

Proposed new Visitor Centre for Cradle Mountain



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**Submission to the Parliamentary
Standing Committee on Public Works**

25th Oct 2017

Department of Primary Industries,
Parks Water and Environment

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1.0 Summary

This submission seeks approval from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for the development of the first stage of a new Gateway Precinct for Cradle Mountain which includes a new Visitor Centre.

Cradle Mountain is a significant iconic tourist destination for Tasmania. A new Visitor Centre is a critical tourism project for the site not only providing much needed, improved visitor services but also as a catalyst to the promotion of future commercial development in the area.

IMAGE

Visualisation of the Cradle Village Precinct and Visitor Centre Forecourt produced as part of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Development Application 2017



The need for a new Visitor Centre has long been established with recommendations dating back to 2003 (The Cradle Mountain Development Plan, Inspiring Place). Since this time the existing Visitor Centre has had little development and has increasingly struggled to cope with visitor demands.

The new Visitor Centre will provide an improved visitor experience not only by physically accommodating growing visitor numbers to one of Tasmania's most visited natural wilderness destinations but also by providing a positive emotional experience with the site, connecting the visitor to the landscape and suitably interpreting the values of the WHA.

The design team have worked collaboratively with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Services (PWS) who are the land managers of the site as well as under the guidance of a multiple-stakeholder, cross government steering committee to develop a design that not only fulfils PWS's functional requirements but also responds to public expectations of a Visitor Centre for a site of World Heritage significance.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 BACKGROUND

Cradle Mountain is located in the Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park and is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). The Park and Cradle Mountain in particular enjoys an international reputation and is a major tourism destination.

The park caters for a variety of experiences including short, medium and long walks, sightseeing, canyoning, kayaking, camping and visitor accommodation ranging from self contained through to catered luxury.

Cradle Mountain is the iconic gateway to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and a key site in Tasmania's brand as a global destination for nature based tourism. The past several years has seen visitor growth to Cradle Mountain in the order of 16% annually and this level of visitation is putting significant pressure on existing facilities and services.

The latest Tourism Visitor Survey published by Tourism Tasmania (Tasmanian Visitors Survey: July 2000 - June 2017) indicates that Cradle Mountain is the most visited 'natural' tourist destination in Tasmania and the sixth most visited overall destination after Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Richmond and Port Arthur.

A number of studies (refer to Section 3) have been undertaken to examine the potential of Cradle Mountain as a tourism destination the most recent of which was the 2016 Cradle Mountain Master Plan (CMMP2016).

The CMMP2016 was undertaken to plan for the delivery of visitor facilities to complement Cradle Mountain's status, manage future visitor numbers to Cradle Mountain, and generate new and repeat visitors.

The Master Plan identified **The Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct (including a new Visitor Centre)** as a key project as part of a tourism strategy for the Cradle Mountain area.

The Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Project is being managed by the Tasmanian Government as a whole of Government project, led by the Office of the Coordinator General and the Parks and Wildlife Service. A steering committee overseeing the project includes the following organisations:

- ▷ Cradle Coast Authority (CCA)
- ▷ Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS)
- ▷ Office of the Coordinator-General
- ▷ National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Committee
- ▷ Tourism Tasmania (TT)
- ▷ Infrastructure Tasmania
- ▷ Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT)
- ▷ Kentish Council

2.2 CRADLE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY PRECINCT

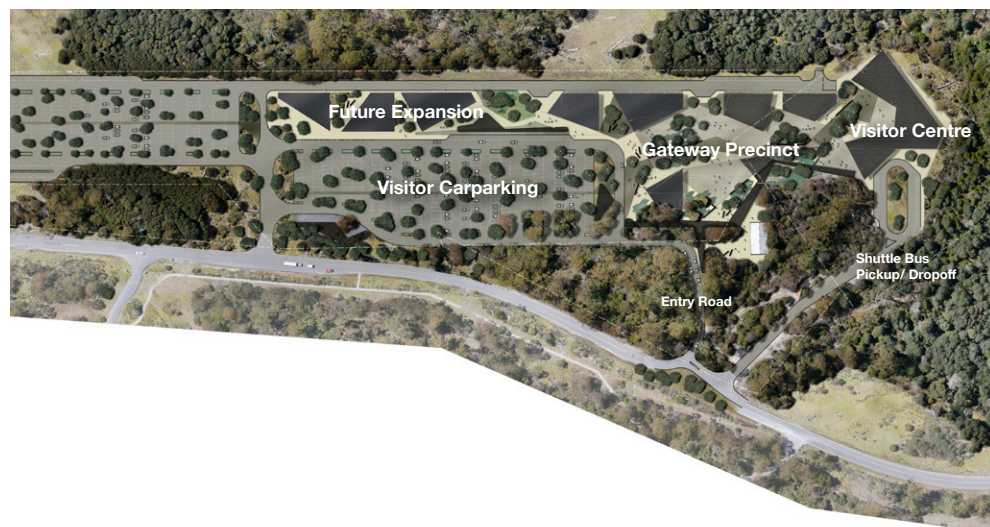
The Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Project will deliver a new Visitor Centre and arrival experience with an alpine village feel that provides a gathering space for the community and visitors. The Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct is located outside the national park on the old airstrip where the existing visitor/ transit centre and a café is located. This new precinct will provide:

- ▷ Visitor information on transport, walks and activities in the World Heritage Area;
- ▷ Ticketing for entry into the National Park,
- ▷ Transport departure zone for the National Park,
- ▷ Interpretive displays and services,
- ▷ Visitor amenities, food and beverages,
- ▷ Community gathering space,
- ▷ Retail related to wilderness activities, groceries, souvenirs and fuel, and
- ▷ Civil works including car parking and site services.

