one of those. There's no point putting something in place if it's going to make things harder for our customers and make them less happy. Making sure that the process doesn't impact on our customer service I guess is what we're talking about - and in big chains that can happen quite a lot; an edict comes down from head office so you have to change the way you do something on the front desk, which means it takes everyone one minute longer to check out. When you've got 160 out on a Friday, that's a lot of extra minutes and it pushes everyone's service back a little bit.

This hotel would have a fairly rare culture; “We’re a fairly unique environment in terms of the strategic direction.....” defines the organisation. The fact that there is no pressure on someone to work 12 hour shifts instead of a normal ‘7.6 hours’ is indicative of a different mindset and work ethic. It is those 12 hour unnecessary shifts that tend to cause resentment and unhappiness amongst staff and the solutions are fairly simple to implement. If “happy staff plus happy customers equals profit” why would not more hotels, in this particular instance, adopt the same approach?

M1: It means as the lifts come down to disgorge a bunch of people; you get them checked out before the lifts get down again. So you're doing these kind of waves of checkouts. But if you've still got half of them there from that first lot, then the next lot arrive, and so you've still got a full lift-load when the next lot of lifts arrive. You're just pushing everyone back and they're thinking, "God, it's like trying to do the banking."
M1: So we're always looking for ways to improve that and streamline the process. If it's a bit harder for accounts, well, you know, they don’t need the help anyway, quite frankly. So they can go round and, you know, I've had a girl on a desk who was, she was, well I spoke to her mum a couple of times; she had a learning disability, always had - but the friendliest girl in the whole world. She was like having a puppy on the desk; you'd walk in the door and her face would light up and she's go, "Oh, hi Mr. Eller, welcome back!" You know, she'd just make people feel good and the lobby sparkled when she was on, you know?

M1: I had a front office manager before ......, ......, and he goes, "We're going to have to do something about her. I think I'm going to have to get rid of her." I said, "You're not getting rid of her." He goes, "Oh, she makes this, she does that, she..." I said, "None of those things affect customers - none of them. Everything you've just told me affects you or accounts." Because she can't count and she'd mix up if people give us a cash bond, we'd post it onto their room, it comes up, negative 100 dollars, that we owe them the hundred. Then they'd use maybe bits and pieces of it during their stay then when they check out it might say, negative 68, so we give them the refund of 68.

M1: Well, she would constantly, if they were a cash room and they'd spent over their bond they'd given us, they're liable for - so it'd just say 38, no negative, and she'd give them 38! She couldn't tell the difference between negative and positive numbers. "I know whatever it says, I have to give them that much to make it zero." What we were talking about before - the accounting side of it.

M1: But fantastic - customers loved her and she was really bright, and the mistakes she made didn't affect the customers - well, only for the positive - they were, "Ooh, I stayed here and made a profit! I'll be back there!" So for me, from my point of view, she was great. She made happy customers. Now, it made things a little bit harder for the front office manager, a little bit harder for the duty manager, a little bit harder for accounts - but, you know, kind of suck it up, keep working with her, helping her to improve on that.
M1: Because that particular spot that she's got is way more important than that, "I can't count" spot. Look, eventually she got there and she was Employee of the Year in her third year here. So became our best receptionist. Once she'd got it, she's the kind of person that once they learn something, they never unlearn it. I'm not sure if she had maybe a little bit of autism or something - that kind of way of looking at things. But she was a great girl, very friendly.

It would be very difficult to imagine this happening in a different hospitality environment; to ‘allow’ employees to make these kinds of errors on a continual basis but as illustrated below the hotel has loyal and long term employees who obviously fit the culture and the culture fits them.

M1: So that’s what we push. So what that means is that we have a lot of staff who stay here a long time. I've been here nearly 12 years. ....'s been here 10, ....'s coming up to four. In the kitchen .....'s been here 12, ....'s has been here 15, .... - he's our sous-chef - he's been here eight. The chef's only been here a year but he took over from a guy who'd been here five and the guy who'd been here before him had been here for 10. So we've had some really good longevity. It's more about what those people like. So we've got a really good, friendly, open atmosphere and we tend to attract and keep people who like to work in that kind of - so there's a lot of trust, there's a lot of autonomy given, particularly to the department heads and department managers. So they tend to - people feel they belong and that they're valued and that they're doing something.

In the focus groups some of the participants who had been ‘loyal’ to the company had not risen through the ranks of the organisations to any real extent and many of them were dissatisfied with their environment and with no clear indication as to how far they could rise through the ranks to achieve satisfaction in their employment.

M1: So it tends to attract a personality type. If you're very career-oriented and you want to climb the ladder quickly, it’s the wrong organisation because we only have three hotels - Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane. We don't really - we've had a couple of transfers within hotels but we don't really move staff around between properties. We’re not taking staff in and saying, "Well, you'll be a general manager in six or seven years if you're the right kind of person, if you're prepared to travel anywhere in the world” kind of thing and do that.
M1: So graduates would more I think tend to gravitate towards those kind of companies that can fast-track their progression. Here we tend to have people who have been through the wringer a bit and are happy to put down some roots and settle in a really good environment. We have a good product; we have a really good hotel, it's very successful, and we've beaten the budget every month so far this year so - and it was a pretty tough budget when we thrashed it out in October with the owners.

M1: So they like being part of that - something successful - and that means they don't have to worry about losing their job. They just have to perform it well - and they do, the ones who stay.

So, do I keep graduates longer? No, probably not. But I think that's more about our environment rather than - it's kind of not the right fit for them. So we might get graduates who will come through, make it sort of through to duty manager and then see, that, "Oh, I've got to wait for someone to die to be promoted."

M1: You know, we'll lose ...... in the next - our owner's looking at - in fact he's got a bid in on one hotel up in Sydney at the moment so we're hopeful that the group expands a little so that we can give people like ...... more opportunity depending on if he's willing to move, because it requires a move, et cetera. At least the opportunities are there if we do that. But that's really the only way we're going to have those opportunities at this stage.

This hotel and this manager would be atypical.
What would you advise school leavers who are interested in a career in hospitality to do?

M2: If I was mentoring school leavers looking at a career in hospitality, I would definitely recommend that they start tertiary qualifications as early as possible. Particularly if they could be working in the industry at the same time. Over the past few years I have noticed that more and more senior Hospitality positions now asking for relevant tertiary education. So I would presume that in another 5 + years it will be almost mandatory.

This is a positive for education; the business environment is becoming more complex and the hotel sector of the industry, in particular, is or has become which needs well educated staff.

5.4 Interviews with Thai Resort Personnel

The remaining two interviews took place in Phuket, Thailand where the working conditions and the cultures are quite different. Charges for guests are in line with Western hotel prices but the wage structures, and hence the popularity of the employment, is vastly different. The minimum wage in Thailand for hotel workers is the equivalent of approximately Aus$10.00 per day; hence the fact that there are many more employees doing relatively menial work at Thai resorts. However, the managers I interviewed mentioned that non managerial staff would receive the following benefits included in their salary ‘package’

- Uniform and laundry
- Transportation to and from home (if they do not live on site)
- I day off per week (during the high season ) and 6 per month in the low season
- Insurance

They can expect a further Aus$3.00 per day in tips.

Phuket was chosen as a country of research as one of the University R graduates was from Thailand and I wanted to find out from a Thai employer’s perspective what motivations and benefits there would be for Thai nationals studying in Australia and then returning home to work in the industry.

