Governance through the COVID-19 Crisis and its Implications for Tourism- A Global and Australian Perspective in the Context of Contested Wicked Problems

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ABSTRACT

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic was the most "over governed" crisis tourism since World War II. This pandemic was unlike any which disrupted tourism prior to 2020. It was a transformational crisis which challenged many long-held paradigms about global tourism including issues as fundamental as the right to travel. On the above basis it fully qualified as a "wicked problem" as defined Rittle and Webber (1973) and Head (2022).

The extent of government imposed regulation and governance was central to the management of and response to COVID-19. All tiers of governments mandated measures, including border closures, area lockdowns, quarantine regimes, social distancing, pressure to accept vaccinations, mask wearing and testing requirements applied in most countries and regional territorial jurisdictions throughout most of 2020 and 2021. In some cases, notably China, restrictions remained until early 2023.

Tourism's recovery from most crisis events, involves the rebuilding of consumer and stakeholder confidence and a focus on marketing positive perceptions of destinations and enterprises. However, during the COVID-19 crisis, marketing and promotion of tourism recovery was hampered by a regulatory environment that restricted tourism activity in all sectors.

As a "wicked problem" for global tourism, COVID-19 incorporates many of Head's (2022) seven policy strategies to deal with Rittel and Webber's (1973) ten elements of wicked problems including authoritative imposition, micro management and science (health) based technocracy.

The Australian response to COVID-19 was significantly complicated by the fact nine governments (one Federal, six states and two territories) frequently had differing policy and regulatory approaches to COVID-19. These affected international and domestic travel to, from and within Australia. Australia's fragmented, federalist governance of a health based crisis exacerbated the restrictions imposed on both domestic and international Travel .

Keywords:

1. Pandemic governance, 2. COVID-19. 3. Global crisis management 4. Tourism restrictions 5. Tourism resilience.

Introduction

Since 2000, pandemics have disrupted tourism activity in many parts of the world. SARS (2003), H1N1 (Swine Flu 2009-2010) and Zika (2015-2017), Ebola (2016-2017) represent just a few of the pandemics which disrupted tourism globally or to specific destination regions. (Beirman 2022). Governments played an active role in managing these pandemics, with fulsome support of airlines and cruise operators in border screening, isolation of infected passengers and other preventative and mitigation measures. The only pre-COVID-19 pandemic event since 2000 in which border closures were applied was during the Ebola outbreak of 2016-2017. They were imposed on four West African countries , Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Ivory Coast (Avraham and Ketter 2016) . Generally, governments played a collaborative role in conjunction with the private sector to manage pandemics using measures such as screening at gateway points. They avoided the temptation to impose the extent of restrictive regulations so widely applied during 2020 and 2021 and during the first half of 2022 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic between January 2020 and December 2022 emerged as a unique crisis in terms of its impact on global tourism. Unlike previous pandemics the multiple regulatory responses to COVID-19 were predominantly initiated and implemented by governments. They resulted in massive disruption to all sectors of the global economy. Tourism was especially restricted on a global scale. The crisis and the resulting restrictions, most of which were imposed by all three tiers of government, encompassed every sector of the tourism, hospitality and events industries and applied to most countries. However, from the second half of 2022 most governments in the world reversed their goverance approaches to COVID-19 and removed restrictions applying to tourism.

Between January 2020 and June 2023 Worldometers (2023) stated that globally there were 690,778,989 cases of COVID-19 recorded by governments in the world and the death rate during that period was 6,893,705. Based on these figures which were provided by government authorities the mortality rate was just under 1%. The peak periods for infections were between January-March 2022 and the peak periods for deaths were December 2020, May 2021 an February 2022. The restrictions coupled with the introduction of vaccines during late 2020 contributed to a drop in the COVID-19 mortality rate from 2% in 2020 to just under 1% by 2023. Virtually every jurisdiction on earth recorded COVID-19 cases with the USA, India, France, Germany and Brazil as the top five countries in terms of cases and deaths. Between them accunted for just over 230 million cases and 2.74 million deaths or just over a third of the global total. It should be pointed out that government figures quite significantly erred on the side of being conservative. Many cases of COVID-19 in a large number of counties were unreported and it is highly likely that case numbers and deaths were considerably higher than government statistics indicated.

According to an assessment published by the UN World Tourism Organization (2023) COVID-19 and the associated restrictions was the overwhelming factor in massive declines in international tourism in 2020 and 2021 compared to the pre COVID levels of 2019. In 2020 Internatinal tourism mpvements were down 72% compared to 2019 and in 2021 it was

71% down, A recovery began in 2022 when tourism movements wer 33% down on 2019 levels.The UNWTO panel of experts predict that a full recovery to 2019 levels is likely by 2024 with international tourism numbers expected to reach 85%-90% of 2019 levels by the end of 2023.

