Marketing the Mountains
How boosters and bureaucrats sold Mount Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, 1885-1945.

Josh Woodward, BA Hons.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how railways, councils and local clubs and associations, such as the Bright Alpine Club, state government tourist bureaus and, eventually, the Australian National Travel Association (ANTA), marketed Australia’s first mountain resorts - Mount Buffalo and the Blue Mountains. It spans from the 1880s up to the end of the Second World War, when their status as the ‘premier resorts’ of Australia began to fade as the age of rail gave way to that of the motor car and airliner. Throughout the thesis I make three closely related arguments. The first is that a commercial dimension underpinned by the drive to create a profitable Australian tourist industry exists at the core of Australian national parks. Second is that promoters used national symbols and motifs, such as sunlight and the bush, to attract consumers, constructing particular visions of Australian nature related to their perception of the national identity. Finally, I argue that national park advertising was complicit in the broader historical process of Indigenous dispossession because it presented national parks as spaces that were not inhabited by or culturally significant to Indigenous people. This examination of national park promotion enriches our understanding of the history of national parks in Australia, while also illuminating the social construction of Australian nature, narratives of Indigenous dispossession and settler possession, and the rise of industrial tourism in Australia.
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Introduction

The 1880s were auspicious and exhilarating for Australia’s two biggest colonies. Rampant speculation in land prices induced a real estate boom that paid for new skylines and suburbs in Melbourne and Sydney. Immigration soared, and the two cities found themselves amongst the biggest in the Empire.¹ One 1885 railway guidebook described Melbourne as ‘a city of palaces, and its merchants are princes, whose fame has gone out into all lands.’ As the cities, and their populations, rose, more and more people started to think of ways to get away from them, at least temporarily. Escape was not only for the prosperous merchant princes. Urban progressives, concerned by the effects of overcrowding and polluted air on public health, had agitated for Sydney’s National Park in the 1870s. They intended the park to be ‘additional city lungs,’ a breathing space for the ‘most densely peopled parts of the metropolis and suburbs.’² Similar progressive sentiments led to the expansion of city parks and establishment of new national parks in Victoria.³

In Victoria, early national parks such as Fern Tree Gully played an equivalent role to Sydney’s National Park. Both were conceived of as retreats from urban living conditions.⁴ Both were close to the city, but during the long boom, railway lines had crept away from the cities and suburbs and into the bush and the mountains. Railways grew to service settlements, mines and to transport agriculture and machinery, and the prospect of a profitable trade in the freight of tourists soon became apparent. Recognising the opportunities presented by tourism, enterprising railway commissioners looked to increase passenger traffic by marketing the places reached by their lines as holiday destinations. At more or less the same time, regional entrepreneurs discerned the new financial opportunities opened up by rail and sought to attract tourists from the city.

This thesis explores how railways, councils and local clubs and associations, such as the Bright Alpine Club, state government tourist bureaus and, eventually, the Australian National Travel Association (ANTA), marketed Australia’s first mountain resorts – Mount Buffalo and the Blue Mountains. It covers the sixty or so years from the early promotional efforts of the 1880s and 1890s, up to the end of the 1940s, when their status as the ‘premier resorts’ of Australia began

⁵ Ibid, 255.
to fade as the age of rail gave way to that of the motor car and airliner, and tourists and promoters started to turn their attention to new destinations. To date, scholarship on Australian national parks has shown more concern for how parks were established and managed than with what their promotion says about how institutions and organisations engineered an image of Australian nature designed to attract tourists. I explore in detail the preoccupation of historians with national park creation in the following chapter. In the subsequent chapters of this thesis, I incorporate theories from advertising history and studies of Australian national identity to develop a deeper understanding of how advertisers connected these destinations with wider social, racial, economic and cultural values, attitudes and anxieties.

One of the most glaring differences between Buffalo and the Blue Mountains is that the Blue Mountains area that is now a national park was not formally reserved as such until 1959. The journeys of each place to national park status were almost opposite. Opportunities to grow a commercial tourism industry incentivised the Victorian government to make Buffalo a national park in 1898 and to expand the borders of the park in 1908. In contrast, the movement taking place in the interwar and post war period that sought to have the Blue Mountains reserved as a national park arose, in part, from the opposition of the Sydney Bush Walkers, led by Myles Dunphy, to the mass patronage of the park by day-hikers.6 Though the Blue Mountains did not become a national park until the 1950s, the region has a long history of preservation. The Jenolan Caves, for example, were first reserved by the colonial government in 1866, and 'there were attempts to protect the scenic rim via “Sights Reserves” close by the Upper Blue Mountains townships such as Katoomba, Leura and Blackheath’ during a mountain tourism boom around the turn of the century.6

The history of any one national park does not begin with the date that it is legislated as such, and each national park has its own journey towards being formalised as a ‘national’ park. The task of historians need not be the identification of the nascent moment any place starts its journey towards becoming a national park. We should acknowledge the diverse histories of national parks in Australia, where the historiography is complicated by the peculiarities of national parks falling under state rather than federal jurisdictions. Many of today’s national parks have complicated histories in which parts were reserved for conservation or other purposes. Some

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were understood as ‘national parks’ even while lacking this designation and land designated as ‘national park’ did not always have a correspondingly high level of protection.’

I situate the Blue Mountains area in the national park framework - and in relation to national park historiography - even though it was not yet a national park during the period with which the thesis is concerned. Tourists escaped to the towns and resorts there for the nature and recreational activities that animated the movement to have the region reserved and managed as a national park, therefore making the era preceding its reservation a critical one in its history. During this time, promoters for the Blue Mountains seized on what they identified as a consumer desire to use the region as a destination for nature based tourism, and the image of the park they created and sold represents an important component of the configuration of the Blue Mountains as an important place in the settler imagination. This thesis shows that there are clear parallels between Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in spite of differences in their formal designation. I also demonstrate a clear relationship between these two places in terms of how each destination evolved in relation to the other. As I discuss in chapter four, Victorian public figures were impelled to develop and promote Buffalo because of widely held insecurities that the resort was not as well publicised as the Blue Mountains were by the New South Wales government.

For all their differences, Buffalo and the Blue Mountains have a great deal in common. Even though the Blue Mountains are on Sydney’s back doorstep and Buffalo was over 200 miles away from Melbourne, promoters sold each destination to tourists as the foremost mountain and outdoor experiences in the Commonwealth, and often in the world. Both had a long history of Indigenous occupancy prior to settlement. Jarrod Hore tells us that famous ‘natural places like the mountainous interior’ of New Zealand, the site of Tongariro, New Zealand’s first national park, ‘deserve attention because they are powerful sites for the reiteration of settler mythologies.‘

The propaganda deployed by various government institutions and local associations to sell Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, the foremost mountain destinations for settler tourism in early twentieth century Australia, gives a powerful insight into the construction and promulgation of settler mythologies. Settler myths and narrative evolved in relation to national and consumer identities, and as I argue throughout this thesis, contributed to the ongoing process of dispossession.

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Most of all, how promoters sold these spaces as tourist destinations had a lasting impact on the future of tourist promotion in Australia. Historian Julia Horne states that the Blue Mountains, as Australia’s first major tourist destination, are a useful guide to the shape and emerging direction of the Australian tourist market. The Blue Mountains’ popularity pre-dated that of other resorts owing to their proximity to Sydney. Their popularity did not go unnoticed either, and, as Horne tells us, ‘prompted interest in the tourist potential of other mountain regions further afield.’

One of these destinations was Mount Buffalo, which in the interwar period became the most vigorously and systematically publicised tourist destination in Australia. In the same way that the Blue Mountains provided a model for Buffalo, the Victorian Railways’ sophisticated advertising campaign for Buffalo provided a model for the advertising of other tourist resorts in Australia. This is especially apparent during the 1930s, when important figures from the railway’s publicity staff formed the Australian National Travel Association and orchestrated its promotion of the nation’s attractions, from the Great Barrier Reef to Wilson’s Promontory, as domestic and international tourist destinations.

To date, scholarship on Australian national parks has tended to focus on how nature destinations became national parks, how they have been managed, and how these processes dispossess and marginalise the traditional Indigenous owners of the land. Examining the promotional history of the Blue Mountains and Buffalo departs from the focus of existing scholarship by tracing how advertising, marketing and public relations campaigns curated distinct visions of Australian nature that changed over time. The efforts of promoters can be used to take a measure of how public and private enterprises viewed settler-Australian society, how they estimated settler Australians viewed nature and even how promoters imagined themselves. Furthermore, the widespread circulation of advertising for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in Melbourne and Sydney meant that advertising reached many who did not, or had yet to, visit. This meant that the image of the two destinations extended beyond the physical borders of the places themselves, forming a distinct brand in the public sphere of which consumers had a certain awareness.

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10 Ibid, 110.

did not have to visit to imagine them, or imagine visiting them, because promotion invited consumers to see them on a poster in a train carriage, read about them in the newspaper or pamphlet, or even hear about them on the radio.

This study has three closely related aims. The first is to explain a commercial dimension at the core of Australian national parks. The timeline of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains’ promotion broadly follows the timeline of the rise of the Australian advertising industry. Railways, tourist bureaus and ANTA were abreast of developments in the advertising profession. They often boasted about their knowledge of leading international advertising practices, or even how their strategies were more advanced and modern than those of their counterparts overseas. It was in this context of the rise of advertising and public relations that promoters curated an image of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains that they presented to the Australian public. In doing so, they invited consumers to imagine themselves as wealthy, respectable, healthy and happy, holidaying in an idealised vision of Australian nature.

I argue that promoters of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were among the leading publicists of their times. They did not just follow trends set by private industry, but often adopted innovative advertising strategies traditionally thought of as the inventions of commercial agencies. Industrialisation, growing populations and the development of an increasingly wealthy urban middle class towards the end of the nineteenth century gave way to a consumer ethic in an Australian marketplace characterised by an ever growing cacophony of brands and products. It was in the flooded marketplace of large-scale capitalism that railways, state tourist bureaus and ANTA competed for the attention of consumers by deploying sophisticated public relations strategies and advertising campaigns. They embraced new technologies, from printing and photography techniques to state-of-the-art communications media. Examples of Australian promoters’ commitment to modern advertising include the New South Wales Tourist Bureau’s commissioning of films in the early twentieth century when cinematography was still in its infancy; the Victorian Railways’ employment of the country’s most talented commercial artists to create striking posters; and ANTA’s dynamic use of radio and magazines as means to connect with a large audience.

Promoters sold their vision of the national parks with an aspirational, middle-class audience in mind. As Susie Khamis writes of Bushells tea, first introduced to consumers in 1895, the brand ‘fashioned an image closely tied to a distinctly middle-class mindset, as this was the most compelling force in the 19th century Australian marketplace.’ Likewise, promoters of the Blue Mountains and Buffalo cultivated an image of nature they thought would best resonate with the urban middle class, whose new-found wealth, increased leisure time and emerging consumer desires placed them as the foremost consumers of nature-based tourism.

The second aim is to bring into focus how promoters used national symbols and motifs to attract consumers, and how this constructed particular visions of Australian nature. Richard White described the image of the bush cultivated by the artistic and literary nationalist movements of the late nineteenth century as ‘a sunlit landscape of faded blue hills, cloudless skies and noble gum trees.’ Hot on the heels of the cultural nationalism of the Bulletin writers and the Heidelberg artists, White’s ‘city-dweller’s image of the bush’ was among several prominent motifs that promoters deployed in an effort to attract tourists to Buffalo and the Blue Mountains. Poster artists, photographers and copy-writers invested their material with national symbols such as the bush, eucalypts and sunlight that first found expression in the literary and artistic cultural nationalist movement in the 1880s. Close analysis of promotion materials from 1890 to 1950 also reveals the significance of a range of other symbols. The romantic and technological sublime celebrated Australia’s scenery and technological progress. Symbols of Britain and Empire reinforced cultural ties with Anglo-Saxon heritages, and the strength of character many settlers felt they had inherited from the Land of the Rose.

As values and tastes changed, promoters constantly rebranded the destinations by adapting national symbols and narratives. Later promotion depicted native plants and animals to emphasise a more independent and unique Australian identity, for example. By the 1940s, the image of the mountains was more that of a playground than a wonderland, where a constellation of recreations awaited the pleasure-seeking tourist. Many advertisements represented tourists as idealised symbols of the settler nation. Exploring how these motifs fell in and out of favour with promoters, or how representations of them changed over time, gives a new perspective on how advertising professionals engineered Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as an ideological space.

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related to the national identity, and also engaged with the changing tastes, aspirations and anxieties of the middle class Australian consumer. Tracing the incorporation of national symbols into tourist advertising also speaks to wider historical questions such as the emergence of Australian consumer culture and its relationship to the settler Australian quest for a national identity.

My final aim is to explore the extent to which tourist propaganda sought to control the image of Indigenous peoples, or presented national parks as spaces that were not inhabited by or culturally significant to Indigenous people. Jarrod Hore has approached the question of how the photography and promotional material of John Watt Beattie excluded representations of Tasmania’s Indigenous people. The lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous presence created an image of Tasmanian nature ‘disconnected from the moral problem of Indigenous ownership,’ argues Hore.\(^{13}\) Similarly, promoters for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains neglected the importance of both places to the Indigenous peoples who had lived on, or in proximity to, them for thousands of years before European settlement. The director of the NSW Tourist Bureau, Percy Hunter, believed there was a popular impression ‘with those who do not know Australia’ that the country was heavily populated by Indigenous people. This was an impression he hoped to change. Unsurprisingly the advertising work he oversaw for the Blue Mountains did not reflect the presence of Indigenous people there. In the 1920s and 30s, the Australian National Travel Association did depict Indigenous people in their advertising and promotional material, but only in instances that served a narrative that indicated settler Australians had, in the words of one contemporary government administrator, ‘bridged the gap between the primitive and the present.’\(^{16}\) While ANTA promoters decided how the image of Indigenous Australians was best put to use in advertising the continent, an acknowledgement of the past Indigenous occupancy of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains remained absent from the organisation’s publicity and advertising.

How these institutions represented or omitted Indigenous people in tourist advertising was complicit in the broader historical process of dispossession. Advertising campaigns conducted by local, state and national tourist organisations encouraged settlers to forge an emotional connection with the land. This settler connection centred around ideas of progress and working

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the land. While national park or reserved land was not used for resource extraction or agriculture, promoters drew tourists’ attention to the productive industries that could be seen from the altitudinous lookout points or alongside the railway that brought tourists into a scenic destination. Such celebrations of progress saturated Buffalo and the Blue Mountains with foundation myths of the settler nation. Guidebooks celebrated white explorers as the first men to set eyes on these places. They invited tourists to imagine themselves as the freewheeling drover or bushman when they hiked the bush trails. Myths and symbols that helped settler Australians build a relationship with the land through tourism both reflected and ensured the dispossession of Indigenous Australians. Advertising for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, aimed at settler Australians, speaks to how systems of meaning around settler connection with the country on one hand, and Indigenous dispossession on the other, were mutually established.

While exploring these three aims, I argue that promoters cultivated visions of the land that they thought would attract the maximum number of consumers. These visions of the land changed over time as promoters perceived changes in cultural attitudes and anxieties, and in the types of experiences promoters believed consumers desired. They adapted their marketing according to their interpretation of prevailing trends. In the same period, Australia experienced a gradual shift away from its British roots towards a firmer sense of national self-identification. That the image of the resorts changed over the course of the first half of the century evidences that advertisers attempted to intuit changing cultural trends and consumer tastes. Equally, promoters sought to change tastes, and deployed advertising that they hoped would influence consumers to visit. As the American journalist and author of Advertising Today Warren Berger writes, ‘advertising tries to reflect and reinforce attitudes and behavioural trends that have already begun to take hold.’

But advertising creates attitudes and trends as much as it mirrors them, and distinguishing between promoters’ efforts to draw from popular opinion and their attempts to shape it is a key concern of this thesis. I argue that promoters created advertising that attempted to induce people to Buffalo or the Blue Mountains. Promoters based their creative campaigns on what they interpreted as the desires, anxieties and aspirations of the modern consumer. State and national promoters operating in the twentieth century also injected into their advertising themes of Australian national identity to cultivate a settler attachment to the land that they felt had not been

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established. This was a component of a strategic economic effort to establish Australia as an independent country, with a population of proud citizens, that could stand on its own in the twentieth century.

Like most of the tourists that visited Buffalo or the Blue Mountains, the chapters that follow spend more of their time in the city than in the mountains. The first chapter comprises a comprehensive review of existing scholarship on national parks, tourism, advertising, settler-representation of Indigenous people and national identity. Here I explicate the significance of approaching nature tourism destinations and national parks from the context of their promotion. The second chapter examines the promotion for both resorts from the 1880s to just after Federation. Chapter three studies the campaign of the NSW Tourist Bureau, established in 1905 under director Percy Hunter, to sell the Blue Mountains. I argue this was the first tourism campaign to seriously apply modern advertising, as it existed in the early twentieth century, in Australia.

Chapters four and five are set mostly in Melbourne. The fourth chapter takes place in the offices of the Victorian Railways in Flinders Street in the 1920s, where the chief commissioner Harold Clapp overhauled the image of both Mount Buffalo and the railway in general. Chapter five remains in Melbourne, where the Australian National Travel Association directed the first centralised campaign to sell Australia. It explains how ANTA grew out of Clapp’s mission to advertise Australia, and how the association sold Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as the quintessential Australian destinations. The final chapter, spanning the 1930s and 1940s, examines the promotional efforts of both states’ tourist bureaus, and considers how new recreational activities, such as bushwalking, new technologies, such as the growing use of the individual motor car, and the social and economic impact of the Second World War, shaped the image of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as the century approached its mid-point. I have tried to keep the narrative in chronological sequence, but organisations and their campaigns sometimes overlapped, meaning that there is some temporal overlap between the following chapters also.

Each chapter brings to light a range of actors whose contribution to popularising nature resorts as commercial tourist destinations has been overshadowed by the existing scholarship’s preoccupation with progressives and conservationists such as James Barrett and Myles Dunphy
as the proponents of the national park idea in Australia. The core characters of this thesis include the late nineteenth century’s unknown boosters, sedulous tourist agents and anonymous railway writers. In the twentieth century, promotion became more glamorous, and fell to celebrity public-servants and imaginative Australian entrepreneurs, some of whom belonged to an administrative and business elite that Geoffrey Blainey tells us, ‘held the public’s esteem to a degree not exceeded today by any similar group in any capital city.’ Some of these businessmen and bureaucrats and publicists irreversibly influenced the direction of tourist promotion in Australia. Premiers, prime ministers and progressives make cameos, but the story here belongs to the talented printers, photographers, commercial artists and public relations strategists who contributed their energy and skill to advertising Australian destinations domestically and abroad. Cultural critic and media scholar Raymond Williams wrote that ‘most advertising is not the cool creation of skilled professionals, but the confused creation of bad thinkers and artists.’ If what Williams said is true, the pages that follow contain more than a few exceptions.

The Mogullumbidj of the Victorian Alps and the Gundungurra and Darug peoples of the Blue Mountains, who lived on Country that overlapped with the areas that later became the national parks, are also important characters in this story. It is important to note, however, that this thesis is concerned with what contemporary advertising reveals about those active in promoting the national parks, and what their vision of national parks says about how they perceived the racial, social and economic attitudes of their audience, predominantly the settler Australian middle class. It is not possible to represent the effect of marketing exploitation from an Indigenous perspective in the scope of this thesis.

Focussing on the advertising material and internal documents of promotional organisations makes it easy to lose sight of the broader historical currents that Australians experienced from the end of the long boom to the end of the Second World War. Between 1890 and 1950, Australia, and indeed the world, experienced a period of uncertainty and change. In less than a lifetime, Australia's two biggest colonies, turned states, suffered two devastating recessions, droughts, a pandemic and two world wars. In the same period, the country transitioned to a federated commonwealth, working conditions improved markedly and opportunities for leisure

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* Historians have tended to focus on advocates for initial preservation rather than on those who promoted reserved sites. Hall writes, for example, that ‘Wilderness preservation was a local issue which featured the efforts of a few significant individuals or scientific associations.’ See Hall, *Wasteland to World Heritage*, pp. 89-102.
and recreation extended to an increasing number of people. Indigenous Australians did not enjoy
the advances at the rate or universality that they were won by settlers, and promoters sold an
image of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains that did not account for the culture or history of
Indigenous people. So the story that follows, while pointing often to the economic and
 technological progress being made in Australia, also underscores that myths of settler progress
 continued to dispossess and alienate Indigenous people long after the colonial era.
Figure 1.1 - *Royal Commission on Railway Decentralization: Comparative Map showing Railway Systems of New South Wales and Victoria*, Photo-lithographed by W.A. Gullick, Government Printer, Sydney, N.S.W. 1911. The original map does not show Buffalo or the Blue Mountains, but shows how each place could be reached by rail from Melbourne and Sydney. I have circled the locations of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in red. The map’s creator, the Government Printer W.A. Gullick, was an innovative printer, and played a vital role in developing and printing tourist brochures, guides and photographs for the NSW Tourist Bureau between 1905 and 1915 (see chapter three).
Chapter I

Why look at Promotion?

For as long as environmental historians have been writing about national parks, they have been preoccupied with the circumstances that led to their creation. Are they a creation of American culture, or a transnational phenomenon? Why did they appear in ‘new world’ British settler societies? To what extent were national parks expressions of nationalism in the nations that invented them? Why did the nations in which they emerged build social cohesion, recreation and national identity around nature, instead of culture or history? How did this so called ‘enclosure of bounded wilderness’ participate in the dislocation of Indigenous people from their lands? Why were parks reserved in the first place, and who was responsible for their preservation? How did changing perceptions of ‘wilderness’ allow for the emergence of national parks? The influential environmental historian William Cronon writes that by the end of the nineteenth century ‘the wastelands that had once seemed worthless had for some people come to seem almost beyond price.’ Since the 1960s, historians whose work focuses on, or touches on, national parks have sought to explain what caused this transformation, how it resulted in the formulation of the national park idea and the effects of this process on the environment, ecology, Indigenous people and visitors.

Although these lines of inquiry have produced valuable insights into the social construction of national park nature and the history of settler recreation, conservation and possession, the story of how tourist promoters packaged and sold national parks as a consumer product remains unscrutinised. The fixation with the question of why nations created parks has overshadowed the important story of how parks appeared to the public in advertising, public relations and marketing. An examination of how Australian promoters sold national parks leads to important revelations about the image of national parks in popular culture, while also providing an account of Australian social history. As promoters constructed advertisements for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, they estimated the prevailing attitudes, values and concerns of the average, middle-class consumer. In this sense, the image of a national park in an advertisement, guidebook or brochure is the purest synthesis of what a national park is, even more than the place itself, because

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1 Banivanua Mar, “Carving Wilderness”, p. 76.
it is a carefully cultivated, aspirational expression of the vision of the park and the people who visit it.

National park advertising tells us that the national park idea is constructed in more ways than Cronon and other historians have suggested. National parks are not only the outcome of socially constructed environmental attitudes, they are a carefully and selectively marketed construction, designed by advertising specialists who instructed, and were in turn instructed by, the public’s perception of society, the nation, and what types of nature and scenery constituted a tourist attraction. Furthermore, promotion offered potential visitors a clear and idealised picture of what scenery they could expect to see, what clothes they should pack and which recreations they could participate in once they arrived. Because advertising produces an image that is calculated to resonate with the broadest possible audience, each image, description and photograph deployed with a view of selling a place sheds light on the social concerns of the people and society that produced and consumed these texts. This chapter gives an overview of national park historiography while also pointing to how close examination of national park promotion enriches our understanding of the history of national parks in Australia.

**American National Park History: Wilderness and ‘Worthless Lands’**

The first scholarship that sought to explain the emergence of national parks was American and conservationist. Writing in the midst of the rise of the new environmental movement in the 1960s, Roderick Nash argued that the change in environmental attitudes that led to the creation of the US national parks was a truly American experience. He suggested that Yellowstone and the parks that followed were made possible by America’s unique democratic tradition. According to Nash’s account, other nations emulated the process of national park creation and management invented in the United States. Nash’s focus on wilderness as a once reviled but eventually valued phenomenon indelibly framed subsequent national parks scholarship. In the 1970s, Alfred Runte, a student of Nash, extended the exceptionalist view that parks were a creation of American culture. He also proposed that preservationist campaigners and politicians cleverly convinced congress to set aside parks only by stressing the lack of resources the landscapes contained. Parks were too high, too cold and too inaccessible for settlement, mining or grazing. ‘Where a rugged terrain allowed nothing else, altruism could prevail,’ Runte wrote.

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A handful of American historians did not embrace Runte’s ‘worthless lands’ thesis. Richard West Sellars, for instance, noted that different park areas had multiple land uses and their own ‘accumulated political, economic, and environmental history’ that Runte had ignored. He also argued that Runte too narrowly defined the national park system and what constituted ‘worthless.’ Sellars identifies the economic value of tourism and real estate, ‘specifically as it pertains to development potential for commercial lodging,’ as examples that ‘flatly contradict the “worthless lands” concept.’ Sellars rightly points out that railways, explorers and even preservationists saw ‘obvious potential for tourist trade’ in the lands to be set aside as parks. The campaigns to promote Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, carried out by professional publicists and entrepreneurs, not the preservationists or progressives who are usually the focus of national park history, very clearly demonstrate that these figures recognised the significant economic value of the places they promoted, and had little interest in the potential of these destinations as anything other than locations for the operation of an industrial tourist industry.

In spite of Sellars’ critique, Runte persists that tourism does not contradict the worthless lands idea, but supports it. Development of parklands to host tourists, he argues, represents American society’s proclivity to see nature in economic terms rather than valuing nature itself. In *Trains of Discovery*, Runte explains the efforts of railways in promoting many destinations that were later set aside as national parks. *Trains of Discovery* does a good job of showing the hand of commercial enterprise in preservation but represents more of an overview of railway nature promotion rather than a detailed analysis of tourist advertising ephemera as a revelatory source about its creators and likely audience. An investigation into the marketing strategies of the railroads, how they conducted their public relations campaigns, and what their efforts to market national parks says about how they perceived national parks and the contemporary social and cultural milieu has not yet been undertaken for any of the settler societies in which national parks emerged. In spite of Sellars’ objections the “worthless lands” thesis has been pervasive in international scholarship. A number of significant historical works, several of them Australian, clearly subscribe to Runte’s view that national parks were reserved only on lands considered to be valueless, or ‘wastelands.’

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8 *Ibid*.
In 2012, Australian historian Ian Tyrrell contended that in spite of criticism of the wilderness concept 'and extensive historical research into its social construction' the exceptionalist narrative of Nash and Runte 'remains largely intact.' This view was questioned by Paul Sutter, who believed Tyrrell overemphasized the role of Nash and Runte and underplayed how modern academics think about national parks. In a similar vein, Melissa Harper and Richard White have argued that the influence of Yellowstone as a model for other national parks has been overstated. Indeed, historians such as Harper, White and Tyrrell have attempted to view parks from new perspectives, but the debate between Sutter and Tyrrell is testament to the grip that the old historiography has on the new. That the “worthless lands” thesis has remained a point of contention for these authors reflects the enduring influence of Nash and Runte.

Tyrrell’s work is an important step in moving away from the influence of US historians. However, his central concern is with explaining the transnational development of park administrations and challenging the exceptionalist narrative coming out of the United States. This narrative is, nonetheless, fixated with national park creation. Thomas Dunlap argues for a more local approach to national park history, proposing that the creation of parks around the world demonstrates that ‘local culture is as important as foreign example.’ My research into how park advertising was created and by Australian professionals takes a cue from Dunlap’s suggestion, promising local social and cultural insights into national park advertisers and how they attempted to create work that appealed to consumers. This approach also represents a move away from existing scholarship’s emphasis on national park creation and management.


For responses to Tyrrell see Paul Sutter, “The Trouble with ‘America’s National Parks’; or, Going Back to the Wrong Historiography: A Response to Ian Tyrrell,” pp. 23-29 and subsequent articles in the same journal.


Trouble with Wilderness

Since the 1980s, historians have emphasised the social construction of ‘wilderness’ and national park nature. The deconstruction of wilderness peaked in the mid-1990s with environmental historian William Cronon’s argument that the prevailing view of ‘wilderness’ as wild nature needed to be rethought because the ‘specific habits of thinking that flow from this complex cultural construction called wilderness’ are harmful to the environmental movement: ‘idealizing a distant wilderness too often means not idealizing the environment in which we actually live.’

To Cronon, it was the intersection of the religious sublime and cultural anxiety over the closing of the frontier that created the climate in which national park preservation was possible, and loaded wilderness with the moral and cultural values he found troubling.

Cronon was preoccupied with the American experience. However, Australian scholars writing contemporaneously were similarly critical of the wilderness idea, particularly in histories that explore Indigenous narratives as they relate to nature conservation and appreciation. Aboriginal academic Marcia Langton, for instance, questioned the cultural and economic construction of Australian ‘wilderness’, and contended that artistic representations of native peoples and landscapes are laden with themes of conquest and pioneer dominance. In Langton’s account depictions of people and the landscape in settler Australian art are closely related to the construction of wilderness and national parks. Langton writes, for example, that ‘the national park is an institution of power which governs and commodifies “nature” and thereby culturally constructs an imagined wilderness.’ Central to this claim is the idea that national parks are an institution derived from other institutions, including the tourism industry. However, there has been a limited focus on the tourist industry’s promotion of national parks, resulting in an incomplete understanding of how these settler institutions distributed the narratives of pioneer dominance which Langton identifies as problematic.

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The promoters discussed in this thesis rarely sold Buffalo or the Blue Mountains as wildernesses. Rather than advertising these places as wild, they emphasised themes of progress, recreation and development. As I demonstrate in each chapter, they advertised Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as places that were equipped with modern amenities, tourist facilities such as accommodation, but also infrastructure such as roads, paths and lookouts. They advertised each destination as replete with the creature comforts of urban living. The promotion of nature destinations as the designated playgrounds of the settler Australian middle class evoked narratives of settler progress and identity that promoters estimated would drive visitation. Langton argues that the institution of national parks constructs an imagined wilderness. The promotion of national parks, however, did more than construct wilderness. Promotion constructed a connection between settlers and the land by imbuing it with myths of settler progress and populating it with citizens of the settler nation. Promotion was therefore a process that shored up settler claims to the land and continued to seek the legitimisation of settler sovereignty long after governments and institutions in cooperation with government, such as railways and tourist bureaus, identified either Buffalo or the Blue Mountains as lucrative sites for settler tourism.21

Tracey Banivanua Mar recently expanded on the critique of wilderness, writing that Australian national parks represent ‘spatial institutions distinctive to settler colonialism, which manifested converging doctrines of dispossession and notions of wilderness.’22 Writing from a colonial history perspective, she expands on the notion that national parks in Australia were only worthless in the view of settler colonists because they were supposedly ill-used by the Indigenous peoples who occupied them. In her account, national park creation represents a final measure of Indigenous dispossession. Mar’s work is a good example of how Australian approaches to conservation history have built on and departed from the conceptual frameworks set by earlier American and Australian scholars.23

Historians’ focus on wilderness has precluded an analysis of the parks from an economic perspective that explains the extent to which the construction of national park nature was the

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outcome of advertising as a function of the free market economy and the rise of consumer society. In this thesis I explain how the narratives promoters used to sell Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were closely related to topical issues such as the economy and war; changing perceptions of nature; and shifting cultural and national identities. Promoters deployed these narratives to motivate the middle-class settler Australian public to visit the destinations they advertised and, on a broader level, to industrialise tourism as a meaningful and profitable component of the Australian economy. Promoters elevated settler narratives of progress, wholesomeness and national identity above any consideration of Indigenous people and their history. As settlers built a connection with the land through tourism, recreation and conservation, the alienation and dispossession of Australia’s Indigenous people was doomed to continue.

Approaching national parks and nature tourism destinations from the campaigns to promote them offers a new perspective on how systems of meaning around settler connection with country on the one hand, and Indigenous dispossession on the other, were established. It may also go some way toward explaining the historical problem of understanding and managing parks as non-Indigenous spaces and the remaining tensions around this issue.

**Australian National Park History**

Australian national park history tends to be written on a state by state or park by park basis. These works track the development of preservation efforts from their outset into organised park management. While they are informative sources for the individual histories of parks, marketing rarely figures as a central concern. In broader environmental histories, national parks receive the exceptionalist treatment and tend to fall back to the position that preservation policies in Australia ‘found encouragement in the example of the United States government.’ In these histories, parks are generally seen as designated recreational grounds and little thought is given over to the

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way in which organisations responsible for their promotion produced visions of the parks in an
effort to influence Australian consumers.\(^\text{26}\)

Michael Hall’s *From Wasteland to World Heritage* marked a departure from previous
scholarship on Australian national parks. As the title indicates, Hall traced the national park
movement from the romantic view of nature in the nineteenth century into ‘the development of
a national wilderness system in Australia.’\(^\text{27}\) Apart from being inspired by Nash’s tracing of the
transformation of attitudes towards nature, Hall’s argument also drew on Runte’s “worthless
lands” thesis, holding that parks in Australia, as in America, were only preserved where the land
was understood to have little or no extractive resource value. Hall concluded that Australia’s
national parks were ‘created for reasons of tourism, scenic beauty and a lack of intrinsically
valuable resources.’\(^\text{28}\) Parks were wastelands that could be made economically viable only through
the development of tourism, he argues. Hall and John Shultis highlight economic similarities
between Australian and American parks. They point out that tourism and railway expansion,
more than conservation values and environmental concerns, stimulated park making in both
countries.\(^\text{29}\)

Together with Warwick Frost, Hall has also argued that ‘tourism provided the national parks
with a defence mechanism,’ and was ‘a valuable weapon for preservationists in the development
of more parks and in the protection of others,’ and that it ‘gave parks a material value.’\(^\text{30}\) Clearly
tourism has been an important consideration in national park history, but Hall’s work is
preoccupied with the circumstances and arguments that allowed park creation. Not enough is
understood about how advertising played an important role in raising awareness of the parks,
and in what ways advertising engaged in a process of manufacturing a certain image of Australian
parks and nature. A further point for consideration is the fact that many of those engaged in
promoting the national parks as tourist destinations in Australia rarely expressed preservationist
or environmentalist attitudes. Instead of environmentally conscious nature lovers, promoters
were dedicated professionals with backgrounds in journalism, public relations and railway

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\(^{\text{27}}\) Hall, *Wasteland*, p. 198.


\(^{\text{29}}\) Hall, *Wastelands to World Heritage*, p. 103.

\(^{\text{30}}\) Frost and Hall, “National Parks and the worthless lands hypothesis”, p. 49.
management. Their systematic attention to promoting areas that were reserved, or eventually reserved, as national parks as the central destinations of an industrial tourist industry is inconsistent with Hall’s and Frost’s argument that tourism was merely a tactic seized upon by preservationists to advance their cause.

Hall discusses park publicity on a number of occasions, but is primarily concerned with the efforts of bushwalkers and preservationists to raise awareness for the creation of national parks through newspapers and magazines. Another downside of Hall’s focus on creation is that it does not properly account for places like the Blue Mountains, that have long histories of tourist activity before being reserved as national parks.

Historians writing in the last decade have questioned how Australian parks earned the ‘national’ prefix even though the majority of them are the product of state, rather than federal, legislation. Melissa Harper and Richard White, for example, write that early parks in Australia were designated as national not because their scenery represented the nation, but because the people who visited them did. I argue throughout the thesis that promoters created advertising that invited consumers to occupy an image of wholesome, efficient, happy and healthy tourists that embodied what promoters estimated was the ideal citizens of the settler nation. This line of argument builds on Harper and White’s interpretation of the national significance of Australia’s national parks – the idea that in Australia, unlike in the U.S. and other settler colonies, ‘recreation was a sufficient justification for calling them ‘national.’”