The interviews in Phuket were shorter than those in Melbourne due to the nature of the businesses in Phuket as there were time constraints upon the managers concerned. (Human Resources Director = HRD and General Manager = (GM). They were at different properties. The GM was at an eco tourism sustainable resort whilst the HRD was at a family resort with no pretensions of being necessarily sustainable.
I: What level of qualifications do your staff have?

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<td><strong>HRD</strong></td>
<td>It depends on the role, our staff, in reception they have degrees from Thai Universities or overseas because it is important to maintain a high level of customer service but most of our staff are trained at work</td>
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<td><strong>GM</strong></td>
<td>Many of our Front office staff have degrees where the language of tuition is English. We need (Front Office) staff who can speak English as most of our guests speak English. It is very important that our staffs (sic) can communicate properly with our guests.</td>
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According to the Thai Office of Tourism Development (2007) in Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) there are eighty nine institutes in Thailand that are delivering some form of hospitality and/or tourism training, including colleges (TAFEs) and universities.

One university, Vatel International charges domestic students the equivalent of approximately Aus$2,500 whilst charging international students approximately the equivalent of Aus$2,800 per semester. Therefore a six semester, 3 year degree would cost between Aus$15,000 and Aus$17,000 depending on nationality. According to Wisansing (2008) Thailand, has since 2001 tried to promote itself as “a regional education hub; a low cost alternative to Singapore” and is internationalising its curriculum and beginning to attract international students to its universities. The language of tuition is, in many cases, English.

I: Are you aware of any Thai nationals who have returned to Phuket after having studied in overseas locations?

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<td><strong>GM</strong></td>
<td>I think it is unlikely that they would do this because the costs of studying in countries like Australia are so great. They would be better off staying in those countries and trying to get a job there.</td>
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<td><strong>HRD</strong></td>
<td>No, I think they won’t come home because it would take them long time to earn enough to pay back their fees.</td>
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The Thai student who studied at Institute W and University R has returned to Thailand to work and has moved into the Information Technology field.
I: Do you employ international graduates as well as locals?

| HRD | We have a large number of staff from Laos, Cambodia, Burma and a couple from Europe who have not studied here but have come for the lifestyle of living in Thailand and spend a short period of time working here. There is a high turnover of staff as there is intense competition between international hotels. It has been seen as a low status occupation by Thais but it is now improving. In general we employ graduates from Thai colleges and recruit other staff from other countries as I said before. |
| GM | We try to employ local staffs but the status of the jobs is not high for many young people and they do not stay long….we have to use staff from next door countries who are happy to work with our wages. |

This appears to contradict Ghaunpeng (2011) who posited that working in the accommodation sector in Thailand was positively perceived compared to working in unskilled occupations in construction, manufacturing or transportation.

Certainly there are issues with the level of English spoken by frontline staff outside of food and beverage and front office. During the time I spent in one five star hotel and two five star resorts it was sometimes difficult to put one’s point across to various levels of staff. Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) identified that there is a cause for alarm in the Thai hospitality industry as the level of English spoken by frontline staff is poor. In particular, they drew attention to the need for English communication skills for hotel front office as “they have the highest frequency of interactions with guests and they are centrally concerned with guests” satisfaction”.

If Thai hospitality students came to Australia to gain a hospitality degree and returned to Thailand to work; it would be very difficult for them to gain a healthy return on their investment. In the past it was very common to see Europeans or Americans as General Managers of five star and above hotels but now some of the indigenous population is able to gain high level positions. The Thai Hotel Association Annual report (1995-1996) in Wisansing (2008) identified that non-Thai General Managers of hotels accounted for nearly thirty one per cent of all General Managers whilst in Phuket the figure rose to nearly forty five per cent.

However, the new focus on improving Thai hospitality and tourism education hopes to improve the opportunities for the indigenous population.
I: Do you agree with the comments that hospitality/tourism graduates “are over qualified but under experienced.”

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<th>GM</th>
<th>Not in my experience; the culture here is very different I think to yours. Staff not so ambitious so early in their careers. They have to gain experience all over the hotel or resort and learn from their peers</th>
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<tr>
<td>HRD</td>
<td>I don’t think so. Maybe 1 or 2 but many staff we train from the start</td>
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This chapter has analysed the data from interviews with various managers from both Melbourne and overseas. The descriptions have shown that hotel managers identify different strengths and weaknesses of potential employees whatever their background academically. It also highlights the role previous employment may play in obtaining employment within the hotel sector of the industry.

Different cultures play an important role in the ambitions of the diverse groups of students. However, it also highlights that if international students return to their countries of origin then it is difficult to see how they could gain a return on their investment in education in Australia as the salary differentials are so large.

5.5 Descriptive analysis of interviews with Advanced Diploma Graduate

This chapter deals with a single interview with a graduate from the advanced diploma of hospitality management from Institute W. She describes the pathway she has taken to achieve her current position and discusses what she thinks is important for potential students.

The previous chapter provided the viewpoints of several managers; the following interview is an isolated discussion with a graduate from the advanced diploma of hospitality management course.

Despite five diplomates agreeing to participate in the focus group only 1 eventually agreed to be interviewed; a high achiever in a travel related sector of the industry. Initially, her studies at Institute W had not been particularly successful but as time passed she applied herself much more rigorously to her education once she found a keen interest in front office. She obtained employment at a leading Melbourne hotel and after six months was promoted to be a supervisor.
Later she was asked to be the account assistant and finally Assistant manager at the hotel after the general manager asked her to take the position. She stayed there for about eighteen months. She then moved to another property where she was also the Assistant Manager there for the reception and looking after eight receptionists and then from there she then became a Night Manager as well and then the Front Office Manager left and she was then acting as a Front Office. At that stage she thought that the work life balance was becoming important and looked for a ‘9-5 job Monday to Friday’. She has now been working at a leading provider of hotel business process management solutions and is currently in the role of Manager Support Services having started as a Customer Service Representative before rising through the organisation to being the Revenue Manager and then into her current role.

I: How do you think your hospitality education helped you achieve this position?
I: Would you be able to do this position without a hospitality background?

| FTF1 | Well it did because, I mean for us, when you study actually in ……(country deleted), you don’t get to develop yourself. You don’t actually speak about, you would never present yourself or do a presentation in front of people or gain that kind of confidence to speak in front of people……..I think it was more about a personal development. |
| FTF1 | Nup, nup, I wouldn’t, no... It would be harder because I wouldn’t be speaking the same language as the other, with the people that I’m dealing with so I don’t think... |

I: Do you think the skills and knowledge again from your studies are transferable into other industries?

| FTF1 | Yeah, because I would say there’s, I mean in banking there’s various departments as well. I mean in terms of even working in the Admin section but you have to work within a team. You have to know how to work with a lot of people. You have to communicate, you have to still have the customer service level behind it which you gain a lot at Institute W which I did. |
I: During your career moves, have you knowingly come across students who may have graduated with degrees of hospitality or tourism? If so how do you think you’ve progressed compared to them?

FTF1  
Let me think about….. actually yes I have. I think I’ve actually grown more. I don’t know whether that was luck that I’ve actually found the proper, what I really wanted, because you do get up every morning and you think oh, do I want to go to work but the day you actually get up and you just don’t want to go to work, that’s not where you should be. But it hasn’t been like that for four years and I’m still happy to come to work so excited and all but I have a couple of people that have studied but not at Institute W so some other school. But I’ve asked ‘You’re working in a café?’ like they’re still doing a casual job not finding what they want really and I don’t know whether that’s sometimes presentation ……….. I mean they’re younger than me and they went straight into studying and doing their degree and the diploma in advance and their degree and up to now I have friends that are still working in a café and they’re casual. They’re always wanting to actually grow. I even tried to get them an interview here but still they were not successful so I don’t know. Yeah, but I think yeah, I’ve done well I think and I always refer to the fact that I’ve studied 11 years. I don’t know why but somehow it really had an impact on my life and I would always recommend to actually study there.