Government imposed restrictions on tourism activity from early 2020-mid 2022 were based on the strategic paradigm that COVID-19 was best managed by elimination or suppression. This was most ruthlessly applied to the global cruise sector which was largely closed down between March 2020-early 2022 (Leggat & Franklin 2021)

From mid 2022 the strategy shifted to one of adopting an individual focussed mitigation strategy in response to an "endemic" health risk. This meant border closures, mandatory testing and vaccination requirements were largely abolished despite the fact that COVID-19 remained a significant medical risk.

In January 2023, the government of China, the country from which the first cases of COVID-19 were identified in late 2019, imposed some of the world's most stringent COVID -19 related restrictions on its citizens between January 2000 and January 2023.

The Chinese government decided to abolish these restrictions from 08 January 2023. Yet, between December 8, 2022 and January 12, 2023 China experienced a surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths. Official Chinese government figures indicate there were 60,000 COVID-19 related deaths during this period (Kleczkowski 2023). However, if one looks at the Worldometers site which has been tracking global trends for COVID-19 since 2020 sourced from government statistics by January 23, 2023 China is recorded as having just over 503,000 cases of COVID 2023 since 2020 and 5,212 deaths (Worldometers 2023). The opacity of Chinese government data made it difficult to accurately determine the real extent of this surge in COVID-19 cases in China which was conservatively estimated to be over 100 million cases. However, this was not reflected by official Chinese government statistics. The impact that this surge in COVID-19 cases and carriers of new strains of the virus will have outside China as Chinese citizens have been effectively released to travel within China and around the world is a matter of concern as it could potentially recactivate the intensity of COVID-19 .

Many of the regulatory measures imposed by governments on citizens and visitors between 2020-2022 were justified to the pubic as legitimate responses to advice and recommendations from health authorities and other sources of "expert opinion" (Beirman 2022). To a far lesser extent, some regulatory and restrictive responses were self-imposed by the tourism industry, especially by airlines. The extent and scope of government restriction on tourism during much of 2020 and 2021 called into question many of the paradigms which had dominated conceptual, marketing and operational approaches to tourism between 1970-2019.

Among the many longstanding pre-COVID paradigms which were challenged and undermined by the pandemic were:

- International and domestic cross border travel (subject to administrative security and legal limitations) was widely perceived as a right. During COVID-19 travel bans, border closeure and limitations imposed on passenger numbers negated that "right".
- Tourism was becoming increasingly democratic and affordable to a growing number of people in both developing countries and the developed world. The restrictions on travel movement and social distancing led to an significant increase in travel costs reflected in increased air fares which have applied throughout 2023 and are likely to extend far beyond that. The increasing cost of travel suggests that tourism is likely to be less democratic and limited to the financial elite as was the case prior to 1970.
- In order to maximise the economic benefit of tourism, countries around the world would, subject to security considerations, facilitate international and domestic inter-jurisdictional travel and minimise entry restrictions. During the COVID-19 crisis there were multiple restrictions imposed on tourism movements between countries and in many cases within countries. These measures negated this paradigm.
- Tourism was set on a path of long-term growth, apart from some short-term disruptions. (Beirman 2022) . During 2020-2022 there was a significant decline in global tourism movements and the forecasts from transnational tourism bodies suggest that the levels of 2019 will be reached by 2024 at the earliest. (UN World Tourism Organisation 2023)

This chapter focuses on how the governance of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic called into question many of the basic assumptions which had dominated tourism thinking, tourism operations and risk management between 1970-2019. The chapter also relates the impact of COVID-19 and the governance response and management of the pandemic in relation to tourism in the context of responding to a "wicked problem".

COVID-19 as a Wicked Problem for the Governance of Tourism

The governance of COVID-19 is analysed as a "wicked" problem as defined by Head (2022) and Rittel and Webber (1973) in which a governance issue is dominated by complexity, uncertainty and divergence.

Rittel and Webber define wicked problems as malignant and tricky problems which are inherently complex and not readily subject to policy planning. There are ten core elements which need to be understood when discussing a wicked problem and all of them are relevant to the governance of COVID-19.

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem. COVID-19 may be like other pandemics but it was never managed like previous pandemics and it is arguable that the zealous and restrictive governance of the COVID-19 pandemic caused far greater disruption to tourism than the virus itself.
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule. COVID-19 is a classic case of a crisis which has ebbed and surged, sometimes due to mutations of the virus and in some cases lockdowns and restrictions exacerbated rather the contained the pandemic.
3. Solutions for wicked problems are not true or false but good or bad. In this respect

governance of COVID-19 included a significant political element which took into account issues such as the economic, social and political impacts of regulatory regimes implemented by government authorities . The most compelling evidence to support this contention was the widespread policy reversal in dealing with COVID-19 during 2022 and 2023 when countries shifted from attempts to eliminate COVID-19 by restricting travel to removing all travel related restriction between mid 2022 to early 2023.