Harper and White’s work raises the problematic nature of the ‘national’ when used in the context of Australian parks. While parks in other settler colonies were also named ‘national,’ the term ‘national park’ was underpinned by different meanings in each country. Sarah Mirams touches on the difficulty using the ‘national’ designation for parks and organisations related to parks in Australia. On the Victorian National Parks Association, formed in 1904, she writes:

\[\text{Hall, Wastelands to World Heritage, p. 106.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
the term ‘national’ in the title is deceptive, as this was a Victorian association. National parks were well into the late twentieth century a purely state concern, their creation and maintenance governed by legislation that differed across the continent.31

I argue that the national park label was of almost no significance to the main promoters of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains. Their foremost aim was to increase tourist traffic, and one of their main strategies was depicting Australian nature as national. Promoters embedded elements of ‘Australian’ nature (such as sunlight and the bush) within advertisements in an effort to elicit an emotional connection between settlers and the land. This must have involved some attempt on the part of promoters to meet an existing popular desire to connect with Australian nature. Victorian Railway’s posters for Buffalo, for example, included the words ‘national park’, but the vision of the destination in these posters was of a tourist resort, and not a dedicated area for conservation or nature preservation. As I have mentioned above, advertisers sold Buffalo, and the Blue Mountains, around images of progress and recreation. Promoters sold them as places where nature and iconic Australian scenery existed in droves, and advertisements suggested tourists should go there to be amidst nature rather than protect or preserve it.

Central figures in the promotion of these spaces, such as the New South Wales’ Tourist Bureau director Percy Hunter and the Victorian Railways chief commissioner Harold Clapp, sought to evoke an emotional connection between settlers and the land in an effort to achieve certain national and economic objectives. I argue throughout this thesis that while promoters were motivated by winning the business of consumers, they were even more so hopeful that they could fashion a sense of national pride and identity that would encourage settler Australians to think of themselves as part of a unified and cooperative nation. ‘In order to build up an atmosphere favourable to Australia,’ wrote Harold Clapp, ‘we must first develop a justifiable pride in our wonderful heritage - a pride that will spur us on to achievement!’35 To Clapp, who I demonstrate in Chapters IV and V as the defining figure of campaigns to advertise Mount Buffalo and later to advertise Australia itself, the formal designation of Buffalo as a national park counted for nothing. He was only interested in exploiting the destination as an attraction that captured the beauty and allure of Australian nature, which he argued settler Australians must first recognise for themselves before the country could induce visitors (and investment) from overseas.

31 Mirams, ‘For their moral health’, p. 250.
**Australian Tourism History: The Bush, Recreation and National Identity**

Historians of Australian tourism and recreation have explored how the bush became central to national identity and culture. Using a cultural studies approach, Melissa Harper sheds light on how recreation shaped the everyday lives of visitors to the bush.\(^{36}\) The contributors to *Playing in the Bush*, edited by Richard White and Caroline Ford, present multiple perspectives on the attachment of recreational park users to the national park landscape of New South Wales.\(^{37}\)

Drawing from the diaries and journals of tourists in the 19\(^{th}\) century, Julia Horne explains in *The Pursuit of Wonder* the beginnings of the Australian fascination with nature-based tourism.\(^{38}\) How travel writers and diarists described nature in terms of the romantic sublime is one focus of Horne’s detailed account of Victorian era tourism in Australia. She argues that tourists’ use of sublime language subsided towards the end of the century. In chapter two’s discussion of tourist ephemera for the Blue Mountains in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, I argue that tourist promoters still estimated that sublime, transformative experiences in nature were of import to their audience. Another important work of Australian tourism history, Jim Davidson’s and Peter Spearritt’s *Holiday Business*, has covered the growth of tourism from modest beginnings in the late nineteenth century to a recognised commercial industry by the 1970s.\(^{39}\)

While these works offer perspectives on the relationship between tourism, recreation and national parks, and in many cases draw from the record of promotional ephemera, they have not thoroughly investigated the role advertising played in developing a specific image of Australian nature and national parks.

In spite of the extensive research into tourism and recreation, little is known about how tourist promoters constructed a vision of Australian nature. A closer look at how promoters operated and what they promised consumers reveals that these advertisers invested their material with moral meanings and national symbols, particularly sunlight, pastoral scenes, the bush and rugged mountain scenery, in an effort to appeal to early-mid twentieth century urban settler Australians. This line of inquiry is informed by Richard White’s work on the settler Australian identity and its relationship to uniquely Australian artefacts. White writes in *Inventing Australia* that the image

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\(^{39}\) Spearritt and Davidson, *Holiday Business*, 117.
of the ‘real’ Australia was generated in fin-de-siècle Melbourne and Sydney by a generation of creatives who invented a set of symbols which they promulgated as central to the Australian type.¹

In contrast to the inner city intellectual elite of the Heidelberg school and Bulletin writers, the staff of the state government tourist bureaus, railways and travel associations resembled a cross section of the professional Australian middle class. The subject positions they invited readers to occupy were informed by their awareness of audience values and expectations - an awareness they intuited from belonging to the same class of non-Indigenous middle-class Australians they targeted. How promoters reinforced and modified the dominant images of Australian identity in their promotional material for national parks is a central question of this thesis.

Examining how promoters manipulated images of national identity raises the question of how advertisers drew on the Australian legend in their attempts to inspire the public to visit Buffalo and the Blue Mountains. Historians such as Robert Crawford, Jackie Dickenson and Richard Nile have written on how professional advertisers drew on and combined ideas of the bush and the Australian spirit to sell commercial products.² Settler anxieties about the role of the closing of the frontier in preservation and recreation have also been explored.³ But how did national park advertising engage the Australian legend? And how did representations of the Australian legend in tourist advertising change over time?⁴

My research has found that national park advertising both supports and challenges the history of the Australian legend.⁵ Women, hardly the central figure of the bush myth, often featured in sophisticated posters advertising national parks.⁶ This coincided with professional advertising’s efforts to target female consumers. Advertisers were clearly aware of the gendered nature of national park consumption. National park advertising also drew on conventional images of the lone bushman or male adventurer, loaded with masculine symbols of the ‘Australian spirit’. After the First World War a clear parallel between national park posters and wartime propaganda emerges. Artists such as James Northfield worked on both, employing similar visual techniques and designs. Advertising historian Robert Crawford tells us that First World War propaganda

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³ White, Inventing Australia; White and Ford, Playing in the Bush; Hall, Wastelands, 84.
⁴ There are some works that link national parks and national identity, but they do not emphasise the role of advertising. See: Harper and White, “How National were the First National Parks?” and Frost and Hall, “National Parks, National Identity and Tourism.”
demonstrated to agencies that advertising could be deployed effectively to influence the hearts and minds of the people. Building on Crawford’s view, my research explores how institutions used propaganda techniques in their advertising to create a vision of Australian nature laden with ‘national’ symbols and images.

**National Park Promotion’s control and omission of Indigenous Australians.**

The demarcation of parks as protected sites that forbade habitation by Indigenous populations represents a significant act of colonial possession in settler societies. However, few historians of colonial possession and Indigenous dispossession have explored how national park advertising continued to facilitate these spaces as national sites of white possession long after they were first established. Indeed, Tracey Banivanua Mar has explored national parks from a settler-colonial context, arguing that park creation represented the chronological apex of settler state land policy rather than simply an emergence of an altruistic conservation movement. However, Mar’s arguments centre on park creation and settler land policy without much discussion of the systems that motivated the settler public to use and visit parks once they were set aside. A focus on promotion rather than creation bears out a more comprehensive narrative of the alienation and dispossession of Indigenous people that is constricted by viewing national parks from a conservation and policy standpoint alone.

Park brochures, guides and posters that promoted Buffalo and the Blue Mountains regularly drew on symbols of settler recreation and untrammeled nature. The notion that these places had once been, or continued to be, inhabited by Indigenous people was not addressed by promoters. Sometimes promoters actively sought to overcome popular impressions that Indigenous people continued to inhabit the country. In chapter III, for example, I discuss how, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the director of the NSW Tourist Bureau sought to dispel what he believed was a prevailing view that New South Wales still had a large Indigenous presence. How institutions such as the NSW Tourist Bureau, and others discussed throughout the thesis, omitted Indigenous people in national park advertising is revealing of the racial attitudes of state institutions, while also providing a commentary on how these institutions perceived the racial attitudes of settler Australians and settler concepts of nature and terra nullius. In cases where promoters did choose to deploy images of Indigenous people in advertising, they often reinforced a stereotyped picture of Indigenous Australians. This is a pertinent question in

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* Mar, “Carving Wilderness,” p. 76.
regard to the discussion of how the Australian National Travel Association marketed the Blue Mountains and Mount Buffalo in the 1930s and 1940s in their monthly magazine *Walkabout* (see chapter five).

Drawing on Bain Attwood’s view that the attempts of nineteenth century missionaries to impose civilisation on Kurnai peoples in Victoria transformed them from an independent culture to ‘Aborigines’, marking the creation of a pan-Aboriginal stereotype in the settler imagination, Lynette Russell has argued that ANTA’s *Walkabout* similarly homogenised Indigenous people. She concluded that *Walkabout* portrayed Indigenous culture and people as a resolutely silent group with a ‘sense of temporal and spatial homogeneity’.

Russell argues that settler visions of Aboriginal people in Australia ‘emphasised a uniform Australia-wide Aboriginal culture.’ Russell argues that *Walkabout* stereotyped Indigenous people and ‘denied them a place in the emergent nation.’ She argued that visions of Aboriginal Australia were conservative and ‘emphasised a uniform Australia-wide Aboriginal culture.’ While not necessarily disagreeing with these critiques, Mitchell Rolls and Anna Johnston, co-authors of a book on *Walkabout*, argue that more nuanced readings of *Walkabout* are possible. For instance, Lynette Russell argues that an image of two Indigenous men wading across a river, towing across a policeman, falls within a ‘silent and anonymous category’ of images that subordinates the colonised. Rolls suggests that this reading is deterministic, and that rather than being silent and anonymous, the ‘photograph gives the two men considerable agency’ because they appear ‘strong, relaxed, and in charge.’

Studies of advertising media must be careful not to make claims to how audiences interpreted promotional content. Rolls and Johnston are critical of critiques such as Russell’s. They argue many historians’ interpretations of the photographing of Indigenous peoples give no agency to

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the viewer to make what they will of an image. In Rolls’ and Johnston’s view many accounts of *Walkabout* (and other media that carried representations of Indigenous peoples) offer ‘a singular reading endorsing a particular politics of representation’ that is ‘privileged over an assumed unlikelihood that other readings might be realised or even possible.’ In my research I have maintained an awareness of the problem posed by presuming how readers interpreted images and texts, which I try to avoid throughout. We can only know from promotional materials what images and descriptions promoters thought would resonate best with their audience.

Current scholarship has not effectively explored how advertising may have been involved in a process of creating a picture of national parks as spaces that were not inhabited by Indigenous people. Investigating how and when promoters chose to represent Indigenous peoples and cultures to a non-Indigenous, urban Australian audience provides important insights into how settlers stereotyped or neglected Indigenous culture, and the pervasiveness of a late-colonial belief in settler Australian society that Indigenous people belonged to a dying race.

Scholars of other settler societies have explored the question of Indigenous representation in national park promotion in more detail than their Australian counterparts. Paul Schullery contrasts prevailing negative attitudes toward Aboriginal people among promoters of Yellowstone National Park with promoters working after 1900. The latter tended to see Indians as ‘potentially an added ‘attraction’ to bring visitors to an area.’ Chapters three and four contain specific examples of promoters, the same promoters engaged in advertising Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, considering whether or not to use Indigenous people as a state or national tourist attraction. This was something they ultimately decided against, yet promotional material produced by their organisations continued to use stereotypical images of Indigenous men in generic tourist advertising. Michael Dawson, historian of tourism in British Columbia, provides some explanation of why this may have been so. Dawson notes that North American advertisers constrained the role of Aboriginal people in advertisements for consumer products by depicting savagery ‘in order to construct an “other” against which the virtues of a modern consumer

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product could be contrasted.” In a similar fashion, the Australian National Travel Association issued posters that depicted Indigenous men as the stereotypical ‘noble savage’, in an attempt to demonstrate to audiences that settler Australia had made significant technological and material progress since settlement.

Historians of Australian photography have investigated how settler photography depicted Indigenous people. In *Photography and Australia*, Helen Ennis comments on the disappearance of Aboriginal people as photographic subjects by the end of the nineteenth century. She argues that this was not only due to the diminished number of Indigenous people following brutal colonisation in the preceding century, but that a ‘crucial element to the widespread invisibility of Aboriginal people’ in early twentieth century photography was what WEH Stanner called in 1968 a ‘cult of forgetfulness practiced on a national scale.’ According to Stanner the disappearance of Indigenous themes was not the result of forgetfulness or disinterest, rather it was a deliberate repression ‘caused by the guilt white settlers felt for the crimes perpetrated against Aboriginal people since first contact.’ Throughout this thesis I ask how Stanner’s ‘cult of forgetfulness’ relates to national park advertising and the participation of promoters in processes of forgetting and possession.

Australian historians have also explored the role of settler photographers in assisting the cultural construction of the nation. Rod Giblett tells us that the work of Australian landscape photographers ‘has played an important role in the formation and maintenance of Australian national and cultural identity.’ Historians such as Melissa Miles have written on how early twentieth century photographers used symbols such as sunlight ‘to define the nation in terms of a distinct race of people.’ Miles’ argument bears ideological similarities to Marcia Langton’s 1996 critique of wilderness, discussed above, in which she argued that Australian landscape painting used ‘beams of sunshine’ and ‘the quality of the light’ to emphasise settler “progress” and the pastoral idyll. These approaches have in common the argument that the absence of Indigenous people from landscape painting and photography constituted a systematic action of colonial possession. But these accounts are often preoccupied with individual painters and

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66 Miles, “Light Nation Place”.
photographers, or photographic movements such as the Heidelberg School or the Sunshine School, rather than with institutions that editorialised photographic content and disseminated it into the public domain on an industrial scale.

A closer examination of how promoters depicted nature in mass-produced advertising leads to alternate interpretations of the relationship between national park advertising and the dispossession and marginalisation of Indigenous people. One interpretation is, for instance, that promoters created advertising they thought would attract consumers by projecting an image of nature and wilderness that was simultaneously created and informed by promoters’ interpretations of existing settler attitudes and trends. If a pamphlet from 1910 engendered an image of the Blue Mountains as uninhabited by Indigenous people, it was not simply because promoters wanted to establish such a vision. Rather they selected images that they estimated would best appeal to their likely audience. In this sense, the elision of Indigenous people from national park advertising was the product of a symbiotic understanding between promoters and readers that promulgated a vision of Australian nature that did not account for the troubling and violent history of settler possession.

**Australian Advertising History: Agencies, Brands and Ad-Men**

Historians of Australian advertising have remained focussed on individual advertising creatives, the campaigns they worked on, and chronicling the development of the Australian advertising industry. For example, Robert Crawford, the foremost historian of advertising in Australia, has written extensively on the growth of the profession from one untrusted by the public at the turn of the twentieth century into a sophisticated and legitimate enterprise by the late 1960s. In accounts such as Crawford’s, the historic advertising of consumer brands and commercial products, and how they attempted to adapt to historical and socio-economic changes, has received much attention. But rarely has advertising scholarship investigated how the state and its affiliated institutions embraced modern advertising to promote tourist assets, and to promote the institutions themselves. In addition to its contribution to environmental and tourism history, and understanding of national identity and its mobilisation, a study of national park promotion

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contributes to advertising history by offering a deeper understanding of the relationship between nature and consumerism. This approach also recognises that advertising was not exclusively developed by the private sector, and that state-employed promoters made important and far-reaching contributions to the modernisation of advertising in Australia.

Advertising scholar Jackie Dickenson has stated that there is limited scholarly literature on the ‘relationship between Australian national identity and consumerism.’

Looking at how promoters advertised Buffalo and the Blue Mountains opens up new lines of inquiry into this relationship by exploring how specialists drew on themes of national identity as they simultaneously constructed an image of Australian nature and national parks. The history of how national parks have been advertised does not exist outside of developments in the advertising profession. Indeed, organisations such as ANTA boasted about their ongoing liaisons with leading international advertising professionals. Advertising is an important part of modern culture that creates, appropriates and transforms symbols and ideas.” The chapters that follow explicate how these processes of creation, appropriation and transformation generated a particular vision of Australia’s national parks.

As stated above, studies of national parks tend not to give proper attention to the entrepreneurial personalities and advertising creatives responsible for promotion. Figures responsible for promotion often came from commercial backgrounds. Any interest they had in environmental conservation was eclipsed by their desire to establish for Australia an industrial tourist industry central to both state and national economies. To properly assess the commercial strategies that motivated these promoters it is necessary to draw on histories of Australian business and industry. John Sinclair has written on the role of Sir Harold Clapp, commissioner of the Victorian Railways and Charles Holmes, chairman, in developing advertising techniques to promote domestic and international tourism. Art historian Michelle Hetherington writes that the tourism posters created by Victorian Railways, and later ANTA, ‘served as a visual lexicon of Australian identity’

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and expressed the contemporary interwar tensions about what this identity might be. Robert Crawford makes the salient point that even ‘improvements occurring within the local advertising industry [by 1920] should not be underestimated.’ Neither should the campaigns to promote Australian parks. Work such as Crawford’s, Hetherington’s and Sinclair’s provide context for my exploration of the artistic and commercial decision making of ANTA and other national park promoters.

Michael Dawson has explored the interrelated nature of tourism and consumer culture in his history of tourism in British Columbia. Dawson claims that historians of tourism in North America have tended to focus on the circumstances that allowed the industry to grow - increased leisure time, greater disposable income and better access to transport. While noting that these observations are important, he claims that they overlook the incorporation of tourism ‘into the burgeoning culture of consumption.’ His interest specifically is in the connection between tourism and consumerism. Pleasure travel, he writes, ‘is as much about purchasing goods and services as it is about obtaining ‘authentic’ experiences.’ The birth and development of modern commercial advertising techniques features heavily in Dawson’s account. He draws on cultural critic Raymond Williams’ framework that held the purpose of advertising ‘was to instil even the most mundane of products with a sense of desirability by associating them with a particularly rewarding experience.’ For Dawson, this process became a way for promoters to create value and demand for local goods and services. His aim in the book is to explain how tourist promotion transformed from civic boosterism to ‘an economic strategy... fully enmeshed with the culture of consumption.’ Few historians of Australian tourism have attempted to investigate the relationship between consumerism and tourism in the way that Dawson has for British Columbia. Throughout this thesis, I argue that Australia’s national parks are emblematic of the growing links between consumer identity, tourism and the national economic interest.

In exploring the relationship between consumers, tourism and the nation, this thesis makes two important contributions to existing scholarship. First, it repositions the focus on national parks from how nations created them to how promoters sold them to the public. Drawing on histories of advertising and tourism, it develops an understanding of who these promoters were and what

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72 Crawford, The Quest for Legitimacy, p. 336.
73 Dawson, Selling British Columbia, p. 9-10.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid, p. 39.
76 Ibid, p. 9.
professional backgrounds and expertise they had. Having drawn a profile of these bureaucrats, boosters and publicists, I show how their sophisticated public relations and advertising campaigns created an image of Mount Buffalo and the Blue Mountains that was based less on the places themselves than it was on what they believed would attract the maximum number of tourists. Promotion is therefore a lens through which we can see how these experts viewed mainstream settler Australian society. It is also a useful tool in apprehending how advertising attempted to encourage settler Australians to forge a connection with the land, and deepens the understanding of the link between national identity, tourism and the Australian bush.

The second contribution is to an emerging field of studies showing that processes of Indigenous dispossession were not limited to the colonial era, and were also not exclusively carried out by government agencies tasked with controlling the lives of Indigenous people. In this thesis I show how tourist promoters both perpetuated a vision of the land as uninhabited by Indigenous people and presented Indigenous people as a dying race. Furthermore, I bring to light a range of evidence, previously unpublished, that demonstrates that promoters were a driving force in propagating a late colonial narrative that the extinction of Indigenous people was inevitable and a morally unproblematic side effect of settlement. As we will see in the following chapter, promoters working in the 1880s began these processes, that were soon embraced by state affiliated promotional institutions such as tourist bureaus and ANTA, and continued right up to the Second World War, where the period of this research ends.
Chapter II:

Early Promotion, 1880-1900.

In this chapter I trace the evolution of advertising materials for the Blue Mountains and Mount Buffalo from the twilight decades of the nineteenth century up to the early twentieth century, when state governments began to take an increased interest in advertising them as tourist resorts. Prior to the establishment of state tourist bureaus, railways, private tourist bureaus, or associations formed by local communities were the primary publicists for the destinations. Entrepreneurial organisations such as the Bright Alpine Club sought to create a tourist industry and develop the regional economy by attracting visitors from the city. Conversely, railways and commercial tourist bureaus saw the destinations as opportune places to send tourists and turn a profit from their use of commercial services to reach their destination.

Tourist advertising for the two destinations shared a preoccupation with health, opportunities to experience the technological and spiritual sublime and narratives that intertwined British heritage with emergent myths of Australian identity. Promoters drew particular attention to the positive health effects of invigorating climates and altitudes. Such appeals to the improvement of mental and physical wellbeing reflected emerging urban progressive concerns around the effect of city life on the individual. Furthermore, descriptions of scenery often suggested equivalence between the bush and the English countryside, and guidebooks for the Blue Mountains abounded with stories of colonial explorers and their resolute British characteristics. How late nineteenth century tourist promotion simultaneously expressed nostalgia for Britain and emerging myths of the settler experience gives an insight into the changing nature of settler Australian identity.

What else can be discerned from the myths and descriptions of scenery in these guidebooks? Firstly, early efforts to promote Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as tourist resorts give an insight into the movement of Australia's economy towards mass consumption. Jo Hawkins, who has written on the relationship between consumer culture and the ANZAC tradition, writes that ‘as Australians moved from producers to consumers, the consumption of goods grew increasingly central to culture and national identity.’ As this shift occurred at the beginning of the twentieth

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century ‘Australian traders began to realise that words and symbols, in the form of trademarks and brands, could embody powerful emotions and meanings,’ argues Hawkins. But tourism promoters increasingly addressed middle class aspirations and anxieties, just as contemporary advertisers of consumer items were doing for medicines and household goods such as tea and laundry powder at the end of the nineteenth century. Importantly, the promoters I focus on in this chapter sold a nature experience as something that could be held on to and possessed for life by the consumer. As the Bright Alpine Club wrote of one gorge ‘to have seen it is an experience which will be remembered while memory lasts.’ Secondly, early promotion began to imbue the destinations with characteristics promoters perceived as distinctive to settler Australian culture, experience and progress. Promoters’ construction of the destinations as spaces connected to colonial identity mirrored Australian literary and artistic movements towards a new conception of Australian identity in the 1880s. For the Blue Mountains and Buffalo this meant an entanglement with both emergent Australian and existing British myths and images, as promoters sought to present versions of the destinations that maximised visitation by appealing to the sentiments of the broadest possible settler audience.

This chapter draws from New South Wales Railways and private companies’ guidebooks published in the 1880s and 1890s. I discuss them in terms of their themes, rather than in chronological order. One guide, published in 1887 by the printers Batty and Chalcraft of Redfern, has no clear association with any company, railway or other organisation, but largely aligns with the thematic content of the others. Another guide was written in 1888 by William C. Woolcott, who ran a private travel agency called the “tourist bureau.” Not to be confused with the state agency created in 1905, Woolcott’s bureau was a front for Cook & Son and the American Baggage Company. For Buffalo, I draw from the two editions of the Illustrated Guide to the Australian Alps and Buffalo Ranges, published in 1890 and 1897. The Alpine Club was the sole promoter of Buffalo until the resort came to the attention of the state government as a site for the investment of funds to grow the Victorian tourist industry during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

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1 Ibid, p. 7.
3 The Bright Alpine Club, Illustrated Guide to the Australian Alps and Buffalo Ranges, 1897, p. 49.
The Mountains as Health Resorts

Settler Australians living in the Victorian era often worried about their health. On the extent to which Australians have been historically troubled by matters of mental and physical well-being, historian David Walker writes that many ‘felt a nagging worry that the whole basis of modern life, at once sedentary and stressful, had created new maladies which needed new remedies. Some people doubted that it was possible to live healthy lives in the modern world.’ National parks emerged in the context of near mass-hypochondria as urban progressives sought an antidote to what they perceived as the debilitating effects of the industrialised city. The New South Wales government set National Park (later Royal National Park) aside precisely for this reason in 1879. As Michael Hall writes, the creation of the National Park ‘was inspired more by a desire to ensure the health of Sydney’s working population than to provide a wilderness.’

Promoters played on anxieties over mental and physical health in order to draw people to both resorts. As Julia Horn notes, ‘from the belief that Australia’s inland regions, particularly its mountains and tablelands, possessed desirable climates, there followed the promotion of Australian mountains for their curative properties.’ Guides for both Buffalo and the Blue Mountains describe the benefits to health of the high altitudes, temperate climates and other healing opportunities present in the highlands, demonstrating promoters’ awareness of contemporary anxieties over the effects of urban working life on the body and mind.

The notion that a mountain vacation was beneficial to health was tied to the emerging progressive movement that became popular with the rising middle class toward the end of the nineteenth century. In her article on the influence of progressive ideas on early Victorian national park reservation, Sarah Mirams writes that the progressive movement became active in middle-class Australia between 1890 and 1914, and held a ‘passionate belief in the value of efficiency, utilitarianism and scientific planning, coupled with a view that nature and the natural world was the source of humankind’s vitality and freedom.’ As urban progressives identified national parks

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4 Mirams, ‘For their moral health’ pp. 249-266.
6 Mirams, “For their moral health”, p. 249.
as spaces for the revival of mental and physical wellbeing, promoters seized on these anxieties and marketed nature resorts as a panacea for modern urban life.

The promise that exposure to the rarefied air of higher altitudes improved health closely resembled the emergence of mountain sanatoria in Europe. Alison F. Frank writes that ‘the air of the central European Alps’ became commodified in the 1860s. Advances in science and medicine created a market demand for mountain air, that released an army of railway engineers, architects, construction workers and tourist operators to facilitate access to it. Frank writes that in European mountain resorts:

a great deal of human ingenuity, of mental and physical work, went into creating the demand for certain types of air, in gaining access to those types of air, in storing, marketing, and packaging it for sale, and in distributing access to it in its original setting.14

The same processes that led to the commodification of mountain air were occurring in the Blue Mountains. After hoteliers and railways created networks of infrastructure to support tourists, promoters marketed the Blue Mountains’ air as one of its foremost attractions. Much was made of the altitudes of Katoomba, Blackheath and other towns where tourists could rest and recuperate in privately owned cottages, accommodations and hospices. Promoters seized on air as an attraction and promptly folded the benefits of mountain air into their advertising.

The marketing of air in the Blue Mountains in the 1880s was tied to historic ambitions for the region to gain a reputation as a sanatorium. The Batty and Chalcraft guide quotes John Dunmore Lang’s 1834 history of the colony, in which the doctor and early promoter of the colony wrote that he had ‘no doubt that a considerable village or Sanitarium will eventually spring up’ in the vicinity of Wentworth Falls, ‘for the health of valetudinarians from Sydney and elsewhere in the lowlands.’15 Lang’s prediction augured well for Springwood, a town at the foothills of the mountains which Woolcott’s guide described as ‘more of a sanatorium than a resort of sightseers, the climate being beautifully mild throughout the year.’16 In spite of Springwood’s modest altitude of 1200 feet above sea level, it was closer to Sydney and therefore more easily accessed by the infirm.

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15 *Blue Mountains Guide* (Batty and Chalcraft), p. 11.
16 Woolcott, *Tourists’ Pocket Guide* p. 43.
The Bright Alpine Club did less to establish for Buffalo a reputation as a mountain sanatorium. It was harder to commodify the air in a place that was further away from the city and less developed for the accommodation of tourists, let alone those who were ill or weak. Still, advertisements that the club took out in the *Argus* sold the Bright district as the ‘Switzerland of Australia’ and emphasised the altitude of Australia’s Alps were over 6,000 feet. Private businesses that advertised in the *Illustrated Guide to the Australian Alps* attempted to capitalise on the alpine air, and often described the district as ‘invigorating’ and the climate ‘bracing’, but did not seek to attract visitors who were seriously ill. As I discuss below, promoters’ appeals for tourists to take the mountain air were centred around the benefits to the urban public, and the progressive idea that time spent in nature, away from the polluted air of the city was a social good. This clean air movement mirrored a contemporary nostalgia for the lost frontier that postulated the ‘simplicity and innocence’ of the bush could remedy the ‘overcrowding, poverty, vice and disease’ of the city."

So the commodification of air in the Blue Mountains was more advanced than at Buffalo by the end of the nineteenth century. As I argue in Chapter IV and V, promoters working in the 1920s and 1930s sought to establish Buffalo as a resort where the bracing air could provide a benefit to tourists, but this only represented a small part of their broader marketing campaign. In contrast to the sanatoria of the Italian or Swiss Alps, neither Buffalo or the Blue Mountains were ever marketed exclusively as dedicated sanatoria for the treatment of tuberculosis patients. Rather, promoters cultivated a notion that time spent at higher altitudes was beneficial to all people, particularly those suffering from the perceived ailments of modern city life. One railway guide for the Blue Mountains, for example, praised the benefits of the scenery to health, but for all who could make the trip: ‘For a dozen miles the train runs through a quiet country, bright and charming to one who seeks in Nature’s heart that rest which is often the best medicine.’ The benefits to health increased when a tourist alighted the train to breathe in the mountains’ fresh air. In the words of the Batty and Chalcraft guide:

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The air is pure and invigorating. Business men soon lose all weariness, and children, previously weak, even in a few days, wear the bloom of health. The bustle and cares of city life may have chased sleep away, but on our “Highlands” tired nature’s soft restorer swiftly returns. And the appetite! Men and women who could scarcely be tempted to take the daintiest food in the low country soon eat like ploughboys. Blackheath specially suits lung and chest diseases. There are those who owe an altogether new lease of life to a few months of residence there.²⁰

While the Blue Mountains Railway Tourist Guide foregrounded the benefits of the air to businessmen, it was optimistic that these advantages would be received by all members of the family. ‘In time the great majority of Sydney families that can afford it will spend the summer on the mountains, and in winter hundreds will be there who want the tonic of sharp fresh air rather than drugs,’ the guide said.²¹ Another guide saw itself as providing something of a public service, claiming rather proudly that its arrival:

cannot fail to be welcomed as exactly filling a great public need; and as giving an impetus to that health-promoting custom of occasionally visiting our mountain districts, and there taking in a fresh supply of ozone, which is so deficient in the crowded centre of population.²²

Guides promised that the benefits of air were available to all. But who exactly could afford a holiday in the Blue Mountains? Prices in the guide for cottages were between £2 and £3 per week. Rooms at Katoomba’s Carrington Hotel were around £2 as well. In 1890 the average weekly wage was around £1.38 per week, so a week’s accommodation plus costs for travel and food was expensive, but not out of reach for middle-class holiday makers.²³ Julia Horne argues that Blue Mountains promoters advertised ‘the affordability of short tours’ insincerely, because ‘the labouring classes could not afford such excursions.’²⁴ But advertisements for hotels in Blackheath and Katoomba, for example, said tours and accommodation was ‘suited to almost any purse’, or within the ‘reach of the well-to-do and the struggling family man alike.’²⁵ In keeping

²¹Ibid.
²⁴Horne, Pursuit of Wonder, pp. 55-56.
with these appeals to the middle class, or those who aspired to be middle class, guidebooks took
more of an egalitarian tone than an elite one. ‘Is not health better than wealth?’ asks the Batty
and Chalcraft guide, which also quoted the maxim ‘a hale cobbler is a better man than a sick
king.’ The 1892 Railway Tourist Guide declared the railway hoped for mass, rather than elite,
tourism at the state’s resorts, declaring that ‘the convenient train services and cheap fares arranged
by the Railway Commissioners are doing much to make them more popular.’

In their promotion of Mount Buffalo, the Bright Alpine Club (established 1888) hoped for mass
tourism as well. The club’s first guide, published in 1890 on the heels of the 1880s land boom,
was optimistic that ‘all who can spare the time will visit.’ But the cost of a Buffalo trip remained
an expensive proposition throughout the 1890s. By 1893, at the height of Victoria’s worst
depression, the question of visiting Buffalo depended not just on spare time, but also on spare
money, which few households had. One in ten houses were repossessed by the banks, job losses
were severe and GDP fell by 17 percent. In 1890, a second class return ticket from Melbourne
to Bright cost £1.12 shillings. A first class return ticket cost nearly £3. The employment of a guide
cost £1 per day, providing the trip was made in summer and the party did not exceed six or seven
people. The price of a guide did not include the cost of a packhorse to carry provisions (10
shillings per day); a saddle horse for a tourist (10 shillings for ‘gents’ and 12 for ladies’ horses).
Neither did it include the price of provisions. The cost of a five-day holiday for two, with three
days on the mountain led by a guide, could easily surpass £15, or ten weeks’ labour for the
average wage earner.

In some respect the Alpine Club’s efforts to attract a broad range of tourists were hamstrung by
the realities of the expense of a holiday in an area where economies of scale had yet to dampen
the high cost. While the Alpine Club expressed hopes for mass tourism, they understood an
excursion to Buffalo was not inexpensive, and they still sought the dollar of those who could
afford to make the trip. They did this through suggestions in the guide that implied the full benefit
of a holiday on the mountain would be received by those who could afford all the bells and
whistles of a guided expedition up the Buffalo. The Alpine Club recommended, for example,
that visitors ‘should spend two or more days on the summit, camping out’ to fully receive the

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* Bright Alpine Club, Illustrated Guide to the Australian Alps and Buffalo Ranges, (Briner & Shoebridge Printers, Bright: 1890),
p. 52.
* Bryan Fitz-Gibbon and Marianne Gizycki, “The 1890s Depression” Reserve Bank of Australia, October 2001, accessed June
benefits of nature to the soul.’” The employment of a guide, they suggest, left the tourist with ‘nothing to do but abandon himself completely to the spirit of his surroundings, and revel in the enjoyment of his holiday.’” Importantly this promise of mountain serenity was aimed directly at the affluent or successful businessman, revealed by the promise of:

The complete isolation from the world of business, the exhilaration caused by the rarefied atmosphere, and the wildness and magnificence of the surrounds, bring the tourist into close sympathy with Nature in her grandest aspect, and render the trip both profitable and invigorating.”

The Alpine Club appealed to the inner-city health anxieties of the professional class in an effort to grow the local tourist industry and the local economy. Local businesses benefited from the tourist trade. Guides and tourists bought provisions, utensils and hardware from local bakers, grocers and storekeepers. The ironmonger and stables saw to the maintenance of equipment, horses and buggies. Hotels accommodated and fed tourists. Chemists dispensed medicines to stimulate those about to make their ascent and soothe those returning tired and sore. Advertisements for all of these local businesses in the 1890 and 1897 Illustrated Guides indicate the Bright Alpine Club’s dual mandate to improve visitation to Buffalo and have Bright capitalise on an increased stream of visitors.

In spite of the high cost in the 1890s, the Alpine Club’s vision for the future was optimistic that as many Victorians as possible would make the trip. Their vision of who should visit was, for the time, fairly inclusive. Advertisements for hotels stressed low rates and moderate prices, even though these were realistically affordable only to tourists of reasonable means. The writers encouraged ladies to visit and noted that many already had.” The guide observed late nineteenth century notions of chivalry, observing, for example, that the ascent of one summit ‘is not by any means difficult, even for ladies’ and ‘the writers have more than once successfully taken ladies up who have not been on horseback half-a-dozen times in their lives.” Julia Horne writes, ‘helpfulness was part of Australian etiquette in the second half of the nineteenth century: courtesy demanded that gentlemen should see to the luggage of an unescorted lady, put her safely into a

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30 Bright Alpine Club, Buffalo Ranges, 1897, p. 45.
31 Ibid, p. 46.
32 Ibid, p. 45.
33 Bright Alpine Club, Buffalo Ranges, 1897, p. 54.
34 Ibid, p. 54.
carriage and so on.’ It follows that the Alpine Club’s insistence that ladies could make the trip up the mountain with male assistance was in line with contemporary values. Melissa Harper has written that, up to the 1930s, bush-based recreations such as camping and bushwalking were ‘often characterised as masculine activities,’ adding that ‘women often faced scepticism about their physical and mental abilities to cope with the rigours required by extended walks and camping trips.’ While the Alpine Club demonstrated some level of scepticism about women’s ability to ride, they did not sell recreation in Buffalo as exclusively elitist or masculine. Instead, they addressed the values of the Alpine Club’s imagined audience – well-to-do, upper middle class travellers who imagined themselves as chivalrous and well comported.