Some of the proposed commercial facilities will be staged and subject to private sector investment.

SITE PLAN

Site Plan developed as part of the Cradle Gateway Precinct Planning Application (2017)



The 2016 Cradle Mountain Master Plan (CMMP2016) anticipated that the project will directly generate \$29 million of additional economic activity in the region each year and create around 140 long-term jobs in the Cradle Mountain area. The entire region is expected to benefit in terms of job creation, predominantly in construction, hospitality, services and retail.

The establishment of a world-leading World Heritage Area visitor experience at Cradle Mountain will further strengthen Tasmania's reputation as a global destination for nature-based tourism.



PHOTOS

Above: Aerial photo of the proposed site for the Gateway Precinct. The visitor centre is proposed for the end of the old run-way on the upper right-hand side of the image.

Below: Photo of the proposed site for the Visitor Centre with views to Cradle Mountain



2.3 KEY PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The key project objectives as outlined in the Cradle Mountain Master Plan (CMMP2016) of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct are to:

- ▷ Provide new world class visitor facilities that forms a gateway and appropriately introduces visitors to the World Heritage Area.
- ▷ Through architectural design, landscape and interpretation present the World Heritage Area in a way that fosters a deep appreciation of the site
- ▷ Encourage and facilitate increased future visitation to the World Heritage Area

2.4 SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Planning Approval for the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Project was granted by the Kentish Council in July 2017. The current scope has been defined to work within the constraints of available funding announced by the Tasmanian State Government, a budget estimate for which is included in Section 5.2 of this report.

Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Project proposes a 'Village' style development which has been identified as the preferred development model for the site. A 'village' or 'community of smaller support structures' enables flexibility and provides the "*ability to grow with increased visitation numbers and in partnership with private investors.*" (p. 18-21, The Visitor Experience Master Plan 2016, Inspired by Marketing).

The Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct builds on the village concept providing a new Visitor Services Centre, tourism operator front desks, a general store, a tavern, events stage and kiosk as well as generous landscape and civil infrastructure to support and catalyse appropriate future development on the site in order to:

- ▷ Provide visitors with a world class introduction to the World Heritage Area.
- ▷ Provide a sequence of built and unbuilt spaces that heighten the sense of arrival and departure into the World Heritage Area.
- ▷ Provide amenities and services that reflect the outstanding natural values and significance of this Wilderness Area, and are sufficient to adequately and appropriately accommodate future visitor projections.
- ▷ Provide and cater for new and existing tourism experiences that engage with a broad and expanding range of visitor groups.
- ▷ Provide improved management of visitor impact and safety at the gateway to the World Heritage Area.

The Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Master Plan (Inspired by Marking, 2017) notes:

"The Visitor Arrival experience is to be both relocated and re-imagined. A completely new construction, it will be relocated south of the current centre, at the end of the existing runway site (outside the national park boundary) to embrace stunning Cradle Mountain and Wilderness Views. This re-imagined Gateway Precinct Village would offer an alpine village feel and construction, acting as a visitor and community

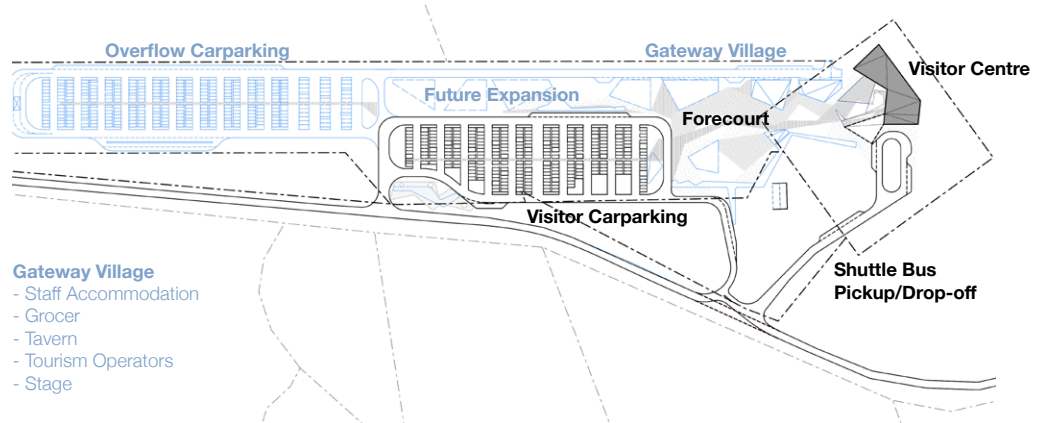
gathering space. This single and simple collection of thoughtfully designed buildings will be crafted from materials that create and communicate a strong connection to the landscape. The village will provide a true sense of arrival for visitors, through its positioning in the landscape and entry sequence. The Gateway will welcome new visitors to the Park, and create anticipation for the next stage of their journey into this extraordinary place. The considered choice of construction materials will create a feeling of permanence and 'rightness' for the building within its location, as if it had been sculpted from the rock beneath it or woven in place from the surrounding trees... The Village will feature a central courtyard and several event spaces. This space will be flexible and multifunctional, with an impressive, central open fire creating a focal point for a range of community gatherings and events. The Courtyard will host everything from plays and performances to storytelling and singing, special events, concerts or a simple gathering of a few friends, strumming a guitar by the fire over a glass of mulled wine and a shared plate of tasty Tasmanian delicacies." (p. 19-21, Visitor Experience Master Plan)

The proposed scope of this project is to implement a first stage of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Project. The key components of this work are:

- ▷ A new Visitor Centre;
- ▷ A new Public Forecourt for gatherings and events;
- ▷ Visitor Car-Parking;
- ▷ Re-configured roadworks to bring visitors into the site; and
- ▷ Site Services & Infrastructure.