4. There is no immediate or ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem. In relation to COVID-19, regulations and governance in many jurisdictions underwent significant changes when it was found that a specific set of measures failed to resolve the pandemic's impact or spread. A significant example of this was the imposition of lockdowns for certain areas which were intended to limit the spread of COVID-19. However, many of these lockdowns led to negative impacts on economic activity, mental health of affected citizens which in turn generated a political backlash.

Every solution to a wicked problem is a one-shot operation and as such is significant. From late 2020 many countries experimented with "travel bubbles" as an interim measure to reboot travel between participating destination regions. In some cases they led to long term relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions but in others a surge in cases led to a re-imposition of travel restrictions.

5. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable set of potential solutions. A common characteristic of governance responses to COVID-19 was the divergence of responses ranging from authoritarian and punitive lockdowns to encouragement of self-help health measures and relatively free movement.
6. Every wicked problem is unique.
7. Every wicked problem can be considered to be symptom of another problem. Many of the governance measures imposed to address the COVID-19 pandemic led to a range of economic, social and even other medical and psychological problems. The restrictions imposed on tourism activity and operations challenged the viability of the tourism and hospitality industry, especially in developing countries which lacked a scoal welfare safety net.
8. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the problem's solution. Many of these discrepancies in relation to COVID-19 relate to the social, political and economic context in which governance is implemented. Many countries which have a high level of economic dependence on tourism tended to opt for a less restrictive approach to governance than those in which tourism was a small element in the economy.
9. The planner has no right to be wrong but most wicked problems fall outside the risks and crises which can be planned for.

It is noteworthy that the seven strategies for coping with "wicked problems" all came into play during the COVID-19 crisis (Head 2022). In the early phase of the emergence of COVID-19 beyond China, January – March 2020 most governments, with the exception of

China sought to avoid the problem. It was only after March 11, 2020 when the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 as a pandemic and cases were recorded in multiple countries that governments outside China treated the pandemic seriously and the full suite of government responses to a wicked problem came into play.   These included:

- Authoritative imposition
- Micro management
- Science (medical) based technocracy
- Incremental muddling through
- Collaborative dialogue
- Long term coping and prevention strategies. (Head 2022)

Head assesses the capacity of leaders to achieve long-term impacts in the management of wicked problems based on five key criteria.

1. The quality of leadership
2. The capacity for stakeholder collaboration
3. The availability of core skills and resources
4. The capacity to identify different and viable options
5. Overall governance capacity

Head (2022) points out that a pandemic with the impact of COVID-19 was not widely recognised as a key forecastable threat prior to 2020 by many of the major global economic organanisations such as the World Bank, International Monetrary Fund and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). These organisations tend to provide guidance to governments on contingency planning for key economic and trade security threats. Head suggests that this partially explains why COVID-19 emerged as a wicked problem for which most governments were under-prepared.

There is no doubt that globally, the governance of COVID-19, especially in 2020 and 2021 and the restrictions imposed on tourism were far more coercive and restrictive than the response to any previous pandemic since the beginning of the 20th century. Even the Spanish Flu outbreak 1918-1922 which infected over 500 million people and killed over 50 million people (a mortality rate ten times higher than COVID-19) was not subject to the intense and comprehensive range of restrictions which applied to COVID-19 in many countries. Notably, while there were widespread instances of quarantining suspected carriers of Spanish Flu, countries did not close their borders to travel. The initial phase of most governments responding to COVID-19 involved a strategy focussed on eliminating or suppressing the spread of the virus. In this context many governments chose the path of authoritative imposition justified by the advice of health authorities and "expert" opinion from the medical profession, especially virologists.

A contributing factor to the initial global spread of COVID-19 between January and March 2020 represented a case of **problem avoidance**, a core governance strategy in response to wicked problems. The World Health Organisation was very slow in identifying and declaring Covid-19 as a pandemic (WHO 2020).   The first cases had been identified in China in late

2019 and the first cases outside China were identified during January 2020 in countries as geographically diverse as Thailand, USA, UK, Italy, Iran and Australia. Yet it was not until March 11, 2020 that the WHO officially declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic despite the fact that by its own definition of a pandemic (a severe communicable disease in which numerous cases are present in more than one country). The WHO's declaration was a trigger for many governments around the world to enact a range of measures designed to either eliminate or prevent the introduction or spread of COVID-19 better known as the "Covid zero" approach or the "endemic approach" in which it was accepted that COVID-19 was present but that behavioural and hygiene measure by individuals could minimise the spread of the disease without responsible behaviour being imposed by law enforcers or government decree.

Many countries adopted variations of the "Covid Zero" approach to their governance strategy. These included China, USA, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, UK, most South West Pacific island nations and Israel, among many others. Governments of these countries employed the full suite of regulatory and administrative measures to minimise the introduction and spread of COVID within their jurisdictions.