**Pioneer myths, Britishness and emerging Australian identity**

In the late nineteenth century, settlers living in Victoria and New South Wales were deeply connected to their British roots. Guide books for both Buffalo and the Blue Mountains register a preoccupation with notions of British scenery and the character traits that settlers associated with British identity. As the historian Neville Meaney writes, the evidence that the majority of Australians in the nationalist era of the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century ‘thought of themselves primarily as a British people is overwhelming.’ He cites public school oaths of loyalty to Britain and the ‘sacred occasion’ of Empire Day as evidence of Australian’s pride in their British heritage. Schoolchildren learned the geography of Britain as well as Australia. Key figures in the cultural nationalist movement, from Lawson and Paterson to the Jindyworobak literary nationalists of the 1930s, identified with the myth of Britishness. As we will see below, tourist guides for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains manipulated the preoccupation of settler Australians with their British past as a means of attracting tourists.

Promoters celebrated the role of what were seen as typical British characteristics, such as bravery and the stiff upper lip, in the colonial conquest of the mountains. Guides for the Blue Mountains emphasised the gritty resolve of early colonial explorers who had first attempted to cross them. The Batty & Chalcraft guide begins:

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The early colonists regarded the mountains as a land of mystery. In the dim distance they stood out blue and indistinct. They were deemed the boundary of the settlement, and for a long time as impassable.  

The guide then describes a litany of expeditions, from those made by First Fleet marines to the famous, successful crossing of Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson in 1813. The guide monumentalised this final expedition as a watershed moment in the history of settlement, quoting Blaxland’s journal entry that crossing the Blue Mountains ‘changed the aspect of the colony from a confined insulated tract to a rich and extensive continent.’ Another guide held that the public owed the development of the colony to the intrepidity of the three explorers. The 1813 crossing represented a significant attraction to tourists because it stood for a symbol of settler progress. Most guides point tourists to ‘The Explorer’s Tree’ (a trunk where the 1813 party carved their initials the night before completing the crossing) as an equal attraction to the waterfalls, canyons and rock formations.

The writers of guides for the Blue Mountains celebrated the heroism of the explorers, and defined the characteristics needed to overcome the deep ravines and towering crags as fundamentally British. ‘Such are the energy and pluck in the British character that an early attempt was made to examine them [the Blue Mountains],’ the Batty & Chalcraft guide says of the first 1789 expedition. Pluck and daring are also said to be the characteristics of the naval surgeon and explorer George Bass, who ‘struggled manfully up the mountain for fourteen days’ before surrendering at Pulpit Hill, where he and his party turned back. In spite of Bass’s failure, the trials he faced demonstrated what ‘the sons of Britain can accomplish under the most trying difficulties.’ The guide laments the disappearance of Bass in South America, before associating his courage with the modern values of the colony: ‘sons of this modern England when they visit Pulpit Hill may shed a tear as they think of the fate of George Bass, the brave pioneer.’

Why did the heroes of British expeditions make a central appearance in tourist guides for the Blue Mountains? Geoffrey Blainey writes that Australians of this era were proud to belong to the

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*Ibid., p. 3.

*Ibid., p. 5.

*Ibid., p. 5.

*Ibid., p. 5.

*Ibid., p. 5.

*Ibid., p. 5.

*Ibid., p. 5.
British Empire, but ‘believed they had a fuller dose of what they saw as the stoutest British qualities – courage, self-reliance, and the appropriate blend of independence and loyalty.’ That guidebooks for the Blue Mountains consistently idolised British explorers’ stoicism, grit, and ability to remain calm in the face of danger, suggests that promoters believed these characteristics resonated with late-nineteenth century settler Australians, who valued these attributes in others and hoped existed in themselves. Furthermore, representations of these characteristics in tourist promotion signify promoters’ embrace of what the historian J.B. Hirst called the ‘pioneer legend.’ Hirst wrote that the legend ‘deals in a heroic way with the central experience of European settlement in Australia: the taming of the new environment to man’s use.’

In Kendall’s and Paterson’s poems, explorers stood in for the great heroes and warriors of the ancient world, an archetype Australia lacked until the Boer and, especially, First World wars. Hirst argued that the two poets sought to create a pantheon of Australian heroes ‘heavily influenced by the classical tradition of Greece and Rome.’ These poets used the Blue Mountains as the backdrop for heroic settler narratives. Kendall’s poem the ‘Blue Mountain Pioneers’ (1880) and Paterson’s ‘Song of the Future’ (1889), for instance, told of early 19th century pioneers’ and explorers’ strenuous conquest of the mountains. An 1892 railway guide gives an insight into how these legends gained a foothold in the popular imagination. The guide told readers that the name of Wentworth Falls, ‘demands a notice, it being in honour of the early explorer and statesmen, W.C. Wentworth. Years ago it was known as the “weatherboard,” but the new generation have taken more kindly to its present nomenclature.’ It is interesting that the railway identified a recent shift in the preference of visitors to use the name of a colonial explorer over its previous one during the same period that saw the rise of the literary nationalist poets, who imbued in the mountains what they asserted to be the essence of the settler past. Guides also suggested the importance of the explorer myth to posterity:

In all years to come children will be told of the exploits of these explorers, which are typified by the districts bearing their names. The recollection of their feats, too, gives a spice of romance and intellectual enjoyment to the traveller as he passes over regions rendered historic in this way.

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Identical to the Bulletin poets, Blue Mountains promoters saw exploration as an important precursor to the settling and working of the land that had made New South Wales a self-sustaining and productive colony. Guides frequently referred to the fertile agricultural lands that spanned the plains between Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Arriving by rail, we might expect that tourists looked forward to the scenic beauty that lay within the mountains. However, guides often encouraged tourists to use the height of the mountains as a vantage point to look back towards Sydney at scenes of material progress. Woolcott’s guide, for example, describes this view:

From the top of the hill the outlook is magnificent. As far as the eye can reach, the broad fertile Emu plains stretch out with their towns, villages, homesteads, and orchards mapped out as if it were at one’s feet, while the Nepean River, winding through the Plains like a broad silver belt, completes a scene to which for calm and peaceful beauty it would be hard to find an equal.52

The idea that a scene of fertile plains and worked land was unrivalled for calm and beauty, in a guide that told readers the Blue Mountains ‘contain some of the finest scenery in the colonies,’ is a telling insight into Woolcott’s perception that progress, conveyed by scenes of settled land and agricultural development, were of significant value to potential tourists. Views from the peaks of mountainous scenic reserves have always featured the settled agricultural land that borders them. Today, views of primary production conjure ‘local and global flows of ideas, commodities and organisms’, writes Andrea Gaynor.53 But in the colonial era, views of productive land were tied more closely to the triumph of settlers in establishing a viable and sustainable colony in less than a century of settlement. As Patrick Wolfe tells us, ‘agriculture, with its life-sustaining connectedness to land, is a potent symbol of settler-colonial identity.’54 Colin Symes writes, ‘the ideology of progress is writ large’ in the period’s railway guides.55 Indeed, NSW railway promoters described vistas that celebrated the working of the land, such as the one seen from the top of Mount Victoria where the ‘Nepean is seen... flowing like a silver streak through a fertile plain.’56

The 1889 *Railway Tourists’ Guide* cast the explorers Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth as saviours of the colony in a heroic description tied to progress. The guide evokes an image of the early colony as an insecure outpost where severe drought threatened the very survival of the settlement. Because of drought, ‘the safety of the flocks and herds of the colony’, which, the guide told readers ‘were even at that early date beginning to be appreciated at their true value’, hung in the balance. ‘Many an arduous search for water was the result,’ the guide continued. But it was only when the colony was desperately on the ropes, ‘when every resource was apparently about to fail’, that Mr. Wentworth ‘the pioneer of material and social progress in Australia, in conjunction with Messrs. Blaxland and Lawson’ penetrated the interior through the mountain gorges, leading them ‘to the land of plenty.” Combining the pioneer myth of the 1813 expedition with contemporary notions of economic progress, evident in the appraisal of the wool trade and of William Wentworth as a ‘pioneer of social and material progress’, reveals that promoters estimated in their readers a strong personal association with the present health and historical growth of the colonial economy.

The celebration of colonial pioneers as catalysts for the material wealth of the colony privileged a settler narrative that neglected the often violent toll of settlement on Indigenous people. The most direct way that guides served expansionary settler interests was by the complete omission of an Indigenous perspective. The Alpine Club guide for Buffalo, for instance, did not refer to Indigenous people at all, the beginning of a long running theme in the resort’s advertising history of not acknowledging historic presence of Indigenous people in the region. I discuss in further detail in Chapter IV that advertising Buffalo as uninhabited propagated a narrative that the land had been unused prior to settlement, and did not properly account for the decimation of the Mogullumbidj people by disease, infertility, frontier conflict and settler-perpetrated violence. As follows, I argue that the apparently benign park advertisements were in practice connected to, and supported, a colonial project. Images of Indigenous land as ‘empty’ in combination with the encouragement of a masculine ‘explorer’ tourist subject paved the way for settler use of land advertised as available.

In Blue Mountains promotion, the triumphant description of early colonial explorers as catalysts for the survival and eventual wealth of the colony also perpetuated a cleansed version of history.

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This occurred not only through the omission of an Indigenous perspective or acknowledgement of the prior presence of Indigenous people, but also by celebrating colonial protagonists whose role in advancing the perimeter of settler controlled land had often had devastating effects for local Indigenous people. Either through the omission of Indigenous presence in early colonial history, or by distorting the historic nature of settler Indigenous relations, guides contributed to the ascendancy of the myth that settlement had been a bloodless and victimless enterprise. The Batty and Chalcraft guide describes Colonel Paterson’s 1793 expedition up the Hawkesbury river that penetrated deeper into the mountains than any expedition since the arrival of the First Fleet. ‘Great hopes were entertained of his success’ read the guide, which suggested these hopes stemmed from Paterson’s expedition being well equipped and having a ‘strong escort, and some aboriginals as guides.’

Here, it is worth pausing to consider the dual-edged operation of exploration and of dispossession. In all of the guides I have used as sources for this chapter, the Batty and Chalcraft guide is the only one which references the contribution of Indigenous guides during the period of early colonial exploration. The acknowledgement of Indigenous guides in this guide makes their absence from other promotional material all the more conspicuous. And while the Batty and Chalcraft guidebook suggests there was a level of cooperation between settler explorers and local Indigenous people, settler Indigenous relations were far more complex, underscored by misunderstandings, shifting allegiances and violence. Paterson embodied the turbulent relationship between early colonists and Indigenous people. While he had relied on support from Indigenous men as guides during his expedition, he also figured in episodes of frontier violence between settlers and Indigenous groups. For example, he ordered soldiers to conduct a bloody reprisal attack against the Bediagal Indigenous group in 1795, following settler reports of theft and the murder of settlers around Parramatta. According to the account of the colony’s judge-advocate David Collins, Paterson sent soldiers from Parramatta ‘with instructions to destroy as many as they could meet with of the wood tribe... in the hope of striking terror.’ Paterson’s order was a disproportionate retaliation, and it is not clear from Collin’s recollection if the order even accurately targeted the alleged perpetrators of prior conflicts. Regardless, a grave tragedy was inflicted on an Indigenous woman and her child during the attack. Collins recollected

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* The Blue Mountain Guide, Batty and Chalcraft, p. 3.
* A number of historians have sought to recognise the contribution of Indigenous guides during the early colonial period in Australia. See: Henry Reynolds, With the White People, (Penguin Books: 1990).
that one Bediagal woman, ‘with a child at her breast’ had been shot through the shoulder. The same shot wounded her babe. British soldiers returned both to the settlement, along with a number of other prisoners. The child died. \(^{61}\)

Selective descriptions of the past in Victorian era tourist guides privileged the heroic attributes and efforts of early explorers over the realities of settler occupation. In tourist promotion, the lack of a single Indigenous perspective, or an account of the complicated reality of settler Indigenous relations, enshrined the practice of misremembering, forgetting and distorting the experience of colonisation for Indigenous people. Promotional guides only told stories that were morally uncomplicated and featured unambivalent masculine settler protagonists, whose motivations never strayed far from God or country. These one-dimensional narratives were printed as background reading for tourists waiting for the train to transport them to their mountain holiday. But they are an insight into what Stanner described as the settler practice of disremembering Indigenous people. Stanner said that this practice ‘may well have begun as a simple forgetting of other possible views’ but turned under habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practiced on a national scale. \(^{62}\) In the treatment of colonial exploration in tourist promotion for the Blue Mountains we can see how this process began, as it elevated settler achievements and enterprises over Indigenous experiences. This had already become standard practice in tourist promotion by the late nineteenth century.

Another way that promoters asserted a settler claim to the land was by suggesting the landscape resembled the idyllic British countryside. Promoters did this for both Buffalo and the Blue Mountains. Woolcott wrote that the climate at higher altitudes in Sydney’s resort was ‘similar to that of the south of England,’ noting that these conditions were given over to the flourishing of English fruits, such as apples, currants and all kinds of berries. \(^{63}\) Independent advertisements within guides offered furnished cottages as the preferred, fashionable accommodation. Guides informed tourists of activities that completed the English countryside aesthetic. Among them were: tearooms and lunchrooms, visits to pottery works, souvenir shops, golf, croquet, tennis, horseback riding and shooting. Scenery beckoned, and the guide directed tourists to all of the Blue Mountains’ natural attractions.

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\(^{61}\) Ibid.

\(^{62}\) W.E.H. Stanner, The Dreaming & Other Essays.

\(^{63}\) Blue Mountain Guide, (Batty & Chalcraft), p. 11.
The Bright Alpine Club characterised the scenery around Bright in terms of its likeness to England rather than a place that was uniquely Australian. Bright’s streets, ‘profusely planted with English trees’ gave a ‘cool and pleasant appearance, even in the hottest weather... [the trees] revive memories of Old England in a way that probably no other town in the colonies do.’ Again, the suggestion of a climate and aesthetic more like England’s manifests the Alpine Club’s estimation that sentimentality for England existed in the mainstream colonial audience, and, that this was a sufficient motivation to attract potential tourists to the Buffalo region.

Promoters for both resorts tugged at the heartstrings of those settlers who identified with Britain and British pastimes, yet were constrained by the distance of Australia from the old country. In the late part of the nineteenth century, England was fifty days away by steamship, spent aboard with 600 passengers. A train ride into the Blue Mountains from Sydney was a matter of hours. From Melbourne to Mount Buffalo took around a day. Consequently, promoters, appealing to what they estimated to be the prevailing cultural attitudes of the time, evoked British and European themes in order to capitalise on the majority of settler Australians who desired a holiday in Europe but lacked the means or time the trip required.

In fact, promoters often boosted the Blue Mountains as a cost-effective alternative to Europe. The pictorial guide to the Blue Mountains, for example, expounded that ‘it should be a matter of congratulation’ that ‘the masses who cannot afford the luxury of a visit to the Alps, Pyrenees, and other mountain scenery of Europe... have it in their power, by the exercise of a little economy, to witness, at least once a year, scenes quite as wonderful, quite as health giving, quite as beautiful as the historic and popular old-world resorts of English tourists.’

‘A Rapidly Declining Race’: Blue Mountains’ promoters relegate Indigenous people to history.
Promoters appealed to what they perceived to be mainstream values, and in so doing they offered readers a sanitised version of history that neglected the verity that the existence of the tourist resorts, and the settled lands that tourists viewed from the train window whilst travelling toward them, rested on the dispossession of Indigenous people. In presenting Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as either idylls of rural Britain or as places where British pioneers played out heroic myths that set the stage for the transformation of the land to its fecund appearance, promoters

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* Bright Alpine Club, Buffalo Ranges, p. 23.
perpetuated another myth, albeit an unspoken one, that Indigenous people had all but vanished from the country at some indeterminate time since the early colonial period.

Most of the early guides I have drawn on in this chapter advanced a settler claim to the land through the total omission of Indigenous peoples, particularly in connection with the tourist sites. The elision of Indigenous people from promotional materials is something I return to in later chapters. But instead of focussing here on the widespread omission of Indigenous people from the guides focussed on in this chapter, the discussion that follows refers to a single reference to Indigenous people in one of these guides. It is significant because it is the exception that proves the rule that the omission of Indigenous people from the bulk of tourist materials endorsed colonial policies that had historically displaced and dispossessed Indigenous people from their land. The reference is in the 1885 *Pictorial Guide to the Blue Mountains* description of Blacktown, three stops by train towards the mountains from Parramatta. It tells the tourist that the town was:

A former rendezvous for the aborigines - hence its name - in the days of Governor Macquarie, who established here an institution having for its object the civilizing and caretaking of this rapidly declining race.

The guide is referring to the Blacktown Native Institution. Originally established in Parramatta in 1814, it was relocated to Blacktown in 1821, where it operated until finally closed in 1830. In their historical overview of Aboriginal education policies, education specialist Professor Nina Burridge and research collaborator Andrew Chodkiewicz write that ‘an important feature of the Native Institution was that it ran as a boarding school for children aged between four and seven’ who had often been ‘removed from their families and placed in the care of the Superintendent of the Institution.’ Jane Lydon has described the site of the Native Institution in Blacktown as ‘an important physical trace of Aboriginal child removal policies, marking the origins of the stolen generations.’

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That the guide limited the presence of Indigenous people in the vicinity of the Blue Mountains to the Native Institution perpetuated an extinction narrative that the ‘decline’ of Indigenous people had already taken place. On the contrary, Darug people maintained a continued presence in the region long past the 1880s, when the guide was published. Maria Lock, a Darug woman who had been admitted to the institution by the missionary William Shelley in 1814, became a prominent owner of land around Blacktown and Liverpool. When she died in 1878 over 100 acres of her land at Liverpool and Blacktown were divided amongst her children and occupied by her descendants until around 1920. So rather than a ‘former rendezvous’ Blacktown was a continued site of importance and residence for many Indigenous people, and remains so to the present day. According to a recent article in the Guardian, the Blacktown area is ‘home to the largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in New South Wales’ and a Darug community ‘remains on country retaining elements of language and culture.’

The continued presence of the Darug on Country in the 1880s, however, would not have been learned by any tourist in possession of the 1885 Pictorial Guide, or for that matter, any other contemporary guide, because all advanced an image of the Blue Mountains and country between them and Sydney as uninhabited by Indigenous people. Guides supported a settler imagined image of the land as open for unobstructed expansion of settler industries, chiefly agricultural production. The contrast between settler progress and Indigenous ‘extinction’ is embodied by the Pictorial Guide’s description of the scenery alongside the railway toward the Blue Mountains. Significantly, this instantly follows the guide’s record of ‘aborigines... in the days of Governor Macquarie.’ After departing Blacktown, the guide said, one could see ‘enormous mobs of cattle and sheep... feeding on their way to the Sydney abattoirs’ and ‘the farms and gardens with which the country is studded are illustrative of the varied care and attention of their owners.’ Here the guide gives a celebratory description of the local ‘orchards of orange trees, brilliant with fruit and bloom,’ which comes shortly after an illustration of the bountiful orange harvest alongside a description of the wealth of the Parramatta region as a site for orange and wool production that had provided untold profit for the colony. 

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According to the ADB Dozens of families traced their descent through Maria to Yarramundi and to his father Goe.

70 ‘The settlers gave this town the name Blacktown. Now should they take it away?’, Guardian, October 14, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/oct/14/the-settlers-gave-this-place-the-name-blacktown-now-should-they-take-it-away>


Promoters were clearly not in the game of providing their readers with a current or realistic picture of local Indigenous affairs. Not only did the writers of the *Pictorial Guide* gloss over the disturbing colonial policy of removing Indigenous children to the Native Institution, and further elide the fact that Darug peoples continued to live, and own land, in the area, they also did not account for what was by the time a known reality that missions such as that in Blacktown had been unsuccessful in inducing Indigenous people to live a more ‘settled’ life. As Bruce Buchan notes, administrators and observers widely noted as early as the 1840s that efforts to ‘settle’ Indigenous people had failed.  

The *Pictorial Guide*’s positive historic description of the efforts of early colonial administrators to ‘re-construct Indigenous peoples in line with European expectations, norms and behaviour’ reveals a favourable settler attitude toward the historic treatment of Indigenous people by the state. Writers likely believed their audience shared this view. As I have previously said, promoters created advertising they believed would attract consumers by projecting images that were simultaneously created and informed by promoters’ interpretations of existing settler attitudes and trends. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine how readers may have interpreted the guide’s juxtaposition of Indigenous people as helpless, in need of government care and dwindling in number with descriptions of bountiful agricultural production. However, viewed in the context of 1880s NSW government policy towards Indigenous people, it is not a stretch to imagine that a broad level of community support existed for programs aimed at ‘civilising’ Indigenous people, as well as for the historical origins of these programs. The 1880s was a period that saw the increased interference of the New South Wales government in the lives of Indigenous people, characterised by the establishment of the Aboriginal Protection Board (1883), an institution that over the subsequent decades sought to expand its powers to interfere with, control and segregate Indigenous people by dispersing them to government run stations and reserves.

The guide’s sanguine representation of Macquarie’s institution advocated that its establishment had been a necessary, benevolent and constructive component of colonial Indigenous policy. The writers took for granted the material progress of settler society and celebrated this progress in the same breath as the only mention of Indigenous people in the guide. It is significant that a

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74 Ibid, p. 46.
guide which perpetuated the myth that Indigenous people were a ‘rapidly declining race’ that had been in need of the state’s ‘caretaking’ implicitly suggested through the exclusion or further mention of Indigenous people or history, that they had no continued presence further west than in the towns to which they had been dispersed decades earlier, separated from parents and kinship groups and prevented from living in traditional ways.

‘Vast Immeasurable Abyss, Deep Wasteful Wild’: The romantic sublime remains an alluring tourist attraction.

The idea of the sublime dates back to the eighteenth century and the work of the enlightenment philosopher Edmund Burke, who wrote that the ‘passion caused by the great sublime in nature’ caused such astonishment in the onlooker ‘that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot contain any other.’ Where a scene that is beautiful gives one a pleasant, aesthetic appreciation, sublime scenery rocks the foundations of the soul. Since Burke’s treatise the sublime has been revised, reinterpreted and adapted by philosophers, writers, essayists and historians. In environmental history, William Cronon argues that the version of the romantic sublime as expressed by ‘the terrible awe’ of writers William Wordsworth and Henry David Thoreau gave way to a ‘more comfortable, almost sentimental demeanour’ in the late nineteenth century, particularly as more tourists ‘sought out the wilderness as a spectacle to be looked at and enjoyed for its great beauty.’ Cronon calls this the ‘domesticated sublime.’

Julia Horne presents a similar perspective for the transformation of the romantic sublime in Australia. Horne focuses on the journals and diaries of tourists, in which she notes a decline in sublime descriptions of scenery and experience over the course of the nineteenth century. She writes that from the 1880s onward, even though some tourists still described scenery with sublime language, ‘the same emphasis was no longer given to the transformative possibilities of the sublime, the state of being that arose from contemplating sublime scenery in which the onlooker was lifted out of ordinariness towards a state of inspiration.’ While the terms were still in use at the end of the nineteenth century, she argues, they became ‘travel clichés to point out notable

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* Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of the Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1757, Section III-IV.
landscape features, the contemplation of which was gently pleasant, even uplifting, but did not unsettle the senses.”

But the sublime language promoters used to describe the Blue Mountains around the end of the nineteenth century cannot be accurately described as travel clichés or the ‘domesticated sublime.’ In fact, the way promoters deployed the sublime suggests they believed transcendental experience brought on by an encounter with nature was a legitimate sales strategy that would attract potential tourists. Multiple guides quoted a passage by Edmund Barton, attorney general of NSW in the 1890s and, later, the first prime minister of Australia. Barton described the scenery around Govett’s Leap as ‘the deepest chasm with perpendicular cliffs in the known world’ where, he said, ‘the full sublimity and grandeur of the scene is not realised at the first glance. After contemplating it for some time the mind becomes filled with awe and wonder as it vainly strives to comprehend – the vast immeasurable abyss, outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful wild.’

Promoters used the Barton passage to raise astonishment and a sense of existential fear in readers, whom they believed could be enticed to make the trip to the mountains to experience what we might think of as ‘the call of the void’, the feeling of existential anguish that sometimes confronts us when we encounter monumental scenery. Interestingly, the words following the hyphen in Barton’s description, ‘vast immeasurable abyss, outrageous as a sea,’ are borrowed from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, the epic poem known for its obscure and terrible descriptions of civil war between the angels of heaven and hell, the fall of man, and God’s creation of earth. The eminent Enlightenment philosopher Edmund Burke, who wrote at length on the sublime and on *Paradise Lost*, was fascinated by Milton’s ability to make things terrible by poetic obfuscation. Burke wrote that no person ‘seems to have understood… the setting of terrible things’ better than Milton, whose poetry, ‘dark, uncertain, confused and terrible’ was, said Burke, ‘sublime to the last degree.’

The line of pentameter Barton borrowed to describe the Blue Mountains is a prime example of how Milton crowds and confuses a distorting array of images to confound and astonish the reader. In only one sentence, we are asked to imagine an immeasurably deep and vast abyss, an outrageously turbulent sea, and an impenetrable, horrifying wild. Pause for a moment to think

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Burke, *Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1757, Sections III-IV.
of what image this sentence conjures. On the psychological effect of obfuscation, Burke wrote: ‘the mind is hurried out of itself, by a crowd of great and confused images; which affect because they are crowded and confused. For separate them, and you lose much of the greatness; and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness.’ It is significant that promoters used this line of iconic western literature, especially when we consider the comparison of the Blue Mountains to an ‘outrageous sea’. Burke wrote that a vast extent of land is no mean idea, but the prospect of the land can never ‘fill the mind with anything so great as the ocean’ because the ocean itself is an object of terror, and terror is ‘the ruling principle of the sublime.’ It is significant that promoters used this line of iconic western literature, especially when we consider the comparison of the Blue Mountains to an ‘outrageous sea’. Burke wrote that a vast extent of land is no mean idea, but the prospect of the land can never ‘fill the mind with anything so great as the ocean’ because the ocean itself is an object of terror, and terror is ‘the ruling principle of the sublime.’ The question here is not whether or not promoters were across Edmund Burke’s literary analysis of Milton. Rather, the question is why multiple guides deployed sublime language and replicated the poetry of an eminent poet of the sublime to describe the Blue Mountains if they did not wish themselves to unsettle the senses of their audience.

Illustrations depicting the Blue Mountains scenery in these guides deepened the articulation of the sublime in the descriptions of scenery and nature. In figure 2.1 a torrent of water drops from mortal heights into dark chasm. Both the origin and terminating point of the water is unclear to the viewer. In both figures 2.1 and 2.2, thick tree canopies appear impenetrable to infiltration by the sun. The undergrowth is a horrible entanglement of twisted vines, rotting branches and coarse bracken. In figure 2.2, bats, hardly thought of as a welcome sight in any age, fly silently through a realm of darkness that looks more like a scene from Gustave Doré’s famous, brooding, nineteenth century engravings of Paradise Lost than they do a place for the enjoyment and relaxation of tourists. Illustrations such as these contributed to a deepened sense of awe, fear and wonder already conjured by contemporary guidebooks’ deployment of poetic obfuscation in scenic descriptions.

**Ibid.**

**Ibid.**
Figure 2.1 - Wentworth Falls crash through dark foliage into an unknown abyss. *Batty and Chalcraft Guide*, 1887. The same illustration was published in the *The Pictorial Guide: Blue Mountains New South Wales* (Gibbs, Shallard & Co: 1885).
Figure 2.2. - Illustrations of the Blue Mountains in guides from this period were often dark, brooding imaginative representations of the Blue Mountains scenery. The Pictorial Guide: Blue Mountains New South Wales (Gibbs, Shallard & Co: 1885).

Although promoters widely quoted Barton’s Milton-influenced passage, writers also tried their own hand at astonishing readers. One railway guide described the arrival of the tourist into the mountains:

As the traveller on the railway is sped along the summits of the range, and catches glimpses of the thousand valleys stretching like ocean waves to the horizon on both sides of the line... he finds it difficult to imagine a nobler representation of the grandeur and sublimity of nature.\(^\text{84}\)

\(^{84}\) *Blue Mountains Railway Tourist Guide*, (Sydney: S.T. Leigh and Co, 1894), 12.
Again the image of an endless ocean conjures an image of the Blue Mountains that defies human understanding. Presenting the scenery in such a way established the Blue Mountains as a place for the quiet contemplation of nature and one’s place in it. The railway guide says of one vista in the Jamieson Valley that: ‘there is a solitude and solemnity about the whole scene suggestive of Nature’s innermost sanctuary.’ The guide says that a spectator ‘gazing on mountain and valley, on rock and stream’ is apt to think of ‘an antiquity almost invaluable.’ It continued that from a lookout near Leura ‘the tourist obtains such a general view of valley and waterfall, ferny glen and forest masses that he is figuratively entranced with the bewildering beauty of the scene.’

Guides did not altogether deny the possibility of tourists experiencing physical fear or terror either. The Batty and Chalcraft guide says that the tourist who finds himself atop “Perry’s Look Down” near Blackheath, ‘can gaze with mingled feelings of horror, amazement and delight into the unfathomable abyss of the gorge beneath.’ Seen from a higher point, the guide told readers that it ‘appears huger, more monstrous, wonderful, and terrible.’ These are descriptions of physical terror as much as existential, but guides reassured readers that they were safe to experience the awesome scenery in safety. For example Woolcott’s guide informed readers that at Wentworth Falls, ‘all places where an accident might happen have been protected with railings either of wood or iron, firmly fixed into the rock.’ Tourists could gaze into the abyss, and the abyss back at them, but safety rails and other measures stopped one from consuming the other.

In contrast to promoters for the Blue Mountains, the Bright Alpine Club was less concerned with inspiring metaphysical awakening. Nevertheless, they still offered consumers the possibility of a sublime experience. On arriving at the Buffalo Gorge, for example, the tourist who a moment earlier had ‘no indication of anything wonderful being close at hand’ is said to ‘suddenly burst on the view which invariably calls for the most superlative exclamations of wonder, awe and admiration.’ The Alpine Club guide lacks the transcendental descriptions used in guides for the Blue Mountains, however the Buffalo guide stated throughout that it did not ‘profess to be descriptive,’ and left the interpretation of the scenery up to the individual - ‘we do not propose

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*Bright Alpine Club, Buffalo Ranges*, 1897, p. 49.
to attempt its [the Gorge’s] description, but would say, if you can possibly manage to see it, do not miss the opportunity.”

Rather than sublime language, superlative description typified the Bright Alpine Club guide. The writers of the guide claimed ‘the scenery of the Buffalo is without doubt the grandest, the wildest, and the most novel of any to be found in Australia.’ Views were said to be the ‘most extensive in Australia.’ There is an obvious preoccupation amongst the writers with asserting that Buffalo’s scenery surpassed that of any other destination, in Australia or overseas. Of the Buffalo Gorge, for example, they wrote that ‘there is undoubtedly anything like it in Australia.’ The ascent of nearby Mount Feathertop is described as ‘the trip *par excellence* of Australia.’ The guide suggests comparison between the Australian Alps, the Himalayas, the Swiss Alps and the Andes. “The Switzerland of Victoria’ or of ‘The Switzerland of Australia’ had been Mount Buffalo’s first marketing slogans and appeared in advertisements headed by the Alpine Club in *The Argus* in the late 1880s.” The advertisements were unelaborate, brief and hardly distinguishable from the hundreds that surrounded them. Nevertheless, they boasted that the region’s high altitude and views offered ‘the grandest and most comprehensive picture in Australia.”

**The Technological Sublime**
Promoters for the Blue Mountains equally celebrated progress and natural scenery. They praised roads, railways, and other infrastructure with the same flourish as rocks and rivers. Woolcott’s guide named the Great Zig-Zag, a steep set of switchback rails cut into the side of Mount Victoria, as ‘the greatest engineering work on the N.S.W. Railways,” and that no visit to the mountains could be said to have been properly “done” unless it had been seen. The Batty & Chalcraft guide said the Zig-Zag was one of the region’s ‘most striking’ features, long ‘regarded as the wonder of the colonies.’ Woolcott’s praise for infrastructure extended to Sydney, whose buildings and roads rendered the city ‘more English-looking than the other Australian cities, such as Melbourne.”

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* *Argus*, 26 December, 1891, p. 12.
* Bright Alpine Club, *Buffalo Ranges*, 1897, p. 45.
Guides updated tourists on the developments to infrastructure and facilities at the mountains’ various tourist sites. ‘A local board is doing excellent work to ensure the safety, increase the convenience of visitors, and also add to the facilities at their command for seeing to the best advantage the many magnificent features of this aggregation of natural beauties,’ the railway guide told readers. Improvements included paths and steps, in some places cut into the side of precipices, ‘leading to spots which would be otherwise inaccessible’; secure fencing and protective railings to protect from slips and falls, and secure look-out points. At Wentworth Falls basins were cut into the rocks beside the paths where tourists could find cups attached by chains from which they could drink the cold spring water. Shelter sheds and picnic pavilions were also among the new facilities, and guides assured their readers that more improvements were on the way. Guides described these alterations to the natural environment, in some cases irreversible (such as the carving of rocks under Wentworth Falls to collect drinking water for thirsty day trippers), in the spirit of progress.

The idea that nature was unaffected by, or even benefited from, the presence and application of modern technology evokes what Leo Marx described as the ‘technological sublime.’ Marx held that during the industrial era Americans used the sense of awe and wonder that had previously been directed at nature to describe the technological advances of the industrial revolution. The unlikely reconciliation between nature and technology was an effort to maintain pastoral ideals where the ‘machine and the garden’ existed harmoniously rather than in opposition to one and other. The Australian historian Douglas B. Craig argues that many historians since Leo Marx have shared a conviction that the technological sublime was representative of a ‘distinctively American tendency to imbue technological advance with ideological and civic value.’ Yet Craig notes that the technological sublime was fairly prevalent in other Western societies, including Australia.

With respect to the technological sublime and the promotion of tourism, the historian Michael Dawson writes that travel guides in British Columbia ‘intertwined observations about nature and industry’ and gave voice to ‘an angst-ridden search for escape into nature, and a celebration of
and fascination with the twin driving forces of the modern world, technology and capitalism.\textsuperscript{104} Thomas Dunlap writes that evading and embracing modernity was universal across settler societies, and notes that settlers ‘wanted a relationship with nature in the context of their lives, and if that required modern methods to find a primitive experience, so be it.’\textsuperscript{105} Not only did tourists embrace modern technologies such as rail to get themselves into nature, once arrived, they continued to look for symbols of technological wonder in the natural setting. That tourist guides demonstrated a fixation with the fertile lands that reached back to Sydney and marked marvels of engineering such as the Zig Zag as notable points of interest indicates that in New South Wales a nature experience was not mutually exclusive with the presence of modern technology and capitalism. During the late nineteenth century, neither promoters nor passengers saw an inherent conflict between natural and industrial wonders. In New South Wales, as in other settler societies, travellers hoped to escape the ills of urban life and the city, but this did not prohibit them from maintaining a fascination with economic progress and its manifestations in industrial and agricultural production.

In the early phase of promotion, images of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains resembled a microcosm of the cultural zeitgeist. They were at once health resorts that offered a remedy for the overcrowded and polluted cities and places to experience nature at its most magnificent, though in the Blue Mountains, advertising gave a sense that something more transcendental lay beyond the mist filled canyons. Promoters for both destinations advanced the settler culture of expansion, possession and territory making either through outright omission, or by relegating Indigenous people to the past. Tourist promoters writing in the late nineteenth century did not recognise the contribution of Indigenous guides to the opening up of the continent that made possible the social and material progress of the settler nation. This finding challenges existing histories of national parks that do not account for the troubling and violent history of settler possession. As we will see in the next chapter, the myths of settler progress and misremembering of the past occupation of Indigenous people would take on new dimensions in the dawn of the twentieth century.