PLAN

Site Plan of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct indicating the scope of the current project (shown in black) and proposed future work (shown in blue)



This work has been designed with future expansion in mind. Future development is envisaged to include a commercial wing of the Visitor Centre, Covered Walkways, Event Stage, BBQ Facilities, Commercial Tenancies, Tourism Operator Facilities and Overflow Car-Parking and will be funded by both public and private investment.

It is envisaged that the current work will be a catalyst for further commercial development of the rest of the village precinct.

3.0 Need for the Development

The *Cradle Tourism Development Plan, 2003* (CTDP) was commissioned by the Kentish Council, Cradle Coast Authority and the Department of Tourism Parks Heritage and the Arts. The CTDP identified the critical planning issues to be resolved and the strategies for implementing a number of key initiatives, of which the development of a new village based on the existing airstrip site on Cradle Mountain Road was a major recommendation.

In 2007 the *Report for Cradle Village Development Planning Study* (GHD) noted that “...the construction of a new visitor centre and conceptual layouts for the village development is considered to be fundamental in achieving the successful implementation of the CTDP.”

The same report noted that the existing facilities were already at capacity during peak times with visitor numbers to the site projected to rise in the future. As outlined below, visitor numbers to the site have actually outgrown expectations whilst there has been no significant development of tourism infrastructure. The current Visitor Centre is now completely unable to cope with current demand.

3.1 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

The 2016 Cradle Mountain Master Plan is the most current in a series of plans and reports for Cradle Mountain, all of which build on the findings of previous reports. A summary of each of the key documents is noted below:

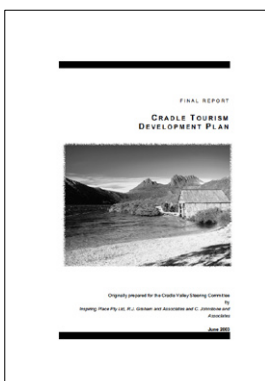
3.1.1 Cradle Tourism Development Plan (2003)

Authors: Inspiring Place Pty Ltd, R.J. Graham and Associates and C. Johnstone and Associates, 2003

The Cradle Tourism Development Plan states that ‘a comprehensive framework for tourism and infrastructure is necessary to ensure that the conservation aims of the WWHAMP (1999) are met, given the increasing number of visitors’ (p. iii) to the Cradle Valley site. The Cradle Tourism Development Plan provides an overarching tourism strategy for inside and outside the TWWHA to address and effectively cater for the increased visitor numbers to the site. Historically, due to different planning controls, development has occurred in isolation without a consistent focus or approach. The Cradle Tourism Development Plan objectives are to:

- ▷ Articulate a vision for visitor experience and appreciation of Cradle Mountain the surrounding TWWHA
- ▷ Define the infrastructure required to deliver the vision for Cradle Valley over the coming years
- ▷ The Cradle Tourism Development Plan raised two critical issue regarding the planning of tourism infrastructure. These were:
 - Visitor numbers (were) increasing without proportional increase in the number of overnight stays, potentially as a result of a lack of activities to encourage longer stays, and

“visitors should know they have arrived and are clear about where they are going and how they get there... As the visitor travels to and through the area, the complex and many layered landscape is revealed...Returning them (the visitor) to a centre of activity that sets a standard for integration with nature and the expression of culture”
p. v, *Cradle Mountain Tourism Development Plan*



- The limited development of opportunities to link nature with other forms of visitor/tourism activity (need to develop a stronger nexus between the natural experience and commercial forms of tourism)

The issues clearly identified the need for a long term vision and planning framework for the Cradle Valley as a tourism destination to support and build on the experience of visiting Cradle Mountain.

The Cradle Tourism Development Plan provides a vision statement, outlining the key principles required for developing the visitor experience with the Cradle Valley. These principles include:

- ▷ Quality Visitor Experiences
- ▷ Efficient, effective, flexible and safe visitor access
- ▷ A well design built environment
- ▷ Best practice infrastructure

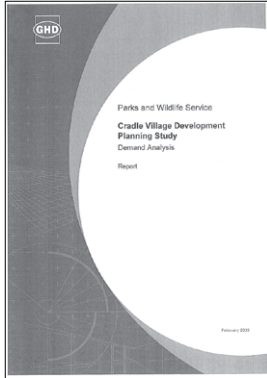
It goes further to articulate the desired visitor experience, stating that *“visitors should know they have arrived and are clear about where they are going and how they get there...As the visitor travels to and through the area, the complex and many layered landscape is revealed...Returning them (the visitor) to a centre of activity that sets a standard for integration with nature and the expression of culture”* (p. v)

The Cradle Tourism Development Plan (p. v) recommends the development of:

- ▷ A Cradle Mountain Village on the current airstrip as the main arrival point for visitors to Cradle Mt and the surrounding TWWHA and where there will be a hub of infrastructure, facilities and services.
- ▷ A Cradle Mountain Village based on the premise of four precincts – Interpretation and Experience, Commercial Services, Future Growth and Buffer and Public Utilities and Infrastructure
- ▷ A new TWWHA visitor centre as the focus of the proposed new Cradle Mountain Village on the Crown quarry site at the southern end of the airstrip

The Cradle Tourism Development Plan reiterates that for the site to meet the demand of the increased visitors a ‘world class visitor centre’ (p. 77) is required and that best option to achieve this outcome would be the creation of a new Visitor Centre within the proposed village on the crown quarry site. The Cradle Mountain Tourism Development Plan concludes in stating that while other sites and refurbishment options may be available, none have the combined advantages and tie wholly into the overarching objectives set out in the Plan.

The proposed Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct (including a new Visitor Centre) heavily references the Cradle Mountain Tourism Development Plan with regard to location of services and takes cues from the visitor experience statement, the proposed design incorporating a clear and simple circulation strategy as well as strategically revealing the landscape to aid circulation and heighten encounter.



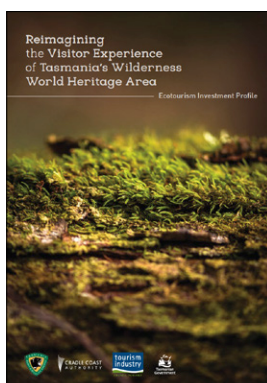
3.1.2 Report for Cradle Village Development Planning Study - Demands Analysis (2009)

Authors: GHD, 2009

The Demand Analysis was conducted to support the business case for new Village development within the Cradle Valley service zone on the airstrip site. The key findings of the analysis include:

- ▷ An increase of visitor demand at Cradle Valley, even when assessed under a conservative scenario
- ▷ Coupled with the existing inadequacies with the services and infrastructure, the analysis indicates that decisions will have to be made into the very near future to provide a well-planned response to future development opportunities
- ▷ The two main issues that will impact the sustainability of tourism at Cradle Valley into the future are:
 - The existing infrastructure is at capacity, particularly during the summer and off peak periods
 - There is a lack of service and activities to improve the visitor experience and encourage longer stays
- ▷ The current provision of services in Cradle Valley is not meeting visitor expectations. Transport in and out of the TWWHA is not well planned and sign posted. There is a need for integrated visitor information services.
- ▷ There is a strong need to provide a robust plan for developing Cradle Valley as a tourist destination. There is substantial demand for improvements in infrastructure as illustrated by the outcomes of past studies. The visitor demand analysis, identified a lack of existing services to meet visitor expectations and the aspiration of tourism operators.

The Demand Analysis demonstrates a clear need for 'well planned and robust development' to cater for the increase of visitor demand on the Cradle Valley site.



3.1.3 Reimagining the Visitor Experience of Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage (2014)

Authors: EC3 Global, TRC Tourism and Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, 2014

The need for change was identified in the 2014 PWS released Reimagining the Visitor Experience of Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage report. This identified that to grow visitation and expenditure, Cradle Mountain needed to reimagine its visitor experience to deliver world class visitor experiences while at the same time managing the impacts of visitors to the TWWHA. These elements included:

- ▷ Creating a quality sense of arrival into the wilderness and Cradle Mountain.
- ▷ A world-class visitor experience for Cradle Mountain, the TWWHA and its values.
- ▷ Amenities and services appropriate to the area's outstanding universal value that are sufficient for the expected visitor numbers.

- ▷ New experiences to engage visitors with one of the nation's most important natural assets.
- ▷ Improved management of visitor impacts in the Visitor Services Zone.
- ▷ Improved visitor safety from the Service Zone to Dove Lake.
- ▷ Correcting the impact of private vehicles at Dove Lake, which is at odds with the nature and values of the TWWHA.
- ▷ Attracting private sector investment.



“...the construction of a new visitor centre and conceptual layouts for the village development is considered to be fundamental in achieving the successful implementation of the CTD.”

Report for Cradle Mountain Village Development Planning Study

3.1.4 Cradle Mountain Master Plan (2016)

Authors: Inspired by Marketing and Cumulus Studio, 2016

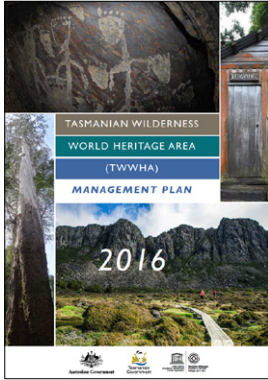
The 2016 Cradle Mountain Master Plan was jointly commissioned by the Cradle Coast Authority, Parks and Wildlife Services Tasmania, Kentish Council and the Tourism Industry Council and consists of the following documents:

- ▷ *Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Master Plan* - Inspired by Marketing
- ▷ *Cradle Mountain Master Plan* - Cumulus Studio
- ▷ *Cradle Demand Potential Assessment* - BDA
- ▷ *Economic Impact of Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Development* - Deloittes
- ▷ *Cradle Mountain Land Use Planning, Environmental, Traffic and Services Review* - Pitt&Sherry

The Master Plan was commissioned to identify key developments that would both facilitate and encourage increased future visitation to the World Heritage Area.