I: have members of your team studied either hospitality or tourism?

FTF1  
Yeah, I think a lot of them have done tourism management and yeah, but a lot of them are also like a revenue management background and studied at Cornell University for example and would have worked in a hotel at the front and front desk level. Some of them would have studied. Everyone would have actually worked in the hospitality industry but not necessarily studied it before. 50 per cent of our staff here have studied that.
I: Do you think you would need further studies? If you were to stay here would you need to do further studies?

FTF1: You wouldn’t need to because you actually grow slowly into the role and whatever comes up, you’re actually getting the training for it. So you can develop that skill being the expert into that particular product or whatever is coming up. But I would want to study more, I would want to study probably just you know, like let’s say the University of Cornell or something, you know. My dream actually is not this job. My dream is to teach actually but this is what I’m thinking about doing. Maybe then I’ll change that career path completely but just to teach, even in the hospitality industry itself.

It is interesting that this particular successful 32 year old working in the hospitality industry would like to teach in the hospitality industry where the pay and conditions would be less favourable than her current conditions.

I: Do you think studies in hospitality or tourism are necessary for people to make a success of their careers in tourism or hospitality?

FTF1: If I take the example of ….. who has been in design and she’s in Australia now and did her degree or something else, a Masters, I don’t know, in design – she’s working in hospitality. She’s working in a café and…

P: I: Voluntarily?

FTF1: Yeah, because she’s been doing that for the last three years now but she’s now the manager. She manages it but haven’t had this hospitality background at all. But when I’m there and I watch them doing things I could kill them. I could scream at them. I’m looking at her serving this customer chewing this gum! Every time I go there I’m telling her off about, oh you can’t do this, you cannot do that. You can’t tell this customer like this. But I think it is important. I think the way you formulate your sentences or the way you actually respond to a customer or giving them that, I don’t know, that kind of respect or the way you speak to them. Of course they’re not always right but the way you actually say things to them is I think, is different from someone that has this hospitality, maybe knowledge than someone that doesn’t at all.

I just think that those people, themselves and those owners or whoever manages it, are not that passionate about what they’re going to do or don’t think that it’s going to be important. They just think that I’ll be able to train them because at the end of it you just probably have to bring them a plate and bring them a glass of wine.
This raises an interesting point about the customers; maybe they do not anticipate that the staff who are serving them will necessarily have had previous hospitality training. They do not mind how they are addressed or how they are treated as long as this ‘renowned’ café provides them with food and beverages.

However, it also demonstrates that hospitality trained graduates have a different expectation of how they themselves and other employees should behave at the workplace. Their own expectations are higher.

The concept of passion is again raised here; only on this instance is it connected to the owners or proprietors of the business. If they are not passionate about the business it is unlikely that the employees will be either. A case of “monkey see, monkey do” (Sullivan 2007, Egan 2008).

I: If this business needed a new revenue manager would any other qualification be more useful than an hospitality qualification?

| FTF1 | No, I don’t think they’d put anyone with an accounts or finance or IT background in my position. It would actually jeopardise the business itself because these people won’t trust us anymore. Because if you don’t know what you’re talking about then people are going to be like ‘Oh please don’t call me anymore, because you don’t even know what you’re talking about. I have one bedroom apartment and he has this, this, this, this you know.’ |

This excerpt highlights the fact that as an employee gains promotion the hospitality qualification (and/or experience) does become more important. “... it would jeopardise the business ...because you don’t know what you’re talking about.....” If an outsider was brought in without hospitality experience or qualification this business would suffer.

I: What would you advise a student interested in tourism or hospitality to do to improve their career prospects?

| FTF1 | I would actually say study but at the same time get a job within that same industry..... somehow you just get a little bit out of everyone and that just gives you the confidence and you actually gain a lot of knowledge you know. You gain more and you feel more confident into going into that industry ....If they wanted to go to that path of working in a hotel or any hospitality business the study would definitely contribute to them being successful. |
I: But they wouldn’t necessarily need a degree?

**FTF1**  
They wouldn’t necessarily need a degree, no……It would be helpful but when you are actually applying for the job they don’t really look at your degree right now… but if you did a degree and never actually worked anywhere and then you actually go out there and try to get a job I wouldn’t trust that person.

From this interviewee’s perspective, it is the combination of qualification **and** experience that is important.

*You gain more and you feel more confident into going into that industry …. and similarly to the degree graduates it is the confidence that the training gives you to go out and apply for positions that might otherwise be unattainable.*

It is a combination of personality, commitment, luck, study and being in the right place in the right time that is likely to lead to a success in the industries.
6. Discussion

The previous chapter focussed on the data derived from the focus groups and interviews. The participants were recruited via a question asked at the end of the survey they completed on SurveyMonkey. Two focus groups were held and one interview with an individual was held. Additionally, interviews were held with two Australian and two Thai hospitality personnel. This chapter will identify the discuss the themes discovered in the analysis of the focus groups, interviews and survey data.

As stated previously this study aims to answer the following four questions:

- What are the current employment outcomes of graduates with degrees and advanced diplomas of hospitality and tourism?
- What pathways have the graduates taken to get to their current roles?
- What has the value been of their studies to the graduates?
- Does one need a degree to be successful in tourism or hospitality?

The data described above in the surveys and focus groups identifies the employment outcomes of both sets of graduates. In most cases the graduates started their careers in the same positions as when they were students. There was a notable exception of the graduate who was head hunted by a well-known company to manage a team of 12-15 people.

The graduates are now moving slowly up the chain of command again with the exception of the more skilled and more committed graduates who have forged a path to higher responsibilities or are running their own businesses. Many have left the industries due to anti-social hours and work life balance.

The pathways graduates have taken are varied. Whilst their expectations at the beginning of their careers were that the education would help them it is apparent that experience in the early parts of their careers is more valuable.

The most valuable asset has been that all of the graduates have no trouble in finding work even after they have travelled or started a family or taken a break. The financial benefits have been valuable but are not as high as from more traditional degrees. Further education has been of benefit especially for those wishing to change jobs.

Graduates have declared that for the early parts of their careers degrees are unnecessary but are valuable as they grow into their jobs. Graduates have identified that several of the
subjects studied during their education have become more valuable as they have been promoted.

The group which has been most successful financially, is the group which has left the industries and moved on to alternative careers. They are mostly degree graduates, whilst the most successful graduates who remain in the industry are from the advanced diploma cohort. As stated earlier, the analysis suggests that graduates leave the industry as due to poor salaries, lack of opportunity and under appreciation of their efforts. Most of the graduates interviewed are contemplating leaving the industries. Surprisingly, those who intend to remain have no great desire to try and improve the industries to attract higher quality employees. A European exchange student who has studied at my present employer stated “there is no culture of hospitality here, back at home it is a well respected career”. Herein lies part of the problem for hospitality employers.

Potentially, better rewards lie outside the industries for most of the graduates. It is only the committed and passionate who will thrive and succeed. That is not to say that the hospitality industry in particular, cannot be a worthwhile and rewarding career, but it demands sacrifices that the present generation may not perceive to be worthwhile.