\textsuperscript{104} Dawson, \textit{Selling British Columbia}, 14.
\textsuperscript{105} Dunlap, \textit{Nature and the English Diaspora}, p. 10.
Chapter III


On a Friday evening in February 1908, a handful of New South Wales’ most influential politicians entered Sydney’s lavish Hotel Australia on Castlereagh street. Decorated in imported marble and with a central court extending from the ground floor to the top of the building, the Australia was Sydney’s answer to the opulent hotels of London, Paris and Melbourne. The men included former premiers James Carruthers and George Reid, who had been prime minister for a year spanning 1904 and 1905. They ascended the ornate marble and polished cedar staircase into one of the hotels’ private dining rooms, where they entertained a guest dear to them all, Percy Hunter, the director of the New South Wales Tourist Bureau. They loved Hunter because he had worked for a newspaper that favoured their politics, and had all, at one time or another, depended on him for favourable coverage. Toasting Hunter, Reid said he had ‘never yet had to complain of a breach of faith on the part of the press’ while Hunter had worked as a journalist. The minister for Public Instruction, James Hogue, thanked Hunter for ‘the kind manner in which some of his speeches had been left unreported.’

The meeting of these political movers and shakers with one of the state’s foremost publicity experts demonstrates just how valuable tourism was to the NSW government. Carruthers’ faction sought to attract a consistent stream of immigrants from Britain. They believed this would cement Sydney’s place as one of the Empire’s leading cities and would grow the state economy through immigration and foreign and domestic investment. The purpose of the meeting was not only a celebration of what Hunter had already achieved towards these ends since the establishment of the Tourist Bureau in 1905. It was also a toast to what might be achieved in the future. Hunter and Carruthers, who had resigned as premier in 1907, were departing to represent the state at the Franco-British Exhibition, to be held in October of 1908, in an effort to induce a larger flow

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1 ‘The Hotel Australia’, Daily Telegraph, December 13, 1890, p. 10.
3 Hunter formed his political connections working as a journalist during the Federal Conventions in the 1890s. He was employed by the Daily Telegraph (a paper which supported Reid’s free trade government). Hunter was married to Lilian Blair, the daughter of the well-known journalist David Blair, who founded Melbourne’s Age with Ebenezer Syme. The Age had a protectionist position that made it hard for the Victorian government to carry federation without its support. The endorsements of Hunter by Reid stem back to Hunter’s favourable coverage of Reid’s government. See, John Hirst, The Sentimental Nation, p. 179; and ‘Who’s who: Percy Hunter’, Sunday Times, May 31, 1925, p. 6.
of immigration to Australia. Hunter was not subordinate to the powerful men toasting him that night, and their dependence on him as an advisor should not be underestimated. A piece in *Smith’s Weekly* said the reporter turned PR consultant had been the premier’s ‘guide, philosopher and friend.’ A later article would say that Hunter’s name was ‘almost as well known to the public as the prime minister’s.’ Hunter had the ear of the political elite, and they happily deferred to him on matters of publicity, an art in which they all agreed Hunter had ably demonstrated himself.

The Hotel Australia, built in the 1890s to improve Sydney’s standing as a tourist destination, was a fitting location for a meeting with the purpose of furthering the state’s reputation. Before the foundation for the hotel had been laid, newspaper editors and politicians had demonstrated a concern with how New South Wales ought to be seen by other nations, particularly English-speaking ones. Increasing the reputation of the state was therefore part of a broader campaign to attract immigrants and investment from overseas. This question was intimately connected to the new and novel idea of advertising which was sweeping the country. As the *Adelaide Register* expressed in 1905, ‘this is the age of advertising, if Australia is to be known as she should be known and keep pace with other countries she will have to advertise.’ Leading dailies in New South Wales argued that Australia was falling behind contemporary nations, such as Canada, in effectively promoting themselves internationally. According to the *Register*, the fact that Australia was ‘one of the most glorious countries under the sun’ was only known to the people living beneath the Southern Cross. This may have been a generous appraisal, as few settler Australians knew of the natural attractions and tourist destinations in their own states, and those who could afford to travel often visited destinations overseas, rather than holidaying in Australia.

The focus of this chapter is the New South Wales Government Tourist Bureau, that was established precisely in response to mounting concerns over the state’s reputation as a tourist destination. The premier, J.H. Carruthers, was alert to the disparity between advertising for his state, of which there was relatively little, and other states in the commonwealth. He blamed New South Wales’ lack of a tourism industry on the state’s failure to advertise itself effectively. A

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1 *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 22, 1908.
frequent visitor to Tasmania, Carruthers was impressed by how the island state had built a tourist profile for itself by arranging lantern slide lectures in Britain. He was also dismayed by how many people left New South Wales to take holidays in Tasmania. As a repeat visitor to the island state himself, the lack of New South Wales’ appeal to holidaymakers was surely not lost on Carruthers. By his estimation between ten and twenty thousand people travelled from NSW to the island state ‘every year to enjoy inferior scenery and a less invigorating climate change than they could get without leaving the State.’

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I tell the story of how the Tourist Bureau came into existence with a strong impetus to modernise the state’s tourist advertising. The Bureau embraced new printing, photography and film technologies, and its director, Percy Hunter, demonstrated a prescient understanding of the emerging field of public relations. I argue that the Bureau he ran was a cutting edge publicity organisation ahead of its time. The Bureau’s photography, for instance, depicted an Australianised vision of the landscape that emphasised bright sunlight, eucalypts and space before the movement generally credited with revolutionising Australian landscape photography.

Second, I elaborate on the specific image of the Blue Mountains produced by the organisation. In the previous chapter we saw that promotion for the Blue Mountains had largely rested on appeals to the restoration of health, opportunities to experience the sublime, and the engagement of tourists with British identity through pioneer myths and the landscape. In the first decades of the twentieth century, many of these selling points fell away in favour of descriptions of natural features and geology that fused the romantic sublime with the emerging, modern interest in science. Where earlier promotional materials saw parallels in the British landscape, the Tourist Bureau’s campaign was marked by an effort to present the Blue Mountains as an unrivalled international destination.

The final section of this chapter argues that Hunter promoted the Blue Mountains as a scenic resort in a white man’s continent, offering an image of Australian nature that not only neglected the past inhabitation of New South Wales by Indigenous Australians, but actively worked to overcome popular impressions that Indigenous Australians remained present in the country.

12 Ibid, pp. 67-70.
The Origins of the Tourist Bureau

The stated goals of the Tourist Bureau were to advertise the state’s resources, encourage immigration and investment from overseas, develop tourist traffic and establish new tourist resorts.14 The Bureau described its mission as being to assist ‘people who wish to visit... both locally and from abroad.’15 Davidson and Spearritt write that the bureau was ‘a domestic operation... perceived primarily as a way of encouraging people to visit the resorts of their own state before venturing beyond it.’16 Some of the newspapers saw it that way. One reported that the government established the bureau to induce ‘people who formerly went to Tasmania, New Zealand and other places for their holidays... to remain in the state.’17 In spite of this impression of the Bureau as a domestic outfit, its staff took the dual mandate to advertise New South Wales at home and abroad seriously. Annual reports show equal concern for the work being done to promote New South Wales overseas and within Australia. However, a limited budget and limited human resources meant that the Bureau’s publications were uniform for domestic and international circulation.18

The employment of Hunter, a former journalist, as the state’s foremost publicity agent was a deft stroke of modern public relations strategy. Hunter was unscrupulous about using the press as a vehicle for dissemination of public relations propaganda.19 In her history of public relations in Australia, former journalist and public relations expert Clara Zawawi notes that late nineteenth century theatre and vaudeville promoters sought editorial coverage by sending newspapers ‘so called puff pieces – promotional material barely disguised as editorial copy – and journalists were accused of cooperating too closely with advertisers in seeing to it that such material got into print.’20 A successful cyclist before becoming a public servant, Hunter peddled puff pieces as well as he could any racing bike.

In reports made to the NSW Parliament, Hunter frequently reported on the Bureau’s use of metropolitan, country and overseas newspapers ‘for giving publicity to matters connected with

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15 Intelligence department, N.S.W.: a brief summary of the organisation and functions of this department, formed July 1905, New South Wales Intelligence Department: (Sydney: W.A. Gullick, Govt Printer, 1906), pp. 14-15.
16 Spearritt and Davidson, Holiday Business, p. 69.
18 Intelligence department, a brief summary of the organisation and functions of this department, pp. 14-15.
both immigration and tourist resorts. The Tourist Bureau’s ‘Publications Branch’ passed precise information on to newspapers for publication, often writing complete articles that they forwarded to editors and journalists. In Hunter’s words, the branch did ‘a good deal of work in the preparation of articles for publication in newspapers’ and sent the articles with accompanying illustrations and maps of the state’s industries or scenic resorts. In 1913, Hunter estimated that the Bureau had established relationships with over fifty newspapers. He knew that the bureau’s use of the press was advantageous, claiming that ‘articles descriptive of the various tourist centres and districts are prominently placed before a very large circle of readers.’ Within eight years of operation, the Bureau was able to get its message out to an audience, the size of which was unmatched by any equivalent tourist organisation in Australia at the time.

In 1907, Hunter had the Bureau moved into the ground floor of Challis House in Martin Place. Situated opposite the General Post Office in the heart of the CBD, the office enjoyed a steady flow of passers-by and inquirers, who often stopped to peer through the office’s large show window – the largest single piece of glass in any shopfront in the city. It became a convenient meeting point for new visitors to Sydney, the Bureau said. The relocation was an important step in modernisation, and the effects of the new premises were soon noticed. ‘Since the removal of the Tourist Bureau to its central position in Challis House, there has been a constant growth in the stream of visitors and inquirers,’ noted Hunter in one parliamentary report. Inside, Tourist Bureau officers carefully arranged displays and exhibits of the state’s products, resources and pictures of its tourist resorts. Photographs and depictions of the Blue Mountains would have figured prominently in these displays. Local tourists, he wrote ‘readily avail themselves of the information and facilities afforded.’ The new arrangements impressed Alfred A. Billson, the member for Ovens in which Mount Buffalo is situated. He wrote:

To pay a visit to the New South Wales Tourists’ Bureau in Sydney is at once a pleasure and an education. Centrally situated it is convenient to all... Inside the spacious offices, groups of views arrest the visitor’s attention, every tourist centre being well advertised.

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*a Immigration and Tourist Bureau (Report for Year Ended 30th June 1913), p. 8. NSWA: NRS 14087, [5/3499B]*

*a Ibid, p. 8.*

*a Ibid, p. 8.*

*a Ibid, p. 8.*

*a Australian Star, November 30, 1907, p. 2.*


*a Ibid, p. 5.*
The officers in charge beam with enthusiasm, and the fullest information as to distances, means of communication, cost of journey &c. is supplied at a moment’s notice.\(^7\)

Hunter’s belief in the need for modern advertising guided the Tourist Bureau’s efforts to create sophisticated publicity. He held the Bureau’s advertising at an international standard, writing in one annual report that the ‘excellence of the work’ in publications and photography bore ‘comparison with the advertising of any country in the world.’\(^8\) As his work required frequent travel to Europe and the United States he was in a position to know. He also wrote of the quality of the new sets of photographs that ‘strikingly set forth the various phases of social and industrial life, the tourist resorts, and the different sports in vogue’ in Australia and New South Wales.\(^9\) The Tourist Bureau strived to keep their materials up to date and at a high standard. They constantly revised text in order to give the latest information, ‘to bring under notice of the tourist the new resorts.’\(^10\) Hunter understood the need to produce publications that covered new ground, writing ‘I have given particular attention to this phase of the Bureau’s functions in view of its importance. The work of publication and complementary schemes for distribution have been the subject of continued vigilance.’\(^11\)

Indeed, the Tourist Bureau’s guides, pamphlets and brochures made guides from the preceding era obsolescent. The amount of text per page was slight. Information and pictures appeared in arrangements that were easier on the eye. Negative space was more common. The Bureau wrote one text on each destination. Shorter guides used parts of the longer texts. Compared to the disjointed promotion of the 1880s and 1890s, Tourist Bureau ephemera was tightly focussed. Decorative borders gave guides more visual appeal as did the framing, focus and quality of photographs. We will see below that the manipulation of, and experimentation with, photographic negatives also played a role in constructing nature in the bureau’s Blue Mountains promotional ephemera.

The Bureau’s production of sophisticated publicity rested on the skill of the Government Printer, William Applegate Gullick. Hunter credited the ‘variety of design, attractive appearance of the

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\(^7\) ‘Central Tourists Bureau’, Argus, May 19, 1908, p. 9.
\(^8\) Immigration and Tourist Bureau, Report... for the year ended 30th June, 1914. NSW: NRS 14087, [5/3499B]
\(^9\) Immigration and Tourist Bureau, Report for Year Ended 30th June 1913. NSW: NRS 14087, [5/3499B]
\(^10\) Immigration and Tourist Bureau, Report for Year Ended 30th June 1913. NSW: NRS 14087, [5/3499B]
booklets, folders and pamphlets, and the all-round excellence of the photographs and lantern slides,’ to the talented printer.” Gullick became the Government Printer in 1896, and adroitly produced colourful and visually defined prints and lithographs of government publications, pamphlets and maps. The *Comparative Map showing Railway Systems of NSW and Victoria* seen in Figure 1.1 on page 17 of this thesis being one such example. Before joining the government, he had completed a twenty-year managerial career at John Sands, at the time Australia’s largest printing and lithography firm. His employer and his colleagues held him in high esteem. At a silver tea service celebrating his departure, the owner and directors of John Sands spoke of him in ‘terms of eulogy.” He would be missed, they said, not only for his good character, but for his expertise and skill. It was precisely these qualities that Percy Hunter and the Tourist Bureau came to value so highly.

Gullick’s methods in lithography and efforts to improve the scientific understanding of photography were at the cutting edge of international technology as it stood in the early twentieth century. Gullick’s reputation as an able investigator into ‘the great secret’ of photography – the development of colour – was well known in Sydney. In 1910, he gave a presentation of his work in colour photography to the New South Wales Institute of Journalists who were ‘amazed at the absolute fidelity and beauty’ of Gullick’s reproductions.” One journalist wrote that Gullick’s pictures of the Blue Mountains ‘were presented with a vividness that gave one the impression that he was looking out upon the actual scene, through an open window.” The Bureau distributed Gullick’s prints as lantern slides and in promotional literature and prepared enlarged photographs that were displayed all over Australia and the world.”

Within a few years of its conception the Tourist Bureau was the most professional organisation of its kind in Australia. We will see in the next chapter that Hunter’s bureau was the envy of other states, particularly Victoria. For the Blue Mountains, the professionalization of the NSW Tourist Bureau meant an updated and modernised image. The professional writers and public relations experts at the Bureau brought the image of the mountains in line with changing ideas, tastes and attitudes, which around the turn of the century included greater public interest in scientific study and national symbols.”

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A modern image of the Blue Mountains: Scientific and Sublime

The Bureau attempted to lure people to the mountains by imbuing them with characteristics relevant to the modern world. Written copy emphasised the sublimity of the mountains, for instance, but conflated the sublime with scientific fact to stun and overwhelm an audience less persuaded by romantic language alone. Its photography, consistent with the Australian photographic movement’s emerging celebratory depiction of sunlight and the bush, suggested the Bureau’s own efforts to shape and respond to the settler connection with the land. Inherent in the Tourist Bureau’s campaign was a determination to have the Blue Mountains seen as a world class destination that equalled any foreign scenic wonder, emblematic of emerging post-Federation national pride. But, as I discuss towards the end of this chapter, formative attempts to inspire a settler connection with the land formalised the displacement of the cultural and spiritual claims of the Gundungurra and Darug peoples of the Blue Mountains, whose continued presence in the mountains was not recognised by the Tourist Bureau.40

As discussed in the previous chapter, scholars have tended to think the western fixation with the sublime dissipated by the end of the nineteenth century.41 But the Bureau’s promotional materials reveal the Bureau believed tourists sought a sublime experience during the early twentieth century also. Pamphlets told readers that ‘the vastness of the depth and extent of the precipitous gorges and valleys of the Blue Mountains inspire one with feelings of silent awe and wonder.’42 Guidebooks claimed the most characteristic features of the mountains were their ‘mighty abysses and towering headlands worn by the rushing torrents of bygone days.’43 The effect of these sites on the tourist were said to provoke feelings of awe and insignificance:

The spectator, gazing from the vantage-ground of some beetling crag, views wonderful panoramas of giant precipice and intervening tree-carpeted valleys at giddy depths, with a delicate veil of blue mist softening the outlines on the distant horizon.44

What image is this of the Blue Mountains if not one designed to inspire feelings of astonishment and wonder? This image was not merely descriptive, but directly tied to how the bureau expected

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40 Thomas, Artificial Horizon, p. 157.
42 New South Wales Government Tourist Bureau, The Blue Mountains, (Challis House, Sydney: circa 1910) 5; See also: NSW A Holiday Ground for the Tourist, 1910, p. 49.
43 NSW Government Tourist Bureau, The Blue Mountains, p. 11.
44 Ibid, 11; NSW Government Tourist Bureau, NSW A Holiday Ground for the Tourist, p. 38.
tourists would feel when confronted with monumental scenery. When the Tourist Bureau wrote that ‘the immense extent of the silent, rugged mountain scenery, all so wild and impressive cannot fail to inspire a feeling almost akin to awe, only to be replaced by one of soothing calm and restful peace’ it was appealing to what it perceived as a middle-class appetite for the transcendental.\footnote{Ibid, 13.}

While the Bureau estimated that tourists were interested in encountering the sublime, it dressed these appeals in a modern, scientific tone. Guides and pamphlets imparted scientific knowledge on the formation of the valleys and ravines. What forces of nature had caused these geological wonders of rock and water to form? The Bureau told readers that many persons arriving in the mountains wrongly thought ‘violent convulsions in the earth’s crust’ to be the cause of the enormous cliffs and ravines in the mountains. But how these speculators were wrong! The landscape was not the product of violent earthquakes or volcanic eruption, elucidated the Tourist Bureau. It was rain water that was responsible for this seemingly seismic landscape, which over the course of millennia had denuded the sandstone into its present formations. The Bureau instructed tourists how to observe the agency of water for themselves:

Look at the sloping surface of any earth cuttings or embankments that have been exposed to rain action; see the miniature ranges and intervening valleys that the water draining off has furrowed out. Notice the miniature precipices left where the harder earth material has resisted the action of the running water.\footnote{New South Wales: A Holiday Ground for the Tourist, p. 50.}

Thomas Dunlap writes that a popular interest in scientific understanding was an aspect of the enthusiasm for nature in the countries of the English diaspora between 1880 and 1920.\footnote{Thomas Dunlap, Nature and the English Diaspora, pp. 139-164.} In this context we can understand the Bureau’s description of the Blue Mountain’s geological history as an effort to capitalise on the contemporary enthusiasm for science. Nearly all of the Bureau’s guides included Charles Darwin’s assessment that ‘it is not easy to conceive a more magnificent spectacle’ than the Blue Mountains.\footnote{NSW Government Tourist Bureau, The Blue Mountains, p. 11; and, NSW A Holiday Ground for the Tourist, p. 39.} This was an important testimonial from the last century’s most eminent scientist, sure to secure the Bureau’s vision of the Blue Mountains as a site of scientific wonder. But what is interesting about this particular phase of the Blue Mountains’ promotion, is the way in which the Bureau used scientific description to further evoke an image
of the Blue Mountains as a phenomenon that eclipsed human experience. One description, steeped in the language of geology, directly challenges the reader’s sense of mortality:

Though in the life of a man a block [of sandstone] may seem unchanged, in a few thousand years it may have entirely disappeared, and such a lapse of time probably bears a less proportion to the period occupied by the valley formation than does a single hour to the life of a man.⁴⁹

The photograph of a man eclipsed by a vertiginous cliff face (see Figure 1 below) appeared in guides very close to the above text, evidencing that the Bureau was trying to inspire more than a prosaic, scientific ideation of the land. Another example of Bureau copy extols the fragile beauty of sunlight entering the valley while simultaneously explaining the escarpment’s mineral properties. ‘The shadows of the clouds creep in masses of indigo across the great gullies and the sun lights up the bright cliffs, which are streaked with red and yellow from strains of iron.’⁵⁰ These are evocations of simultaneous beauty and scientific marvel, designed to kindle in the reader an urge to visit so they might see these attractions for themselves as well as experience the kind of emotional responses that Tourist Bureau ephemera suggested.

While many of the Bureau’s descriptions of the Blue Mountains betrayed some scientific understanding, their characterisations of waterfalls and of the Jenolan Caves (in the greater area of the Blue Mountains) were steeped in the romantic sublime. Waterfalls plunged ‘in silvery torrents of spray over mighty cliffs’ and rushed ‘in graceful cascades through fairy bowers and nooks of mountain fern.’⁵¹ Caves were ‘fairy palaces, supported on fluted columns, hung with magic tapestries of shining stone’⁵² and subterranean ‘scenes of transcendent beauty which the experience of the dweller in the upper world can offer nothing to parallel.’⁵³ The aura of the romantic sublime runs thick in these descriptions. Arriving on the topic of the caves in his promotional lectures, Percy Hunter evoked the sublime also, describing them as ‘the finest wonder caverns in the world’ that called ‘to the minds of visitors of some delightful places in fairyland.’⁵⁴

⁴⁹ NSW Government Tourist Bureau, The Blue Mountains, p. 9.
⁵⁰ NSW A Holiday Ground for the Tourist, 1910, p. 39.
⁵¹ Ibid, 11.
⁵² Ibid, 15.
⁵³ Ibid, 53.
⁵⁴ Percy Hunter, Notes for a Lecture on New South Wales, New South Wales Immigration and Tourist Bureau, (Sydney, 1909), 8.
Manipulated photography accentuates the Sublime

The photograph ‘Cliffs at Wentworth, Blue Mountains’ (Figure 1 below) manifests how the Bureau embraced modern photographic techniques to imbue the mountains with a sense of awe and wonder. It depicts a solitary male figure standing on a sliver of a trail that hugs the cliff face. To the man’s left the sun casts light into a tree covered valley that extends to the horizon. The cliffs tower above him, their tops not visible in the frame. Every sedimentary layer, built up over millennia after millennia, compounds the picture’s feeling of the transcendental. The man seems insignificant in the face of nature. He has dropped his suitcase at his feet, temporarily paralysed by the vastness of the scene before him. Like Thoreau on Katahdin ‘vast, titanic nature has got him at disadvantage.’

Another photograph in The Blue Mountains pamphlet, ‘The Gap, Leura’ (Figure 2 below) demonstrates the extent to which the government printer William Gullick went to manipulate images so that they would present a sublime vision of the Blue Mountains. The picture depicts two women standing before a yawning valley. Over the valley a tree clad mountain side rises diagonally across the picture, reaching its peak somewhere beyond the frame. Beyond the tree line of the opposing mountain incline nothing is visible, giving the impression that the women are staring into an infinite void. As with ‘Cliffs at Wentworth,’ the image magnifies the women’s sense of awe at the scenery before them. The State Library of New South Wales holds the original negative of this photograph, from which a slightly different vision emerges. In the negative, the top of the mountain, cropped from the pamphlet, is clearly visible. If one image were laid over the other, we would see that the peak of the mountain is far lower than the edited picture leads us to believe. Additionally, the infinite horizon of the pamphlet’s photograph is the result of a manipulation removing a distant, shadowy range from the original. The negative, while impressive, is hardly the vision of the tremendous encounter with nature suggested in the version in the pamphlet.

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Figure 3.1 – Cliffs at Wentworth. *The Blue Mountains*, New South Wales Government Tourist Bureau, circa 1910.
Manipulation emphasised sunlight and eucalypts, replaced the misty horizon with clear, sunny skies and cropped the peaks of promontories, leaving the extent of their heights to the viewers’ imagination. The staging of human subjects and the manipulation of photographic negatives evidences how the Tourist Bureau actively constructed an image of the Blue Mountains they thought would best appeal to consumers. Photographic manipulation accentuated the sublimity of the scenery. The panorama of The Gap at Leura is less impressive in its negative form than in the published pamphlet. Without the awestruck man, ‘Cliffs of Wentworth’ would have no scale by which consumers could measure the immensity of the scenery. That both images crop the peaks of ranges and cliffs meant that the heights of these features were left to the imagination of the reader. These represent deliberate efforts by the Tourist Bureau to increase the appeal of the destination by increasing the monumentality of the scenery. They intensified the vision of the Blue Mountains as a prolific wonderland where tourists could experience the sublime. Furthermore, photographs that framed human subjects gave readers an opportunity to imagine themselves among the spectacular scenery of the Blue Mountains before they had ever visited.

There was also a component of nationalistic expression in the style of photography chosen by the bureau. ‘Cliffs at Wentworth’ and ‘The Gap’ accentuate bright light, giving prominence to
the vastness of the spaces they depict. Historians have identified two phases of Australian pictorialist photography that give context to the photographs of the Tourist Bureau. The first phase, belonging to the nineteenth century, typically used soft focus and recalled the fuzzy style of the impressionist painters. The subject matter of this style was not obviously Australian. Contrastingly, the second phase came into focus during the 1910s and aimed to, as the Australian photographer Jack Cato later wrote, ‘interpret something of the bright light and spaciousness of Australia.’

Historians have emphasised the role of the Sydney Camera Circle, a photographic society formed in 1916, in forming the foundational practices and aesthetic of this second phase of Australian landscape photography. Its founding members included noted photographers such as Harold Cazneaux and Cecil Bostock, who are now regarded as influential to Australian landscape photography’s use of sunlight and spacious vision of Australia. Both were associated with the Sydney Camera Circle, which later became known as the ‘Sunshine School’. Ennis writes that the movement’s landscape photographs, ‘were obviously Australian in their subject matter’, and that ‘harsh, bright sunlight now had a crucial part to play as a signifier of what was conceived to be Australian.’ Rod Giblett writes that the Heidelberg School style of landscape painting inspired these photographers, who depicted similar themes and images, such as the bush, sun-drenched landscapes and the gum tree.

While much has been written on the Sydney Camera Circle’s revolution of Australian photography, Tourist Bureau photography, that aligned to a great extent with the stylistic conventions of the Sunshine School, preceded the establishment of the famous Sydney Camera Circle. ‘Cliffs at Wentworth’ and ‘The Gap’ are but two examples. Other photographs depict immense open spaces filled with rugged bush terrain, monumental rock formations and skies that are either clear or have been manipulated to appear so. Harsh sunlight pours into these pictures, filling the nooks and crannies of every hillside and reflecting brightly from every cliff face. We can see that ‘The Gap’ has been doctored in its published form to represent a far

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59 Sue Smith, Queensland Pictorialist Photography, (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1984), 10
brighter scene than the negative. The combination of these effects resulted in the presentation of the Blue Mountains as an obviously Australian place. In light of the Tourist Bureau’s stated objective ‘that the New South Wales public should know their own state first,’ photographs that emphasised the Australianness of the landscape were a form of propaganda devised to encourage a domestic audience to celebrate the scenic attributes of Australia. The presence of these pictures in *The Blue Mountains* pamphlet came at a time when such encouragement had only previously come from literary and artistic movements such as the Bulletin writers and the Heidelberg school.

Tourist Bureau photography emerged almost a decade before the Sunshine School first met. While the pamphlet from which the pictures I have discussed here has no definitive date, it is likely to have been circulated sometime during the 1910s. Interestingly the negative of ‘The Gap, Leura’ is dated 1908 by the State Library of New South Wales, however we do not know exactly when the negative was manipulated into the image presented in the pamphlet. It was published in a book that bore Hunter’s name and he left the Bureau in 1915, so the pamphlet’s provenance is before the First World War. Cazneaux and his contemporaries had experimented with the development techniques, negative manipulation and light effects that characterised their later work. Indeed, as Melissa Miles points out, these artists had likely been influenced by ‘calls for a national photography grounded in Australia’s clear, bright sunlight’ that had gained momentum since Federation in 1901. William Gullick was also driven by these nationalist impulses, and his role as an innovator in printing photography in Tourist Bureau ephemera preceded the emerging nationalist conventions of the artistic movement.

**An unrivalled international destination.**

Sublime, scientific language and photography were not the only means by which the bureau sought to attract visitors to the Blue Mountains. They also attempted to establish them as a unique attraction, unrivalled by any mountain scene in Australia or overseas. The Bureau sought to do this by redefining the traditional definition of mountain scenery. Guidebooks and pamphlets stated, for example, that the scenery was ‘magnificent... yet strangely different from that made up of bleak, snowy peaks, and glacier torrents which one is so apt to associate with the name of mountain.’ This was an attempt to dispel the prevailing notion that mountain scenery should physically resemble the European Alps. It was also an attempt to limit outgoing tourist trade with

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62 *The Blue Mountains, NSW Government Tourist Bureau*, p. 11.
New South Wales’ competitors, Tasmania and New Zealand, where the conventional image of mountain scenery was more prominent. (Also interesting is the bureau’s description of Kosciusko as a conventional snow-clad mountain comparable to ‘such famous places as St. Moritz, Aldenboden, Davos, Platz, and other Alpine centres on the continent’).64

Comparisons of the Blue Mountains with Yosemite asserted the supremacy of New South Wales’ scenery over America’s. Tourist Bureau guides claimed the two were the ‘only considerable valleys which can be classed as originally inaccessible.’65 This was a reference to the narrow outlets of both valleys that give the impression to someone inside them that they are completely enclosed, with only narrow entrances permitting access into the colossal amphitheatres. After making this initial comparison, the guides claim that: ‘in some respects the valleys carved out of the great sandstone plateau of New South Wales are even more remarkable than the Yosemite itself.’66 In what respects the valleys of the Grose and Cox are exactly more remarkable the guides do not say, and they make no further comparison between the Blue Mountains and Yosemite. Whether or not the Blue Mountains’ merited comparison with Yosemite was irrelevant, the point was to bring the two into the company of each other. Having invoked Yosemite, the comment lingers over the page like the haze that gives the Blue Mountains their name.

Allusions to foreign destinations were commonplace in Tourist Bureau materials and comparisons with famous sites were not limited to the Blue Mountains. Brochures compared New South Wales with famous destinations elsewhere. Sydney’s climate was said to strongly resemble the French and Italian Riviera, with a better temperature than Naples in the summer. Manly beach was ‘the Brighton of Australia.’ In one brochure Sydney ‘is like a corner of London transplanted.’ Another stated: ‘what New York is to the United States of America, Sydney is to Australia.’67 Sydney was of course healthier than any of these places, or as the Bureau put it:

Sydney is healthier than any other capital city in the old world or America. The death rate per 1,000 of the population is 10.41. In London it is 12.7 and in New York 16.0. In the salubrious climate, the inhabitants take their full measure of joy and indulge in surf

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64 NSW Immigration & Tourist Bureau, Alpine Sport in New South Wales, (Sydney: Challis House, 1909), p. 7.
66 The Blue Mountains, NSW Government Tourist Bureau, p. 8-9.
67 NSW Immigration and Tourist Bureau, Sydney: Australia’s Holiday City, (Sydney: 1914), p. 2.
bathing, swimming, and all the aquatic pastimes and outdoor recreation so favoured by the beautiful environment.\(^6\)

The Hawkesbury river was the peer of the Rhine or the Mississippi, yet had headlands, bluffs and waters 'more enchanting than those of either the European or American rivers.'\(^7\) A Tourist Bureau tour itinerary stated that ‘the National Park of New South Wales is one of the most magnificent recreation grounds in the whole world. In point of size it is second only to the Great Yellowstone Park of the United States.’\(^8\) Comparisons with international tourist attractions, particularly parallels with the American National Parks, built up a modern image of New South Wales and its tourist resorts as a world class and unrivalled destination. Hunter wrote that ‘no country in the world offers to the traveller such a wide range of climate, such a wonderful variation of interesting scenery, or such a wealth of entrancing, easily accessible waterside resorts as New South Wales.’\(^9\)

‘The only continent in the world occupied by a people belonging to one race.’

The Tourist Bureau's assertions that the scenery and health benefits of New South Wales surpassed Europe’s and America’s was borne from a prevailing racial belief that elevated white Anglo-Saxon civilisation above other races and cultures. Hunter fashioned New South Wales’ image as a white country that had a clear lineage to Britain. ‘Practically the whole population of New South Wales is descended from inhabitants of the United Kingdom who have emigrated in the course of the last century’, he wrote.\(^10\) Needless to say this characterisation of the population excluded all Indigenous people and non-British migrants living in the state at that time. Notes prepared by Hunter for lectures on New South Wales celebrated the social and material wealth that had arisen from the colony's British institutions. Hunter declaimed that the state had a judiciary that upheld ‘the best traditions of the British Bench’, and that the ‘British Parliamentary system of Government prevails in Australia.’ Not only had Australia inherited these institutions, it had improved on them. ‘The law of the land is practically the common law of England, with, in addition, a number of statutes of an advanced democratic stamp,’ he wrote. Implicit in Hunter’s approbation of the state’s British derived institutions is a belief that the ‘high state of

\(^{6}\) Ibid, p. 5.
\(^{7}\) The Pacific Coast of New South Wales, (Sydney: New South Wales Government Immigration and Tourist Bureau, 1911), p. 8.
\(^{8}\) Immigration and Tourist Bureau, Tourist Excursion to Sydney Leaving Melbourne, (Sydney: 1911).
\(^{9}\) Hunter, Notes for a Lecture on NSW, pp. 7-8.
\(^{10}\) Ibid, p. 4.
civilisation’ in New South Wales was the effect of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority. Hunter credited Australia’s progress to race, writing, for example, that:

In many ways Australia is remarkable; in one respect it is unique among nations. It is the only continent in the world occupied by a people belonging to one race, speaking one language, fired by the same impulses, hopes and ambitions, and from corner to corner of the vast territory within the girdle of the encompassing indissolubly united under a common Government – the freest, most democratic, and easily conformable to the popular will known on earth.”

Like the images of the Blue Mountains the Bureau disseminated, there is a conspicuous absence of Indigenous people from this vision. Hunter and his colleagues in the Bureau would have seen no problem in presenting the progress of New South Wales in the terms that they used, and were blind to the fact that the progress they celebrated rested on Indigenous dispossession. The Bureau’s attitude towards Indigenous people is revealed in Hunter’s Notes for a Lecture on New South Wales, under a section titled ‘FAUNA AND FLORA.’ In it, Hunter articulated two pet frustrations he often encountered amongst people ‘who do not know Australia well.’ One was ‘that the country is overrun with hostile blacks’, the other was that ‘venomous snakes constitute a grave danger to the settler.’ ‘Nothing could be further from the truth,’ he stressed, adding that ‘in New South Wales there are absolutely no hostile blacks, and the danger from snakes, if ordinary care is observed, is practically non-existent.”

Hunter’s conflation of Indigenous people with wildlife reflected broader contemporary governmental policy towards Indigenous people. As Fiona Paisley writes ‘At Federation, Aborigines had been excluded from citizenship within the states, their affairs incorporated into departments such as Fisheries and Wildlife.’ Moreover, the fact that Hunter, as an authority of New South Wales, was often encountering people who held a stereotypical view that a precondition of being Indigenous was hostility is indicative of prevailing racist attitudes. However, Hunter often spent long periods on tour outside of Australia to lecture on New South Wales. People he met that carried a stereotyped view of Indigenous people as hostile primitives could equally have been American or English as settlers in Australia. This does not diminish the fact

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73 Ibid, p. 2.
74 Ibid, p. 7.
that the Tourist Bureau’s promotion of New South Wales and its attractions rested on racist principles and the state control of Indigenous populations and where they resided. Elsewhere in his lecture notes, Hunter wrote that:

The state is especially fortunate in having no coloured problem to deal with. Of the aboriginal natives whom the first settlers found in possession there are now fewer than 4,000, and the race is dwindling yearly.⁷⁰

In the context of the New South Wales’ government policy towards Indigenous people and land use, Hunter’s remark about the diminishing Indigenous population is a pertinent example of how legislation aimed at controlling the Indigenous population intersected with tourist promotion. State land policy and legislation aimed at dispersing Indigenous people enabled the Tourist Bureau to promote tourist resorts as without Indigenous presence. By way of government Indigenous policy, communities living on land used for public recreation were moved on to Aboriginal reserves before 1905. This process of dispossession had already occurred in the Blue Mountains. For instance, members of the Gundungurra language group, (whose language gave Katoomba its name), had been relocated to a few acres known as ‘Aboriginal Reserve No. 26’ in the Burragorang Valley, about 300 km south of Katoomba.⁷⁷ Historian of the Gundungurra people Jim Smith has used electoral records to show that Aboriginal people maintained a presence in the valley until 1953, where they voted in State and Federal elections, owned land and held ‘a suite of aspirations for equality with the non-Aboriginal community.’⁷⁸ The continued presence of the Gundungurra in the Blue Mountains controverts Hunter’s assurance to his audiences that the number of Indigenous people was ‘dwindling’ every year.