These measures included:

1. Border closures for international outbound and inbound travel (subject to government approved exceptions). In some countries, notably in Australia and China, there were border closures between state/provincial/ prefectural crossing points.
2. Specified periods of mandatory quarantine for international and in some countries (including Australia) inter- jurisdictional travel between states/provinces/prefectures.
3. Limitations on passenger numbers travelling on airlines and other forms of transport.
4. Strict hygiene requirements which applied to all forms of accommodation.
5. Mandatory mask wearing in public places, medical and hospital facilities and on public transport, workplaces, retail stores schools and other educational institutions.
6. Adherence to social distancing requirements.
7. Capacity limitations for event and sporting venues, restaurants, cafes, retail outlets, office buildings.
8. Area specific lockdowns when and if a jurisdictional government believed there was a heightened threat of community spread of COVID-19.
9. PCR (Polymerase chain reaction) tests administered by a medical professional or RATS (self-administered rapid antigen tests) testing required for people if symptoms suspected or in the course of preparing to travel.
10. When vaccinations were introduced into jurisdictions from late 2020 it became a regulatory requirement for many citizens to show proof that they were vaccinated in order to retain or gain employment in a range of jobs and to engage in most forms of inter-jurisdictional travel . This especially applied to air travel for which airlines and government authorities required online or documented proof that passengers were vaccinated in accordance with the requirements of the point of departure the destination and any internedate stopover points of travel. The entire issue of mandatory vaccinations was and remains highly controversial, vehemently opposed

by many as people as a denial of human rights. Despite many governments having insisted that their citizens were vaccinated as a precondition for international travel more much of 2020, 2021 and 2022, by early 2023 this pre-condition was largely abolished.

11. Long term bans were imposed on sea cruising (Gurtner & King 2021) .

All of the above restrictions and regulations were determined and applied by governments at national, state/provincial and local level. For the tourism industry, the regulatory environment set by governments was utterly inimical to the operation of tourism and during most of 2020 and 2021 there was a precipitous decline in tourism activity across all sectors. Many hotels which were centres of luxury accommodation and venues for prestigious events were operating, if at all, as quarantine centres for unhappy and bored arrivals waiting out their mandatory quarantine period and awaiting the opportunity to determine whether they were free of the pandemic.

Many of these restrictions were applied from March 2020 and in some jurisdictions were applied well into 2022. Breaches were subject to a range of penalties including imprisonment. By the end of 2022 China was most notably one of the few countries which retained a COVID zero approach despite some unusually voluble expressions of public opposition.

However, by January 2023, despite a surge in COVID-19 cases, the Chinese government, allegedly in response to citizen protests, removed restrictions on both inbound and outbound tourism. The relaxation of restrictions globally from 2021 was a result of COVID-19 vaccination regimes being developed and implemented in most countries in the world and high percentages of populations adhering to government calls to accept vaccinations. This was despite the fact that the available vaccines did not guarantee immunity from transmission of COVID-19 or cure from the disease. However, it became clear that the mortality rate of COVID-19 which was over 2% in 2020 was less that 1% by the end of 2022(Worldometers 2023) and this was comsidered manageable..

In most developed economies including USA, Canada, UK, EU countries, Australia and New Zealand, governments introduced a range of compensatory policies and financial measures to cushion tourism enterprises from the financial losses they had incurred as a result of lockdowns, border closures and other restrictions which reduced business activity. These could come in the form of government grants, tax reductions, subsidies and other measures.In Australia the "job keeper" policy of 2020-21 involved the federal government actually paying employers a set weekly figure to retain the jobs of employees whose job security was compromised due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This assistance applied to all sectors of the economy but was especially significant in maintaining many jobs in tourism which was the most vulnerable sector of the economy to COVID-19. Although well intentioned ,these measures did not fully compensate tourism businesses from pandemic related losses but it enabled many jobs being saved when the measures were applied. Cruising was notably one sector in which there was minimal targeted compensation for the sector. (CLIA 2023) .

A key global issue relates to the fact that tourism is more likely to be a dominant part of the economy in developing countries than in developed economies. As Neupane (2021) points out in his research on the impact of COVID-19 on Nepal, the country's tourism industry virtually shut down during much of 2020 and 2021 because the government (in common with many developing countries) lacked funds to support tourism businesses and their employees. The economic and social impact of COVID-19 on tourism dependent economies in the Caribbean, SW Pacific, Africa, SE Asia was especially severe as most of governments in developing countries lacked the financial resources to provide any form of compensation to tourism business and tourism emplyees affected by the restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19.

In each country there were differences in the application of COVID -19 regulations. This chapter's case study focuses on Australia . In many respects Australia's approach to the governance of the COVID-19 was a microcosm of governance policies practices seen around the world. Key elements of global approaches, most notably the transition from an authoritarian approach to governance based on a perceived need to prevent the transmission and spread of COVD-19, to the relaxation of those restrictions during 2021 were both Australian and global trends.