6.1 Themes

Several themes became evident from both the focus groups and the surveys; from the focus groups the themes of luck, commitment, passion, experience, education, pride, confidence, and transferability of skills and knowledge were identified. The first focus group emphasised the usefulness of experience over education. The members of the second group, FG2MP1 and FG2MP2 also mentioned experience but their emphasis was on passion in whichever job they were. They had both worked in lower paid positions during their early careers before becoming gradually promoted because of the work ethic and the expertise they had demonstrated. One is shortly to become a general manager of a newly arrived hotel chain in Melbourne whilst the other is starting his own chain of organic fast food cafes. During the discussion they were surprised at some of the attitudes shown by the first group.

Onwuegbuzie et al (2009) proposed a qualitative framework for collecting and analysing data from focus groups; a micro – interlocutor approach which, amongst other things, focuses on the individual’s participation during the focus group instead of the group as a whole. In this way each the individuals role is highlighted whether they are active, quiet, passive or animated throughout the session. Some focus groups, if not managed well can have dominant
members who overshadow others and may cause members who have an important
collection to make to remain silent.

This was not the case in this research; all members were respectful of each other during the
focus groups discussions and allowed others to have their say. Additionally, the moderator, in
this case the researcher, was careful to allow all members time to express their feelings
regardless of their perceived status within the group.

Vicsek (2007) structures thematic analysis in two ways; firstly by characterising the
similarities of the various groups and secondly, if important, by the differences between the
two groups. On occasions Vicsek (2007) also analyses the individual groups separately.
There was animated discussion amongst the first of my groups but no disharmony. Bryman
(2012) uses an illustration of how a disagreement can deter one or more people from
participating in the discussions. No such disagreement occurred here.

The combination of education, confidence, and being in the right place at the right time
coupled with a bit of luck was identified by the advanced diploma graduate as being the
reasons for success. She was convinced that all of these components put together were likely
to result in a successful start to a career. After that it was up to the individual to forge their
own careers using their skills and knowledge.

In contrast to that, the more successful degree graduates identified hard work as the key
contribution to their success.

The surveys indicated that both groups thought that further education was important with
over fifty percent of graduates having gone onto further study. Those who had undertaken
further study and transferred from the hospitality and tourism industries were financially
more successful than those who had remained in them.

The concept of lifelong learning was mentioned in a fleeting way in both focus groups, the
participants recognised that without further studies they would be unlikely to be able to
achieve their career objectives. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and
Development produced a report in 2012 outlining the significance and benefits of lifelong
learning. The graduates who undertook further education had identified it as a way out of the
hospitality, tourism and events industries. Most further education or training in the industries
tends to come from in house or on the job. If an employee is moved from for instance, Front
Office, to Events then they largely learn on the job.
Whitelaw (2010) in his thesis described four groups based on the number of promotions individuals had had during their careers; “stars”, “stalwarts”, “flash”, and “foot soldiers”. According to Whitelaw (2010) ‘stars’ are senior and middle managers with a high number of promotions over the last five years. ‘Stalwarts’ are senior and middle managers with a low number of promotions over the last five years; ‘flash’ members are low rank staff with a high number of promotions over the last five years whilst the ‘foot soldiers’ are low rank employees with no promotions over the last five years.

The participants in the focus groups and interviews could be loosely attributed to three of these groups. None of them could be described as stars as none of them are senior enough. However, the single advanced diploma interviewee could be described as half way between a stalwart and a star as she is clearly a high achiever who could be described as a middle manager but who may not have a clear career path ahead of her apart from trying to become a teacher.

The members of the second focus group could also be similarly described although in Whitelaw’s (2010) thesis he did not address the prospect of self-employment and how people would fit into that category. But the member of the focus group who has now accepted a General Manager’s position commencing in November could be moving into the star category shortly.

There is one foot soldier in the first focus group, one to two stalwarts whilst the remainder of them would belong to the flash group but with potential to move upwards. Although one of the tenets of this research is that promotion within the hospitality industry can be relatively quick most of the participants have not risen to responsible positions all that quickly during the research period and their early careers.

However, very recently two of the members of the first focus group have been promoted and may also be moving into the stars group.

### 6.2 Human Capital

The Graduate Pathways Survey (GPS 2008) as part of an Australian Council for Educational Research series analysed the employment and education pathways for graduates five years after graduation from Australian Universities. At that stage, in 2003 there would have been no graduates from TAFE degrees and therefore they could not have been included in the survey. However, there are some interesting comparisons to be made between the educational
and employment outcomes of the cohorts in this research and the outcomes from the GPS. The following table depicts some of the key characteristics of the three different groups.

**Table 11 - Key characteristics of the three different groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Further study per cent</th>
<th>Employment part time per cent</th>
<th>Employment full time per cent</th>
<th>Median salary $</th>
<th>Overseas/local employment per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>7/93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual award</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>42,500</td>
<td>10/90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv Dip</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>12/88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The return on investment for the university graduates, studying other disciplines than hospitality or tourism, is higher than the return for either the Institute W or Institute R graduates, and the gap is quite large. One would expect those university graduates who move into health and veterinary employment would earn much higher salaries than many others and therefore those categories have been removed from the analysis.

There are remarkable coincidences concerning the percentages of students who have undertaken further studies and the percentages of full-time and part-time employment. It is interesting that over half of both groups have gone onto to further study and the percentage is much higher than those from other disciplines.

In other disciplines there are fewer graduates working part-time and approximately the same percentage working full-time and their median salary is $20,000 dollars more than the dual award graduates and nearly 430,000 more than the median salary of the advanced diploma graduates. If employees in the industries were aware of these figures they may have thought twice before choosing hospitality, tourism or events as a career.

The United Kingdom government commissioned research published in 2011 depicting the returns to higher education qualifications in terms of earnings and employment and painted a disappointing picture. The marginal earnings return for those with an undergraduate degree compared to those with 2 or more ‘A’ Levels stand at 27.4 per cent higher overall. The highest returns were associated with dentistry and medicine. The lowest returns for men were in linguistics and European languages whilst for women it was in the areas of mass communication and documentation.
Comparing to those with 2 or more ‘A’ Levels the research found that graduands with a degree were more likely to be employed by 3.3 percentage points. Men achieved a 2.1 percentage point advantage whilst women accounted for an advantage of 4.2 percentage points.

Male graduands in the disciplines of architecture, dentistry, medicine and veterinary science saw an increase of 4 percentage points. Neither hospitality nor tourism degrees were mentioned in the report but they could be assumed to fall under the category of ‘Business and administrative studies’; in which case those degrees showed a marginal return of 2.8 per cent for men and 3.05 for women. The report used data from labour Force Surveys completed between 1996 and 2009 (BIS 2011).

A recent article in the London Daily Telegraph (Nelson, 2012) attempts to discredit the worth or value of university degrees in the United Kingdom. The article by Nelson (2012) outlines the mis-selling of higher education in Britain; outlining the lack of returns on investment if students complete the wrong course. For example, doctors and dentists can earn boost their earnings in excess of £400,000 over a lifetime of work; but studying what used to be a well regarded degree in history and philosophy, “can expect to earn a paltry £35 a year more than non-graduates”. The article also highlighted an example where a degree in “mass communication” actually leads to graduates earning £15,000 less (emphasis added) than a non-graduate commencing employment at 18 years of age.