Simultaneously with Hunter’s campaign to promote the scenic resorts of New South Wales, the state’s Aborigines Protection Board, under the Aborigines Protection Act of 1909, was empowered to remove ‘the child of any aborigine or the neglected child or any person apparently having an admixture of aboriginal blood in his veins.’⁷⁹ Heather Goodall, who has written at length on the NSW Aborigines Protection Board’s efforts to expand its powers, writes that ‘the whole

⁷⁰ Hunter, Notes for a Lecture on New South Wales, p. 4.
thrust of the 1909 Act was towards the dispersal of the Aboriginal population.\textsuperscript{80} So while Hunter, the representative of one government institution responsible for the promotion of the state, instructed his audiences that the state’s Indigenous communities were in decline, another government institution was actively involved in ensuring that decline took place. In this sense, the actions of the Aborigines Protection Board complemented the objectives of the Tourist Bureau, which were to promulgate narratives of settler progress. The Tourist Bureau’s presentation of New South Wales as uninhabited by Indigenous people was not only predicated on the displacement of Indigenous people already effected by the state, but also perpetuated an imaginary myth that Indigenous people did not remain on the land, and those who did would not remain for much longer.

As I mentioned above, advertising simultaneously shapes and reflects the society that produces and consumes it. Hunter’s desire to have the country thought of as without Indigenous presence and the promotion of the idea that Indigenous people were members of a dying race was a product of his estimation, as a talented reader of public opinion, that consumers sought an image of a country uninhabited by Indigenous people. In chapter 2, I demonstrated that the relegation of Indigenous people to the past in tourist guides, whose main purpose was to promote the Blue Mountains, made the tourist resort seem as if it had never been occupied by Indigenous people. Hunter’s Bureau carried this process into the twentieth century. Tracey Banivanua Mar writes that just as Indigenous people in settler colonies ‘were increasingly framed, both imaginatively and in legislation, as remnants in the way of progress, so too the pristine nature of wilderness came to be imagined and predicated on their exclusion.’\textsuperscript{81} Hunter’s belief that progress was an outcome of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority, combined with his public assurance that the Indigenous people of New South Wales were diminishing in number, demonstrates how the mechanisms of legislative and imaginary dispossession described by Banivanua Mar took place.

The Bureau’s campaigns appear to have been successful. Bureau data on the passenger traffic to Jenolan Caves shows that 9,638 tourists visited in 1913 compared to 3,975 in 1906. The domestic tourist traffic to Jenolan Caves continued to rise even after the outbreak of the First World War.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{80} Heather Goodall, ‘A History of Aboriginal Communities in New South Wales, 1909-1939’ (PhD, University of Sydney, 1982), p. 78, http://hdl.handle.net/2123/1601; For a detailed account of the NSW Aborigines Protection Board’s role in the dispersal and dispossession of Indigenous communities see Heather Goodall, Invasion to Embassy: Land in Aboriginal Politics in New South Wales, 1770-1972 (Sydney University Press: 1996), pp. 104-115.

\textsuperscript{81} Tracey Banivanua Mar, “Carving Wilderness”, p. 86.

The rise in traffic cannot be solely attributed to the Bureau’s deployment of a modernised advertising campaign. Affordability of holidays and the advent of better facilities and transport also facilitated the growth in visitors. However, the bureau’s depictions of the Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves as landscapes where the possibility of transformative experience existed must have appealed to some extent to a new generation of tourists. Significantly, the Bureau’s depiction of the Blue Mountains as a site of national importance occurred before the Sydney Camera School organised itself into a formal movement. Hunter had left the Tourist Bureau before the ‘Sunshine School’ formed in 1916.

By depicting Australian scenery as sublime, but also of national and scientific significance, the Bureau clearly believed it was meeting the demand of people who set out to experience the scientific wonders of the Blue Mountains, and the transcendental feelings they inspired. At the same time Hunter actively promoted New South Wales as a country uninhabited by Indigenous people. As a centralised government institution, the Bureau consolidated the myths of settler progress and terra nullius that were already apparent in the previous generation of promotion. In the next chapter we will see how Hunter’s approach became a gold standard for running state tourism campaigns and how the Victorian Railways adopted and adapted the lessons of his campaign to the marketing of Mount Buffalo in the 1920s.
Chapter IV

‘Tourists Mean Revenue’: How the Victorian Railways overcame Buffalo’s promotion problem.

When the Victorian government set Mount Buffalo aside as a national park in 1898 it was an expensive and difficult place to visit. A lack of developed accommodation on the Mountain meant that visits were ‘excessively cold’ most of the year. ‘Do not wear your best clothes when visiting the Buffalo,’ warned the Bright Alpine Club’s 1897 guidebook. Rather than packing one’s finest dress, the guide urged visitors to take a sufficiency of rugs, blankets and importantly ‘a flask of some good stimulant... in case of emergency.’

Thirty years later the national park at Buffalo was the premier tourist destination in Australia. In the 1920s, tourists made the 340 kilometre journey from Melbourne to Buffalo on the north-eastern railway line, stopping at either Bright or Porepunkah, gateway towns on the south-west border of Victoria’s central highlands. Though the journey took around a day, tourists travelled on trains said to be the most luxurious and comfortable in the state. Once they arrived at Buffalo, they lodged at the famous Chalet, where they enjoyed central heating, hot running water, and a variety of comforts and recreations unimaginable to the blanket-clad, shivering adventurers that took on the mountain just a few decades earlier. Many tourists still packed a flask of booze, but they did so to fuel the Chalet’s raucous dance nights (and the parties that continued in the guests’ rooms afterward).

What led to Buffalo’s transformation? Since 1890 the Bright Alpine Club, and then the Victorian Government, had made decent efforts to popularise the park. The extent to which the efforts of the state were inspired by competition with the Blue Mountains should not be underestimated. In 1908, for example, John Mackey, the Minister of Lands, proclaimed that when the state’s work was completed at Buffalo, ‘the Blue Mountains – the “crack” show place of Australia at present – will take second place in popular favor.’ But, in spite of Mackey’s enthusiasm, Buffalo did not earn a reputation as the premier tourist destination in Australia for over a decade. Various

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1 The Bright Alpine Club, Illustrated Guide to the Australian Alps and Buffalo Ranges, p. 44.
2 Ibid. p. 44.
5 ‘Tourists’ Resorte: Hospice at Mount Buffalo to Cost £10,000’, Age, July 14, 1908, p. 5.
state departments, railways and a meek Victorian tourist bureau that resembled Hunter’s only in name, offered an unclear vision of what the national park was.

In this chapter, I give an overview of the state’s initial efforts to market Buffalo before discussing the sophisticated and modern campaign undertaken by Victorian Railways, directed in the 1920s by Harold Clapp. I argue that the VR campaign was the most comprehensive effort to market a destination in Australia up to that time, and that the railway’s publications and posters were integral to Victorian Railways’ effort to create a national park brand that simultaneously shaped and responded to the desires, aspirations and values of the Melbourne middle class. The railway undertook its Buffalo publicity campaign with the express purpose of increasing railway income through tourism. An internal advertisement, published in the *Victorian Railways Magazine* for the attention of railway employees synopsised the railway’s sentiment that the tourist was ‘an asset, not merely because he spends money on sight-seeing and accommodation, but because he helps to increase rail traffic.’ ‘Tourists Mean Revenue’ read emboldened red letters of the advertisement’s title, published while Mount Buffalo National Park was the foremost destination publicised by the railway.

VR promoted Buffalo in the context of the professionalization of the advertising industry in Australia and abroad. Their campaign coincided with a movement towards advertising as a profession, a public service, and a necessary part of the economy. The railway’s attention to advertising as a professional mode of communication is congruent with Raymond Williams’ idea that the early decades of the twentieth century saw ‘more conscious and more serious attention to the psychology of advertising’ and an industry that ‘began staking its claims to be not only a profession, but an art and science.’ The level of sophistication in their advertising, combined with the attention of Clapp and his subordinates to mass publicity, indicate that the railway was abreast of contemporary developments in commercial advertising. Historians of Australian advertising have traced the growth of advertising from its beginnings as an untrusted profession in the early twentieth century into a sophisticated and legitimate enterprise following the Second World War. Here, I argue that Victorian Railway’s use of modern commercial advertising

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6 ‘Tourists Mean Revenue,’ *The Victorian Railways Magazine*, November, 1926, p. IV.
practices established a practice of commodifying nature for the purposes of large scale industrial tourism that influenced subsequent representations of Australian nature and national parks up until the Second World War.

The imagery and symbols the railway thought effective in attracting consumers reflect the railways’ attempts to target a middle-class Anglo-Australian audience by postulating the mainstream beliefs and values of this demographic. VR advertising of Buffalo invited consumers to imagine themselves as wealthy, respectable, healthy and happy, holidaying in an idealised vision of Australian nature. They sold this vision with an aspirational, middle-class audience in mind. Likewise, VR’s writers and artists cultivated an image of Buffalo and Australian nature they thought would best resonate with the urban middle class of the early twentieth century, whose new-found wealth, increased leisure time, emerging consumer desires, and consumption of sought-after products and experiences were a means of making and expressing identity.

In the sense that advertising was aimed at, and a product of, the middle class, the promotion of Buffalo reflects the prevailing 1920s notions of race and national identity as well as contemporary gender conventions, at least as railway advertisers perceived them. It is also an instructive, microcosmic example of the advertisers’ perception of the rise and direction of consumer behaviour in Australia. Examples I discuss below focus on the railway’s attempts to attract male and female consumers by devising advertisements they thought appealed to what men and women wanted. Robert Crawford points out that advertisements in this period ‘offered what men thought women wanted’ and that admen often struggled to comprehend women’s patterns of consumption. In spite of the challenges of the male nature of advertising creation, VR’s advertisements reveal some encouragement for women to experiment with independent and modern identities.

‘Everybody’s concern, yet nobody’s’: State Promotion of Buffalo, 1900-1920.

In order to fully appreciate the sophistication of the Victorian Railways campaign, it is first necessary to explain the unorganised, uncoordinated and inconsistent marketing efforts that preceded it. Prior to Clapp’s arrival in 1920, the Victorian Railways and various government departments promoted Buffalo’s scenic qualities, but scenery ran second to their publicising of

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their own involvement in developing the resort. The Bright Alpine Club retreated from their role as promoters. It was difficult for the small organisation to find a voice amidst efforts by the better resourced government departments, who had access to superior technology, and produced a higher quality and larger number of pamphlets and guides.

The Victorian government attempted to establish a tourist bureau, but it was a shadow of its New South Wales counterpart. The Age took Victorian Premier Sir Thomas Bent to task for failing to deliver an effective state tourist agency: ‘beyond making promises... nothing at all has been accomplished’, the paper editorialised. Even with a tourist bureau, Victorian promoters could not hold a candle to the campaign being undertaken in New South Wales, at least according to influential Victorians, who, as I describe in greater detail below, unabashedly vented their ire at the state’s failure to promote Mount Buffalo.

The Victorian government became interested in the promotion of Mount Buffalo as a tourist resort in 1906. Returning from a survey of the Buffalo Ranges, Edward John Dunn, director of the state Geological Survey, reported:

> In the grand mountain range the State possesses an asset of enormous value, even from a monetary point of view, and the stream of tourists that it will attract when easily accessible, and its marvels and beauties become well known, should prove as good as a gold mine to the local inhabitants.  

An acolyte of Eastern philosophy, Dunn believed that the region’s scenic beauty was intrinsic to its value; and that in Eastern countries Buffalo would be revered as a sacred place ‘dotted with shrines and visited by thousands of pilgrims.’ He called Buffalo a ‘Garden of the Gods’, an epithet that would soon become a favoured slogan for promoters. Dunn’s assessment that both the state and local economies stood to benefit from the land through managed tourism was met favourably by the government, who soon invested heavily in developing the region as a tourist destination. Their intent to commercialise Buffalo was more in line with Dunn’s vision of Buffalo as a tourist gold mine than a sacred temple. The promise of tourist revenue was too tantalising to temper the government’s pro-development instincts.

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12 ‘Mt. Buffalo in Winter: Great Attractions, But No Tourists: A story of Folly and Neglect’, Age, August 9, 1910, p. 7. See also: Age, September 17, 1907; ‘Tourist Bureau’, Age, Jan 12, 1907; and Age February 2, 1907 p. 6.
13 Buffalo Ranges, Geelong Advertiser, October 23, 1906, p. 4.
14 ‘Our Tourist Resorts: The Buffalo Mountains’, Age, January 8, p. 5.
During this early phase of promotion, state printed literature propagandised the role of the government in building attractions at Buffalo, more than advertising the place on the basis of its nature and scenery. The Victorian Government Tourist Bureau’s *Peaks and Plateaus of Victoria*, for instance, praised the artificial 60 acre Lake Catani, constructed by the Public Works Department at a cost of £2,200, as an ‘attractive sheet of water’ and a site for ‘diversified sport suited to the changing season.’¹⁵ The Bureau noted the man-made water feature, named after the chief engineer of the Public Works Department, Carlo Catani, as ‘easily first in power of attraction’ amongst Buffalo’s many sights. ‘Anything more strikingly picturesque than the lake with its moving groups of skaters and rushing toboggans it would be impossible to imagine.’¹⁶ The guide noted that the lake was the principal meeting point for participation in winter recreations such as tobogganing, skiing and snow-shoeing. In summer the lake, ‘plentifully stocked with English trout’ was attractive for fishermen as its proximity to the chalet obviated ‘the usual necessity of exhausting tramps through the scrubby undergrowth.’¹⁷

State published guides consistently celebrated new government infrastructure. The 1908 Victorian Railways’ guide so opened: ‘This magnificent wonderland of natural beauty and superb scenic attractions is now easily accessible by a splendid road recently constructed by the Public Works Department.’¹⁸ Other guides used the same copy, meaning that state promoters praised the Public Works Department and the road, also engineered by Catani, in more than one publication.¹⁹ Praise for the state was effusive. The Railway’s *Picturesque Victoria* emphasised the government’s role in ‘the opening up of various tourists’ resorts’ and making ‘easily accessible some of the finest scenery in the Commonwealth.’²⁰ Of the government road at Buffalo the handbook said that it: ‘enables visitors to the “Garden of the Gods”, to obtain easy access to this magnificent wonderland of natural beauty and superb scenic attractions.’²¹ Another railway guide commented that the road’s construction was ‘very fine and well graded.’²²

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 32.
¹⁷ Ibid 33.
²¹ Ibid, p. xi.
Promoters emphasised the new facilities at the Chalet, particularly the addition of new sewage and piped water systems. A guide issued by the minister for lands proudly stated that the ‘newly erected establishment’ was ‘sewered on the septic tank system.’ This was a point of pride for the new developers because previous accommodations were badly ventilated and human waste had, until that time, been removed not by pipe into tank but by bucket into Gorge. The railway guide commended the construction of a ‘commodious chalet’ on the summit, ‘at a height of 4,370 feet above sea level’. A Government Tourist Bureau guide included a photograph of the chalet after a snowfall. The caption reads: ‘First Class Accommodation at the New Government Chalet.’

Promotional literature still sold the promise of natural beauty and superb scenic attractions, and nearly every department appropriated Dunn’s ‘Garden of the Gods’ as a slogan for their publicity. Even the Mines Department published a souvenir that used the catchphrase as its subheading. (The fact that Mines Department felt obliged to produce publicity materials for Buffalo testifies to the urgency institutions felt to attach their names to the new resort, not to mention the decentralised nature of publicity campaigns at the time). However, while some of the points on which these institutions sold Buffalo, such as magnificent views and opportunities for outdoor recreation remained similar to those used by the Bright Alpine Club, the campaigns mainly publicised the work being done by whichever institution commissioned a publication. Consequently, the image of Buffalo these departments offered was less to do with nature, and more a commendation of the work being done by the state to make Buffalo available to tourists.

A huge amount of public money had gone into the development of the resort. Engineering Lake Catani into an ice-skating surface cost £2200. The construction of the baronial style Chalet cost £10,000. The road from Bright up to Buffalo also drew considerably on public funds. That the state was doing a poor job of advertising the resort on which it had spent these funds was a great source of consternation for the media, whose response to state efforts to promote Buffalo were vitriolic. Indignant about the huge expenditure of public funds and the perceived inability of the state to properly advertise the resort, the Age proclaimed:

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* Webb and Adams, Buffalo Story, p. 47.
* VGTB, Peaks and Plateaus, p. 30.
* VGTB, Trips from Melbourne to the Nearer Ranges, (Melbourne: 1910), p. 29.
* ‘In Splendid Isolation: A Victorian Health Resort’, Daily Telegraph, August 11, 1910, p. 3.
* ‘Hospice at Mount Buffalo to Cost £10,000’, Age, July 14, 1908, p. 3.
A sphere of government enterprise which has been totally neglected in Victoria is the
development of tourist traffic. This State possesses scenic attractions of which a great
majority of its own people are ignorant, and no steps worth speaking of are taken to make
them known to our own community or to possible visitors from other parts of
Australasia.\textsuperscript{29}

In 1908, the Federated Progress Association met with the premier to ‘hasten the establishment
of a tourist bureau for the purpose of fully advertising all Victorian summer and winter retreats.’\textsuperscript{30} But season after season passed without any significant developments in a formal institution
resembling that advocated by the Federated Progress Association and \textit{The Age}. This enraged
those who believed the amount of public investment in Buffalo was not seeing an adequate
return. Worse still, the Victorian Railways advertised special excursions to Mount Kosciusko in
conjunction with the NSW Railway department, but no such excursions had been run to Mount
Buffalo.\textsuperscript{31}

Criticism of Victoria’s failure to advertise itself was not limited to the editors of the daily
newspapers. Alfred A. Billson, the member for Ovens (in which Buffalo is situated) wrote in a
letter to the \textit{Argus} that the State government was ignorant ‘of what is being done in other states
of the Commonwealth and in other countries of the world to attract visitors, and generally to
promote tourist traffic.’\textsuperscript{32} After visiting Sydney and studying the NSW Tourist Bureau’s methods,
Billson was fearful that Victoria was not abreast of other states in regard to establishing an effective
tourist policy. Speaking highly of Hunter’s bureau, Billson then asked where could ‘any visitor
to Victoria obtain information in a similar manner?’ and ‘Where can any visitor go and see for
himself the views of our tourist resorts?’ Billson expostulated that in order for ‘people throughout
the Commonwealth’ to ‘know of the grandeur of the scenery on Mount Buffalo... or any of our
other attractions, steps must be taken to advertise them in approved methods.’\textsuperscript{33}

Outrage peaked in 1910, and the sense of Victorian rivalry with New South Wales was palpable.
The \textit{Age} editorialised that Victoria should operate a tourist agency the same as Percy Hunter’s

\textsuperscript{30} ‘Government’s Tourist Policy’, \textit{Herald}, August 12, 1908, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Age}, August 9, 1910, p.
\textsuperscript{32} Alfred A. Billson, ‘Central Tourist’s Bureau: An Urgent Necessity’, \textit{Argus}, May 19, 1908, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid}.
over the border. The *Herald* criticised the suggested premises for a Victorian bureau because the proposed site, on the corner of William and Bourke streets, was not equivalent to the central situation of the NSW Bureau’s headquarters in Martin Place. The offices ‘may as well be in Oakleigh’ said one unimpressed citizen.Editors often mentioned Hunter in the same breath as the failure of the Victorian government to take initiative in promoting Buffalo. For example, one article proposing that if Buffalo ‘existed in any other state it would have been exploited long ago’ read:

Had this mountain scenery been placed in New South Wales the energetic manager of the tourist traffic in that State, Mr. Percy Hunter, would by this time have on for it a European reputation, and it would have been visited by people from many places.

The print media in New South Wales revelled in the failure of their southern rival to execute a program of advertising for Buffalo. The *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, told of the visit of the minister of defence who went to Buffalo on a trip to recuperate his health. Once arrived, he found that ‘there was not a single person in the hotel except the servants.’ The paper put the lack of visitors down to the lack of advertising: ‘no one goes there because no one knows it exists.’ According to the *Daily Telegraph*, Victoria’s lack of organised publicity was due to state leaders’ failure to grasp the importance of modern advertising: ‘the so-called Tourist Bureau... will issue a ticket if some stranger happens to stroll in and ask for one, but the advertising and popularising of the place by modern methods is an unacquired art in Victoria.’

The negative response to the state’s advertising efforts, and the acute references to the superiority of New South Wales’s Tourist Bureau, testifies to the fact that promoters could not deploy any old propaganda to sell a tourist destination. There had to be a level of compatibility between the image of the park being promoted, and the expectations of the audience targeted by advertising. In Victoria, the state institutions responsible for promoting Buffalo exhibited more concern for constructing an image of themselves and the state than they did in attempting to persuade tourists to visit by constructing an image of Buffalo that appealed to consumers. The efforts of the state

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*b* Ibid.


*e* Ibid.

*f* Ibid.

*g* Ibid.
to produce organised publicity for Victorian tourist resorts scarcely improved until 1920, when the Victorian Railways, reorganised under a new system of efficient leadership, launched a new and effective campaign for Mount Buffalo as the centrepiece of Victoria's scenic destinations.

**Clapp’s new advertising strategy: ‘an example to private advertisers.’**

Modern publicity methods came to the Victorian Railways under the charismatic leadership of Sir Harold Clapp. Soon after Clapp’s appointment in 1920, the railway advanced a romantic vision of Mount Buffalo that was aimed at generating increased tourist traffic to the mountains by building settler attachment to the land. VR’s artists and writers combined sunlight, the bush, heroic explorers, native trees and the rugged Australian mountainscape in an attempt to trigger an emotional connection between Victorians and the countryside beyond Melbourne.

Scholars have examined Clapp and VR publicity from a range of perspectives, in work primarily concerned with VR advertising as a mechanism to persuade Victorians to travel by rail and consume products freighted by the railroad. But advertising can also be used to take a measure of the extent to which national park marketing attempted a project of connecting settler Australians with a romanticised vision of the land. More of VR’s advertisements in the 1920s and 1930s featured Mount Buffalo than any other railway product or service. The railway also published abundant ephemera, guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles. These sources give valuable insights into the construction of Australian nature in the context of the post-Federation search for a settler Australian identity.

The extent to which the park’s advertising advanced a settler claim to the land must be understood in the context of how the railway carried out its advertising strategy in Melbourne. Early in Clapp’s tenure, the railway began to modernise its internal advertising practices, bringing

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them in line with commercial advertising agencies in Melbourne and Sydney. Like the pistons and cylinders that turn the wheels of a steam engine, railway and tourist propaganda slowly began ticking over, and with Clapp stoking the engine of promotion, it did not take long for publicity to reach full steam. In June 1923 the railway bought out the privately owned Railway and General Advertising Company, assuming internal creative control for all railway advertising. The **VR Magazine** noted that the reorganisation brought the railway up to pace with the ‘efficient systems of advertising’ in commercial houses.

But the railway saw its publicity strategy as better than equal with contemporary advertisers. The **VR Public Betterment Board’s** Flinders Street offices headquartered a dedicated group of marketers, publicists and image-makers tasked with bringing revenue to the railway and increasing its public profile and reputation. In addition to the Betterment Board, the commissioners (particularly Clapp) had a hand in commissioning commercial artists to create posters, including those enticing tourists to visit Buffalo. The commissioners regarded the posters as works of art, and believed the prints “set an example to private advertisers in keeping up the artistic standards” of public displays of advertising.

The commissioners’ decision to use posters as the cornerstone of the advertising strategy was an innovative move that ran against contemporary commercial practices. Charles Lloyd Jones, advertising manager of the department store his grandfather founded in 1838, introduced to Australia the style of poster advertising favoured by the railway. Jones had spent time in New York before the First World War, where he became enthralled with a new style of poster advertising that exchanged vast amounts of copy for artistic design and illustration. In 1918 Jones ran an exhibition of posters, collected in America and Europe, with a view to promoting commercial art in Australia. After visiting Jones’s exhibition, the literary and art critic Bertram Stevens wrote, “The poster is the medium in which the fine arts meet most closely the needs of commerce and it has already proved that the most artistic appeal to the general public is the most effective.”

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44 Advertising’s Artful Aid, *The Victorian Railways Magazine*, January 1928, p. 11.
45 ‘Recent Railways Publicity’, *The Victorian Railways Magazine*, October 1928, p. 15.
47 *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 11, 1918.
In spite of the favourable review, most Australian business leaders were not convinced by Jones’ argument that the future lay in visual, rather than textual advertising. In fact, the only business leader swayed by Jones’ exhibition was Harold Clapp.49

The answer to the question of why Clapp was more receptive to a new form of advertising lies in his professional background. Born in Melbourne in 1875, opportunities in the United States whisked him away from Victoria in 1901. For the next two decades Clapp collaborated on the construction of the New York subway, oversaw urban rail electrification schemes, and proved himself to be a perceptive executive and engineer. Before returning to Australia he had served as vice-president of a management corporation and two railroads, one of which was the leviathan Southern Pacific Railroad.50 Similarly to Charles Jones, Clapp’s time in America alerted him to publicity and management strategies not thought conventional in Australia.

The Victorian state government sought an experienced executive to reform its deteriorating railway lines. They offered Clapp £5,000, a record salary for an Australian public servant, but a meagre sum compared to what he would have received had he stayed in America. But it was not money that motivated Clapp. He returned because he felt a responsibility as a Victorian and as an Australian to modernise what he believed was a backward colonial rail system hamstrung by state rivalries and bureaucracy, and lacking a strong sense of business leadership.51

Clapp held an entrepreneurial belief that Australia’s economic success hinged on cooperation between states. Central to this belief was the idea that state rivalries prohibited cooperation, and these rivalries endured because Australians did not think in a united, national sense. He felt that the lack of unity and cooperation held Australia back locally and on the international stage. Publicity and advertising became the key instruments through which he campaigned to overcome state parochialism and inculcate a sense of pride among settler Australians. Clapp wrote, ‘the greatness of Victoria is but a link in the chain of national prosperity,’ and was forthright in announcing that what the railway was doing in Victoria ‘should be done through the length and breadth of Australia.’52 His nationalising project was in its formative stages during his commission

49 Symes, “Motion Pictures”, p. 214.
at VR, but, as I argue in the next chapter, grew into the larger effort of the Australian National Travel Association to advertise Australia nationally and internationally in the 1930s.

For Clapp, the visual appeal of an advertisement was as important as where it was placed. Clapp’s administration maximised the visibility of posters around Victorian Railway property. As Colin Symes notes, posters appeared where ‘people were on the move.’ Commuters read posters ‘while running’ and their ‘captions were not laden with unnecessary detail.’ The Betterment Board placed Buffalo posters in high-traffic locations, on the columns in the main hall in Flinders Street Station, or above the station’s busy juice bars, where thousands of customers lined up daily for fresh citrus juice. The outer carriages of trains contained advertisements in weatherproof casings, so that when a train arrived at a station the advertisement pulled in slowly in front of an audience of passengers.

Advertisements did not clutter billboards and hoardings. When they discoloured or frayed VR employees replaced them. In fact, the placement and presentation of advertising posters was a point of pride for stationmasters and their staff. A Victorian Railways Magazine article on the efficiency of one station’s employees described how station porter J.H. Trotman put up posters without a ‘wrinkle of any kind’, (see figure 4.1). Trotman brought his own paint brush to work and squared each poster off with a neat border of black paint. The stationmaster said proudly that Trotman’s attention to detail ‘makes the poster stand out and keeps the whole lot uniform.’ Ever the vehicle for promoting institutional pride and efficiency, the VR Magazine was not only celebrating Trotman’s initiative, but was also suggesting that other porters and stationmasters should also go the extra mile at their own station.

Above all, the skill of the poster artists gave Buffalo’s advertising visual appeal. Percy Trompf and James Northfield worked on advertisements for leading commercial products including Colgate, most of the Melbourne beer companies and overseas accounts such as Triumph motorcycles. Both artists worked at the Melbourne Art Training Institute, training future students in commercial artistry. A coursebook for the school instructed that advertising ‘must reach out, attract the attention of the people, arouse their interest and make them desire to read the

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53 Symes, “Motion Pictures,” p. 10.
54 Symes, “Motion Pictures,” p. 11.
56 Croxton’s Capabilities, The Victorian Railways Magazine, August 1927, p. 44.
advertisement.” Northfield and Trompf practiced the artistic values they preached to their students at the institute. Their posters for Buffalo and other tourist destinations have been widely reproduced and remain the best known Australian commercial art of the era.\footnote{Melbourne Art Institute, \textit{New Era of Commercial Art}, (Melbourne: Art Training Institute, 1928), p. 8.}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.jpg}
\caption{J.H. Trotman carefully painting a border around Public Betterment Board posters. Croxton Station, north-east Melbourne, 1927. (\textit{VR Magazine}, August 1927, p. 44).}
\end{figure}

\footnote{Spearritt, “Sites and Sights,” p. 28.}
Branding Buffalo: From a winter destination to ‘In Season at All Seasons.’

So what did VR’s Buffalo look like? Initially, the vision of the park the railway created was an attempt to overcome the negative publicity for Buffalo that arose in the 1910s. Many thought of Buffalo as only a winter resort, and VR had gained a poor reputation for catering efficiently to the tourist traffic. ‘Other State railways departments have been more alive to the importance of bringing tourists as swiftly and comfortably as possible to beauty spots – in many instances of quite inferior attractions,’ read a 1922 article in Melbourne’s Argus. Complaints had also been made that the Government Chalet, built by the state government in 1910, was in poor condition and unable to comfortably accommodate tourists.

Clapp’s publicity strategy aimed to overcome such criticisms and rebrand the park as a recreational wonderland that rivalled international attractions. While visiting Buffalo in 1922, Clapp frankly stated the railway’s intentions: ‘The scenery is equal to anything I have seen in other parts of the world’ he said, ‘and if the people of the state were made more fully aware of what Mount Buffalo has to offer, a great many of those who now travel to other states would spend their holidays in Victoria.’

Promoting Buffalo as being among the world’s most beautiful nature destinations reveals Clapp’s, and by extension the railway’s, campaign to instil a sense of national pride in the land. VR publications for the park espoused the idea that Buffalo was superior to foreign destinations. As one 1927 pamphlet declared, ‘It has been said by many people, including blasé globe trotters familiar with the wonders of nearly every land, that The Horn, the highest point in the Mt. Buffalo National Park... commands outlooks that for completeness and splendid grandeur cannot be excelled.’

But the campaign to instil a sense of national pride in Buffalo ran deeper than evoking comparisons with foreign scenic wonders. VR’s marketing manipulated a set of distinctive images that had become tied to emerging ideas of settler Australian nationhood in the late nineteenth century. Two historians have explained the origins of bush and mountain imagery in the context of settler Australian nationality. Richard White holds that the bohemian movement centred

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* The Argus, May 13, 1918, p.6.
* The Argus, November 2, 1922, p. 8.
around writers at the *Bulletin* and the Heidelberg school artists was responsible for an enduring romantic image of the bush as ‘a sunlit landscape of faded blue hills, cloudless skies and noble gumtrees.’ And Julia Horne has demonstrated that over the nineteenth century settler Australians expanded their European conception of mountain scenery to include features that were more in line with Australia’s, such as naked granite precipices, pillar-shaped rocks, gorges and steep, sheer cliff faces.

Nearly all VR posters of Buffalo produced between 1920 and 1940 included either a view of, or from, the famous Mount Buffalo Chalet. When artists illustrated different aspects of the park, such as recreation, they superimposed the Chalet onto the poster. The image of the Chalet was an enduring representation of hospitality, comfort and luxury; symbolising the railway’s service on the mountain. To the consumer, it was supposed to represent the ease and leisure with which a holiday at Buffalo could be undertaken – an assurance to readers that while the scenery was rugged the accommodation was not.

The Chalet also represented fitness and recreation. It was the base from which tourists undertook any of the national park’s sports and recreational activities. ‘A well-equipped sports depot has been installed at the Chalet, and toboggans, skates, skis and other sporting gear may be hired for a nominal fee,’ a 1927 railway pamphlet informed readers. That the Chalet appears in so many posters alongside men and women skiing, tobogganing, climbing and hiking strengthened the connection between the Chalet and outdoor recreation. This emphasis on recreation was tied up with national efficiency and related notions of wholesomeness in the national identity. Also prevalent in the United States and Britain, the national efficiency movement was characterised by improved health, fitness and the cultivation of a unified, homogenous and productive population.

Clapp was an important proponent of the national efficiency movement in Australia and saw the railway as a central institution in affecting improvements in physical health and productivity. He deployed the infrastructure of the railway to modernise the Victorian economy, transforming agricultural, transport, tourism and food industries. As John Sinclair writes, Clapp’s

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modernising outlook included a truly national vision.” So when Clapp said that ‘it cannot be too emphatically pointed out that the efficiency of service on the Victorian Railways is intimately associated with the prosperity of the state,’ he was not just talking about the trains running on time. Rather, he was asserting that every aspect of the railways’ enterprises counted towards the economic development of Victoria. The Chalet, an embodiment of the athletic and restorative opportunity that typified a healthy population, extended the railway’s contribution to modern nation building into the realm of tourism.

Conscious of the Chalet’s enormous importance to the Buffalo campaign the railway invested heavily in renovating the premises. Undeterred by public criticism of the expenditure, Clapp added a large dining room and new kitchen, upgraded the lighting and had the unreliable old boiler replaced. By the mid-1920s every room had a steam operated radiator. Naturally, Clapp ensured that these developments were reported in the press. Railroad publications assured readers that the Chalet was ‘one of the finest tourist houses in Australia,’ with ‘food, cuisine... and service throughout... equal to those provided in the best city hotel.’ In a brazen example of how far Clapp would go to promote the railway’s services, he attacked the Melbourne restaurant industry, saying that ‘kitchens in some of the leading restaurants and hotels in this city... were so filthy that I would not feed my Airedale dog on the food served in them.’ In the next breath he mentioned that the kitchen at the Chalet ‘is better than that of the finest hotel in Melbourne.’ Predictably this enraged the Victorian Caterers’ Association and a host of restaurateurs, but this was a small price for Clapp to pay for the publicity the quarrel gave to the Chalet.

Some posters spruiked the comfort and social atmosphere the Chalet offered. One of Northfield’s posters, for example, is set from the perspective of one of the Chalet’s balconies amid a convivial social scene of male and female tourists relaxing, chatting and preparing for hikes. Posters that advertised Buffalo as a winter resort presented the Chalet as a hub for winter sports and a comfortable, warm place to spend the evenings. In addition to notions of wholesomeness and efficiency, the Chalet indicated that the comforts and facilities known to consumers in the city were also present at Buffalo. That VR felt it important to explicitly connect the city with nature in their advertisements demonstrates that they estimated consumers’

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68 Sinclair, ‘Agents of Americanisation’, p. 34.
70 Age, December 8, 1924, p. 8. The Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, August 8, 1924, p. 3.
73 Northfield’s poster was also the cover for the November 1926 issue of The Victorian Railways Magazine.
decisions to visit the national park hinged as much on modern comforts as it did on scenery. Consequently, aspects of the city (social opportunities, heating, lighting and fine dining) and the romantic settler idea of the bush were combined in Buffalo’s image as a tourist resort.

Representations of gender in the posters also provide a telling insight into how VR perceived contemporary values and aspirations. Good advertisements invite potential consumers to occupy the scene they depict. In Buffalo’s advertising, men appeared either as businessmen at leisure or as athletic bush adventurers. Women were shown in a variety of ways, from enjoying hikes, chatting with friends, playing with horses or butterflies, taking photographs or standing next to men, perhaps as wives or girlfriends. Usually the male partner in these images is of a strong build and stands confidently while pointing outward, to nature. In winter posters, women outnumbered men as skiers, shown speeding down the mountain or soaring over it.