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated a vast quantity of research by tourism academics, consultants and travel industry associations. This chapter will highlight a few key examples. Sigala appropriately describes the COVID-19 pandemic as imposing a "transformational impact" on tourism consumers and stakeholders (Sigala 2020). Sigala observes that COVID-19 has led moves to re-image and re-set tourism. In fact the impacts of the crisis have forced researchers to resist and contradict institutional logic, systems and assumptions. One shared observation by many researchers was to highlight the high extent of government intervention in all economic activity but especially tourism activity. During much of 2020 and 2021 the steep decline in tourism activity was dominated by the limitations set by government regulations.

The widespread closure of international borders in many countries meant that destination marketing boards were limited to marketing their destinations to a domestic market. This practice was somewhat counter-intuitive to the primary role of national DMOs (destination marketing organisations) which imvolved marketing their destination to the world. However, many government authorities went much further than border closures. National, state/ provincial and local governments imposed lockdowns on specific areas, essentially confining citizens to their own homes or immediate neighbourhoods. In some cases this led to tourism marketing which focussed on aspirational tourism as opposed to actual tourism.

Social distancing and mask wearing requirements imposed by government authorities was accompanied by set limits in the customer capacity in cafes, restaurants and events, hampering their ability to operate in an economically sustainable manner.

One of the greatest challenges for governments was the need to establish a sense of legitimacy for the restrictive and often punitive measures they imposed on their citizens in response to COVID-19. This meant that governments needed to build a reservoir of trust and support from local residents (their electoral constituents) to ensure that the community would be compliant with the regulations imposed. Regulations needed to be deemed as appropriate, timely, demonstrating executive ability, a commitment to sutainability, transparent and engaging the full cooperation of stakeholders . As the research of Wong and Lai (2021) on the heavily tourism dependant economy of Macau indicated, there was a significant preparedness for Macau's citizens to accept regulations which were clearly harmful for tourism business in the short-term but were seen as protecting the long-term health, security and wellbeing of the local community.

In Macau, the approach to the governance of its response to COVID-19 came in the form of a Public Private Partnership involving intense collaboration between the government and private enterprise stakeholders which had defined roles and were effectively partners with the government in balancing the needs to restore tourism without compromising the health of the community (Wan, Li, Chun-Lau, Dioko 2022). As a small city state, heavily dependent on tourism government and tourism officials in Macau had a strong sense of mutual understanding which enabled them to ride out the COVID-19 tourism slump and use the opportunity to plan for a more sustainable future.

Robina et al focussed (Robina-Ramirez, Sanchez, Jiminez-Narango 2022) their research on another tourism dependent economy in the Sierra de Gata region of Southwest Spain. Spain's ecomomy is one of the most tourism reliant in Europe, accounting for 14% pf Spain's GDP and the Sierra de Gato region is especially dependent on eco-tourism. COVID-19 led to a significant drop in both domestic and international tourism visitation to the region. It was critical from a governance perspective to establish a set of cooperative and collaborative measures to use the period pf COVID-19 restrictions to prepare the region to be a model sustainable destination when tourism recovered.

In the Sierra de Gato region there was a great deal of cooperation between tourism businesses from all sectors and a more empowered local community in building a sustainable tourism infrastructure which would facilitate a sutaianable tourism recovery. This cooperation included a strong emphasis on healthy practices and tourism safety. It was coordinated by the regional tourism authority in close association with the regional and national government.

Governance was recognised as a core element in tourism management and post-COVID-19 recovery (Vargas 2020). Vargas' discussion of tourism governance during the COVID-19 pandemic discussed the complications the tourism industry ecosystem. Central to effective governance was ensuring the inclusiveness of all key stakeholders. The tourism industry has long been characterised as fragmented and this hampers its ability to lobby governments as effectively as its economic contribution would suggest. Although COVID-19 affected every sector and nearly every business in the global tourism industry, it remained a challenge to ensure that the tourism industry worked as an alliance in its approach to government. A number of industry sectors sought government financial support which was sector specfic

rather than as part of a package for the entire tourism industry. Airlines tended to attract more government support than other sectors of tourism. Vargas pointed out that in many cases during the COVID-10 crisis, Destination Management Organisations took on the role of coordinating a tourism industry response to government. In many respects this was a natural role for DMO most of which are funded an operate as an arm of government and as marketers of a destination, they work closely with all sectors of the industry in the interests of the destination and provide a natural link to government.

Tourism has been a growing element of the South African economy since the 1990s and the country's visitor economy was hard-hit by the COVID-19 (Rogerson & Rogerson 2020). South Africa is a developed economy in many respects but with a large part of its population living in poverty. Endemic government corruption has hampered the level of government suppport for tourism during the pandemic years. Of the 500,000 tourism related enterprises over 90% of them are small or micro businesses and all were affected by the chaotic and rapidly changing government policies in response to the pandemic. Unlike fully developed economies which offered significant government financial assistance to businesses affected by COVID-19 regulations the South African could only support what it deemed as the most "valued sectors".