The Master Plan adopted recommendations from previous studies for the need for a new Visitor Centre, its location at the end of the unused runway site, and alterations to existing roads to present the visitor centre as a destination site and ‘gateway’ to the WHA.





3.1.5 TWWHA Management Plan (2016)

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) covers almost a quarter of Tasmania and encompasses more than 1.58 million hectares. The Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park is 161,583.3 hectares, making up approximately 10% of the TWWHA. The planning and management of the TWWHA is directed by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan (TWWHAMP) and primarily administered by Parks and Wildlife. The TWWHAMP identifies a number of service zones of which Cradle Valley is one. The zones provide the highest level of developed visitor facilities and where the majority of visitors experience the TWWHA. According to the Management Plan (p56-57) the zone's aim is to:

- ▷ Enable all visitors to experience and enjoy the values of the TWWHA, by providing and allowing a range of quality services and facilities.
- ▷ Provide a principal focus for necessary visitor and management services, facilities and infrastructure.
- ▷ Provide high levels of access and cater for high visitor numbers

The TWWHAMP also lists 'presentation' as a key requirement of World Heritage Convention. Management of the WHA's presentation covers all aspects of the visitor experience including information, interpretation, recreational opportunities, management presence and facilities. The visitor experience has many strands, ranging from the type of engagement to the expectation and demands of the visitor groups. The TWWHAMP proposes a strategic framework to address the issues of presentation in a cohesive and coherent manner, a key strategic theme within the proposed framework is the:

- ▷ Prioritisation of investment in facilities and experience (p.11)

The current visitor infrastructure at the Cradle Valley site does not meet the objectives of a services zone provided by the TWWHAMP and furthermore presents and provides an experience that is inconsistent with the expectation and demands of the visitor group. Therefore, the Cradle Valley service zone facilities and infrastructure should be a prioritisation for investment.



3.2 VISITOR NUMBERS

The Report for Cradle Village Development Planning Study (2009) also noted the key findings of the Demand Analysis Report which included:

- ▷ The estimated number of visitors who would use a village/service hub ... would rise to 191,850 in 2023/24 based on the 'most likely' scenario.
- ▷ The existing infrastructure is at capacity, particularly during summer and other peak periods

Visitor numbers have however actually grown much faster than projected with even recent predictions falling short of actual figures. This is illustrated by the BDA Cradle Mountain Demand Potential Assessment commissioned as part of the CMMP2016 which forecast that if visitation projections followed existing trends figures would reach 220,000 visitors by 2020 or 260,000 with the addition of new visitor facilities. In actuality the visitor numbers have already considerably exceeded both these expectations with approximately 252,000 visitors to Cradle Mountain recorded in the year to March 2017.

For planning purposes, visitor projections have been calculated based on existing visitor numbers and likely growth. Whilst these figures are subjective, they indicate a possible projection of 500,000 people at the site by 2050 (Approx 2.5% compounded growth).

A summary of visitor number projections are provided below. Visitor Flow Estimates, predicting the number of people in the Visitor Centre at any one time have been calculated using PWS's projections.

Visitor Number Projections

Visitor No. Recorded (PWS Visitor Numbers for Cradle)

| | |
|----------|---------|
| Jun 2010 | 165,895 |
| Jun 2015 | 199,058 |
| Jun 2016 | 230,922 |

Visitor No. Projected (@ 2.5% Compounded)

| | |
|----------|---------|
| Jun 2020 | 251,802 |
| Jun 2025 | 284,890 |
| Jun 2030 | 322,327 |
| Jun 2035 | 364,684 |
| Jun 2040 | 412,606 |
| Jun 2050 | 528,171 |

Visitor Flow Estimates

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Visitors / Year | 500,000 people |
| Visitors / Day (Yearly Average) | 1,370 people |
| Summer Adjustment (Estimate) | 250% |
| Visitors / Day (Summer Average) | 3,425 people |
| Hrs/ Day Operational | 9 hrs |
| Visitors / Hr (Daily Average) | 380 people |
| Peak Visitors Flow / Hour (Estimates)* | |
| 9:00 AM | 95-115 people |
| 10:00 AM | 95-115 people |
| 11:00 AM | 190-220 people |
| 12:00 PM | 475-500 people |
| 1:00 PM | (peak load) 950-1100 people |
| 2:00 PM | (peak load) 950-1100 people |
| 3:00 PM | 380-400 people |
| 4:00 PM | 190-220 people |
| 5:00 PM | 95-110 people |

*projections during a typical day are indicative only based on anecdotal evidence of historical trends.

4.0 The Design

Following the endorsement of the 2016 Cradle Mountain Master Plan (Inspired by Marketing and Cumulus Studio), PWS engaged Cumulus Studio to work through options for how the Master Plan could be implemented within the funding allocated by the Tasmanian State Government.

At the same time a Steering Committee was established with cross industry representation to support and guide the development of the project in accordance with the Master Plan's principles. Cumulus Studio has worked closely and collaboratively with the Steering Committee and Stakeholder Groups to consider project outcomes that reflect the guiding project philosophy whilst establishing design principles that speak to the unique nature of the site and cater for the steady growth in visitor projections.

The current design proposal for the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Project is a direct outcome of both the Master Plan and a consultative process with the Steering Committee.

The proposed design consists of two main components.