The railway was conscious of the rise of women as independent consumers and sought to create advertising that targeted women directly. In her study on representations of femininity in Australian advertising in the 1920s, Liz Conor writes that the period’s visual technologies saw a dramatic shift from inciting modesty in women to inciting self-display. As in other contemporary mass-media and advertising, representations of women in Buffalo’s advertising encouraged women to emulate feminine identities such as the fashionable flapper and care-free movie star or beauty queen. One example is in a Northfield poster that doubled as a cover for The Victorian Railways Magazine depicting a woman in flapper fashion amid a social scene at the Chalet. Advertisements that advanced these feminine types fashioned Mount Buffalo as a space where women were free to experiment with “making themselves modern.” By no means did all advertising encourage women to assume independent subject positions. Posters depicted women in conventional roles, as wives or girlfriends, accompanied by men who look commandingly out at nature. Posters depicting men and women resembled the artists’ estimation that both genders might be drawn to Buffalo for a romantic holiday with ones’ partner, or that one might meet a future romantic partner there.

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78 See Victorian Railways posters no. 80, Percy Trompf & poster no. 151, Gert Sellheim.
79 Conor, The Spectacular Modern Woman, p.106.
80 Victorian Railways poster no. 205, Percy Trompf, & poster no. 180, Gert Sellheim.
VR’s advertising posters and printed publications omit children and the elderly. Perhaps the presence of children would have disrupted the possibilities for romance that the advertising suggested. Indeed, one article in the *Victorian Railways Magazine* explicitly identified Mount Buffalo as ‘the ideal honeymoon resort.’80 Recently married, childless couples and young singles looking for a partner were likely to have greater disposable income and more time for leisure than families. In any event the railway did not consider that the presence of the children and elderly in advertising material would contribute to increased patronage. The absence of the very old and the very young and the emphasis on young to middle aged men and women resulted in an image of Buffalo as a playground populated by urban tourists in their physical prime. Again, this image was connected to modern beliefs about wholesomeness and efficiency, and invited consumers to see themselves as members of an efficient and healthy homogenous population.

Although no organised national parks service existed at a federal level in Australia until the 1960s - most parks were and continue to be administered by state rather than federal government – VR was the first institution to present a park as a national space through advertising. Melissa Harper and Richard White have written that parks in Australia were designated as national not because their scenery represented the nation, but because the people who visited them did.81 Twenty years on from its designation as a national park, the VR campaign for Buffalo aimed to increase tourist traffic by making the nature national too. The railway’s illustrators and writers embedded elements of ‘Australian’ nature (such as sunlight and the bush) within their work to promote Buffalo.

The national vision of the bush and mountains formed in the nineteenth century influenced the artists that VR commissioned to create posters for Buffalo. A photographic negative of one of James Northfield’s posters (Figure 4.2), in which the beaming sun filters into one of Buffalo’s valleys and scatters light through the branches of a row of eucalypts, is just one example of the romantic vision of the bush and mountains expressed in Buffalo’s advertising. The exposed granite faces at the top of the valley, white with the reflection of the sun, conform to the vision of Australian mountain scenery outlined by Horne. Other artists perpetuated this vision. Posters by Percy Trompf and Gert Sellheim combined monumental valleys and rocky precipices with

romantic bush scenery, encouraging consumers to see in Buffalo qualities already identified as archetypically ‘Australian’ in the settler imagination.\footnote{See for example: James Northfield, \textit{Poster no. 28}, (PROV Item no 501/7) and \textit{Mt Buffalo Ideal for your Summer Holiday}, (Prov Item no 500/11); Percy Trompf, \textit{Poster no. 98}, (PROV Item no. 506/04) and Gert Sellheim, \textit{Poster no. 80}, (Prov Item no, 529/11).}

Buffalo posters share a preoccupation with sunlight. Beams of radiant sun infiltrate even the black and white negatives of posters kept at the Public Records Office of Victoria. When seen in their original form, the posters brim with colour. Vivid and eye catching, they illuminated the scenes of Buffalo that they depicted. One original by Percy Trompf, held by the National Library of Australia, depicts a hiker perched on a rocky outcrop somewhere in the Buffalo gorge. Standing in the full light of the sun under a clear blue sky, the sun casts long shadows on the man and on the hills beneath him. Sunlight drenches the granite cliff behind the man in vibrant hues of yellow and orange. Slogans printed on the posters such as “clear summer air” and “In season at all seasons” reinforced Buffalo’s image as a favourable year-round recreational playground, where all manner of sports and activities could be enjoyed under fair skies in a temperate climate. As I explore in more detail in the next chapter, sunlight was a vital component of Clapp’s campaign at ANTA in the 1930s to promote Australia domestically and overseas by instilling in Australians a sense of national pride. The Victorian Railways poster campaign’s rich sun-drenched image of Buffalo is a clear antecedent to ANTA’s later campaign.

The combination of sunlight and romantic mountain and bush scenery in advertising helped establish Buffalo as a resort to be visited year-round, rather than just for winter sports. However, artists such as Northfield and Trompf were also producing a vision of Buffalo that they estimated would resonate with a settler audience. Art historian Michelle Hetherington writes that Northfield and his contemporaries celebrated Australia’s ‘scenic grandeur, sunny skies, and the opportunities to play and relax in the outdoors,’ and expressed ‘a peculiarly Australian identity, where purely physical features such as the landscape and the weather were seen as a manifestation of a distinctly Australian character.’\footnote{Michelle Hetherington, \textit{James Northfield and the Art of Selling Australia}, (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2006), 7-8.} The configuration of sunlight and distinctive Australian scenery in Buffalo’s advertising both were intended to catch the eye of potential consumers by appealing to prevailing settler values, while simultaneously instilling in the public a sense of cultural and national pride in the land. As we have seen, the railway, under Clapp’s direction, came to see itself as an important agent in settler nation-building.
Figure 4.2 - James Northfield’s Poster no. 137 combined sunlight, naked cliffs and eucalypts. (Prov Item No. 508/13).
Advertising Buffalo as a national space propagated a narrative that the land had been unused prior to settlement. For example, one Buffalo pamphlet issued by the railway’s Public Betterment Board told readers that after the formation of the landscape by forces of nature thousands of years ago, the tableland remained empty until 1824 when “the first white men,” explorers Hume and Hovell “first saw the Buffalo.”

There is nothing in the pamphlet that indicates the Mogullumbidj’s or other Indigenous population’s traditional ownership and inhabitation of the land.

The Mogullumbidj people lived in the area that became Mount Buffalo up until 1838 when they were decimated by disease, infertility, and settler-perpetrated violence. Buffalo and the surrounding region had also been an important ceremonial meeting place for a number of other Indigenous peoples. Some Aboriginal people remained on Country around Buffalo up until the end of the nineteenth century, but by 1898, when the state government enacted legislation to reserve Buffalo as a national park, most had been pushed off to government reserves or into agricultural work.

Charles Holmes, the director of the Victorian Railway’s Public Betterment Board and the Australian National Travel Association, was aware of Indigenous sites and movements to open such sites to tourists, but argued against doing so. In 1929 he rejected a proposal for tourists to view Indigenous corroborees around Australia. He complained the proposal was logistically difficult, but more than that undesirable because: “the aboriginals I have seen in Australia... are not a sight for the visitor. They are usually lower than the mongrel dogs they group with.”

Holmes celebrated the historic depopulation of Indigenous people in his 1932 bestseller We Find Australia, in which he wrote that they were a ‘vanishing race’ of the ‘stone age.’ There was no Indigenous presence at Buffalo in the 1920s for tourists to see, the Mogullumbidj and other people local to the region having been killed or driven out in the previous century. However, Holmes’s attitude towards Indigenous people represented the prevailing attitudes of the institutions he directed: VR and later ANTA. And the vision of a historically uninhabited landscape, expressed in the advertising he oversaw, demonstrates that Buffalo advertising never sought to engage the troublesome and violent past of the region. On the contrary, VR’s
advertising established Buffalo as a fun and exciting social getaway with no hint of the confronting history that displaced the Mogullumbidj.

VR’s presentation of Buffalo was grounded in its vision of the place as historically uninhabited. This enabled it to rework nature into a playground for urban tourists; a place where the landscape consisted of national symbols (the bush, sunlight and rugged mountain scenery) that had been constructed by settler writers and artists in the nineteenth century. A place populated with healthy, young white bodies – bodies that belonged to citizens of an emerging productive, efficient nation. A place where nature was visible but did not preclude the immediate physical wants people had become accustomed to with modern urban life. All of these portrayals combined in a process of building settler attachment to the land that rested on pushing past occupation by Indigenous people to the periphery.

VR publicity for Buffalo elided Indigenous people not because dispossession cast an ugly shadow on a campaign to publicise a site for recreation. Rather, Clapp and his Buffalo publicists perpetuated a narrative of settler possession and land use that affirmed settler claims to the land. Their inattention was a structure of Australian society, the culmination of decades of ignoring or forgetting Aboriginal history. W.E.H. Stanner’s famous Boyer lectures addressed the omission of the Aboriginal experience from Australian history up until the 1970s. But Stanner’s ‘cult of forgetfulness’ was not limited to academia.

The Victorian Railway’s use of modern advertising to promote Buffalo constructed a vision of Australian nature centred on the settler quest for a national identity. The railway used images and symbols of the bush and the mountains, identified with the nation-to-be by the literary and artistic movements of the nineteenth century, to sell Buffalo not only as a tourist resort, but as the cultural property of an efficient and unified settler society. In doing so, the railway perpetuated a narrative that the land where the national park came to be had never been occupied by Indigenous people. VR promised consumers that in nature lay a commodity that could be possessed and enjoyed as any other brand, product or service, giving rise to a commercial dimension at the centre of national parks in Australia.

Advertisements are windows through which we can view the versions of Buffalo that VR thought best appealed to the culture and values of the day. By depicting an idealised vision of the type of people that holidayed at Buffalo, and the activities they participated in while there, the railway invited consumers to imagine themselves as the healthy, well-dressed, happy people that populated the advertisements.

The railway created advertising and commissioned posters of Buffalo with the express purpose of increasing rail traffic. But the overarching project of inspiring nationalism and a sense of settler pride in the land must not be underestimated. Why? Because the nationalising project and the commercial advertising methods used to carry it out resulted in the presentation of Buffalo, in common with other national parks, as a settler cultural site where urban settler tourists could consume national nature as an experience.

Charles Holmes and Harold Clapp went on to run the Australian National Travel Association, where they applied the same marketing strategies used to sell Buffalo to advertise the nation. Consequently, the Buffalo campaign and the subsequent campaigns it inspired had a significant and lasting impact, placing a consumer dimension at the heart of the Australian national park idea while more generally shaping the social construction of Australian nature, and narratives of Indigenous dispossession and settler possession.
Chapter V

A Great Sunlit Country: ANTA Sells the Mountains, 1930-1940.

Sunshine, an age-old mystery and charm, the intriguing originality of unique flora and fauna and the tremendous spread of its distances give Australia an identity only to be appreciated by a comprehensive visit. In the quality of its sunshine alone the continent has a singular appeal.

- ANTA, Picturesque Australia, circa 1934.

During the 1930s, the Australian National Travel Association (ANTA) began the first centralised campaign to publicise Australia. As the most developed and accessible tourist resorts in Australia at the time, ANTA promoted Mount Buffalo, along with the Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves, as quintessentially Australian scenic destinations to domestic and international audiences. The association carried out its publicity primarily through the geographic magazine Walkabout. First published in 1934 and circulated until 1978, ANTA launched the magazine ‘in order to educate Australians further concerning their own and the neighbouring lands below the equator.’ Most issues contained an explanation of the magazine’s title that betrayed ANTA’s ignorance, and the broader settler ignorance, of Aboriginal customs:

The title has an “age-old” background and signifies a racial characteristic of the aboriginal who is always on the move. Month by month through the medium of pen and picture, this journal will take you on a great “walkabout” through a new and fascinating world below the equator.³

Walkabout was fairly popular in its inaugural year, and its popularity continued to rise into the 1950s. In the 1930s it had a circulation just shy of 30,000 issues per month though its readership was actually much larger. The magazine became a staple of the doctor’s waiting room, and the hairdresser, extending its readership far beyond the number of individual purchases.³ Readers passed their copies on to friends and family and often mailed them to relatives overseas.³

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² The subheading is published in many issues of Walkabout, but appears first in its full form in: Walkabout, Vol 1, No. 2, December 1, 1934, p. 9.
only are we educating Australians in the features beyond the cities in their own land,’ one ANTA annual report proudly stated, ‘we are also gaining publicity abroad.’ Before the creation of *Walkabout* ANTA already boasted an impressive production and circulation of publicity materials. The general manager of ANTA Charles Homes wrote in 1935 that ‘a grand total of 2,670,000 folders and booklets, 165,700 posters and 55,000 photographs have been distributed since the association was first formed.’

This chapter moves away from previous chapter’s focus on the campaigns of the Victorian and New South Wales tourist bureaus to explore how ANTA depicted Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in its publicity. Paying close attention to sources from ANTA’s archives, visual advertising and promotional publications such as brochures and pamphlets, first I argue that ANTA set out to create a brand for Australia - a brand that depended on a set of typically Australian symbols and imagery. Monumental canyons and valleys, towering gums, rugged landscapes and eucalypts and Australia’s native birds and marsupials all featured in ANTA’s Australia, but the lodestar of ANTA’s marketing campaign was the sun. In this vision of Australia, everything the light touched celebrated a productive nation of six and a half million settler Australians that had ‘climbed to prosperity’ in ‘only a bare century of development.’ As in earlier phases of promotion, ANTA populated its visions of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains with healthy, young, white tourists. At the same time, ANTA isolated Indigenous people to either the distant past or remote geography. The promotion of tourist destinations by ANTA is an underexplored example of how the promulgation of settler myths simultaneously dispossessed Indigenous people.

I also argue that Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were central to ANTA’s brand for Australia. In *Walkabout*, ANTA marketed the two resorts as the foremost places where elements of the Australian brand could be consumed by tourists. They were the jewels in the crown of ANTA’s campaign to promote Australia, particularly in the 1930s when few alternative destinations were as accessible or equipped with infrastructure to support tourists.

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A 1931 ANTA booklet, *Tours in Australia*, indicates just how important Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were to ANTA’s publicity campaigns. The majority of the tours, excluding those in Queensland or South Australia, included visits to the Blue Mountains and Buffalo. Tours 1, 2, and 4 all included a three-day motor tour of the Blue Mountains. Tours 5, 6, 9 and 15 featured a stay at Mount Buffalo. The signature 30 day ‘Grand Trans-Australian Tour,’ that ran from Perth to Sydney, had tourists stay at the Mount Buffalo Chalet on day 17 and in the Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves on day 25. That so many of the tours featured significant stays at Buffalo and the Blue Mountains testifies to ANTA’s marketing of the two destinations as the essence of Australian nature and foremost resort experiences. Before analysing the publicity ANTA created for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, a discussion of the creation and the guiding principles of the organisation gives context to the economic and political atmosphere in which their campaign took place.

*Walkabout* depicted both Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as spaces devoid of Indigenous presence. Why did *Walkabout* depict so many Indigenous people in photographs across Australia, but continue to avoid mentioning the Indigenous histories of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains? Why did James Northfield, for example, use illustrations of Indigenous men in posters that advertised Australia, when posters of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains depicted white subjects? I demonstrate in this chapter that ANTA was beholden to a colonial ideology that saw Indigenous people as remnants of a bygone era. Northfield’s posters demonstrated, in ANTA’s estimation, that Australia had left the Indigenous past behind and was now a modern nation with an expanding settler presence. The massive circulation of advertising, laden with images such as Northfield’s which were forged in a hearth fired by cultural nationalism and the legend of settler progress, perpetuated a myth that Indigenous people only remained, as one ANTA booklet put it, in ‘huge unsettled areas, such as Arnhem Land in the far north, the North-West and the interior.’

**The formation of ANTA**

By the 1920s some of Australia’s leading businessmen and publicity specialists shared a belief that Australia needed greater salesmanship to promote tourism, investment and migration. In 1927, Charles Holmes of the Victorian Railways, and T.E. Moorhouse of the Commonwealth-
State Development and Migration Commission reported to the commonwealth that ‘greater zest in salesmanship’ was needed to promote national tourism within Australia.10 Unsurprisingly, Harold Clapp was instrumental to the organisation they proposed; an outcome of his relentless agitating for cooperative national promotion. His evolving view was that if Australia were to compete internationally, the nation required an organisation dedicated to domestic and international promotion. To achieve this end, Clapp steadily orchestrated alliances between business and tourism, unifying key figures from shipping, retail, the railways and the accommodation industry by underlining their common interest in tourism.

In 1929 these allies formally approached the Bruce-Page government and suggested the formation of a community organisation with the purpose of circulating favourable advertising domestically and abroad. The government pledged their support, as did various business interests, the overseas shipping lines, and the Australian railways. The businessmen directly involved with ANTA’s establishment were Harold Clapp, representing Australia’s railways; Charles Lloyd Jones (general business interests); D.L. Dowell (shipping); and C.W. Wilson (hotels). These men comprised an honorary board vested with control of the organisation. Charles H. Holmes, director of VR’s Public Betterment Board in the 1920s, administered the Association as its director in Australia. The Association invited applications from all over the country for new staff with experience in transportation, journalism, publicity, and lecturing along with a knowledge of the resources and tourist attractions of Australia.11

Of particular concern to the board was the amount of revenue lost to Australia by the failure to promote the country abroad. ANTA’s leaders, for example, knew that Canada and California had spent a proportionately small amount on advertising that resulted in significant increases in tourist numbers. ANTA was aware that what was possible in North America was not necessarily so in Australia, the populations of North American countries being so much larger than Australia’s.12 However, they used these and similar statistics to argue their view that Australia was leagues behind other countries in winning the business of international tourists. Compounding their concern was their recognition that a high number of Australians travelled abroad compared to the number that chose to holiday inside Australia, representing a further lost opportunity.

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11 ANTA, Daily Standard, September 13, 1929, p. 2.
Clapp lamented that foreign tourists to Australia were more swept away by the country’s natural scenery compared to Australians, who he felt were indifferent. He said that visitors from overseas:

acclaim the attractions of Australia by mountain, river and sea, our strange fauna, and the beauty of our garden cities with their alluring nearby beach and mountain playgrounds. When the visitor recovers from his surprise at what he sees in Australia, he invariably says ‘Why don’t you advertise the beauty and the greatness of your country overseas?’

A perceived lack of national pride amongst Australians also concerned the ANTA board. Their thinking went like this: thousands of Australians left Australia every year as tourists but knew nothing of the country themselves. As we have already seen in Chapter III, the concern that Australia was losing out because domestic tourists left Australian shores in favour of foreign destinations dated back to the early twentieth century. However, ANTA identified a new aspect of this problem. They held that when Australians travelled, it was fashionable to speak critically of the country. Such poor ambassadors did little to promote Australia. ANTA’s board felt that national advertising could overcome this lack of pride amongst settler Australians. As one report put it, the Australian public must be educated ‘in order that they may properly represent our great Commonwealth.’

In the context of the rising global nationalism of the 1930s, and in the wake of the Great Depression that afflicted the decade, ANTA’s urging of Australians to respond patriotically to images of their country had economic as well as strategic dimensions. Charles Holmes believed full publicity should be given to efforts to combat the depression, writing that ‘the very magnitude of our difficulties had aroused the spirit of determination to overcome them.’ Harold Clapp, animated by the shaky, uncertain peace of the interwar decades and the vast geographical distance of Australia from America and Britain, expressed publicly his concerns about Australia’s remoteness. In a radio broadcast given in the early 1930s, Clapp argued that because of the country’s isolation, Australians had acquired an ‘independence of act and outlook that is fictitious for far from being independent so far as the rest of the world is concerned, we are desperately dependent.’ Because of this false sense of independence, Clapp held that Australia ‘had never

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13 ANTA, *Australia’s Tourist Business: Coordination of Effort*, December 1927, p. 3. NAA: B300, 7420 PART 2.
developed a national pride strong enough to insist on our country being properly advertised abroad.’

He argued that national advertising and tourism could strengthen Australia’s economic position and foreign relations. In a 1929 speech he said that advertising Australia would ‘help to strengthen the Empire bond and the English-speaking tie.’ He also spoke, in the context of rising international tensions, of the benefits of travel as a preserver of global peace. In a 1935 issue of Walkabout he further revealed his anxieties, writing that ‘intense nationalism, which is such a feature of the world today, is reflected in the expenditure by most countries of large sums of money to develop trade and to attract the world traveller.’ He then asserted that in a young country such as Australia, ‘which is so dependent in matters of trade and finance on its relations with the great consuming countries’ the obligation to develop a strong international reputation was even stronger.

Clapp’s advocacy for a unified vision of Australia, one that could easily be packaged and marketed domestically and overseas, stemmed from his belief that Australia’s economic success hinged on cooperation between states. He believed that state rivalries prohibited cooperation, and that rivalries endured because Australians did not think in a united, national sense. His concerns had a reasonable foundation. Inter-state rivalry was still strong in the 1930s. In that decade, Victoria and South Australia celebrated their own centenaries rather than the Australian sesquicentenary, which was confined largely to New South Wales. Guided by Clapp’s hybrid brand of economic and civic nationalism, (he believed and often said that ‘national advertising is essentially an obligation of citizenship’), ANTA sought to unite Australia as a cooperative, prosperous nation. There was a ‘desperate necessity’ said Clapp, to remove the misunderstandings about Australia that persisted overseas, so that ‘the stream of world travel’ could flow in Australia’s direction. He called ‘all true Australians for their whole-hearted cooperation in this great cause of national advertising’, which, he claimed was a ‘potent factor in the ultimate restoration of Australia’s prosperity.’

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"Ibid.

"All Help to Push Australia: Clapp’s Appeal", Sun, June 7, 1929, p. 12.

"Ibid.


Richard White, Inventing Australia, p. 146.

Harold Clapp, Information Bulletin (wireless broadcast).
ANTA publicity deployed Australian symbols in an effort to strengthen the national identity. They attempted to construct the land as a national space, not only by encouraging settler Australian tourists to emotionally connect with the land, but also by trying to inculcate the idea that Australians each had an individual responsibility to support the national economy by holidaying and spending money within Australia rather than overseas, and in-turn bolstering a tourist industry that would bring the states closer together and attract overseas visitors and investment. While ANTA sought to strengthen the national identity and economy, its appeals to nationalism were not overly jingoistic or chauvinistic, as Mitchell Rolls writes that *Walkabout* magazine:

> wore its nationalism lightly. Instead of promoting an insular and strident pride *Walkabout* attempted to foster through education and understanding a more enduring and inclusive delight in one’s country.

In fact, ANTA commenced publication of *Walkabout* exactly as a vehicle to attempt to educate and delight the Australian public. The magazine promoted travel to Australian tourist resorts, but also publicised lesser known regions in the interior and the remote north that were more difficult to for the ordinary tourist to visit.

Throughout its 40 year run the magazine was immensely popular with its predominantly urban readership. ANTA directed the magazine at settler Australians first and at an overseas market second. As Charles Lloyd Jones stated in an editorial in the first issue: “primarily the magazine will be sold to the Australian public.” This chapter’s analysis of advertisements and photojournalism in *Walkabout* for the Blue Mountains, Jenolan Caves and Mount Buffalo is concerned with how ANTA used these destinations to carry out their pride-building project on a settler Australian audience.

**ANTA create a brand for Australia**

Buffalo and the Blue Mountains epitomised ANTA’s Australia. But what exactly was ANTA’s version of Australia, and from where did the cluster of symbols and principles that ANTA’s

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22 Harold Clapp, *Information Bulletin: Extracts from an address (wireless broadcast) by Mr. Harold W. Clapp*.


artists and writers evoked in their publications come? One *Walkabout* editorial gives an insightful glimpse:

Sunshine is the keynote of Australia’s charm. Thousands of miles of broad, clean sands, fringing oceans cobalt blue and sparkling under cloudless skies, frame the continent in a silvery, sunlit girdle... Mighty gum trees, between whose knife-like leaves filters the sunlight bringing life to the lesser trees and shrubs, clothe the mountain ranges in sombre green, giving to the Australian countryside a character that persists amazingly through thousands of miles of travelling but is broken at intervals by the delicate, mist like haze of powder-blue that veils the canyons of the mountains and by the scintillating snowfields of the Australian Alps.  

This image of Australia as an expansive, perennially sunlit country decorated by monumental valleys and ranges clad with ‘mighty’ eucalypts has antecedents in the 1880s. But as I have shown in earlier chapters, promoters seized on these images in their advertising for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains since the beginning of the twentieth century. Richard White writes that the bohemian movement centred around writers at the *Bulletin* such as Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson, as well as the Heidelberg school artists, was responsible for an enduring romantic image of the bush as ‘a sunlit landscape of faded blue hills, cloudless skies and noble gumtrees.’ These national symbols, often ‘natural’, gained more and more significance in art and literature as the country approached Federation in 1901, and even more so after. The legislation to bring Australia’s colonies together passed, but only narrowly, and after the first referendum had failed. The question of bringing the people together remained. Nationalist writers and artists drew on the symbols that had already been established as icons around which citizens of the new nation could rally. The most prominent of these symbols was sunlight. Poems such as Bernard O’Dowd’s “Australia” (published in *The Bulletin*) and John Bernard O’Hara’s “The Commonwealth” patriotically celebrated the new nation’s birth under a rising sun.

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Figure 5.1 - James Northfield, The Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia. (ANTA circa 1935). Image used courtesy of Josef Lebovic Gallery.
ANTA publicity put Buffalo and the Blue Mountains forward as places that embodied Australia. Although thousands of Australians had already visited Buffalo and the Blue Mountains by 1930, ANTA encouraged visitors to see them with the same sense of awe and inspiration as international tourists; to see them as symbols of Australia’s greatness. Historian Peter Coates argues that in settler nations, national parks enshrine ‘nature’s recruitment for patriotic purposes.’ Such an analysis applies to ANTA’s marketing of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains, even though the latter was still over twenty years away from being officially reserved as a national park.

Where VR had commissioned posters for Victorian destinations in the 1920s, ANTA commissioned posters for each of the states and the country’s main tourist sites. James Northfield’s poster (figure 5.1 above) for the Blue Mountains recruited nature for ANTA’s national propaganda. It provided a visual reinforcement of the image of Australia ANTA was trying to cultivate. Sunlight, eucalypts, rugged mountain and bush and the ‘delicate, mist like haze of powder blue that veils the canyons of the mountains’ are all present in the one image. In ANTA’s posters, ‘Australia’ was often printed in larger text than the place being represented, subordinating the place to the larger brand. Not only does Northfield’s poster demonstrate a continuity between the campaigns of ANTA and VR, it stretches all the way back to the cultural nationalist movements of the late nineteenth century.

Advertisements for the Blue Mountains and Buffalo in *Walkabout* cohered to the image of Australia that ANTA was trying to establish, but how ANTA promoted each destination in the magazine was slightly different. Publicity for Buffalo was more often in the form of individual advertisements produced by the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau. The Victorian Bureau was essentially an arm of the Victorian Railways, and Holmes’ and Clapp’s influence can be seen clearly in the advertisements published in *Walkabout*. For the Blue Mountains, ANTA published photographic segments such as ‘Our Cameraman’s Walkabout’ and ‘Picturesque Australia’ that featured double page photographic spreads of scenes in the Blue Mountains. These compensated for a lack of dedicated advertisements produced for *Walkabout* by the NSW Bureau, and brought the number of representations of the Blue Mountains in *Walkabout* up considerably.

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Puff-pieces, photography and pictorial supplements

From its inaugural 1934 issue, ANTA’s *Walkabout* magazine carried advertisements and puff-pieces for Buffalo, the Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves in close to every magazine up to 1940. From 1940 to 1950 advertisements for destinations coming into sufficient stages of development, such as Wilson’s Promontory and the Great Barrier Reef, diluted what had been a concentrated coverage of Buffalo and Blue Mountains in the 1930s. Advertisements took the form of full page photographs accompanied by artistically configured copy. Puff-pieces consisted of large photographs and collages of scenery and people participating in recreational activities such as skiing or hiking. Framing and cropping techniques emphasised the scenery. Valleys, cliff faces, rock and cave formations dominated. Images of native animals were present from the beginning, (advertisements for Jenolan Caves in early issues featured kookaburras) but increased into the 1940s when ANTA publicity showed a deeper preoccupation with native fauna as a symbol of Australia.

Dunlap writes that between 1920 and 1940 in Australia, ‘wildlife was less important and wildlife policy a less visible focus of national sentiment than it was in North America.’ Wild life was never a main selling point for Buffalo or the Blue Mountains. However, throughout the 1930s, Clapp tried to incorporate Australian animals into the cluster of symbols being used to boost Australia. In 1932 he said that the Victorian Railways were determined to carry out plans to seek an accessible park ‘where kangaroos, wombats, koalas, and other native animals and birds can be seen without being confined in a zoo.’ He sought to do this because of the demand among overseas visitors, particularly Americans, to see Australian animals. In light of Dunlap’s assessment that wildlife was more a point of national sentiment in America than in Australia, it is interesting that an American demand to see native animals may have contributed to an increased depiction of native animals in Australian promotional materials.

Tourist destinations featured in the advertising sections of the magazine alongside commercial products and services. In line with the magazine’s emphasis on travel, it featured advertisements for hotels and shipping and travel insurance companies. The first issue, for example, carried advertisements for Kodak portable cameras, passenger cruise lines, the Trans-Australian railway, AMP travel insurance and the travel branch of the Bank of New South Wales. Non-travel related advertisements for consumer items included Ford V-8s, gin, Foster’s Lager, and even hand-cut

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* ‘Seeing our Animals: Victoria has plans’, *Daily Telegraph*, July 2, 1932, p. 3.
crystal. The presence of these advertisements in the magazine suggest the middle-class base to which ANTA appealed. The presence of the Blue Mountains, Mount Buffalo and other national parks and scenic destinations alongside these items situated them firmly in the consumer marketplace of the aspirational middle class.

The presence of advertisements for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in the advertising section of the magazine presented the resorts as consumer items. A full page advertisement for a destination was clearly separate to the main journalistic content of the magazine. In the first issue of *Walkabout*, the advertisement for Buffalo interrupts a feature on Maori people in New Zealand. The advertisement for Buffalo bears a photograph of the agriculturally developed Eurobin valley, invites the holidaymaker to enjoy ‘the pleasures of perfect days and a springtime summer amid superb mountain panoramas,’ noting that the charm of the holiday is increased by the ‘unexcelled comfort and cuisine of The Chalet.” In her history of magazines and consumer culture, Ellen Gruber Garvey writes that magazine editors mixed advertisements among articles and stories in order to segment the concentration of readers. This creates a natural and pleasing element where concentration or attention gives way to moment-by-moment focus. On the effect of this technique on a consumer, Garvey writes:

> By joining many activities in a single bound unit, the magazine invited the reader to interrupt reading a story about a marriage proposal to consider how she would look in an attractive jacket or how useful her husband would find a mail-order course on law, or to envision her children contented and healthy from eating Quaker oatmeal.\(^{34}\)

In *Walkabout*, the distraction technique interrupted stories about far away exotic destinations and invited readers to imagine themselves on the slopes or breathing in the fresh spring air at Mount Buffalo. This established a dichotomy of ‘places for tourism’ and ‘places to read about.’\(^{35}\) On the audience to whom *Walkabout* appealed, Charles Lloyd Jones wrote that the magazine ‘will intrigue the armchair traveller; it will appeal to those with money and leisure who seek new travel fields where they may experience the thrill of the strange and new.’\(^{36}\) To visit the areas covered by the magazine’s journalism, such as the remote north, required the kind of money and

\(^{33}\) ‘Summer days above the world’, *Walkabout*, Vol 1, No. 1 November 1, 1934, p. 46.


\(^{35}\) Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor*, p. 5.

\(^{36}\) *Walkabout*, Vol 1, No. 1, November 1, 1934, p. 46.
leisure possessed by very few Australians. The appearance of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains amid the pages of *Walkabout* delineated these sites as places that could actually be visited rather than only read about.

*Eclipsed,* (figure 5.2 below) cropped a Buffalo landscape photograph and a passage of descriptive text into a circular metaphor for the sun. The appearance of the photographic image obscuring the written description visualised the common ploy in Buffalo advertising that words could not do justice to the real thing. But the symbolism of the technique ran deeper than a clever play on words. The photograph, a sunlit expanse of bush covered valleys and open pastoral plains, was itself an evocative representation of Australia with symbolic roots in cultural nationalist Australian art and photography. *Eclipsed* parallels the work of the Australian painter Arthur Streeton, of the Heidelberg School. Streeton’s 1896 oil painting *The Purple Noon’s Transparent Might* depicted a sunlit pastoral landscape where the sun’s radiant light washed out the distant hills on the horizon. Streeton’s contemporary Fred McCubbin wrote that there was nothing ‘more typically Australian’ than the painting, and that the ‘poem of light and heat’ with its ‘sense of boundless regions... long rolling plains of the Never Never, the bush crowned hills, the purple seas of our continent’ could almost be taken as a national symbol.* The long rolling plains, bushy hills and the foregrounding of a Eucalypt in *Eclipsed* demonstrate a continuity between ANTA and Streeton’s depictions of Australian nature.

Forty years later, ANTA promoted the Australian landscape as a national symbol in the same fashion that McCubbin had painted it. But ANTA did not transplant this vision directly from the Heidelberg school art and Bulletin literature that popularised the idea of Australia as a sunlit country. Styles of depiction in photography went through a number of iterations in the first decades of the twentieth century before they arrived at the style favoured by the photographers and editors of *Walkabout*. Rod Giblett writes that in Australian landscape photography a transition from an impressionistic style of depiction to a ‘later style emphasizing bright light and spaciousness’ occurred in the 1930s.” Giblett has traced this transition in the work of noted Australian landscape photographers, but, as I argued in chapter three, existing scholarship does not offer an explanation for how photographers working in the commercial, rather than artistic

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sphere, depended on bright light and spaciousness to create an image of Australia that was designed to stimulate industrial tourism.

Figure 5.2 - Eclipsed! Walkabout Magazine Vol 1. No. 3. January 1935.
In chapter two, I argued that Percy Hunter’s Tourist Bureau began emphasising the bright light and spaciousness of Australia in photography before the landscape photographers generally credited with revolutionising photography in Australia. Photography in *Walkabout*, just like photography in the publications of the NSW Government Tourist Bureau before it, did not merely conform to contemporary fashions of Australian landscape photography. Rather than a follower of trends ANTA saw itself as an innovator. It occasionally employed external professional photographers including Frank Hurley, Max Dupain, Harold Cazneaux and Laurence Le Guay, among others. As Paolo Magagnoli writes, ‘some of the most well-known photographers of the time appeared in the magazine.’ 40 Cazneaux and Le Guay were members of the Sydney Camera Circle, otherwise known as the Sunshine School, whose dedication to photographing the bright Australian sunlight in the tradition of the cultural nationalist painters of the late nineteenth century had been pre-empted by Hunter and Gullick at the NSW Tourist Bureau. While these noted photographers did not capture the Blue Mountains or Buffalo for *Walkabout*, the images in the magazine accorded to the magazine’s high editorial standards and conformed to the vision of Australia as a sun soaked continent that ANTA was cultivating.

