



introduction

In 1991, Getz wrote that festivals and holiday events represented *nouveau, alternative tourism* (cited in Lee et al., 2008). How times have changed! Such an assertion is simply unimaginable today when, more than 20 years later, finding a city or town without at least one annual **festival** or planned event would be quite a challenge. Does this constitute progress? How do festivals and events contribute to contemporary society? What has the remarkable rise in festivals and events meant for the development of tourism destinations; for the development of economies, be they local, national or international? These and many other questions preoccupy what is now an extremely large, international community of scholars from a range of disciplines who adopt a variety of research approaches to study the complex and profoundly important communal celebrations at the heart of the diverse festivals and events treated in this volume.

While it is difficult to calculate the size of **festival** and event activity, academic, policy and industry commentators everywhere concur that its recent growth across the world in terms of numbers, diversity and popularity has been enormous (Getz, 1991; Finkel, 2009; Thrane, 2002). In the USA it is estimated that there were 10,000 festivals per year, attracting over 31 million visitors by the mid-1990s (Janiskee, 1996; TIA, 2004). In Australia, the government notes that festivals have become ubiquitous, with hundreds being held every year (Australian Government, 2012). In Europe, the growth has been similarly dramatic. According to the International Festival and Event Association (IFEA), the special events industry is estimated to comprise between 4 and 5 million regularly occurring events (Wood, 2012). This significant growth in the practice of festivals and events brought a parallel increase in the emergence and development of the festival and event management profession. It soon also brought a rise in academic interest: closely allied to the development of tourism studies, academics began to take an interest in charting developments in the sector and the literature has burgeoned over the last 20 years. Much of the research is published in tourism studies and specific event-oriented journals, but it also finds expression in a wide range of journals dedicated to management and marketing, urban and place





studies, arts and cultural policy, as well as many social sciences-oriented journals. In the majority of cases, festivals and special events are presented as broadly positive phenomena. Throughout the literature, opening paragraphs emphasise the important roles they play in advancing local and regional economies, branding places, attracting visitors, extending the tourism season and fostering community spirit. Yet, festivals and special events, the subject matter at the heart of this book represent a very substantial, complex and dynamic set of activities that can be both deeply rooted and rapidly changing in countries throughout the world. In academia, they are studied from diverse management, social sciences and humanities perspectives. As such, interpretations of their impact and contribution to contemporary economies and societies as well as approaches to valuing, managing and shaping appropriate policies for their advancement are multiple and at times conflicting.

The literature in the field is now enormous and growing all the time. Increasing familiarity with the literature brings an increasing awareness of the unevenness of knowledge, the fractures between academic disciplines and the continuous emergence of new sub-fields. The literature on the **Olympic Games**, for example, is now in and of itself very substantial, yet the extent to which knowledge generated on this particular event translates across into the study of other events that differ by scale and type is very unclear. Getz and Andersson (2010) explained that festival tourism has been studied by many researchers from many perspectives: impact (of varying types), place marketing, travel patterns, displacement effects, motivation, market segmentation, quality and satisfaction, **regional development**, relationship to urban renewal and development, and links to culture and community. However, this sector is nothing if not dynamic and while knowledge gaps are closing in some areas, they continue to open up elsewhere all the time. This book tries to take cognisance of this dynamism in including concepts that would seem very important in terms of future development. The concept of '**risk management**', so important from an applied perspective, and that of '**emerging economies**', so important from a geographical perspective, are two examples of this.

This volume is tasked with introducing, defining and reviewing the current state of knowledge of the key concepts in the contemporary study of festivals and events. While this involves reviewing literature that is either part of, or closely associated with, tourism studies, in reality, it is a multi-disciplinary task that draws on a wide breadth of discipline areas.





It is well recognised that festivals and special events are important from community, social, cultural, political and economic perspectives. Despite the growth and popularity of festivals and special events, researchers were initially slow in directing research beyond economic impacts and motivations (Gursoy et al., 2004). However, this imbalance is now being corrected. The recent evolution of the academic study of festivals and events cannot be understood in isolation from the simultaneous evolution of the academic study of tourism. As themes of enquiry have emerged and developed within tourism studies, they virtually always evolve into a new theme of enquiry within festival and event studies. This link between the two areas of study is very strong, with tourism studies the primary field of enquiry and festivals and events a large and distinct sub-field within.

The task of advancing knowledge about the meanings, practices and policies associated with festivals and events remains ongoing. As this volume will show, the understanding of core concepts remains uneven, and our knowledge of certain dimensions of festival and event activity far exceeds that of others. Some of the extant gaps are recent, emerging only when contemporary political and societal debates begin to highlight particular concerns. The concept of **innovation** is a case in point: questions as to the role that the festival and event sector plays in promoting, adopting and managing **innovation** are now coming to the fore in the literature. Others, such as the sustainability of the sector's activities have been an issue for longer. Most recently of all, the question as to how **festival** and event activities are affected by global recession has begun to be investigated, in response to the harsh realities negatively affecting the health of the sector in very recent times. The 35 concepts that are discussed in this volume are laid out in alphabetical order.

