

Hartz Mountains National Park



Visitor Services Site Plan 2006



**Hartz Mountains
National Park
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2006**



**PARKS *and* WILDLIFE
SERVICE TASMANIA**
*DEPARTMENT of
TOURISM, ARTS
and the ENVIRONMENT*

Hartz Mountains National Park Visitor Services Site Plan 2006

This site plan has been prepared under the provisions of the Tasmanian World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999 and provides for the development and upgrading of facilities, in particular a day use shelter and toilet within the Hartz Mountains National Park Visitor Services Site.

A draft of this plan was released for public comment between 15 May 2006 and 29 May 2006. In total, four submissions were received on the draft plan.

All submissions have been carefully considered and are reflected in the final plan where appropriate.

APPROVAL

This Hartz Mountains National Park Visitor Services Site Plan 2006 was approved by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, June 2006.

Where the Director is referred to in this plan, it is the statutory position of Director of National Parks and Wildlife.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (WHA) covers some 1.38 million hectares or about 20% of Tasmania. It includes Tasmania's four largest national parks: the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, Southwest National Park, Walls of Jerusalem National Park and Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park as well as the smaller Hartz Mountains National Park (the park). Together, these and other areas recognised as having outstanding natural and cultural values, were initially inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1982 and expanded in size in 1989.

The framework for management of the WHA is the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999* (WHAMP). The WHAMP "defines management prescriptions both as policy and as management actions to realise the objectives [of the WHAMP], and establishes monitoring systems to evaluate whether the objectives are being met" (WHAMP 1999:12).

In recognition of the fact that Tasmania depends heavily on the WHA as a draw card for visitors to the State, there is an expectation that visitors will be able to gain firsthand experience of WHA values. To this end the WHAMP identifies a number of Visitor Services Zones and Sites where major facilities for recreation and presentation are to be provided, typically at the margins of the WHA and accessible by the State's road network.

The WHAMP requires that site plans be prepared for all visitor services zones and major visitor services sites prior to commencement of any new development or significant upgrading of facilities (WHAMP 1999: 60). Site plans expand upon the general provisions of the WHAMP and give special consideration to the coordinated and integrated development of these areas.

One of the Visitor Services Sites identified in the WHAMP is the Hartz Mountains Visitor Services Site (the visitor services site or VSS) as this area on the edge of the WHA is accessible by road.

Hartz Mountains National Park is considered one of the key icon tourist attractions in the Huon area, along with Tahune Airwalk, Hastings Caves and Cockle Creek. Other attractions are located nearby but outside the park, principally the Forest and Heritage Centre at Geeveston and several picnic sites along the roads in the southern forests managed by Forestry Tasmania.

A day shelter and toilet facility are proposed at the end of the Hartz Road adjacent to the carpark to improve visitor experience and understanding of the park and world heritage values. These facilities were first proposed in 1995 to replace a shelter that had to be removed due to its poor condition.

1.2 Location and Zoning

The Hartz Mountains National Park is located approximately 85 kilometres south of Hobart by road and 21 kilometres south-west of Geeveston. Gravel Forestry Tasmania roads provide access to the park's north-eastern boundary. The road then continues under the management of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) some 6 kilometres into the park rising to an altitude of 870 metres.

The Hartz Mountains VSS is located wholly within the WHA Recreation Zone as defined by the WHAMP. Covering some 27 hectares, it extends from the park boundary along the Hartz Road to its terminus under the Devils Backbone.

Identified by the site plan are four precincts within the VSS where visitors could expect to find facilities and information. These precincts are at the park entrance, Waratah Lookout, Arve Falls (carpark and walking track) and the turning circle at the Devils Backbone. See figure 1. The Lake Esperance walking track commencing at the Hartz Road terminus is excluded from the site plan.

1.3 Previous Planning Documents

Other documents produced for this visitor services site include the *Hartz Mountains National Park Interim Management Plan 1989*, *draft Hartz Mountains National Park Site Plan 1992* and *Hartz Mountains National Park Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Interpretation Action Plan 2002*. This site plan draws on the recommendations of the interpretation action plan for prescriptions relating to park information, interpretation and directional signs.

A number of specialist reports were produced in 1992-3 when a shelter and toilet for the Devils Backbone precinct was first proposed. These reports which are listed in the references have been checked for accuracy, currency and applicability particularly in terms of WHA values management. All reports were found to be acceptable.