One of the great challenges for government in dealing with a crisis on the global scale of COVID-19 is the extent to which a government can protect the the viability of key sectors of the economy. As the Australian case study shows, a developed economy has access to resources which can provide material support to those sectors which it values and this approach enabled many Australian tourism businesses to survive (Neupane 2021), However developing economies rarely have such options and as Neupane discussed in relation to Nepal in which government financial support was unavailable.

Neupane discusses governance as a process of decision making related to the country's traditions and instititions. In order for governance to be legitimate the process should be transparent, accountable to the local citizens, efficient, ethical and participatory. In Nepal, when the tourism industry was shut down between 2020-2022, tourism businesses and their employees sought to engage in alternative entreprises. This occurred in many developing countries in which tourism entered into state of hibernation. Neupane refers to Adapative Co-Management (ACM) in which the management of tourism businesses and destinations adapt their marketing and management strategies to be in synch with government responses to the pandemic crisis. Nepal, The tourism ministaries and industry leaders in the Philippines and Nepal used the pandemic downturn to plan major enhancements to the sustainability of their destinations and maximising the dispersal of tourists as a natural means of maintaining social distance when tourists returned, while urging their governments to work in accordance with worldwide governance indcators:

1. Clear voice direction and accountability
2. Political stability an minimal violence
3. Government being reliable and effective
4. Regulatory quality

5. Rule of law and mimimal corruption

One of the greatest challenges for governance of tourism during the COVID-19 crisis is the the advancement of resilience during the height of the crisis and tourism recovery as the danger ebbs. (Sharma, Thomas, Paul 2021) examined 37 academic papers referring to governance of the COVID-10 crisis. In essence resilience in response to COVID-19 centred on tourism which focussed on sustainability and attention to protective measures to protect health. Governments in countries with the financial means to do so were encouraged to assist their tourism industry to survive the restrictive elements of governance and re-develop their business models in a manner which would minimise risk.

It is noteworthy that the UN World Tourism Organisation. The World Travel and Tourism Council and Pacific Asia Travel Assciation as the three major global tourism associations all positioned sustainability as central to a post-COVID recovery (UNWTO 2023, WTTC 2023, PATA 2023). The ultimate linkage between governments and the global tourism industry in relation to COVID-19 occurred on May, 4th, 2022 when the UN General Assembly devoted an entire day to discuss the recovery of tourism. This meeting marked the "coming of age" for recognition of tourism as a vital global concern for all governments.

The research of Toanogolo et al (Toanoglu, Chelemi & Valeri, 2022) examined perceptions of the COVID-19 crisis in twelve countries, spanning four continents. They observed that the nature of media coverage and the governance responses to COVID-19 were the two principal determinants of risk perception. In non-democratic countries media and government tend to be far more mutually supportive than in democratic countres with a relatively free press.

According to the much of the academic literature it is clear that the COVID-19 crisis forced the tourism industry and government to engage and collaborate with each to a far greater extent and more broadly than any recent tourism crisis. In developed countries this collaboration maintained the survival of many tourism businesses although it as a wake up call to transfom their business models. In developing countries tourism activity was largely suspended bt at goverbace level it presented an opportunity to plan for a more sutainable future.

The Fractured Responses of Australian Governments to COVID-19 2020-2022.

Although Australia is a single country it's constitution recognises the sovereignty of nine governments , one federal, six states and two territories. Since Australia became a Federation in 1901, it was only during the COVID-19 crisis the Australian state and territory goverments exercise their constitutional right to close their borders and enact a range of significant restrictions on movement between Australian states.

Australia is a particularly compelling example of tourism policy making in response to a wicked problem. As an island continent, Australia has always sought to isolate itself from malign imports of all sorts ranging from insect pests to illicit drugs and people importing pandemics. However, over a number of years the effective marketing work of Tourism

Australia led to Australia attracting a growing number of international tourists (9.2 million arrivals in 2019) (Tourism Australia 2020). In 2019 international arrivals contributed AUD$ 45 billion to the Australian economy.

International visitors stayed longer in Australia and spent more per capita than in any country in the world. This is dictated geographically to a large extent because Australia is a final destination for the majority of international travellers rather that a stopover or transit destination. Australians were also significant outbound travellers with over 11 million Australians travelling internationally in 2019 spending about AUD$68 billion. Australian domestic travellers contributed AUD$120 billion to the Australian tourism industry (Beirman 2022).

The first identified case of COVID-19 in Australia was recorded on January 25, 2020. Between January and March 2020 there was a significant growth in the number of cases globally including Australia. In February and March 2020 the Australian government increased the level of restrictions applying to traveller ariving from China and other countries with substantial numbers of COVID-19 cases. The Australian government's basic approach to COVID-19 involved an attempt to eliminate the pandemic during 2020 and 2021 which shifted to the endemic approach of minimising the danger to health and life posed by the virus from late 2021 to 2023.