Under Prime Minister Tony Blair’s British government there was a policy determination that 50 per cent of all young people should enter higher education; a policy that appears to have been adopted by Australia’s present federal government. In Nelson’s 2012 article he states; “The mis-selling of higher education (in Britain) is one of the least remarked-upon scandals of our time”. That many students are not necessarily suited to higher education whatever support services are offered does not appear to be factored into any policy whether it is in Britain or Australia. One size does not fit all.

Despite the current policies of various state governments of cutting funding to TAFEs there is room for both VET and higher education providers to deliver diplomas and degrees in hospitality and tourism to people wishing to enter the industries and to people already working in the industries.

This chapter has discussed the themes discovered in the analysis of the data and highlighted the importance of human capital theory.
7. Ethics, Risks and Limitation

The previous chapter emphasised the various themes identified in the analysis of the data and drew attention to the importance of human capital theory. This chapter deals with the ethics, risks and limitations in this research. It identifies the complications surrounding the research.

This chapter has dealt with the issues surrounding the research and the impacts they had on the length of the research period.

7.1 Ethics

This research has been formulated to meet all the ethical requirements and has been cleared by the University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education Human Research Ethics Committee with one revision after I left my original employer and had to amend the design of the research.

I was confronted by a number of ethical issues; firstly I needed permission from the students to send them the questionnaire by both the web and by post; secondly I needed the students’ permission to be able to interview them and potentially their employers. Anonymity was assured for the participants and the mailing list was destroyed. Non-respondents needed a reminder letter or call and therefore there was a method by which participants who responded were able to respond to the survey and were able to independently assure me that they had responded without their responses being identifiable.

Many graduates elected to give their names and contact details for the follow up focus groups but these details were kept separate from the survey in order for their answers not be compromised.

Web based surveys are less expensive and quicker to administer than mail out surveys but there are significant concerns amongst various populations about their confidentiality, their availability to everyone, the technical issues surrounding web browsers, and how they are administered. Contrary to this view, young people react positively to the interactive nature of web surveys; they are popular amongst the younger generation and can be completed at their leisure (Sax, Gilmartin & Bryant 2003). On the other hand, because of the ease of web surveys implementation, students and staff of educational Institutes are becoming “fatigued with the number of requests for responses” (Umbach 2005).
Palmquist & Stueve, (1996) in Sax, Gilmartin and Bryant, (2003) discuss in their earlier research that younger and more affluent males are the individuals most likely to respond to surveys on the web. Additionally, Sax et al. (2003) also argue the option I choose, of web based and post-out survey can lead to non response bias. Neither Sax et al. nor Porter and Umbach make any recommendations as to how to improve response rates but recommend further research. Porter and Whitcom, (2005) discuss the personality traits of students who respond to surveys and suggest further research into students’ personalities. It is not part of my focus to research response rates but rather make allowances for them.

Web based surveys may be less expensive and time consuming than paper based surveys but the response rate is lower than paper based surveys; there is disagreement about who is most likely to respond male or female; but there is agreement that international students are less likely to respond (Porter & Umbach 2005, Sax, Gilmartin & Bryant 2003). Additionally, ethical guidelines surrounding web based surveys are unclear (Sax, Gilmartin & Bryant 2003).

7.2 Risks

The research has been identified as ‘low risk’ as it involves consenting adults and is a non-controversial issue. Although it is ‘low risk’, the research has taken longer than originally anticipated due to my departure from my original employer and the difficulty of identifying a reasonable size sample with which to work.

There was a risk that students who perceive that they have not been successful in the workplace would not complete either the web or postal survey.

There was a risk that a substantial number of students would not give me permission to either interview them or their employers. I tried to allay any misgivings the students may have about their or their employers’ participation in interviews. Central to this was a written agreement signed by all parties signifying that all information gained would be confidential; what data is being sort; that the information would be recorded and it would be held safely; how that information will be utilised; the risks inherent to the participation; and also the perceived benefits of participation (Caulley 1998). All parties include students, employers, and me.
7.3 Limitations

The first and most prominent limitation has been the refusal of Institute W to use its student database and its refusal to allow me to use its alumni to contact the graduates.

The second limitation is the lack of contact with tourism graduates in either the advanced diploma or degree cohorts. The focus has therefore, been largely limited to the analysis of hospitality graduates from both programmes. Additionally, the small percentage of international graduates participating in the study leaves a gap in the research. It would be interesting for a further study to pursue those students to discover their employment outcomes and whether they are still in Australia or elsewhere.

The third limitation has been the size of the focus groups and in terms of the advanced diploma the opportunity to only interview one graduate (albeit a clever and articulate graduate).

This may cast a shadow over the reliability and confidence in the findings although I believe that the analysis has been rigorous and robust enough to support the findings.
8. Conclusion

The previous chapter tackled the issue of ethics, risks and limitations in the research and the impacts they had on the research period.

This chapter concludes the research and discusses the implications of it. The avenues for further research are examined.

8.1 Summary of findings by research questions

8.1.1 What are the current employment outcomes of graduates with degrees and advanced diplomas of hospitality and tourism?

The graduates from both programmes have achieved supervisory position within their chosen field. One hospitality graduate, subsequent to the research being completed, has recently become a general manager of an hotel. Another has left the best paid position of all the graduates to start his own restaurant, whilst another has left a well paid position for work life balance reasons. None of their salaries are now known but it has been interesting to chart the career changes of the participants during the time of the research.

On the basis of the data collected from the surveys and the analysis of the focus groups it can be claimed that graduands from the degree programmes have been able to transfer more easily into alternative careers rather than remaining in the hospitality or tourism industries.

Who is more successful? Financially, the most successful graduates from any course are those who have left the tourism and hospitality industries and have undertaken further studies. Their skills and knowledge have enabled them to pursue more financially rewarding employment. The most successful financially in the industries are those who have the commitment, passion, confidence and a little bit of luck. However, they had also worked extremely hard to get where they are now.
8.1.2 What pathways have the graduates taken to get to their current roles?

Graduates have taken varied pathways to achieve their current positions. Four of the participants are still at their employer they had during their industry year. Further research could be undertaken to investigate their experiences at these employers. Thirty seven of them are working full-time whilst ten are working part-time. Twenty one are no longer working in the hospitality or tourism industries.

Five graduates from the dual award programme have achieved a Masters qualification whilst a further four have achieved a graduate certificate or higher. Another six have undertaken another degree. None of the Masters graduates are working in tourism or hospitality.

One of the graduates from the dual award programme is working for themselves. The remainder have worked their way up to their current position in a logical career pattern. Eight of them are still working in the hospitality and tourism industries. One of the graduates has a Masters qualification and is working in Canada.

There is a little literature examining the worth of the part-time work done by students during their studies (Watts & Pickering 2000, Barron and Anastasiadou 2009) but much of it looks at what the impacts of part-time work are on students academic progress rather than an analysis of its worth to the students’ careers in the short or long term. Barron and Anastasiadou’s (2009) research identified that although students would like more recognition of the impact of their employment upon their studies it did not investigate to see if the employment was taken into account for their future careers.

Students invariably work in the industries during their diplomas or degrees yet when they graduate they often remain in those positions (often lowly paid) as employers disregard their qualification. Given that students from other disciplines are also often employed within the industries despite having no formal training in, for example, waitering, and yet are employed next to well trained staff at the same pay and classification level must provide food for thought as to whether hospitality training at degree level is necessary in the short term. Whilst it may be important for those graduates who wish to make a career in the industry for those who seek alternative careers, formal education may not be necessary in the first instance.
8.1.3 What has the value been of their studies to the graduates?