1. The Village Precinct (4.1)
2. The Visitor Centre (4.2)

IMAGE

Visualisation of the Cradle Village Precinct and Visitor Centre Forecourt produced as part of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Development Application 2017



4.1 THE VILLAGE PRECINCT

The proposed Village Precinct consists of a number of separate, but supporting facilities that compliment the Visitor Centre. These include:

1. Reconfigured vehicle access
2. Car Parking for 270 vehicles
3. External Event and gathering spaces
4. Shuttle Bus Circulation, Pickup and Departure Point
5. Rehabilitated Landscape Areas

Visitors entering the Village Precinct will arrive at the northern end of the site, in a newly formed 270 space car park. The carpark incorporates an improved traffic management strategy for onsite visitor, coach, shuttle, and staff vehicles, creating safe pedestrian and vehicular movement to and from the Visitor Centre.

A series of linked event spaces connect the Carpark to the Visitor Centre. Each event space is separated and defined by landscaped tarns, abstracted duckboards and dense endemic planting. These areas provide intimate micro landscapes, sitting in contrast to far reaching wilderness views. A loose collection of buildings hugs the edges of the event spaces providing veranda-like alcoves, offering welcome respite from inclement weather.

As visitors reach the far Southern end of the Village, the tarn edges open to create a forecourt to the Visitor Centre. The forecourt is sculpted in response to the sun's path, promoting daytime use, and the centrally located outdoor fire provides further opportunity for daytime and evening gatherings. The enveloping nature of the Visitor Centre screens the view to Cradle Mountain revealing it only upon entry to the building.

4.2 VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES CENTRE

The Visitor Centre is conceived as a sculpted form carved by an invisible force, creating a building that is solid yet dynamic. Wall and roof materials are matching, responding to the sites distinct geomorphology, creating a material gravitas outlined within the Visitor Experience Statement:

'creating a feeling of permanence and 'rightness' for the building and its location, as if it had been sculpted from the rock beneath.'

IMAGE

Visualisation of the proposed Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre and Forecourt produced as part of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Development Application 2017



The materiality provides a living finish, weathering and developing a patina as dictated by the surrounding environmental conditions. The external material palette is restrained, with heavy solid planes interrupted by transparent frameless glazed apertures. The material selection allows the building to sit as a quietly sculpted object within its context.

The point of entry is a manipulated void that forms a cave-like undercroft, inviting visitors within. The view acts as a tool for navigation that draws the visitor through the forecourt and into the building where a vast, double height glazed panorama of a distant Cradle Mountain is revealed. Sequential and diverse landscape views further draw the user through the building to the point of departure into the World Heritage Area.

The Visitor Centre will provide the following functions:

1. Park Information Centre and ticketing
2. Retail Tenancies
3. PWS Facilities
4. Privately operated café, restaurant, and bar
5. Private function room
6. Display and interpretation
7. Amenities

The current plans for the Visitor Centre are include as in Appendix 01

4.3 DESIGN OUTCOMES

The design proposed in the CMMP2016 and the subsequent Development Application addresses issues identified in previous reports and short comings of the existing visitor services centre. The design not only addresses pragmatic and/or functional concerns such as accommodating the growing number of visitors to the site but also aims to deliver a unique visitor experience that is appropriate to the nature of the site.

IMAGE

Visualisation of the proposed interior for the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre produced as part of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Development Application 2017



The new Visitor Centre is located at end of the runway clearing, as recommended by previous reports, to take advantage of the view to the mountain and form a launch point into the World Heritage Area (WHA) via walking tracks, cycle paths, or shuttle bus.

As the Visitor Centre is the ticketing and departure point for access into the World Heritage Area it is important that it is integrated with any transport provided to Dove Lake (currently a shuttle bus arrangement). The proposed site is an ideal intermediate location situated between Dove Lake and any incoming traffic (private vehicles, coaches and tour busses) to the site.

The possible addition of a future cable way also limits potential sites for the Visitor Centre building. While a cable way was proposed as part of the CMMP2016 - being the preferred option arising out of the Cradle Mountain Innovative Transport Study: Summary Report, Arup May 2007 (p. 8) - further feasibility work is required before this will be finalised. The current Visitor Centre design was envisaged to allow for future expansion which would incorporate interchange facilities for future transport into Dove Lake (whether an upgraded version of the existing Shuttle Bus or new Cable Way).

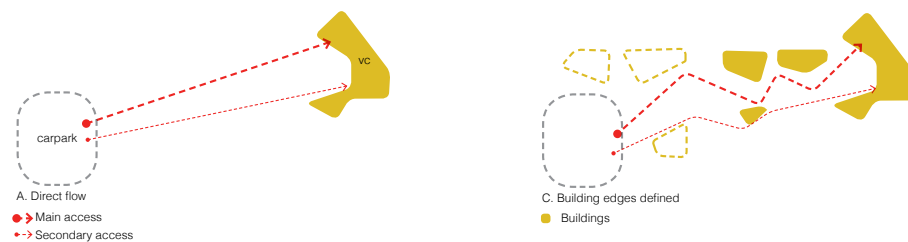
Other issues that have been addressed in the design include:

▷ **Improved Way-finding**

Whereas it is currently difficult for visitors know where they should go on arrival the proposed forecourt and landscaping are designed to guide visitors, creating a natural progression through the site and providing way-finding in a subtle and integrated way.

IMAGE

Diagram showing planning strategys around wayfinding.