In March 2020 the burgeoning two-way tourism traffic between Australia and the rest of the world came to a grinding halt. Australia's government travel advisories from March, 25, 2020 indicated that apart from Australia, Australian citizens were subject to a travel ban (as opposed to a travel advisory) on outbound international travel which applied to every country on earth. The only exceptions to this were travellers who had government approval to travel internationally for official business or compassionate grounds. In addition to the restrictions imposed on air travel Australian federal amd most state governments essentially banned cruising from March 2020-April 2022 (Leggat & Franklin 2021)

The imposition by Australia's federal government of a global travel ban was an unprecedented response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact no previous global crisis had elicited such a response from any Australian government. Even during World War II, Australians were able to travel to a small number of countries.

The outbound travel bans were also accompanied by severe restrictions on inbound travel and caps on the number of passengers which could be carried on international airlines to and from Australia which were so restrictive and financially unsustainable that most international carriers ceased servicing Australia between March 2020 and November 2021. Australian citizens and permanant residents were permitted to enter Australian from overseas but in very limited numbers between March 2020-November 2021 and were subject to mandatory quarantine on arrival.

These measures effectively stranded many thousands of Australian citizens and permanent residents overseas awaiting the restricted number of airline seats on the diminishing number of international airlines which continued to service Australia. Unless they had been granted a

government exemption, non-Australian citizens were denied entry into Australia. In July 2020 the Australian government imposed a cap of 4,000 people a week on returning travellers as well as specific caps for each international airport. International airlines travelling to or from Australia were restricted to a a financially unsustainable maximum of 40 passengers. These restrictions remained in place until November 2021 (Australian Human Rights Commission 2021).

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organisation officially declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Two days later , on 13 March 2020 the Australian government held its inaugural meeting of the National Cabinet which had been established by the Australian federal government to coordinate a national response to COVID-19. (Australian Parliament 2023) The national cabinet included the Prime Minister of Australia's Federal government, the Premiers of Australia's six states, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia and the Chief Ministers of Australia's territories The Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The active participants in national cabinet meetings would also include senior health officials of the respective federal, state and territory governments.

Under the terms of Australia's constitution each of these nine governments had the power to impose health related regulations within their respective jurisdictions. In essence this also meant that a state or territory government was entitled to set the terms and permit or ban access of people from outside their jurisdictions.   The issue of state and territory border access, associated quarantine requirements and testing requirements would become a complex and divisive issue at national cabinet meetings during most of 2020 and 2021. Australian states and territories had the right to open and close their borders, set quarantine rules, impose lockdowns, set social distance and mask wearing requirements on their citizens. Some Australian states set very restrictive rules, notably Western Australia which closed its border until February 2022, Queensland which intermittently imposed severe restrictions on the entry of non-Queenslanders and Victoria where the Premier locked down the state capital Melbourne on five occasions between March 31 2020- October 21, 2021 for a total 263 days.

From a tourism perspective the governance response to COVID-19 presented a situation in which tourism, events and hospitality was barely viable dring most of 2020 and 2021. Tourism Australia ran regular online briefing sessions during 2020 and 2021 which featured tourism indusry leaders, the Prime Minister the tourism minister and health minister and many senior government officials (Tourism Australia 2023). However, much of this communication came in the form of a briefing as opposed to a dialogue and collaboration was barely visible. The author, is a member of the Consular Consulting group, a predominantly travel industry advisory group to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which focuses on travel advisories and tourism safety. The meetings held in 2020 and 2021 were far more a case of the government briefing the group than DFAT actively canvassing industry views (Beirman 2021). Tourism Australia's international promotion of destination Australia in 2020 and 2021 was limited to promoting Australia as an aspirational destination whe restrictions ended. During those years it did encourage Australian to travel domestically

but eben this was hampered by interstate border closures and quarantine requirements which applied to some Australian states. It was not until 2022 that Tourism Australia and state tourism boards could resume serious destination marketing at the international and inter-state level (Bruno, Davis. Stop 2022).

The Australian government was well aware of the severe impact its COVID-19 governance measures had on tourism especially its severe economic impact (Phan, Dwyer, Ngo, Su 2021) . Former Prime Minister, Scott Morrison was a former Managing Director of Tourism Australia and the current Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese was s shardow niister for tourism when the Labor Party was in opposition. Tourism was arguably the most affected sector of the Australian economy. The Australian government's Job Keeper program, launched in March 2000 was introduced to provide employers with the means to pay staff they wished to retain a living wage while business activity experienced a COVID-19 downturn. The initial program provided eligible recipients support until until March 28 2021.Concurrently the Australian government introduced a job seeker program which enabled recipients to have suffcient funds to seek employment in alternative sectors of the economy less affected by the pandemic. The Job Keeper program did enable many businesses to survive the worst period of the pandemic but many tourism industry staff left the industry which was to create a new set of staff shortage problems when tourism bounced back during 2022.