The crux of the matter is whether a degree in hospitality or tourism is worth pursuing from a financial point of view or from a career point of view; should a student spend $40,000 obtaining a degree or does an advanced diploma at $2,500 achieve the same outcomes?

Funding arrangements have changed for diplomas and advanced diplomas as from 2013. Fees in Victoria have risen to approximately $6,000 in some cases; which may make a degree more attractive financially.

The results can only be looked upon tentatively because of the small sample of graduates, the method of selection and the lack of representativeness amongst the samples. However, what can be generally stated is that the studies by all groups have allowed the graduates to achieve and retain meaningful employment within their spheres of interest. But, many of the graduates are becoming under impressed with their long term prospects both financially and professionally and businesses and employers need to address some of their concerns or fear losing experienced, motivated and passionate employees before they reach their full potential and before they can make a meaningful contribution to the businesses for which they work.

Governments, both federal and state need to present a united voice when formulating policy in tertiary education. Whether the federal government be Labor and the state governments be Liberal or Labor/Labor or Liberal/Labor should not matter; they need to compromise and articulate common policy in order for potential students and their parents to make definite and clear decisions about which path is the best to follow to achieve their desired career outcomes.

8.1.4 Does one need a degree to be successful in tourism or hospitality?

The results from the focus groups were a resounding, No. However, what the degrees gave graduates were confidence and transferable skills and knowledge enabling them to move to other industries. Those graduates are earning substantially more than those who have remained in the hospitality and tourism industries. Up to the conclusion of the research no hospitality and tourism employee was earning more than $80,000 but five graduates working in the areas of media, finance, human resources, banking and a charity are earning more than $80,000. Certainly, early in their careers participants felt that degrees were unnecessary for hospitality and tourism.

Since the conclusion of the research at least three of the participants have changed jobs and anecdotally their salaries have increased.
Some managers prefer staff to move up the ladder from the bottom of the ladder whilst others deem that students with degrees start with an advantage and are likely to progress further and faster than those without degrees.

8.2 Implications of Study

The most important issue facing the industries is the retention of well-educated staff who have identified, primarily, hospitality as an interesting, challenging, exciting and rewarding career. However, they feel that they are not being recognised for their endeavours, either extrinsically or intrinsically. This has lead to de-motivation and an urge for most of the graduates from both cohorts to seek alternative employment as they mature. This is not too difficult as their courses were business focused and have given them the skills and knowledge to apply for positions outside tourism and hospitality.

The industries suffer as they see well trained, long serving employees leave for better opportunities but they are reluctant to change recruitment or work practices to encourage these employees to remain. As the new Generation Y employees identify that these industries are unreceptive to their needs and wants the industries may find themselves with a diminishing pool of Australian employees. This will open opportunities for international graduates, who, at the moment find it difficult to find meaningful employment.

Below I discuss in more detail the implications from the research.

Firstly, hospitality and tourism degrees are relatively new academic pursuits and have only recently become popular amongst school leavers. These are the managers of the future who will shape the industries as the industries mature. The industries are becoming more professional and more complex to manage. An hotel, for example, may have three hundred rooms and up to a combined full-time and part-time number of one hundred and fifty employees. These hotels are open every day for twenty four hours per day and require well trained professionals to manage them.

There is research being undertaken by the Office of Teaching and Learning, which is examining the Threshold Learning Outcomes for tourism, hospitality and events for higher education in Australia. I am playing a small part in this research. Stakeholders from industry, current students and alumni, and both VET and higher education providers are providing input into the research. The aim of the project is “designed to engage staff from the sector and to enable a range of outcomes for educators, education leaders, prospective students, accrediting agencies and industry” (http://www.olt.gov.au/). The report is due to be finalised
by either late 2014 or early 2015. Hopefully, the outcomes from the report will assist the parties involved in this research to make informed decisions about their educational pathways.

There appears to be an acceptance by educators but not necessarily governments that there is enough room in the educational marketplace for both VET and higher education providers. However, it is possible that universities would like to assimilate students who apply for advanced diploma courses into their courses to increase the size of their intakes. But TAFE institutes in particular, cater for a different type of student and I suggest both forms of education can exist side-by-side.

Secondly, the findings from this research indicate that further research would be useful in other disciplines. There are a large number of vocational institutes delivering a wide variety of courses to the level of advanced diplomas.

These institutes are competing against degree delivering universities in similar areas such as business, accounting and marketing. Is there a need for this competition? As advanced diplomas become more expensive due to funding cuts by various state governments stakeholders need to identify the relative merits of undertaking the different programmes in terms of employment outcomes and return on investment.

Thirdly, educators need to weigh up the training models which they deliver; does newly employed frontline staff need a degree in order to be employed in the first instance? Or could they perform equally as well with an advanced diploma and undertake further studies e.g. at masters level later in their careers? Once the employee has developed an interest in marketing or finance for instance a post graduate qualification may be more valuable.

Is the theory component of degree course too heavily emphasised to the detriment of practical skills or vice versa in advanced diploma courses?

Fourthly, do hospitality, tourism, business, accounting or marketing really need two different qualifications? Potential Students need to research more thoroughly their study and employment options before committing themselves to a particular two or three year course. In the past they would have needed to identify their career objectives but as discussed earlier people falling in the Gen Y category will have more career changes than previous generations and therefore this is not quite so important. Nevertheless, a career plan would be a useful starting point for decision making.
The focus group members were, with two exceptions high achievers or potential high achievers and they agreed that it was unnecessary in their early careers for them to have degrees. They thought, however that the longer they stayed in the industry the more valuable their degrees became. Should they stay in the industry for longer in some cases postgraduate qualifications may become more useful?

However, as the degrees they studied had a large business component to them; the members also thought that gave them an option to change careers.

The research demonstrates that if the hospitality and tourism industries want to recruit well educated personnel and retain them then those personnel need to be well rewarded financially, emotionally and need to be given challenging roles to encourage them to stay in the industry and improve the businesses in which they work.

It is my intention to maintain contact with the members of the focus groups and to interview them again in the next five years to determine their progress either within the hospitality and tourism industries or outside them. Further longitudinal studies would be useful in this regard in other graduates disciplines.

Additionally, a coherent policy will add certainty to the education providers which, at the time of writing, are in a state of flux as contestability issues at the VET level and deregulation in the university sector create both problems and challenges for both sectors.

Finally, degrees in hospitality, tourism and indeed events are relatively young compared to degrees in other disciplines. Further research needs to be completed when the current generation of upper managers, many of whom do not have academic qualifications, retire. When the younger generations with qualifications assume those positions changes may occur in the management of hospitality and tourism operations. These managers with degrees may then require personnel in lower positions to undertake more formal academic qualifications.
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11. Appendix 1

University R Graduate Survey Questions
1. About you

1. In which country were you born?
   - Australia
   - Other (please specify)

2. At the time of your study were you a permanent resident of Australia? If not, which country are you from?
   - Yes
   - Other (please specify)

3. Please enter your gender
   - Male
   - Female

4. Which study stream did you undertake?
   - Tourism
   - Hospitality

5. When did you start and finish the course at William Angliss? Semester and year eg 1/1999
   - Course started
   - Course finished

6. In relation to the RMIT section of the course (that is the industry year and the fourth year at RMIT), please select one of the following statements that is most appropriate to you;
   - I completed my industry placement year AND the fourth year of study (Go to Q8)
   - I completed my industry placement year BUT NOT the fourth year of study at RMIT (Go to Q9)
   - I completed my degree at another institution (not RMIT) (Go to Q6)
   - None of the above (Go to Q7)

7. Why did you choose not to complete the final two years of the course?

8. At which institute did you complete your degree?

9. What is the title of your qualification?
University R Graduates Survey

10. Where did you complete your industry placement year?
   Employer Name
   Type of Business
   Your occupation
   Location

11. What was your MAIN reason for studying the Advanced Diploma of Hospitality or Tourism articulating to RMIT?
   [ ] To get a job
   [ ] To develop my own business
   [ ] To start my own business
   [ ] To get a better job or promotion
   [ ] I wanted extra skills for my job
   [ ] For interest or personal reasons
   Other (please specify)

12. Did your course help you achieve your MAIN reason for doing the course (as reported in Q11)?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No
   [ ] Partly
   [ ] Don't know yet

13. If the course did not meet your main reason for doing the course (as reported above) please provide recommendations for improvements to the course.