ANTA saw photography as a key medium through which to promote and reinforce the image of Australia as a bright and sunlit continent. At the meeting in May 1934 where the ANTA board motioned to publish a travel magazine, it also ratified the employment of a full time photographer who they hoped would produce arresting pictures for all of ANTA’s promotional materials.41 The photographer was Roy Dunstan, who had been employed as a photographer for VR in the 1920s.42 When Dunstan returned to his hometown for a holiday in 1938, the first paper he worked for, the *Wagga Wagga Express*, proudly described the role of the cameraman who now worked for a national institution, but had assuredly earned his stripes in Wagga:

*Roy has travelled all states of the Commonwealth with his camera, shooting scenes of city life and industries, rural life and industry and the cream of Australian scenic beauty, ranging from the snow scenes of Kosciusko and Buffalo to the Barrier Reef.* 43

Below I will discuss in further detail how Dunstan’s photographs constructed a nationalised vision of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains. Before doing so it is important to make the point that

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40 Magagnoli, ‘Walkabout Magazine’, p. 35.
42 Magagnoli, ‘Walkabout Magazine’, p. 35.
Dunstan’s photographs existed in the same sphere of representation as photographers known for their commitment to depicting Australian landscapes according to the conventions of Australian cultural nationalism. Historian of the relationship between modern photography and culture and society, Sally Stein, argues that images and texts do not exist in isolation in magazines. Single images and photographs, writes Stein, ‘are designed to work off each other within the larger ensemble of the magazine.’ According to this analysis, readers do not view images as standalone texts, but interpret the magazine, and all of its text and photographs as a whole. So bright, light saturated photographs of the landscape complimented literary descriptions of Australia as a charming paradise enfolded in ‘a silvery girdle’ of clear oceans and beaches and mountain ranges and countryside lush with gum trees and dense green bush.

In its effort to represent ANTA’s vision of Australia, Walkabout’s photography subscribed to the conventions of what the historian of Australian photography, A.M. Willis describes as the pictorialist aesthetic. Pictorialism, a modern approach to photography, sought to emphasise the beauty of landscapes rather than simply document them. Composition, manipulation and experimentation typified landscape photography from the mid-nineteenth century. These conventions include a ‘single dominant highlight’ that is framed somewhere away from the edges and the centre. Landscape photographers organised their images by ‘seeking out elements such as framing trees, foreground logs, winding paths and rivers.’ Horizons did not divide photographs into two, ‘either landscape or sky had to dominate.’

_Eclipsed_ is an example of how advertisements for Buffalo drew from pictorialist conventions. Landscape dominates sky. The lightly coloured valley floor that draws the eye is slightly up and away from the centre, running across the frame diagonally. The eucalypt in the front right corner foregrounds the image. Willis argues that photographs that employ pictorialist devices are a ‘transition between the vision of the landscape as scenic view and that of the land as site for settlement and development.’ Furthermore, such photographic views ‘were no longer of a specific place, but increasingly came to signify “Australianness.”’

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47 Ibid.
*Eclipsed* was not the only advertisement or photograph in *Walkabout* to deploy conventions of the ‘pictorialist aesthetic.’ Another advertisement for Buffalo, *Glorious in the Spring*, used a full page photograph that framed a view of a pastoral sunlit valley foregrounded by eucalypts and rocks, as did *Spring at Mt. Buffalo.* These advertisements’ copy incorporated selling points from the VR campaign of the previous decade, particularly in how they commodified the alpine air and climate. One described the air as ‘wine like.’ Another hailed the consistently cool temperature: ‘even when the mercury is soaring beyond the century in the lowlands it is seldom over 75 degrees Fahrenheit at... Mt. Buffalo National Park.’

48 ‘Spring at Mt Buffalo,’ *Walkabout*, September, 1941, p. 43.
50 ‘Seldom over 75 degrees,’ *Walkabout*, February, 1935, p. 3.
52 Harper and White, *How National were the first National Parks*, p. 61.

What vision of nature did *Walkabout*’s photojournalism create for the Blue Mountains? Broadly, ANTA photographers depicted the scenery as containing monumental grandeur abounding with the symbols of the settler Australian nation. In most photographs the mountains appear as a bright, sun drenched landscape where endless forested ranges roll out to distant horizons. Thomas Dunlap writes of Australian landscape photography that ‘there was no Australian counterpart of Ansel Adams, the American photographer who made Yosemite’s rock formations Half Dome and El Capitan into national icons.’ Perhaps in Australia there was no equivalent photographer to Ansel Adams, but ANTA clearly sought to imbue the Blue Mountains, Buffalo and other scenic attractions, with national significance.

Photography for the Blue Mountains asserted a national claim to the land over twenty years before they were formally reserved as a national park. In pictorial segments such as ‘Our Cameraman’s Walkabout’ (see figures 5.3 and 5.4 below) Dunstan’s photography used pictorialist conventions to Australianise the landscape. Scenes of tourists amidst densely carpeted valleys of bush, towering gum trees with monumental cliff faces and rugged rock formations contribute to the image of Australia ANTA was cultivating. The framing of these subjects, athletic, middle-class, young, healthy and white, in scenes that emphasised light and spaciousness established the Blue Mountains as an important national site. Harper and White write that in Australia, early parks earned their status as ‘national’ because the people who visited them, more than the nature, represented the nation. Images in *Walkabout* framed the people of the nation as ANTA imagined them. Photographs that featured tourists invited viewers to adopt subject
positions as archetypes of the modern, athletic and adventurous settler Australian. One ANTA booklet described Australians as a ‘hospitable people who use one currency and language – English’ who benefited ‘in health and vitality from Australia’s sunshine.’ Another said that Australians were ‘rapidly developing into a distinctive race – tall, strong and athletic, proud of the freedom and progress of their own country.’

The subjects of Dunstan’s photographs resembled the image of the thriving Australian race that ANTA imagined. The mountain climber in figure 5.5 scaling an overhang with steely determination provides an example of how ANTA connected their vision of who Australian people were with their cultural nationalist interpretation of the land. The climber is every part the vital, strong and athletic individual ANTA marketing describe, and he is undertaking a physical activity, evocative of the myth of the spirited Australian adventurer, or explorer, in a dramatic, sunlit scene.

Photographs of the Blue Mountains did not exclusively feature striking images of men overcoming nature. A great number of Blue Mountains photography in Walkabout had women as subjects. They were often shown as in figure 5.4, quietly contemplating the mountain grandeur, often beside friends, or other tourists, male or female. Sometimes they appear to be chatting. In others they appear to be momentarily stricken silent by a wave of transcendental awe. Photographs depicted men as well as women at rest, breathing in the scenery. No photograph invited women to occupy a subject position quite as heroic as Dunstan’s rock climber. While there are nuanced differences between representations of the Blue Mountains in Walkabout, all photographs share qualities of scenic appreciation of Australian scenery laden with rugged rock formations, eucalypts (the eucalypt in the top right corner of figure 5.4 is almost an exact parallel with the one in Eclipsed) bush clad ranges, and settler subjects that conformed to ANTA’s wholesome vision of Australian settlers.

Historians of settler colonial photography sometimes overstate the role of photographers as pernicious actors in the project of settler expansion. Jarrod Hore, for example, argues that photographers such as New Zealand’s Alfred Barton purposefully depicted colonial landscapes as sites of wilderness that were uninhabited by Indigenous people. He writes:

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ANTA, Australia, (circa 1930-1939), held by the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

ANTA, Talking Points on Australia, (circa 1934) p. 5.
The most stable strategy for managing Indigenous presence was the depiction of disembodied colonial landscapes as sites of wilderness. Wilderness photographers such as Burton developed landscape frames that contrived new natures and embraced an aesthetics of absence.  

Photographs of the Blue Mountains in Walkabout asserted a settler claim to the land by populating it with quintessential settler subjects that represented the nation. They did not depict a wilderness as much as they reinforced the image of the Blue Mountains as an outdoor playground free to be explored by people who best represented the desired characteristics of the Australian nation, as imagined by ANTA. Representations of gender in these images subscribed to the same conventions as Victorian Railways advertising discussed in the previous chapter. These images also share with VR’s advertising the depiction of settlers at recreation amidst rugged Australian scenery. As Thomas Dunlap writes, in Australia, the bushwalking movement was enraptured with the idea of the bush ‘as a place for human activity’ in contrast to America, where the monumental scenery of places like the Yosemite Valley became sacred spaces. ANTA’s depiction of the Blue Mountains as a place where human activity was easily accessible reinforced the image of Australians as spirited, adventurous and free to take leisure in nature. Furthermore, it indelibly fused settlers with the land, fulfilling a central objective of ANTA’s mission to encourage a sense of national pride.

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Hore, “Beautiful Tasmania”, p. 32.
Figure 5.3 – In the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Walkabout, April, 1939.
Figure 5.4 – Roy Dunstan, *Mountaineering in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales*, *Walkabout*, May, 1935.
How did ANTA control the image of Indigenous People?

ANTA’s photographs and advertisements that evoked the sunlit, pastoral or idyllic vision of Australia were an aspect of the association’s effort to cultivate settler Australian attachment to the land. Inevitably, any image that resonated with settler Australians marginalised and suppressed the original ownership of the land by Indigenous people. Melissa Miles writes that in the 1920s and 1930s ‘images of idyllic pastoral landscapes undisturbed by Aboriginal presence were deeply bound up with the assertion of white ownership of the land.’

It follows that images of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in Walkabout advertising perpetuated a mythology of settler ownership.

But these advertisements were printed in a magazine profusely illustrated with images of Indigenous people. Walkabout contained over 120 photographs of Indigenous people from its first issue in 1934 to the end of 1940, more or less during the same time that advertisements and photojournalism for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were most prominent in the magazine. It was impossible to read an issue of Walkabout during this period without seeing photographic images of Indigenous people. Walkabout’s depiction of Indigenous people during this period has been the topic of numerous scholarly articles. However, these focus more on the representations of Indigenous people rather than on how their omission contributed to a metanarrative of settler possession.

Mitchell Rolls, the foremost defender of the magazine, acknowledges that throughout the 1930s ‘Walkabout did elide images of urban Aborigines’ and supposed, ‘along with contemporary opinion’ that Indigenous people ‘ultimately would fade before triumphant settler progress.’

Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were not urban settings, but were advertised to urban people as recreational spaces replete with the modern comforts of urban life. As well as omitting Indigenous people from their coverage of urban life, the magazine also omitted Indigenous people from spaces it advertised as playgrounds for the recreation of the urban white middle class.

ANTA used Indigenous themes in its overseas advertising but never sought to engage the troublesome and violent pasts of places it advertised as tourist resorts. Significantly, ANTA’s misremembering of the Indigenous past and projection of the country as a settler dominated

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landscape was a process more overt than the omission of Indigenous people from photographs and images. A letter written by James F. Murphy, Secretary for the Department of Commerce, and J.A. Swanson, acting secretary to the prime minister, explains why ANTA deployed representations of Indigenous people in some publicity, but not in advertising for destinations where there was no remaining Indigenous presence:

The Australian National Travel Association, which handles all oversea tourist advertising for the Commonwealth, is opposed to the emphasis of aboriginal themes in their oversea publicity, as it tends to induce visitors to expect what cannot be seen in the places generally visited by the average tourist. The aboriginal theme is used sparingly, however, to indicate how Australia has bridged the gap between the primitive and the present.60

Because past violence and displacement destroyed the physical Indigenous presence in the Blue Mountains and Buffalo, advertising therefore elided Indigenous people so as to not create expectations that could not be met. Nothing in the magazine countenanced the idea that Mount Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were not places once owned and lived on by Indigenous people.

Swanson’s and Murphy’s letter also illuminates why ANTA posters advertising Australia feature Indigenous men when advertisements in Walkabout for scenic destinations did not. Like sunlight, eucalypts and the bush, aboriginality was also a symbol used by ANTA, deployed to belabour a point, especially in overseas advertising, that the burgeoning settler society had made significant technological and social progress since the land was first colonised. One of Percy Trompf’s posters exemplifies ANTA’s deployment of aboriginality to, in Murphy’s words, ‘indicate how Australia has bridged the gap between the primitive and the present.’61 The poster (see figure 5.5 below) depicts a giant locomotive thundering across the continent under a night sky in which the southern cross twinkles. Inside the train, a party of male guests sit in an opulent carriage that might double as a gentleman’s club. Outside, an Indigenous man in a loin cloth peers at the steam engine from behind a skinny grove of eucalypts. This advertisement, commissioned during the 1930s, directs overseas enquiries to Australia House in London and to the offices of Thomas Cook and Sons in New York, and was likely circulated predominantly outside of Australia.

Figure 5.5 - Percy Trompf, Luxurious Travel Night and Day Across Australia. Save Days by The Trans-Australian Railway. Aust. Image courtesy of Josef Lebovic Gallery.
Swanson and Murphy’s 1937 letters were an organised, official reply to Mrs S.E. Midgley, who lobbied the government to open Indigenous sites up to tourists on a basis of racist exploitation, not on the grounds of providing visitors with a cultural learning experience.\textsuperscript{62} She wrote to Prime Minister Lyons in 1937 to suggest that ‘the wild, independent uncivilised natives of the far North of Australia’ might ‘assist in swelling the number of oversea tourists.’ She recalled a childhood memory of the night of her first arrival at Lake Cootharaba in the north of Queensland: ‘we witnessed a Tribal Corroboree, a sight so wild and terrible that I called out “mother – we’ve got to hell.”’ Remembering this, it occurred to her that ‘if arrangements were made to enable tourists to witness these wild corroborees... they would come in their thousands to witness them.’\textsuperscript{63}

Swanson and Murphy replied that ‘it is doubtful whether the capitalisation of the aboriginal races in this way is desirable.’\textsuperscript{64} It is most likely that this meant desirable from the point of view of business rather than protecting Indigenous people from exploitation. They wrote that it was a bad idea to influence people to visit Australia to witness Corroborees ‘which would naturally take place in areas where transport facilities and accommodation are of a meagre nature.’\textsuperscript{65} Their lack of enthusiasm arose from logistical issues that precluded a positive consumer experience, rather than a rejection of Mrs Midgley’s case for commercialising an Indigenous cultural tradition. In any event, the type of experience Midgley was advocating for was totally at odds with the image of Australian nature ANTA sought to cultivate in its advertising and publicity for Buffalo and the Blue Mountains.

The attitude expressed by Holmes in 1929 and Murphy and Swanson in 1937 is representative of their view that it was up to ANTA to decide when, where and under what circumstances tourists engaged with Indigenous people, and if they were to engage with each other at all. It was not the decision of tourists and certainly not that of Indigenous people themselves to find mutually beneficial ways to interact. One place where tourists were certain to never engage with Indigenous people or culture was in scenic destinations where dispossession had occurred generations before. It does not appear that anyone at ANTA ever even made a connection between scenic destinations such as Buffalo and the Blue Mountains and traditional Indigenous owners. ANTA’s only consideration of Indigenous culture was given to areas of Australia that

\textsuperscript{62} Correspondence from Sarah E. Midgley to Prime Minister, The Rt Hon J.A. Lyons M.P., 9\textsuperscript{th} February 1937, NAA: A458, AJ392/3 Part 1.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Correspondence from J.A. Swanson, Assistant Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, to Sarah E. Midgley, August 13, 1937. NAA: A458, AJ392/3 Part 1.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
were so remote it was not possible to organise tours there. ANTA’s booklet *Talking Points on Australia*, gives an instructive example of how the association perpetuated an extinction narrative that had begun in tourist promotion decades earlier (see chapter two). ‘There are still in Australia about 62,000 full-blood [Aborigines],’ the booklet said, continuing: ‘Approximately 42,000 are nomadic, and still live in the remote unsettled areas of the interior and Northern Australia.’

There is a clear parallel between this dislocation of Indigenous people from time and space with those made in earlier phases of promotion. It is especially reminiscent of the claims made by Percy Hunter between 1905 and 1915 that there were scarcely any Indigenous people still remaining in the country.

**Mountain Playgrounds**

Generating an image of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as characteristically sunny, and populated by healthy, active tourists assisted another key marketing point – the idea that clear air, warm temperatures and higher altitudes were beneficial to health. ‘Australia’s foremost tourist resort offers you lovely sunny days, cool nights and invigorating air,’ reads one advertisement for Katoomba-Leura and the Blue Mountains. One Buffalo advertisement superimposed a thermometer over a panoramic photo of the valley. In the days before home air-conditioning, any reader who had endured a Melbourne or Sydney heatwave would have taken note that in Buffalo existed the possibility of a good night’s sleep between December and February. These appeals to the supposed health giving qualities of high altitudes continued a long tradition of advertising the resorts as sanatoria, as discussed in chapter two.

But ANTA promoters appealed to other aspects of health and well-being as well. They began to boost the recreational opportunities that awaited likely tourists. ANTA was as interested in having people patronise these destinations as they were in presenting them as national sites. Therefore, the most significant way in which ANTA defined the mountain resorts was by marketing them as ‘playgrounds’ with limitless opportunities for outdoor recreation. Advertisements that sold the promise of sunshine, cooler temperatures and invigorating air established them as places that were as much for human activity as they were for scenic appreciation. The playground motif advanced an image of the sites as places that existed for the recreation and leisure of urban

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middle class, settler Australians. Ads for Buffalo described it as ‘the great mountain playground’ or the ‘immense mountain playground’, establishing not only the opportunities for recreation but also the vastness of the space it could be undertaken in. Advertising the park in such a way further appropriated Australian nature for settler use and perpetuated a vision of the land that was blind to the region’s Indigenous cultural heritage.

In advertising for Buffalo, winter sports featured disproportionately to other recreational activities. The June 1935 issue’s Buffalo advertisement ‘All Aces’ shows a hand holding four photo cards. One photo depicts skiing, one snowballing, and the final two, climbing and tobogganing. Each picture is presented as an ace in a hand of cards. These are the ‘Ace-high thrills of a winter holiday at Mt. Buffalo National Park.’ Contrast this with advertisements that ran outside of winter, which rarely mentioned which types of recreation were available at the park.

Winter recreation was an important theme of Buffalo’s advertising because of the psychological links between alpine leisure and Europe. One of ANTA’s central concerns during its formation had been the loss of domestic tourists to overseas travel. Marketing Buffalo as an affordable alternative to overseas winter resorts strengthened its appeal with domestic middle-class tourists who aspired to the elite luxury of the Swiss or French Alps. Advertisements publicised the availability of expert ski instructors, imported from Austria and elsewhere, to give demonstrations and lessons on the cutting-edge European skiing techniques. A richly photographed Walkabout article on skiing at Australia’s slopes noted the low cost and egalitarian nature of skiing in Australia: ‘the sport is cheaper here than abroad. £1 per day will cover living expenses, and there is, besides, a social simplicity in our ski resorts which contrasts strongly with the somewhat fashionable atmosphere of the popular foreign ski-fields.’ This helped to sell the park as a competitive alternative to the European Alps. It added an aspirational dimension to Buffalo, whereby middle class tourists could participate in an elite activity, under professional supervision and guidance, without leaving the state and without breaking the bank.

The article, Skiing in Australia, further demonstrates how ANTA sought to rouse national sentiments. ‘The origin of skiing is lost in the mists of antiquity’ reads the article, but ‘it was –

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* Walkabout, vol 1. no 6, April 1935, p. 2.
* Walkabout June 17 1938. The NSW government imported Ernst Skardarasy from Austria in 1935. According to ANTA, Victoria ‘followed suit and brought out his brother Franz, who was an immediate success’ in the 1936 season.’
* Ibid.
characteristically enough – the Englishman who developed it as a sport.” Making a cultural claim to skiing established the sport as a traditional British pastime that settler Australians shared with their ancestral home. Advertisers estimated that the cultural possession of the sports’ origin was important to their readership. Moreover, establishing skiing as an Australian pastime formed the basis for a further claim— that the country in Australia provided world-class skiing in spite of the prominent belief that it was a Northern Hemisphere activity.

Advertisements in *Walkabout* for the Blue Mountains promised a variety of recreations, including an 18-hole golf course, five municipal tennis courts, bowling greens and swimming baths filled with ‘sparkling crystal mountain water.’ Advertising for the Blue Mountains reflected the region’s popularity for bushwalking, notifying tourists of newly opened routes in the area. Some advertisements drew attention to the novelty of the construction that facilitated access. ‘See the Giant Stairway at Echo Point and the amazing panorama from the reinforced concrete projecting platform on which you are literally suspended in mid-air,’ reads one advertisement. As discussed in earlier chapters and the following one, promoters estimated that engineering marvels represented as much of an attraction to tourists as natural ones. This was clearly a selling point that promoters had not been willing to depart from up to the Second World War.

Clapp declared that: ‘Australia is a great sunlit continent as colourful as the world – A continent that Australians must be proud to advertise!’ Advertisements, articles and photographs of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in *Walkabout* embodied ANTA’s visual and literary fixation with the sun. Several Australian historians and academics raise the role of the sun as an important national symbol in Australian landscape photography and art, that helped create a bond between settlers and the landscape they had come to inhabit. Art and design historian Melissa Miles writes that ‘through art, literature, plays and poetry, the energy and singularity of the sun came to penetrate the national psyche and stand for the promise and youth of the new nation.’ She explains that the dominance of the sun as a symbol during the early twentieth century provided Australians with a celebration of the continent’s weather that distinguished it from the gloomy, wet and overcast skies of Britain. ANTA’s constant literary and photographic references to sunlight evidence the organisation’s commitment to having settler Australians see the land as a

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72 *Walkabout* June 1 1938, p. 16.  
73 *Walkabout*, November 1, 1934, p. 62.  
75 Melissa Miles, “Light Nation and Place”; Giblett, ‘Shooting the Sunburnt Country.’  
shared, productive space on which the nation's progress depended. It also represented the climax of years upon years of promotion that had emphasised the bright light and spaciousness of the Australian bush.
Chapter VI.

These Anxious Days: Promotion through depression and war.

The 1930s was a renaissance decade for Australian tourism. Even though the country suffered from the Great Depression, people still took holidays, and the prospect of a cheaper holiday spent inside Australia’s borders appealed to many. As the economy slowly recovered, more Australians had money for holidays. Improvements in working conditions, such as increasing paid annual leave, meant that more people had more time to travel. As the premier mountain resorts in Australia, Buffalo and the Blue Mountains were popular destinations during the 1930s. In 1931, the Argus reported that accommodation at the Mount Buffalo Chalet was ‘strained to capacity.’ At Christmas in 1943 a stream of patrons queued outside the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau hopeful of securing a booking at the chalet. They left disappointed, as the Chalet was already fully booked for the next five months. Tens of thousands of tourists and holiday-makers visited the Blue Mountains every year in the 1930s. According to the Katoomba Daily, the number of Easter visitors in 1933 ‘approached record proportions... the best Easter season for a number of years past.’ Promoters were buoyed by, and often celebrated these numbers, but high visitation was usually limited to the peak seasons and holidays. The question of how to attract visitors in other seasons remained.

This chapter compares how promoters sold Buffalo and the Blue Mountains between 1930 and 1945, a period marked by an erratic economy and rising tensions in Europe that culminated in the Second World War. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century promoters had presented both resorts as retreats from the city. But in the anxious days of the 1930s, VR started to market Buffalo as a refuge from more global perturbations. When R.G. Menzies asked the nation to steel itself for a second war with Germany in September 1939, the extensive loss of Australian life in the First World War was still within memory for most of his listeners. In this climate of heightened anxiety, VR encouraged tourists to visit Buffalo and ‘forget the world’s cares in this celebrated Mountain Playground.’ Contrastingly, Blue Mountains tourist promoters scarcely referenced the recession or war. Instead, promoters continued more or less along the

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1 Spearritt, Holiday Business, p. 74.
3 Ibid.
5 ‘Invasion by holidaymakers’, Katoomba Daily, April 20, 1933, p. 2.
same lines they had for decades, emphasising the variety of recreations, hospitality of accommodation and the health-giving qualities of the air. A clear example of how VR advertising for Buffalo engaged sooner with prevailing socio-economic concerns than their counterparts in NSW is evidenced by the way the VR capitalised on the emergence of the new popular hiking, or bushwalking, movement, which I explore in the below section.

What do the diverging promotional strategies of these organisations tell us about the construction of nature at Mount Buffalo and the Blue Mountains? In 1927, the famous advertising agent Arthur O Richardson claimed that the ‘fundamental dynamic of advertising is to stimulate purchasers to desire an object so much that they will not be content until they possess it.’ The promotion of Buffalo cohered to the modern approach to advertising explained by Richardson. It addressed the emotional state of consumers more than the place itself. VR attempted to drive consumption by manipulating contemporary fears and desires. Whether the problem was economic crisis or the daunting prospect of global conflict, Mount Buffalo was the solution. The approach in New South Wales, by contrast, took for granted that tourists would visit based on scenic and historic attractions, as well as modern facilities and infrastructure. The reluctance of Blue Mountains promoters to capitalise on current events was not out of a sense of altruism. As I show below, promoters considered inducing tourists to visit the Blue Mountains as a cost-effective holiday during dire economic times. However, they lacked the professional approach to selling that had taken hold at VR, and were hesitant to adapt what they felt was a proven sales formula. Diverging approaches to the promotion of our two mountain resorts constructed disparate images of nature in each site. While promoters for both harkened back to an imaginary settler past, VR’s Buffalo was modern and engaged with contemporary affairs, where the promotion of the Blue Mountains offered tourists a safer, more nostalgic vision of the bush.

**Bushwalking: Railways capitalise on a new trend.**

Melissa Harper has outlined well bushwalking’s rise to widespread popularity between the wars, particularly because of its low participation cost after the Great Depression. In 1931, Victorian Railways published a guide aimed directly at bushwalking enthusiasts titled *Wonderful Walks in Victoria.* ‘Walking for health and pleasure is increasing in popularity in Victoria every year,’ the

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guide observed, adding that ‘no holiday season passes without innumerable parties of healthy, enthusiastic boys and men, and, in these days of energetic womanhood, young women, too, taking the road for health and pleasure – pleasure which no other form of travel can give.” It appears VR had a concrete understanding of their audience, and were pragmatically addressing these groups in particular because they wanted potential customers to self-identify as bushwalkers.

The railway targeted bushwalkers in order to win more business by encouraging them to travel to trailheads by train. *Wonderful Walks in Victoria* informed readers:

> the railways give ready access to every point to which the walker’s attention is here directed, and the railway ticket facilities are such that there is no difficulty in the way of leaving a train at one point and joining another at a remotely distant station, after spending unforgettable days revelling in the rare beauty or splendid majesty of the intervening wilds."

The guide demonstrates that VR was at pains to connect the explosion of the hiking movement to destinations reached by the railway. Importantly, they marketed Mount Buffalo as the prime destination for walking in Victoria. The preamble to *Wonderful Walks* celebrated Victoria’s ‘fine mountain routes with beautiful scenic views; there are valleys full of infinite charm.” Immediately following the introductory passage, on the first page, was a section titled ‘Walks in Mt. Buffalo National Park.’ In it, the railway termed the park ‘the walker’s paradise’ because of the innumerable and enthralling walks which could be taken from the Chalet, ‘without the arduous climbing usually associated with a mountain holiday.” Yet it was also possible, the guide said, to undertake climbs that were more venturesome and offered thrills for the mountaineer. The railway covered all bases by appealing to hikers of all abilities. Furthermore, by promoting Buffalo as the premier destination for hiking, the railway could find an additional means of monetising the Chalet, which, as I explain below, increasingly represented a cumbersome asset.

Victorian Railways guides aimed at bushwalkers often deployed motifs of settler Australian identity that alluded to a settler connection with the land. For example, the 1938 guide *Planned*

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10 *Ibid*, p. 3.
Hikes in Victoria, began: 'tramping in the open, with a sunlit Australian sky above and the soft, green beauty of the Australian bush to enchant you with a range of pictures that only Nature can paint, is one of the greatest pastimes.'13 Wonderful Walks portrayed the casual bushwalker in the image of the drover, or the bushman. The walker, said the guide, ‘is master of his own destiny. He may stop where he will and proceed as he likes; he may loiter amid the forest to boil his billy in a delightful spot by the stream,’ and ‘he may diverge as he wishes’ to enjoy the ‘glories for which our magnificent mountain areas are so notable.’14 The railway sold bushwalking to the everyday urban middle class person as a means of exercising the freewheeling spirit of the drover myth. In a further example of the railway’s cultivation of a frontier bush image, Wonderful Walks described walks in the state as ‘threads which string together the primitive, though always homely, comforts of pioneering settlements.’15 VR promoters estimated the drover myth had currency with their audience, and invited them to walk in the shoes of their pioneer forebears.

By contrast, the NSW Railways drew on unique features of the Australian bush to appeal to hikers. ‘Over the whole region is a dense growth of native flowering shrubs which, in season, present a wealth of colouring and fill the air with that fragrant charm which is peculiar to the Australian bush,’ the New Walk Across the Blue Mountains instructed.16 Materials aimed at regular tourists also boosted Australian scenery. All About the Blue Mountains, published by the NSW Government Tourist Bureau, exalted the ‘magnificent rugged mountain scenery’ and ‘vast forest-clad gorges’ that flanked the rail line into the mountains. ‘On all sides is the grand cloud-shadowed expanse of the Australian bush,’ said the guide. While NSW guides evoked the imagery of the Australian bush, they did not put the tourist into the scene as VR had done in Planned Hikes.

Given that VR brochures directed at the new bushwalkers invited tourists to imagine themselves as go-where-they-please bush travellers, it is surprising that their employment of the drover myth did not extend into all Buffalo tourist information. The 1941 pamphlet Where to Walk and Ride in Buffalo is filled only with imperatives such as ‘cross the road in front of The Chalet’ and ‘turn off to the right to view PEEP HOLE.’ The guide described scenery as either ‘fine’ or, if the writer wanted to emphasise the truly spectacular, ‘very fine.’ From 1930, the railway printed several

14 Victorian Railways, Wonderful Walks, p. 3.
15 Ibid.
16 NSW Railways, The New Walk Across the Blue Mountains, (Issued under the authority of the New South Wales Railway Commissioners, 1931), p. 4.
editions of a guide dedicated to hiking at Buffalo titled *Delightful Walks around Mt. Buffalo National Park*. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate these guides in my research. However, there is a distinction between guides that were circulated in the city to sell holidays, and more informative guides distributed to tourists once arrived at Buffalo. *Where to Walk and Ride* and, I assume, *Delightful Walks*, belonged to the latter class of tourist information distributed to tourists already on their holiday, and consequently avoided the flowery language of guides intended to sell rather than inform.

NSW Railways’ approach to the bushwalking movement was different to VR’s in various ways. Instead of printing guides that specifically addressed the new wave of hikers, the railway organised ‘mystery hikes,’ a Sunday excursion where trains laden with passengers departed Sydney’s Central Station to an unknown destination to any of the bushlands that skirted the city. It is not clear how the railway promoted these hikes other than in the popular press. Melissa Harper writes that a condition of the railway’s involvement was that F.J. Palmers, a department store, acted as a sponsor for the hikes. The first mystery hike was to the National Park on the 26th of June, 1932. Over 2,000 hikers attended, over two thirds of whom were women. The press covered the spectacle of the first hike extensively, giving further publicity to the next hike to the Blue Mountains. One article summarises how the walk’s organisers teased Sydneysiders by limiting information, ‘this much is known - the trains will head for the blue mountains. It is up to the hikers themselves to find out the rest.’ The railway and F.J. Palmers lured hikers with a sense of mystery and adventure, expressed in the popular press and likely spread by word of mouth.

**Promoting a tourist, not a scenic, resort.**

The 1932 mystery hike in the Blue Mountains was nowhere near the altitudinous resort towns like Katoomba and Blackheath. It ran from Valley Heights to Penrith, a ten-mile stretch barely at the foothills of the mountains. So the public relations strategies used by the railway to get day-hikers there were not really in the same sphere as promotional efforts to entice tourists to longer stays further up the mountains. The Blue Mountains shire council and the Government Tourist Bureau were more active in the promotion for the Blue Mountains’ towns and scenic attractions, and it seems little was done by the railway to promote the Blue Mountains outside of the mystery hikes.

*‘Sydney to –?’, Labor Daily, July 8, 1932, p. 6.*
The Tourist Bureau and the Blue Mountains council sold the Blue Mountains as a tourist resort rather than a hiking destination. They preferred recreations other than hiking, including motoring, golf, tennis, fishing, shooting and swimming. The frontispiece of the NSW Government Tourist Bureau *Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves Motor Road Guide* listed these recreations before ‘Beautiful walks and Magnificent Scenery.’ The guide emphasised the ease with which walks could be completed and the short walking distance of lookouts, waterfalls and other points of interest from the main road or train stations. While the guide gives some information about longer walks, the Tourist Bureau suggested that walks in the mountains might be ‘undertaken as part of combined motoring and “hiking” excursions.’ However, the tourist bureau emphasised opportunities for tourists to experience beautiful scenery by means other than hiking. Full page advertisements for golf courses at Blackheath and a list of other Blue Mountains courses, green fees and reports on the conditions of greens and fairways, for example, indicate that the Tourist Bureau estimated those tourists travelling by car were far more inclined to slice a ball into the bush than walk through it.

Considering the hiking craze was sweeping Sydney at the same time, it is odd that guides selling the Blue Mountains as a tourist resort seldom referenced the pastime. Particularly interesting in these guides is the frequent use of ‘walking’ to describe on foot recreation. As Melissa Harper has explained, the terminology used to describe either professional bushwalkers or recreational hikers became a hot-button issue of 1930s Sydney popular culture. ‘A great debate raged within the bushwalking movement,’ Harper writes, ‘over the use of the term ‘hiking.’’ Dedicated bushwalkers did not like the term. They perceived connotations of cheap, commercialised and, worst of all, Americanised mass entertainment. Members of Sydney’s bushwalking clubs self-identified as bushwalkers rather than hikers because they felt the former term reflected their professionalism, purpose and skill. The Ruck Sack Club (who had changed their name from the Hiker’s Club) explained the difference between hiker and bushwalker: ‘The hiker is... the muddling inefficient, the bushwalker the expert.’

It is interesting that boosters for the Blue Mountains distanced themselves from the hiking vs bushwalking commentary, preferring to use the uncontroversial (or unclaimed) terms ‘walk’ and

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20 Harper, ‘Battle of the Bush,’ p. 44.
‘walking’ to describe recreation on foot. A 1938 guide’s description of the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, opened in 1935, evokes a leisurely stroll from one panoramic viewpoint to the next. ‘After enjoying a feast of the beauty at Orphan Rock’ it instructed tourists to ‘follow the easy grade along the cliff edge,’ where, after a few minutes they arrived at another lookout ‘of the famous Furber’s Steps creeping up the side of the cliff... in an astounding manner.” The information on the Prince Henry Cliff Walk goes on in this fashion for a page and a half of dense textual description that gave no information on the length of the walk, recommended ability of the walker, or what clothes and equipment might be necessary for tourists to bring along. The description of walking easily from one look out to the next is completely anathema to the language used by the promoters of mass hiking or by specialist bushwalkers to describe divergent styles of walking for recreation in the Blue Mountains.

That promoters chose ‘walking’ as their preferred term, rather than hiking or bushwalking, suggests their estimation that their target market was not concerned either with hiking as a popular activity or with the specialised peregrinations of bushwalkers. Rather, promoters aimed their marketing sights at an affluent middle-class audience they estimated to be interested in a holiday experience that allowed for comfortable touring and accommodation and a wide range of choice in recreations, not hiking or bushwalking alone. Promoters thought that neither self-sufficient tramping in the wilderness or mass-organised day hikes arrived at with thousands of others by train were of interest to the middle-class tourist most likely to spend the greatest amount of time - and money - in the mountains.

The marketing of the Blue Mountains to attract middle-class tourists gave rise to underlying tensions over the effect that development of the townships, Katoomba in particular, was having on the surrounding scenery and bushland. Frustrated by holiday promotion for Katoomba, the de facto leader of Australian bushwalking, Myles Dunphy, wrote in a 1935 editorial that ‘Katoomba tourist attraction boosters believe that most tourists visiting the Blue Mountains desire only the amenities and pastimes of a small city for the whole duration of their stay.’ Dunphy proposed that the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council (NPPAC), established in 1933 to seek the reservation of scenic areas for recreation, believed the Katoomba boosters were wrong in their estimation of the character and desires of the modern tourist to the Blue Mountains. He believed a large proportion of tourists expected ‘to obtain recreation in natural bushland spots’

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and were only able to do so 'not due to any foresight on the part of the Katoomba body [council]' but due to the fact that the council 'have not had a chance to “improve” it.'