▷ **The Creation of a Destination Point**

The main road passes the current Visitor Centre which not only creates confusion about where tourists should go but also diminishes the sense of arrival. The roadway is to be reconfigured so that all traffic is directed into the new World Heritage Wilderness Village and that the Visitor Centre will become the end point or destination for the majority of visitors.

▷ **Creation of a Village Hub**

The design provides a framework for the creation of a village social / communal hub that consists of Cafe, Retail Areas, a front desk for Tourism Operators, associated storage areas and new Facilities for Parks & Wildlife as well as space for festivals and events. There are also areas set aside for future expansion.

▷ **Better Visitor Experience**

The existing Visitor Centre struggles to accommodate current peak visitor numbers due to its small size and spatial arrangement that has grown haphazardly over time. The public areas of the existing building occupy approx 410m² with 205m² occupied by the Visitor Centre - 60m² Visitor Information Services, 70m² shop and 75m² staff & other areas.

Using a rule of thumb of 1m² per person (National Construction Code Table 1.13, Areas Per Person According to Use) the Visitor Information Services space should accommodate approx 60 people expanding to a maximum of 130 people if the shop area is included. The cafe can accommodate an additional 60 people bringing the comfortable capacity of the building to approx 200 - 250 people.

Current peak visitor numbers however are around 1,500 - 2,000 per day which approximates to a peak load of 500 - 550 people per hour. The lack of space places pressure on PWS staff to speed up turn-over when providing visitor information services and overall leads to a reduced visitor experience.

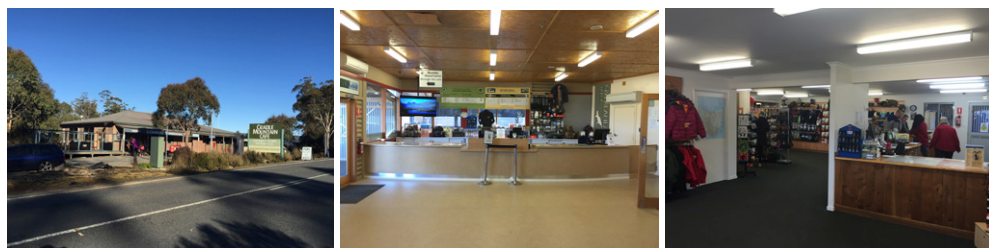
The current proposal has been designed in accordance with PWS forecasts (refer to Section 3.2) of 500,000 visitors per year. Taking increased summer loads into account and peak visitation occurring during the middle of the day, it is estimated that the Visitor Centre will need to accommodate approx 950 -1,000 people per hour.

The critical visitor services areas of the proposed Visitor Centre have been increased in the design to accommodate these estimated loads. The Visitor Centre functions now occupy approx 600m² of the new building with area for visitor information services increased to 300m² and front desk also increased to allow greater turn-over. Cafe, Restaurant, Bar, PWS Shop, and Retail Tenancy areas are additional to this with the total area approx 2,120m².

The proposed Visitor Centre also aims to improve the Visitor experience. Issues identified as problematic with the existing building include lack of visual connection to the WHA, poor way-finding, poor acoustics, as well as the haphazard and impermanent appearance.

PHOTOS

Photos of the Exterior and Interior of the existing Visitor Centre.



The proposed design employs a spatial logic that has a natural flow and allows visitors to find their way autonomously with minimal input from P&W staff or overtly distracting signage. The proposed building design aims to be an integral part of the interpretation of the natural wilderness, framing views and providing spatial connections to the site. In this context the interior spaces have been designed so they are not loud or overbearing but rather are minimal and allow the landscape to speak for itself. At the same time, the material treatment will allude to the geological qualities of the landscape.

Importantly, the proposed design also connects the building to the WHA by providing views from the Visitor Services Area to Cradle Mountain on arrival into the building.

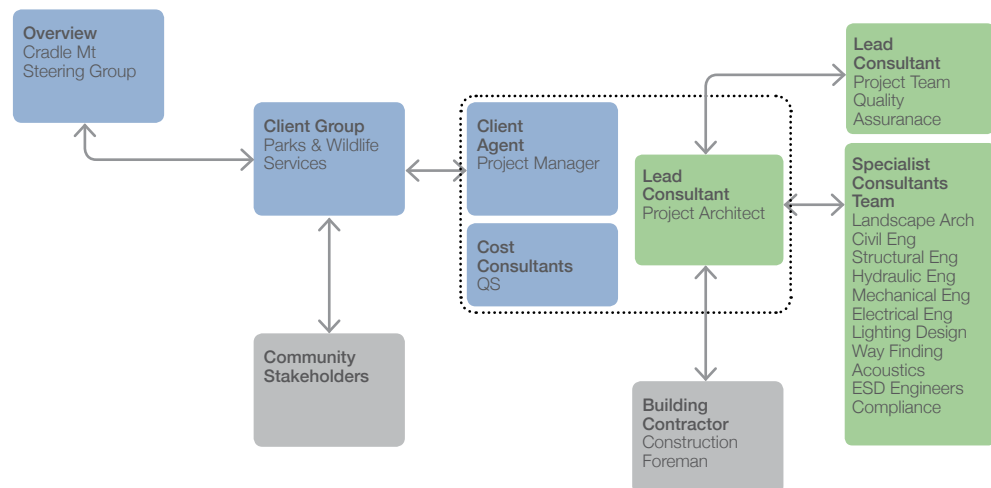
5.0 Project Delivery

5.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The proponent for the Cradle Village Precinct and Visitor Centre is the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) of the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and the Environment in conjunction with The Office of the Coordinator General (Department of State Growth). PWS have employed a Project Manager to coordinate and manage the project on behalf of PWS client group.