14. Would you have recommended the WAI/RMIT course to your friends?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No
3. Your work Situation

15. Do you have a full-time or part-time job of any kind at the moment? (including casual, temporary or part-time, if it is for one hour or more).

☐ Yes, I work for payment or profit (includes being self-employed)
☐ Yes, unpaid work in a family business
☐ Yes, other unpaid work
☐ No, I do not have a job (Go to Q23)

16. On what basis are you employed in your MAIN job at present?

☐ Wage or salary owner
☐ Conducting own business - with employees
☐ Conducting own business - without employees
☐ Helper not receiving wages

17. Is the employer/business you have the same one you had during your industry placement year?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Did not complete industry placement year

18. What is your main occupation and what are the main tasks you usually perform in your MAIN job?

Title: 

Jobs usually performed: 

Location of the business (city and country): 

19. What kind of industry, business or service is carried out by your employer/business in your MAIN job?

eg tourist attraction, hotel, restaurant, fast food outlet

20. How many people work for your employer/business?

☐ Less than 10
☐ 10-19
☐ 20-99
☐ 100 or more people
University R Graduates Survey

21. In your main job, do you work full-time or part-time?
   - [ ] Full-time (38 hours or more per week)
   - [ ] Part-time (less than 38 hours per week, including casual)

22. In your MAIN job, how much do you usually earn per year (before tax or anything else is taken out)?
   - [ ] $80,000 or more
   - [ ] $60,000 - $79,999
   - [ ] $40,000 - $59,999
   - [ ] $30,000 - $39,999
   - [ ] $20,000 - $29,999
   - [ ] $1 - $19,999

23. Which of the following job related benefits do you feel you have received as a result of undertaking the course shown at the beginning of this survey?
   - [ ] Got a job
   - [ ] An increase in earnings
   - [ ] A promotion (or increased status at work)
   - [ ] Change of job
   - [ ] Was able to set up my own business
   - [ ] None of the above
   - [ ] Other (please specify)

24. How long did it take you to find a job relevant to your course after completion of the course?
   - [ ] Already had a job
   - [ ] Less than 1 month
   - [ ] 1-3 months
   - [ ] 4-6 months
   - [ ] 7-12 months
   - [ ] More than 12 months
   - [ ] My job is not relevant to this course
### University R Graduates Survey

25. Please complete the following details in relation to any previous occupations, (that is prior to your current positions if you are working now, most recent first)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Occupation</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer Name</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full or part-time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Occupation</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<th>4. Occupation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full or part-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
University R Graduates Survey

4. Further Study

26. have you enrolled in any course of study leading to an educational qualification or trade certificate SINCE you completed the course?

☐ No (Go to Q33)
☐ Yes but course cancelled or withdrew (Go to Q33)
☐ Yes

27. Which of the following BEST describes the level of qualification you have enrolled in SINCE completing the course? Note: if you are enrolled in more than one course, please report the course you consider most important

☐ Masters or higher
☐ Graduate Certificate or higher
☐ Undergraduate degree
☐ Advanced Diploma
☐ Diploma
☐ Associate diploma
☐ Certificate IV
☐ Other certificate
☐ Statement of Attainment

Other (please specify)

28. What is the full title of the course reported in Q27?


29. What is the MAIN reason for studying the qualification reported in Q27?

☐ To get a job
☐ To develop my existing business
☐ To start my own business
☐ To try for a different career
☐ To get a better job or promotion
☐ It was a requirement for my job
☐ I wanted extra skills for my job
☐ To get into another course of study
☐ For interest or personal reasons

Other (please specify)
30. How would you rate on average, the following aspects of the new course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The course developed my problem solving skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>The course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member</td>
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<tr>
<td>The course improved my skills in written communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>The course improved my skills in oral presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>The course helped me to develop the ability to plan my work</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31. In your opinion, which of the skills mentioned in the previous question are the three most important for the workforce?

1. 
2. 
3. 

32. How would you rate, on average, your satisfaction with the overall quality for the course? Using the scale below, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Overall I was satisfied with the quality of this course</td>
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<td>This course provided me with the skills and knowledge required to enter the workforce in my chosen career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. Would you be prepared to participate in a focus group discussion in order for me to obtain more detailed information? If so please place your email address in the box below. The focus group will be audio taped but anonymous.

Email address
11. Appendix 2

Institute W Graduate Survey Questions
7. What was your MAIN reason for studying the Advanced Diploma of Hospitality or Tourism Management?

☐ To get a job
☐ To develop my own business
☐ To start my own business
☐ To get a better job or promotion
☐ I wanted extra skills for my job
☐ For interest or personal reasons

Other (please specify)

8. Did your course help you achieve your MAIN reason for doing the course (as reported in Q7)?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Partly
☐ Don't know yet

9. If the course did not meet your main reason for doing the course (as reported above) please provide recommendations for improvements to the course.

10. Would you have recommended the WAI course to your friends?

☐ Yes
☐ No
3. Your work Situation

11. Do you have a full-time or part-time job of any kind at the moment? (including casual, temporary or part-time, if it for one hour or more).
   - Yes, I work for payment or profit (includes being self-employed)
   - Yes, unpaid work in a family business
   - Yes, other unpaid work
   - No, I do not have a job (Go to Q18)

12. On what basis are you employed in your MAIN job at present?
   - Wage or salary owner
   - Conducting own business - with employees
   - Conducting own business - without employees
   - Helper not receiving wages

13. What is your main occupation and what are the main tasks you usually perform in your MAIN job?
   - Title
   - Jobs usually performed
   - Location of the business (city and country)

14. What kind of industry, business or service is carried out by your employer/business in your MAIN job? eg tourist attraction, hotel, restaurant, fast food outlet

15. How many people work for your employer/business?
   - Less than 10
   - 10-19
   - 20-99
   - 100 or more people

16. In your main job, do you work full-time or part-time?
   - Full-time (38 hours or more per week)
   - Part-time (less than 38 hours per week, including casual)
17. In your MAIN job, how much do you usually earn per year (before tax or anything else is taken out)?

- [ ] $80,000 or more
- [ ] $60,000 - $79,999
- [ ] $40,000 - $59,999
- [ ] $30,000 - $39,999
- [ ] $20,000 - $29,999
- [ ] $1 - $19,999

18. Which of the following job related benefits do you feel you have received as a result of undertaking the course shown at the beginning of this survey?