In addition to the Job seeker and job keeper programs the Australian federal , state and territory governments provided a wide range financial support packages to various sectors of the tourism industry ranging from outright grants to travel agents via the Australian Federation of Travel Agents through to tax breaks and other forms of financial support for airlines, airports and small tourism and hospitality businesses.

The beginning of a recovery in Australian tourism coincided with the introduction of COVID-19 vaccinations in February 2021. Federal and state governments provided free vaccines to Australian in the hope that the vaccinations would increase immunity against COVID-19 and even though the vaccinations used did not actually prevent people being infected they did reduce the severity of the disease in most cases.

In August 2021(Tourism Australia 2023) the national cabinet agreed to the release of a national plan to transition Australia's national response to COVID-19. Essentially the plan relied on high rates of vaccination as a safety valve to reduce and lift restrictions. The target for a substantive lifting of restrictions was to ensure that 80% of the Australian population had at least two vaccination and ideally boosters (Australian government National Plan 2021). The vaccination program resisted by many on human rights grounds, did enable Australian governments to alter their approach to COVID-19 restrictions. By November 2021 international travel was resumed on a limited basis to destinations deemed COVID safe. From 07 February 2022 international and domestic travel was fully available for vaccinated travellers. By July 6th, 2022 the conditions and restrictions applying to international and domestic travel were abolished and had returned to the pre-pandemic conditions.

Australia's path toward's the resumption of travel should not be thought of as a win against the pandemic. In fact the rate of infections has skyrocketed since the vaccinations regime was introduced. By the end of January 2023, 11,295,466 Australians were recorded as having been infected with COVID-19 and 18,615 had died from the disease (Worldometers 2023). This ranked Australia 14th in the world for the number of COVID infections although the mortality rate of COVID-19 on Australia was 0.16% (far lower than standard influenza). This begs the question that many scholars pose. Did Australian governments overreact to COVID-19 ? Overwhelmingly the evidence suggests that the answer is in the affirmative.

Since mid 2022 domestic and international tourism from, to from and within Australia has undergone a strong resurgence (Bruno, Davis, Step 2022). However while Australians are travelling widely domestically international tourism only began to free up between mid 2022 and early 2023. Complicating Australia's inbound tourism recovery has been problems in restring the Chinese inbound maket which in 2019 was Australia's largest inbound tourism market. The barriers to a resurgence of Chinese visitation to Australia have been dominated by the axing, in January 2023 by the Chinese government of Australia as an approved destination for Chinese groups. The Australian government's insistence that Chinese arrivals to Australia show evidence of recent COVID-19 testing and vaccinations were resented by the Chinese government which sought to impose heavy diplomatic on many countries in the Asia Pacific to allow Chinese unrestricted tourism access to favoured destinations. The strained political relations between Australia and China are proving a barrier to a post-COVID tourism recovery between Australia and China.

While Tourism Australia is actively promoting alternative source markets to China it takes both time and requires supply side infrastructure to build demand for new tourism source markets. The restoration of airline links between Australia and the rest of the world has been a challenge as all international carriers face the challenge of re-hiring and training new staff and re-negotiating bilateral airline agreements.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic and the response to it fulfils the criteria of a contested wicked problem. From a tourism industry perspective the regulatory envirpnment in response to COVID-19 imposed by governments at national, provincial and local level essentially made the operation of tourism hospitality and event services difficult at best and impossible at worst.

It is clear that from both an Australian and global perspective, governance or the tyranny of COVID-19 crisis management by governments was the prime factor which led to a massive decline in global tourism during 2020, 2021 and to a lesser extent in 2022.

Many of the paradigms which had dominated tourism policy making and thinking up until the end of 2019 were debunked and overturned by governance responses to COVID-19. There were many of those paradigms (Beirman 2022) but in this chapter the focus has been on four:

1. The right to travel

2. The economic democratisation of tourism
3. Governments as facilitators of tourism movement within and between countries.
4. Tourism enjoying regular year on year growth.

It is clear that these three paradigms were severely compromised by the governance measures imposed during the COVID-19 crisis. As travel and tourism companies recover from the debts imposed on them by COVID related restrictions between 2020-2022 it is likely that the cost of travel including air fares, hotel rates and land transport is set to be far higher than it was before the pandemic.

Although tourism is experiencing global recovery during 2023 and beyond, the COVID-19 crisis demonstrated the real fragility of tourism and the fact that governance measures are capable of great damage to the business of tourism.

COVID-19 has been a transformational crisis for tourism at many levels and has required a major re-think about tourism management, tourism operations and tourism's relationship with government. Most significantly it has led researchers and policy planners to review the fundamental paradigms which governed strategic approaches to tourism management with greater attention to risk and crisis management.

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