Following the successful acquisition of a planning permit for the project PWS have undertaken an EOI and Tender process to determine the Project Team for the remainder of the project. The successful Lead Consultant will act as the design team coordinator and will manage the design and documentation of the project under the guidance of the Steering Committee and the PWS Project Team.

DIAGRAMMATIC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



5.2 BUDGET SUMMARY

A total project budget of \$21.8M has been set aside for upgrade of visitor facilities at Cradle Mountain however only \$13.3M has been allocated to the delivery of Village Precinct and Visitor Centre. A broad breakdown of the budget (excluding GST) is outlined below:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Visitor Centre | \$7,000,000 |
| Civil Works and Site Services | \$6,100,000 |
| Design Contingency (5%) | \$655,000 |
| Construction Contingency (10%) | \$1,310,000 |
| Sub-Total Village Precinct | \$15,065,000 |
| | |
| Dove Lake Viewing Shelter | \$3,500,000 |
| Site Works and Site Services | \$500,000 |
| Sub-Total Dove Lake | \$4,000,000 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Total Construction Budget | \$19,065,000 |
| Project Delivery Costs | \$2,300,000 |
| Interps / Artwork / Signage | \$400,000 |
| Statutory Fees | \$20,000 |
| Total Project Budget | \$21,785,000 |

There are a number of components that were identified in the master plan and subsequent Development Application that fall outside the proposed works, and are envisaged as being part of future expansion at a later stage. These include a commercial wing of the Visitor Centre, Covered Walkways, Event Stage, BBQ Facilities, Commercial Tenancies, Tourism Operator Facilities and Overflow Car-Parking. Some of these are expected to be funded by private investment.

A detailed cost estimate of the Visitor Centre and Site Works has been prepared by WT Partnership based on the proposed scope of works. Due to the remote location of the site and potential construction difficulties WT have factored in a 20% locality loading. Design and Construction Contingencies - for unforeseen changes emerging during the design development and later while under construction - have also been factored in at 15% of the estimated construction costs.

5.3 CONSTRUCTION PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The construction procurement approach will be two part process with full design development and construction documentation to be undertaken by the lead consultant (in collaboration with PWS) followed by a traditional lump sum tender for the construction.

As the building is a unique and the design customised specifically for the site and in an extreme environment, a traditional lump sum “construct only” building contract will not only provide a competitive price but also allow greater control over the quality of the built outcome.

5.4 PROGRAM

The draft program below indicates a forward works package (which includes civil works for the site access) programed to commence in December 2017 with main construction work continuing in May 2018 and a likely hand-over in time for the 2019-2020 summer season.

| Date | 2017 | | | | 2018 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design Development | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Forward (Civil) Works | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Documentation | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Building Application | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tender & Assessment | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Construction | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contingency | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Commissioning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hand-Over | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

TABLE

Indicative program for the design and construction of the Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct Project

6.0 Conclusion

Cradle Mountain is a significant iconic tourist destination for Tasmania. A new Gateway Precinct is a critical tourism project for the site not only providing much needed, improved visitor services but also as a catalyst to the promotion of future commercial development in the area.

The need for a new Gateway Precinct has long been established with recommendations dating back to 2003 (The Cradle Mountain Development Plan, Inspiring Place). Since this time the existing Visitor Centre has had little development and has increasingly struggled to cope with visitor demands.

The new Gateway Precinct will provide an improved visitor experience not only by physically accommodating growing visitor numbers to one of Tasmania's most visited natural wilderness destinations but also by providing a positive emotional experience with the site, connecting the visitor to the landscape and suitably interpreting the values of the WHA.

The design team have worked collaboratively with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Services (PWS) who are the land managers of the site as well as under the guidance of a multiple-stakeholder, cross government steering committee to develop a design that not fulfils PWS's functional requirements but also responds to public expectations of a Gateway Precinct for a site of World Heritage significance.

The development is therefore recommended to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for its support and approval.

7.0 References

The following documents have been referenced in this report:

- ▷ Cradle Valley Tourism Development Plan (Final) - Inspiring Place, 2003
- ▷ Report for Cradle Village Development Planning Study - GHD, 2007
- ▷ Cradle Village Development Planning Study, Demand Analysis - GHD, 2009
- ▷ Reimagining the Visitor Experience of Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area - 2014
- ▷ Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Master Plan - Inspired by Marketing, 2016
- ▷ Cradle Mountain Master Plan - Cumulus Studio, 2016
- ▷ Economic Impact of Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Development - Deloitte 2016
- ▷ Cradle Mountain Demand Potential Assessment - BDA 2016
- ▷ Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan - DPIPWE 2016
- ▷ Tasmanian Visitors Survey: July 2016 - June 2017

8.0 Appendices

The following appendices have been referenced in this report:

- ▷ APPENDIX 01: Village Precinct Scope (Plans)
- ▷ APPENDIX 02: Village Precinct Planning Principles (Plans)
- ▷ APPENDIX 03: Visitor Centre Scope (Plans)
- ▷ APPENDIX 04: Visitor Centre Planning Principles (Plans)
- ▷ APPENDIX 05: Existing Visitor Centre (Plans)

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