- [ ] Got a job
- [ ] An increase in earnings
- [ ] A promotion (or increased status at work)
- [ ] Change of job
- [ ] Was able to set up my own business
- [ ] None of the above

Other (please specify):

19. How long did it take you to find a job relevant to your course after completion of the course?

- [ ] Already had a job
- [ ] Less than 1 month
- [ ] 1-3 months
- [ ] 4-6 months
- [ ] 7-12 months
- [ ] More than 12 months
- [ ] My job is not relevant to this course
20. Please complete the following details in relation to any previous occupations, (that is prior to your current positions if you are working now, most recent first)

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4. Further Study

21. have you enrolled in any course of study leading to an educational qualification or trade certificate SINCE you completed the course?
   - No (Go to Q26)
   - Yes but course cancelled or withdrew (Go to Q26)
   - Yes (Go to Q22)

22. Which of the following BEST describes the level of qualification you have enrolled in SINCE completing the course? Note: if you are enrolled in more than one course, please report the course you consider most important
   - Masters or higher
   - Graduate Certificate or higher
   - Undergraduate degree
   - Advanced Diploma
   - Diploma
   - Associate diploma
   - Certificate IV
   - Other certificate
   - Statement of Attainment
   - Other (please specify)

23. What is the full title of the course reported in Q22?

24. What is the MAIN reason for studying the qualification reported in Q22?
   - To get a job
   - To develop my existing business
   - To start my own business
   - To try for a different career
   - To get a better job or promotion
   - It was a requirement for my job
   - I wanted extra skills for my job
   - To get into another course of study
   - For interest or personal reasons
   - Other (please specify)
25. How would you rate on average, the following aspects of the new course?

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26. In your opinion, which of the skills mentioned in the previous question are the three most important for the workforce?

1. 
2. 
3. 

27. How would you rate, on average, your satisfaction with the overall quality for the course? Using the scale below, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

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</table>

28. Would you be prepared to participate in a focus group discussion in order for me to obtain more detailed information? If so please place your email address in the box below. The focus group will be audio taped but anonymous.

Email address

29. Thank you for taking the time to assist us with my research. Please enter your full name and contact number to go into a draw to win a dinner for two during 2011/2012.

Name

Telephone number
12. Appendix 3

Consent Form
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Consent form for graduates participating in a research project

PROJECT TITLE: Employment outcomes of undergraduate degree students versus advanced diploma students.

Name of participant:

Name of investigator(s): Dr. Peter Ferguson and Mr. Charles Eller

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which—including details of the “focus group” and the survey—have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher.

3. I understand that my participation will involve a survey and possible focus group and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.

4. I acknowledge that:
   
   (a) the possible effects of participating in the survey and focus group have been explained to my satisfaction; including that other members of the focus group may be members of my class, and therefore will be able to identify me outside of this study.

   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;

   (c) the project is for the purpose of research;

   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;

   (e) I have been informed that with my consent the interview will be audio-taped and I understand that audio-tapes will be stored at the researcher’s home in a safe and at the University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years;

   (f) my name will be referred to by a pseudonym (alias) in any publications arising from the research;

   (g) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

I consent to this focus group being audio-taped  □ yes □ no (please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings  □ yes □ no (please tick)

Participant signature: __________________________  Date: __________________________
13. Appendix 4

Plain Language Statement
You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Dr Peter Ferguson (supervisor) and Mr Charles Eller (DEd student) of the Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne. Your name and contact details have been drawn from a database of former students at William Angliss Institute studying either an Advanced Diploma of Hospitality or Tourism. Permission has been granted for Mr Eller to complete this by the Director of Education and Training at William Angliss Institute. This project will form part of Mr Eller’s doctoral thesis, and has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

The aim of this study is to investigate whether graduates with degrees in hospitality or tourism achieve ‘better’ employment outcomes than those graduates with an advanced diploma of hospitality or tourism. Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute to this in two ways. First we would ask you to look at the provided web site and complete a no more than 30 minute questionnaire, at a time convenient to you. This questionnaire would ask you to indicate your opinions of your studies, and your opinions of its efficacy in achieving your desired employment outcomes. Second, we would ask you to participate in a brief focus group of no longer than 1 hour and thirty minutes so that we can get a more detailed picture of courses of study for the future. With your permission, the interview would be audio-recorded so that we can ensure that we make an accurate record of what you say. We estimate that the time commitment required of you would not exceed two hours. Should more graduates than are needed, indicate that they would wish to participate in a focus group, stratification of the population will occur before selecting the sample; e.g., based on local, international, male, female, RMIT or non-RMIT graduates and there may be more than one focus group.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers, for example, in order to know where to send your interview transcript for checking. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym (alias). We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity; however, you should note that as the number of people we seek to interview is small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you.

Once the thesis arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be available to you on application at the Graduate School of Education. It is also possible that the results will be presented at academic conferences or printed in journals. The data will be kept securely in the Graduate School of Education for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. Your decision to participate or not, or to withdraw, will be completely independent of your dealings with William Angliss Institute, RMIT or your employer and we would like to assure you that it will have no effect on your employment.

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it in the envelope provided. The researchers will then contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time for you to view the web site and to complete the questionnaire and interview.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either of the researchers; Dr Peter Ferguson 8344 4235, Mr Eller: 9269 1332. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.
14. Appendix 5

Graduate Focus Group Questions
Graduate Focus Group Questions

1. Can each of you please describe the pathway you have taken to obtain your current position?
2. Where do you work?
3. Did you complete (the university) part of the course?
4. How do you think your tertiary education, if it did help you, achieve your current positions?
5. During your career moves, have you knowingly come across students who may have graduated in advanced diplomas or diplomas of hospitality or tourism? If so, how do you think you have progressed compared to them?
6. So if, in your – in some of your departments or some of the people you have come across who have had diplomas or advanced diplomas, are they progressing as quickly as you are or are they doing different roles or staying longer in the roles that they've had or have you not noticed a difference?
7. What's kept you working in either tourism or hospitality?
8. Where do you think you're going to be in 5 years time?
9. Do you think degree studies in hospitality and tourism are necessary for people to make a success of their careers in tourism or hospitality?
10. Why is it still so bad out there? (In reference to industry hours, pay and conditions).
11. Why don’t companies ring Institute W or ....... and say, “Have you got some students?” rather than employing medical students?
12. Would an alternative qualification be more useful?
13. What would you advise a potential student interested in tourism and hospitality to do to improve their career prospects?
14. Did you look into the return on investment? (Of studying a degree in hospitality)
15. Appendix 6

Employer Interview Questions
Employer Interviews

1. From your experience as an employer, what do you look for initially in a hospitality graduate, in their early stages of employment?
2. He's on our Degree Committee and I was talking to him and he said he would take a person who had been a checkout person from a supermarket over and above somebody who had just graduated from a diploma who hadn't been working in the industry necessarily because he felt that that checkout person would have the sort of money skills and the attitude and used to serving the customers and difficult customers and that kind of thing.
3. Do you think, if you do employ a graduate, they are able to analyse workplace situations?
4. Do you agree with the comment that hospitality graduates are "overqualified but under-experienced"?
5. Do you think they (students) come in with false expectations; that they've done their degree or their advanced diploma - they should be a manager or a supervisor or…?
6. If you had two final candidates for a position, and assuming all other things are equal, are you likely to look - I know you said about the attitude - but are you more likely to look more favourably on a graduate with a degree in hospitality than an advanced diploma?
7. If you had to recruit a middle manager in whichever department you were looking for, would you be more likely to choose somebody with a degree rather than somebody without a degree
Author/s:
Eller, Charles David

Title:
Degrees or Advanced Diplomas? That is the question

Date:
2014

Citation:

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/39805

File Description:
Degrees or Advanced Diplomas? That is the question

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