Dunphy’s and the NPPAC’s objection to the prevailing marketing strategy of Katoomba’s boosters goes to the heart of competing notions of what the tourist experience in the Blue Mountains should have been. NPPAC’s view was that management should favour the preservation of ‘wilderness’ and scenery over the development of tourist facilities spilling over municipal borders into the natural environment. ‘When the natural scenery is destroyed it can never be replaced,’ they argued. But the view of the NPPAC had evolved with specific resistance to the construction of roads for motorists. ‘It is good business to protect the surrounding scenery against the inevitable, damaging forces of tourist traffic and so called Improvements, particularly vehicular improvements.’ Opposition to motor tourist traffic was directly correlated to the elitist ideals of the bushwalking movement. A section of Dunphy’s editorial that listed ‘grounds for protest’ against the addition of the Narrow Neck peninsula to the Katoomba council’s area of administration betrays the organisation’s partisan belief that bushwalkers were the superior class of Blue Mountains tourists. ‘If it is right for motorists to demand roads, it is equally right for recreational walkers to demand routes free of motor traffic. Motorists prefer walkers off the roads, therefore walkers should be protected as regards their chosen bush routes and camping spots,’ wrote Dunphy in a subtle manipulation that gifted bushwalkers with first rights over the parts of the Blue Mountains they preferred to walk and camp in.

Writers of guides for the Blue Mountains envisioned a different class of tourist to that idealised by Dunphy and the bushwalkers. One 1938 guide (so favourable to the Katoomba municipal council one wonders if it was commissioned by them), repeatedly referenced the improvements the council had made since the 1880s. ‘The municipal council has been most enterprising and wide awake since its incorporation.’ The guide lists a modernised water supply and sewage system, pathways and tracks for tourists to visit points of interest, electric lighting and a new £20,000 municipal golf course among the civic achievements made by the council. The guide’s adulation of the council and its achievements is relentless. ‘In 1932 the council conceived and carried out the ambitious project of floodlighting some of the scenic gems. The success was instantaneous, and the result has fully justified the enterprise and courage of the authorities, who

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have always been in the van of any move for the popularising of the mountain resorts."

The NSW Tourist Bureau similarly celebrated the floodlighting in their promotion,

> A unique system of floodlighting every evening turns the Cascades at Leura, Katoomba Falls, The Three Sisters and the fern glens in the vicinity into a veritable fairyland revealing their beauty in an entirely different aspect.

These guides demonstrate that promoters believed development and technology were a bigger draw to visitors than opportunities to experience nature alone. The novelty of modernity outweighed scenery. The passage on the Prince Henry Cliff Walk celebrated the addition of gardens, seating, picnic grounds and swings and roundabouts for children near Gordon Falls at the walk’s end. It also notes the improvements to the security of fences, bridges and guide rails. “The council has paid particular attention to the Olympian Rock; it is so securely fenced that children may look through the netting to the valley, over a thousand feet below.” Promoters for the Blue Mountains had been making efforts to demonstrate to visitors that safety, development and comfort were the paramount features of the Blue Mountains since the 1880s, and in the 1930s promoters still estimated these concerns were important to their audience.

It goes without saying that Dunphy and his followers resented such efforts to ‘touristise’ (Dunphy’s word) the Blue Mountains’ scenery, believing that tourist infrastructure deprived ‘scenic valleys of their natural frame, and do other irremediable damage.” It would not be until 1957 that Dunphy’s proposal to have large areas of the Blue Mountains reserved as a national park was effected. The details of that campaign are not the main focus of this research. However, there was a clear disconnection between the adventurous, nature loving tourist envisioned by the bushwalkers, and the comfort loving sightseers envisioned by mainstream tourist promoters. The competing visions of who should visit the Blue Mountains offers some explanation of how debates about how the tourist trade should be conducted in the Blue Mountains delayed their reservation as a system of national parks for over twenty years.

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"Ibid, p. 17.
"NSW Government Tourist Bureau, All About the Blue Mountains, (Sydney, NSW Government Tourist Bureau guide, circa 1940), p. 23.
Figure 6.1 - NSW Government Tourist Bureau, *Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves Motor Road Guide*, (Circa 1935).
So how did interwar promoters use national symbols and motifs to attract consumers to the Blue Mountains, and what vision of Australian nature did they promote? Put simply, they adopted the formula of ANTA, the Victorian Railways, and the NSW Government Tourist Bureau and commissioned publicity materials that celebrated Australia’s sunny skies, rugged bush scenery and opportunities for outdoor recreation. As in earlier generations of promotion, it was not a wilderness that they promoted, but a site of developed industrial tourism, equipped with roads and infrastructure ready to receive any who could make the trip. For example, the cover of the NSW Government Tourist Bureau *Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves Motor Road Guide* displayed a mesmerising image of the sheer cliff faces rising up from a tree carpeted valley. The cliffs are bathed in golden sunlight in spite of the windswept sky. A clear road runs through the valley floor, forking into two distinct crevices. One leads deeper into the unknown reaches of the bush, and one suggests an ascent towards the top of the peninsula, where there is a crowd of tourists, alighted from their cars taking in the scene before them.

Clearly the Tourist Bureau strove to create an image of the Blue Mountains as accessible by the new generation of automobile owners. Motorists, if persuaded to experience the region from the comfort and convenience of their own vehicles, represented a lucrative demographic for NSW tourism. But this was a class who the Tourist Bureau estimated were interested in a more glamorous form of leisure than the rigorous bipedal recreation advocated by the bushwalking movement. The guide’s copy complemented the cover art by connecting the scenery to the road network. It often noted, for example, that lookouts and viewpoints were easily accessed from carparks and the road. The view from the road itself was equally of interest, on all sides of the ‘splendid paved highway’ that passed through ‘magnificent ruggedness, broken by vast-tree clad gorges’ was ‘the grand cloud-shadowed expanse of the Australian bush.’ In the Tourist Bureau’s commercial vision of the Blue Mountains, opportunities for sightseeing evidently did not rest on strenuous exertion.

Just as in previous decades, and simultaneous to ANTA’s promotion of the entire continent, promoters for the Blue Mountains and Buffalo populated promotional materials of the 1930s with a physically healthy, settler middle-class. Over generations of promotion this practice had become so enshrined that it was an unspoken feature of tourist advertising. I have covered in the previous chapters the effect that depictions of settler subjects in advertising had on stamping a

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* NSW Government Tourist Bureau, *Blue Mountains and Jenolan Caves Motor Road Guide*
settler claim on the land. As this chapter overlaps temporally with the last, it is unnecessary to go into intricate detail here regarding the evolution of tourist advertising in the broader historical process of Indigenous dispossession. Interwar state based promotors, such as the railways, tourist bureaus and Katoomba Council did not exhibit any change in the prevailing treatment of the land as firmly in the possession of the settler nation.

One example of the pervasiveness of settler expansion through the medium of advertising over the sixty-year period covered in this thesis stands out, however. In 1946, the Blue Mountain Council held a nationwide competition for an artistic illustration to be used as an advertising poster. The winning submission, for which the artist was paid £100, depicted a sun drenched view across the Jamieson Valley. A small group of tourists stand casually next to a rail, enjoying the scenery and each other’s company. And who was the artist of this winning submission? No other than Percival Albert Trompf, the same artist whose posters had fashioned a bright and colourful image of Australia and its nature in VR’s and ANTA’s organised efforts to have settler Australians increase their affinity with the land through tourism.

**In the wake of the depression: Class tensions at Mount Buffalo?**

In Victoria, tensions around what class of tourist was using Mount Buffalo also emerged. In spite of the railway’s efforts to promote Buffalo during the Depression as a rugged bush experience for the spirited Australian adventurer, some commentators took issue with the reality of the experience found on the resort. This was expressed most completely in 1937, when the *Herald* published an article by Lyndhurst Falkiner Giblin, professor of economics at Melbourne university and sometime adviser to the Commonwealth government. He described the Buffalo experience as ‘oppressive to the mountain spirit.’ Scathing in his criticism, Giblin took aim at how the railway had advertised the Chalet, writing that its omnipresent advertisement on railway property meant that every Victorian knew ‘ad nauseam’ of its existence. He also lambasted the railway for limiting access to the park, writing that those with a desire to ‘escape to the higher and wilder part of the plateau’ were actively discouraged by locked gates, and that the fashion of management made it a ‘pleasure resort for elderly and well-to-do valetudinarians’ instead of what Giblin though it should be, ‘a summer playground for the young people of Victoria.’

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But as we have seen in this chapter and in chapter III, VR had attempted to sell Buffalo as a playground for young to middle-aged people in various advertising materials since Harold Clapp arrived at the railway in 1920. The attempt to attract a new wave of tourists by capitalising on the bushwalking trend was a direct response to changes in tourist demands that evolved from the economic crisis of 1929. So what explains the disjuncture between Giblin’s acrimonious account and the image of Buffalo presented in railway promotion? In their history of Mount Buffalo, Dan Webb and Bob Adams explain that Buffalo’s increasing reputation as an ‘exclusive hideaway for wealthy Victorians was probably due to envy bred of hardship during the Great Depression.” Indeed, Buffalo was popular with Melbourne celebrities and establishment figures. Harold Clapp and his family stayed there often. His daughter kept her horse in the Chalet stables. Sidney Myer, whose department store business recovered quickly from the depression, was also a regular visitor, as were other prominent figures of Melbourne’s business elite."

That Melbourne’s rich and famous continued to patronise the park in the wake of the Great Depression is unsurprising as the upfront cost of a holiday at Buffalo remained in reach for the wealthy. For middle-class Melburnians, the cost of a holiday at Buffalo was obviously more expensive than for wealthier people, and while confidence was down they were less likely to commit themselves to the expense. But this did not prevent the railway from attempting to create the potential for those with tighter budgets to visit. For example, a travel stamp scheme that had run since before the depression where Victorians could make a nominal contribution to the State’s Saving Bank each week and save towards a seven-day holiday at Mt. Buffalo. As Colin Symes notes, this scheme was a considerable success that ‘enabled persons with limited means’ to go on holidays."

The real animus behind Giblin’s article was his own resentment of the Melbourne establishment. The professor, whose red tie perennially advertised his socialist sympathies, tendentiously drew up his piece according to a socialist dichotomy of haves and have nots. His accusations that the railway gave priority to the condition of the tennis courts over exploration and discreetly suggested how patrons ought to dress for dinner give away Giblin’s anti-elite stance. The railway gave short shrift to Giblin’s account, replying that ‘apart from being a resort for the “elderly valetudinarian” the Chalet was patronised by many young and active holiday-makers at all

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"Ibid*, pp. 87-88.
"Symes, ‘Motion Pictures’, p. 221."
A handful of letters to the editor emerged in the Herald the following day that supported the railway’s view over Giblin’s. ‘Young Visitor’ wrote, ‘the professor does not state facts... [he] should visit Buffalo during the summer months when he will find the Chalet full of young people and the Valetudinarian well in the minority.’

While the railway and visitors dismissed Giblin, the professor’s article affected the railway’s promotion. Not long after Giblin inveighed against the resort, railway advertising attempted to dispel any notion that Buffalo was exclusive to particular classes or age groups. One pamphlet promised:

No other resort is so well equipped to give the young and energetic that tonic exercise which they need, whilst, at the same time, affording the older and less active the holiday that comes from the study of pictures and effects far removed from their everyday experience.

The railway’s publications did not denote exclusivity either. Where to Walk and Ride, published in 1941, demonstrated the availability of moderately priced recreations. Rather than being a prohibitively expensive activity, horse riding was actually relatively cheap, priced at five shillings a day or ten for a full day. A shilling extra afforded the tourist a guide. The railway was attempting to dispel the image of the elitist atmosphere that Giblin had accused them of engendering.

Giblin’s politically motivated write-up and the response it generated from the railway are relevant to the railway’s advertising of Mount Buffalo because they show that the railway’s promotion efforts were closely tied to the economic situation of post-depression Australia. The Chalet’s image as a trendy socialite getaway was a hangover of how railway advertising had presented it in the pre-crash optimism of the 1920s. Before 1929, marketing the park as an upmarket resort was the result of promoters’ estimation that consumers were attracted to the aspirational characteristics of wealth and luxury associated with a premier resort. After the 1929 crash, images associated with boom of the ‘roaring twenties’ quickly changed meaning, shifting from aspirational to out of reach. Railway promoters worked to rebrand the park as a walkers’ paradise because they sensed a shift occurring among their consumer base.

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40 Victorian Railways, Mt Buffalo National Park: All the Year Round, (Melbourne: Victorian Railways Print, circa 1940).
In promoting Buffalo as a destination for hikers from spring to autumn, and as a ski resort in winter, the railway hoped to offset some of their heavy losses. Despite the Chalet turning a profit of £6,000 in 1929 (the first since it was taken over by the railway), the railways sustained a loss of £3,500 on the Chalet the following year. Between 1933 and 1938 the balance books for the Chalet recorded a loss of £14,000. These deficits must be considered in the context of the railway’s broader losses following the crash in 1929 and the subsequent recession. In their annual review for 1934-35, the commissioners attributed the annual loss of £1,091,000 to the ‘serious decline in revenue, which has been a feature of the depression.’ Everything the railway did ran at a loss, so it would have been no surprise to the commissioners that the Chalet also ran a deficit. This did not stop VR from directing its marketing specialists to find new ways to try and appeal to consumers as well as adapt their advertising to the changing nature of the consumer economy after depression struck in 1929.

Contrastingly, promoters for the Blue Mountains did little to address the Depression in their publicity materials. Individuals active in the promotion of Katoomba were aware of the effect the economic crisis would have on the tourist market in Australia. However, a town hall meeting held one October evening in Katoomba, almost a year to the day from the 1929 Black Thursday crash, highlights the reluctance of the town’s boosters to engage specifically with the economic situation facing the country in their promotional effort. Local business owner Mr. P. Dawson spoke on behalf of a group of residents and business owners advancing a proposal ‘that the business people of Katoomba should unite in taking a complete double page spread in “Smith’s Weekly” stressing the point that Katoomba is the best possible place to spend a holiday during this period of depression.’ The proposal was shot down by hesitant and indecisive committee members. One voter thought it unwise to have ‘any fixed policy’ on addressing the economic downturn. Another said ‘it would be fatal to... pursue any particular course of action.’ The attendants decided a date for the next meeting and the notion of addressing the depression in tourist advertising was lost to the competing personal interests of town-hall politics.

It is interesting that neither the Blue Mountains’ shire council nor the NSW Government Tourist Bureau attempted to connect the Blue Mountains with the recession. Like the Victorian

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"Mount Buffalo Chalet First Profit to State Argus’, August 28, 1929, p. 7; Argus, December 9, 1931, p. 16.

"Buffalo Chalet Losses’, Age, November 30, 1938, p. 10.


" Independent, Wednesday October 29, 1930, p2.

"Ibid."
Railways, the Tourist Bureau was severely affected. After making a profit every year since 1919, it ran a deficit of £8549 in 1929-1930. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* gives an insight into the inflexible strategy of the Bureau, whose once innovative approach to promotion had, by its 25th year, fossilised. The Bureau, it said, ‘has built up a great and ever-extending business by business methods and as long as it adheres to business methods its further success is assured.’ With a consistent stream of visitors continuing to visit the Blue Mountains throughout the 1930s it seems unlikely that the Bureau would have wanted to deviate from a proven strategy. The same applied for the Blue Mountains Council, whose reluctance to post an advertisement in *Smith’s Weekly* demonstrates a conservative approach to promotion; an unwillingness to risk new strategies that may have altered the already established Blue Mountains brand as a middle-class playground with a wealth of scenic attractions and recreations.

**Promoters strategise for war time**

We have seen so far in this chapter that the Victorian Railways responded to topical issues in their advertising to attract consumers to Buffalo, while organisations responsible for promoting the Blue Mountains were reluctant to do so. The trend of addressing or avoiding the headlines continued when the news of the Second World War broke, but not entirely for the same reasons. Economic challenges such as the petrol ration and the decline in overseas tourists redirected the energies of the Blue Mountains’ councils away from tourist publicity and toward how to endure the crisis, for instance.

Concerned with the ‘drastic rationing of petrol on the Blue Mountains,’ the council lobbied their local MP, then treasurer Ben Chifley, for a ‘more liberal allowance’ for tourist vehicles because ‘the life’s blood of the community depends entirely on tourist traffic.’ Chifley presented the council’s concerns to parliament, but the bid for a lighter fuel ration was to no avail. The Blue Mountains tourist operators would be subject to the same stringent measures as the rest of the country. The war, however, turned out to be fortuitous for the Blue Mountains tourist trade. The war-time demand for ships halted the cruise industry, and Australians, who spent more individual income during the war than they had before the war, could no longer travel internationally. Furthermore, the proximity of the Blue Mountains to Sydney meant that a large

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47 ‘Tourist Bureau’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 18, 1931, p. 16.
48 Ibid.
50 ‘Mountains Petrol Rationing to Continue’, *Lithgow Mercury*, August 6, 1941.
51 Publicity Officer’s Report, *Blue Mountains Advertiser*, 8 March 1946, p. 3.
number of visiting Allied and British personnel spent their furlough (and importantly their pay) there. In fact, so well patronised were the Blue Mountains by the end of the war that the prospect of peace worried the council. ‘Can we still maintain this advantage when normal conditions again prevail?’ asked R. Gadd, the council-appointed publicity officer.\(^{30}\)

In spite of the lessened imperative to attract everyday visitors, the council still produced publicity materials during the war. Members of the council assembly reviewed one council brochure, which I have not been able to locate, favourably. ‘I regard the publicity brochure as a very effective compendium of the sights, amenities and general attractiveness of the Blue Mountains,’ wrote one member.\(^{31}\) The *Lithgow Mercury* praised the brochure as well. ‘It is splendidly prepared and well printed, a splendid advertisement for the Mountains, especially the smaller areas that need a boost.’ According to the *Mercury*, the guide described the chief attractions in the shire townships, so it is not likely to have represented a major departure from the style of advertising already conducted by the council.

Articles written by the brochure’s author, Miss Jean Kilner, publicising the Blue Mountains in the rural New South Wales press focussed on the region’s heritage and pioneer history rather than on current events. Kilner certainly did not betray any estimation that readers could be enticed to a holiday as a means of escaping the austere conditions of the home front. Articles she wrote during the war conformed to the council’s pro-development direction. She combined praise of the council with heritage. For example, she told of the council’s renovation of the Old Toll Bar House, a popular rest stop during the pioneer years among traders and settlers travelling over the Blue Mountains to the Bathurst plains.\(^{32}\) Other elements of Kilner’s articles harkened back to the Blue Mountains’ historic past. She noted the many settler landmarks in the mountains, such as the obelisk commemorating the 1813 Wentworth expedition, indicating her belief, and probably the wider belief of the council, that tourists chose to come to the Blue Mountains both for the nature and the opportunity to connect with the pioneer past. Or, as Kilner wrote, ‘nature’s bounty is extravagant on the Mountains, and the touch of historic romance adds to the charm.’\(^{33}\) Where VR invited tourists to connect with the past through the re-enactment

\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) ‘On the Mountain’s Shire’s Publicity Brochure and Other Items’, *Lithgow Mercury*, March 5, 1941, p. 6.


\(^{33}\) Kilner, ‘Our Blue Mountains’, *Nepean Times*. 
of the drover experience, the Blue Mountains council invited tourists to experience history by spending time in and observing historically significant sites.

In a sharp contrast to Blue Mountains promotion, the better resourced advertising experts at Victorian Railways were overt in their appeals to consumers to visit Buffalo so that they could escape the thought of war. The title of one VR pamphlet, for example, promised ‘An 8-Day Carefree Holiday to Mt. Buffalo National Park.’\textsuperscript{56} Materials were not entirely preoccupied with the war, and VR promoters persisted with marketing strategies deployed since Clapp’s arrival in 1920. Descriptions of the commanding views, snow-clad slopes for the skiing enthusiast and beginner, as well as the well-equipped Chalet abounded. But while many tried and tested selling points remained, there is a discernible quality to the war time materials aimed at distracting from the news of fighting, casualties, rationing and Australia’s “All-In” war effort that daily bombarded the front pages of the national papers.\textsuperscript{57} In \textit{An 8-Day Carefree Holiday to Mt. Buffalo}, for instance, the copy elevated the opportunity to escape the fretful state of the times over scenery and recreation, formally pre-eminent selling points:

\begin{quote}
Australia’s finest mountain holiday resort, Mt. Buffalo National Park, offers you much more than the splendour of Alpine vistas and health-giving sporting recreations in crisp sparkling air: it provides you with an unsurpassed haven where you can forget all the cares and irritations of these anxious days.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

Guides from the early 1940s reinforced the sense of opportunity to forget the world’s troubles. The cover page for a 1940 pamphlet depicts a young woman, eyes closed and smiling, seemingly in the depths of some peaceful reverie.\textsuperscript{59} Of course, happy, smiling women had been a constant in Buffalo posters for the best part of two decades, but arguably no image other than this one suggested transfiguration to a dreamlike state. ‘Mt. Buffalo National Park has ever an inveigling natural beauty,’ reads the same 1940 booklet, adding that this beauty was ‘immensely enhanced by its thousands of feet above the world.’ In 1941, the next edition of the Buffalo booklet visualised the metaphor that the resort was on a separate plane of existence by superimposing a cloud across the bottom of a panorama of the national park, with the new slogan ‘Above the Clouds’ written inside it. These literal encouragements to brand the resort as a place separate

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{56} Victorian Railways, \textit{An 8-Day Carefree Holiday to Mt. Buffalo National Park}.
\item\textsuperscript{57} Victorian Railways, \textit{Mt Buffalo National Park All the Year Round}.
\item\textsuperscript{58} Victorian Railways, \textit{An 8-Day Carefree Holiday}, pp. 1-2.
\item\textsuperscript{59} Victorian Railways, \textit{Mt Buffalo National Park: All The Year Round}.
\end{itemize}
from the world were not accidental, and demonstrate that VR’s promoters estimated a level of concern in the community by 1940 that the nation was now on a permanent war-footing, and that people could be persuaded to visit Buffalo if they saw it as a sanctuary from the calamitous state of world affairs.

While the railway was interested in commodifying Buffalo, they had a genuine belief that rest and holiday at Buffalo offered a meaningful contribution to the war effort. Mr Bromilow, then the Victorian Railways’ manager of the publicity and tourist services, wrote in June 1941 that an increasing number of factory munition workers were approaching the railway’s tourist bureau each week ‘asking about somewhere they can go to get a quiet holiday.’ Bromilow argued that if a high level of production was to be maintained munition workers must have the facilities for recuperating. ‘We are getting the tourist industry going,’ he said ‘so those facilities are easily available... people can’t keep working at that high pressure without a break.’60 In this sense the advertising of Buffalo went beyond their commercial objective to maximise profits. The railway saw their administration of Buffalo as a public service beneficial to the individual, society and the war effort. Beyond that, this example speaks to the idea that the railway, which as a state institution and pillar of the economy had insight beyond that of a local council, was demonstrably aware of issues affecting the public, and was likely to have incorporated their knowledge of these issues into their advertising. Hence Buffalo promotion’s greater reference to the war than promotion happening at the same time in the Blue Mountains.

VR’s artists and writers sold Buffalo with acute reference to the depression and war. In doing so, they showed more awareness of contemporary consumer anxieties and desires than their equivalents working to promote the Blue Mountains in New South Wales. By the 1940s, marketing for Buffalo was a product of the well-oiled machinery of the centralised Victorian Railways advertising and publicity divisions. By virtue of the Blue Mountains’ proximity to Sydney and the residential populations of its local centres, the responsibility for publicity fell to councils and the NSW Government Tourist Bureau. As a result, advertising strategy was never as coordinated or sophisticated as VR publicity for Buffalo. Blue Mountains’ promotion rested on the physical attributes of the Blue Mountains’ resorts and attractions rather than on promoters’ intuition of the psychology of consumers. Promoters in New South Wales demurred from addressing the Depression and the war in their advertising because they lacked the

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60 ‘Tourist Trade Booming, But Petrol is A Problem’, *Adelaide Mail*, June 28, 1941.
confidence and experience of professional advertisers in manipulating the subconscious of their audience. VR's attempts to intuit the public psyche were a strict contrast to the efforts being made over the border, and owed to the increasingly professional and modern nature of its advertising branch, who saw the evident economic and security problems Australia faced as a determining factor in people's decision to plan and book holidays.

In the interwar years, promoters identified that depression and war changed the type of holiday experience that consumers sought. VR responded by pragmatically adapting to what it identified as emerging trends. Blue Mountains promoters demonstrated a resilience to change, but still identified the new class of motoring tourists as an important demographic. Promoters for both destinations drew on national symbols and motifs to attract consumers, but Blue Mountains promotion emphasised heritage and scenery, where VR offered a deeper experience, placing tourists in the footsteps of the bushman, a figure associated with Australian identity. These divergent modes of advertising are an insight into the different institutional cultures of promotional organisations, as well as a reminder that global political and economic events played an important role in shaping the way promoters thought about selling nature as a consumer experience.
Figure 7.1 - Photographic negative showing a typical scene outside Flinders Street Station during Clapp’s administration. Cloth banners hoisted above the clocks advertised railway interests. (Prov Item No. 171/09).
Conclusion

In this thesis I have argued that promotion is a useful historical lens through which to view the image of national parks. The history of promotion is also a useful tool for understanding Australian culture, and how it changed over time. Promoters constructed advertisements that, in their attempt to synthesise prevailing cultural attitudes, values and concerns, created a vision of Mount Buffalo and the Blue Mountains that was based less on the physical reality of the destination than it was on creating an imaginary space that promoters thought would resonate with consumers and entice them to spend money on holidays. These visions changed over the decades, but one consistency was the failure of promoters to account for the past ownership of these lands by Indigenous people. In each decade of promotion between 1880 and 1940, in almost every campaign, there is significant empirical evidence that promoters actively sought to control the image of Indigenous people in relation to tourist advertising. As I discussed in the final chapter, this process was so entrenched that the omission of Indigenous people had become standard practice by the 1940s.

It is unrealistic to assume that tourists visited scenic destinations only because governments reserved them. In the 1920s, for example, above the famous Flinders Street clocks in Melbourne, giant banners advertised the railway’s interests. Often they advertised holidays at Buffalo (see Figure 7.1 above). Thousands of commuters passed under the clocks daily. Most were not staunch progressives or environmental preservationists, but regular middle-class urban settler Australians. If one of these people failed to notice the monolithic cloth banner stamped “BUFFALO” that was suspended from the station’s upper stories, they would soon encounter another in the main building, or on the platform, or posted up carefully by a railway employee at another train station. They might have accompanied one in their carriage on their journeys to and from the city. The design and placement of such advertisements were important components of the railway’s long running campaigns to increase traffic to a national park reached by their lines.

Little has been written on how local clubs and associations, and larger institutions such as VR, state tourist bureaus and eventually national tourism promoters such as ANTA, attracted everyday consumers to nature destinations. We cannot know what each individual viewing an advertisement thought about Mount Buffalo or the Blue Mountains, but this thesis has shown
that every advertisement, lecture, photograph, guidebook and puff piece sought to transform its reader into a holidaymaker. Promoters themselves belonged to the same strata of society as those they sought to attract. They predominantly worked in the city, identified as British, but increasingly as Australian too, and held the same middle-class views, attitudes and anxieties as the audience they targeted. Consequently, a new image of the mountain resorts arose. It was ubiquitously middle class, urban and populated with racially homogenous, wholesome tourists. Nature, though irrefragably celebrated in promotion for its monumental qualities, became intertwined with symbols and motifs of cultural nationalism. The origins of these themes dated back to the 1880s, when the Bulletin writers and Heidelberg artists first began to depict Australia in terms of its bright light, rugged bush, and the free-spirited drover and fearless pioneer that had conquered the land and laid down the foundation for future progress and prosperity. Over decades, national park advertising increasingly reflected the predominant settler Australian culture that produced and consumed it. The image was fluid, and certain themes fell out of use as promoters sensed new ones were becoming fashionable. The only dependable feature of tourist advertising during the first half of the twentieth century was that it was devoid of Indigenous people. When they were mentioned or depicted, it was only in such a way as to provide an assurance that they belonged to a primitive or ‘dying’ race, soon to be vanquished by the advance of democracy and capitalism across the continent.

Campaigns to promote Buffalo or the Blue Mountains did not exist independently of one another. The VR campaign, for instance, had been a response to the widely criticised haphazard campaigns in the previous decade. It also evolved as Victoria looked anxiously over its northern border, at the example set by Percy Hunter’s NSW Government Tourist Bureau. Hunter’s centralised Bureau was similarly established following state government concerns that not enough was being done to promote the state, even to its own citizens. Hunter’s Bureau modernised tourist advertising in Australia. It kept some of the Blue Mountains’ selling points from earlier nineteenth century promoters, such as promises of health and clean air; dispensed with fixtures of the earlier eras, such as the celebration of pioneer explorers; and updated the image of the mountains as a place that was both scientific and sublime. The Bureau’s campaign to promote the Blue Mountains was part of a broader state led effort to respond to changing consumer tastes, and change existing ones. Advertising became a medium through which the state enticed residents of New South Wales to holiday in their own state, and promised consumers in other states that it was the place to be. The model of the NSW Tourist Bureau closely resembled that
taken by ANTA three decades later, though ANTA’s campaign is distinguished by its concentrated effort to also inspire national pride and a settler connection to the land.

These campaigns were created by some of the most talented public relations experts working in Australia at the time. While men such as Hunter, Clapp and Holmes predominantly reflected the middle class audience they sought to mobilise as tourists, they also belonged to a public service elite that was instrumental to the operation of the nation and economy. Each held positions of national importance in the bureaucratic and political establishment. Hunter left the Tourist Bureau at the outbreak of the First World War to organise what became the Nationalist Party, which held government from 1917 to 1929. Following the armistice, seemingly in a prototypic role of what we would now call a campaign manager, he accompanied incumbent prime minister Billy Hughes on the 1919 election campaign, which Hughes won. Clapp’s role as a government administrator is better known. He wrote the report for the federal government that formed the basis for rail standardisation in Australia. When war broke out again in 1939, prime minister Robert Menzies made Clapp the director of national aircraft production. During the war, Clapp’s acolyte Charles Holmes served as the interim director of the Department of Information (tasked with censorship and the production of wartime propaganda). The position was previously held by the newspaper magnate Keith Murdoch. Holmes retired from ANTA in 1958, where he had worked tirelessly in the post-war years to expand the organisation’s visibility and funding. While Hunter, Clapp and Holmes are but three individuals, it is striking that each of them held roles outside of tourist promotion in which they were depended on by the highest echelons of the state for their skills in organisation, publicity and orchestrating propaganda campaigns.

Historians have underestimated the role of these skilled professionals in constructing an idealised vision of the bush while industrialising tourism in Australia. Promoters were not limited to the directors of tourist bureaus and betterment boards, there was an army of lecturers, sales representatives, photographers, printers and journalists active in campaigns to publicise Buffalo and the Blue Mountains as the quintessential Australian tourist resorts of the first half of the twentieth century. VR and ANTA commissioned notable graphic artists, such as Percy Trompf and James Northfield, whose work on Buffalo and the Blue Mountains infused cultural

1 ‘Mr. Percy Hunter’s Appointment’, Farmer’s Advocate, Feb 1, 1923, p. 5.
nationalist symbols such as sunlight, rugged scenery and the bush with the eye-catching appeal and colourful flair of modern commercial advertising.

I have argued that the systematic marketing of Buffalo and the Blue Mountains often employed cutting-edge, modern commercial advertising practices. The significance of this finding is that promoters were talented readers of public opinion and sentiment, and that the image of the destinations they created, however artificial, was a well formed articulation of what they estimated consumers wanted to experience when they visited. But promotion was not so straightforward that its exponents simply intuited what the public wanted and set about creating a vision concordant with contemporary tastes. They played an important role in shaping what these tastes were, and who they thought the ideal tourist should be.

From the campaign of the NSW Tourist Bureau onward, promotion was laden with the notion that to be a tourist and spend money in one of these resorts was an obligation of national citizenship. Remarkably this remains a feature of tourist advertising in Australia today. Tourism Australia designed its 2021 campaign to assist in the Australian tourism industry’s recovery from bushfires, closed state and international borders and other economic and political responses to COVID 19. The campaign slogan, spoken in advertisements by the comedian Hamish Blake, encouraged us to think of our duty as citizens to the national economy – ‘a holiday here this year is exactly what this place, and all of us, needs.’ Though the casual language of this advertisement reflects our times more than pre-war Australia’s, there is a Kitcheneresque ‘your country needs you’ quality to it that Harold Clapp would have undoubtedly taken delight in.

The story of how promoters marketed these premier tourist destinations from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War is also the story of the changes taking place in Australia during the same period. It is a story of prevailing settler anxieties and values that either evolved, or remained the same, across generations. On one hand promotion tells a reassuring story of the development of national parks as a democratic institution intended for the health and well-being of a people free to connect with the land by taking leisure time in the bush. Equally, though, the history of how promoters sold Buffalo and the Blue Mountains provides a new insight into the dispossession and displacement of Indigenous people. I argued in the first chapter that existing scholarship has not fully recognised the contribution of promoters in shaping

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the way we think about Australian nature. Throughout this thesis I have shown that the image of nature at Buffalo and the Blue Mountains in advertising was as important as the physical place where they were situated because advertising expressed a vision of what these places, and the people who visited them, were meant to be - at least according to the publicity experts tasked with selling them to settler consumers.

The mass promotion of the Blue Mountains and Mount Buffalo by these talented boosters and bureaucrats created and perpetuated an imaginary history that privileged narratives of settler progress and expansion. Promoters established symbols of the emergent settler nation as components of a consumer tourist experience. They also promoted extinction narratives and pioneer myths that gave a one-dimensional account of settler-Indigenous relations. In so doing, they continued processes that dispossessed Indigenous people of the land far beyond the initial creation of national parks. Stanner argued that inattention to the history of Indigenous Australians could not ‘possibly be explained by absent-mindedness.’ Rather, he said, it was ‘a structural matter, a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape.’ The role of tourist promoters in constructing a vision of the Australian landscape enriches our understanding of who placed Stanner’s window and what image they decided to frame on the other side of the glass.

\[\text{Stanner, } \textit{The Dreaming & Other Essays}, \text{ p. 209.}\]
Annual reports


PART 2


__________________________, *Report on the operation of the Immigration and Tourist Bureau for the year ended 30th June, 1914*

Newspapers and Periodicals

*Adelaide Register* 1905
*Age* 1907-1938
*Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* 1927
*Argus* 1897-1908
*Australian Star* 1907
*Blue Mountains Advertiser* 1946
*Clarence and Richmond Examiner* 1906
*Daily Examiner* 1916
*Daily Standard* 1929
*Daily Telegraph* 1890-1932
*Evening News* 1910
*Geelong Advertiser* 1906
*Herald* 1908-1937
*Katoomba Daily* 1933-1935
*Labor Daily* 1932
*Lithgow Mercury* 1941
*Nepean Times* 1941
*Smith’s Weekly* 1936
*Shoalhaven News and South Coasts Districts Advertiser* 1907
*Sun* 1910-1929
*Sunday Times* 1925
*Sydney Mail* 1933
*Sydney Morning Herald* 1908-1931
*Queensland Figaro and Punch* 1887
*Weekly Times* 1926

Magazines

*The Victorian Railways Magazine* 1926-1929
*Walkabout* 1934-1945
Personal Papers and Correspondence

J.A. Swanson, Assistant Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, to Sarah E. Midgley, August 13, 1937. NAA: A458, AJ392/3 Part 1

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Trip from Melbourne to the Nearer Ranges, Melbourne: 1910.


______________, Mountain & Valley and Scenes in the North-Eastern & Gippsland Districts, Melbourne: Victorian Railways, 1908.


______________, Mount Buffalo National Park, Victoria-Australia, Melbourne: Betterment and Publicity Board, 1927.

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______________, Planned Hikes: Selected Walking Tours in Victoria, Australia, Melbourne: Victorian Railways Print, 1938.

______________, Mt Buffalo National Park: All the Year Round, Melbourne: Victorian Railways Print, circa 1940.

______________, Where to Walk and Ride at Mt. Buffalo National Park Victoria, Publicity and Tourist Service, Victorian Railways Melbourne, 1941.


Books and Book Chapters


Journal Articles


Theses