1.4 Legislation

A range of legislative requirements apply to the management of the World Heritage Area, including the Hartz Mountains Visitor Services Site. Of particular importance, because of their role in daily management of the area and in terms of development assessment processes are the following:

- New Proposals and Impact Assessment Process (a requirement of the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, 1999*);
- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth);
- *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1995*;
- *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*;
- *Nature Conservation Act 2002*;
- *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*;
- *Aboriginal Relics Act 1976*;
- *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*;
- National Parks and Reserves Regulations 1999; and
- Esperance Planning Scheme 1989.

The Building Code of Australia and the Australian Standards Association specify the standards that are to be achieved by development within the area.

1.5 Site Plan Structure and Application

The Visitor Services Site Plan applies to the Hartz Mountains VSS as designated in the WHAMP. It was borne out of a need to provide a day shelter and much needed toilet at the end of the Hartz Road where the majority of walking tracks begin.

The plan is in five sections:

Section 1 “Introduction” gives a background to the site plan

- Section 2 “Planning Vision and Objectives” summarises planning objectives for WHA visitor services sites and the vision for the Hartz Mountains VSS.
- Section 3 “Existing Conditions” provides a brief historical background, summarises the values of the park and describes the environment, current use and facilities of the VSS.
- Section 4 “Pre-visit Management Strategies” describes external influences on future visitor numbers and experience and provides strategies to address issues.
- Section 5 “Management Strategies for the Precincts” describes the future protection, use and development, including the upgrading of infrastructure for each of the precincts.
- For the Devils Backbone precinct there is an examination of site-specific considerations and issues, an assessment of the likely impacts of development and prescriptions to mitigate impacts arising from activities associated with the construction of a day use shelter and toilet.

2 Planning Vision and Objectives

The Hartz Mountains Visitor Services Site Plan is based on the general provisions of the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999* which is the statutory plan setting forth the overall objectives, policies and actions related to management of the WHA.

The overall objective for managing the WHA, in line with the *UNESCO World Heritage Convention*, is “to identify, protect, conserve, present and where appropriate, rehabilitate the world heritage and other natural and cultural values of the WHA, and to transmit that heritage to future generations in as good or better condition than at present” (WHAMP 1999:30).

Of particular relevance to planning for Hartz Mountains VSS are the following objectives from the WHAMP:

“To assist people to appreciate and enjoy the WHA in ways that are compatible with the conservation of its natural and cultural values, and that enrich visitor experience” (WHAMP 1999:30).

To provide a range of appropriate facilities strategically located to facilitate visits to the WHA and to enable all visitors to gain a first hand experience of a range of the values of the WHA; and

To maintain, as far as possible, a natural setting and cultural integrity and to minimise the environmental, aesthetic and social impacts of facilities and visitor use” (WHAMP 1999:59-60).

The vision for the Hartz Mountains National Park Visitor Services Site is:

to provide safe and accessible opportunities for all day visitors to experience and enjoy the World Heritage alpine environment of the Hartz Mountains National Park.

3 Existing Conditions

The present condition of the visitor services site is a result of the interaction between cultural activities and natural processes. The information below is mostly drawn from a series of specialist reports produced in 1992 and 1993, when a day shelter was first proposed for the turning circle at the end of Hartz Road.

This section outlines the history of development within the VSS and the current situation in terms of:

- the historical background to the current conditions in the VSS;
- the range of physical, biological and cultural values both in the park and specifically at the site of the proposed day use shelter and toilet;
- the facilities presently found in the VSS; and
- current levels of use.

This information will provide the basis for a discussion of the management issues and actions recommended for the VSS.

3.1 Background to Existing Conditions

The Aboriginal people that lived in this area probably belonged to the South East group whose territory ranged from New Norfolk to Bruny Island, throughout the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and inland to the Huon Valley. The recorded name for people from the Huon area was the Mellukerdee.

The first Europeans to explore the area were timber-getters in search of the Huon pine. They were also looking for possible routes west to Port Davey to reach the stands of pine.

The Old Hartz Track and original Hartz hut were probably the first structures in the area with any permanence. Both the track and original hut were constructed 1896 by the Geeves family of Geeveston. The hut was subsequently destroyed by fire and replaced on two occasions.

The increasing popularity of the Hartz Mountains as an area of outstanding beauty led to it being set aside as a Scenic Reserve in 1939. In 1989 extensions to the WHA incorporated the Hartz Mountains National Park.

The walking tracks to Hartz Peak and Lake Esperance were rerouted in the early 1990s with the Old Hartz Track being rehabilitated. In 1995 the Hartz hut was removed under archaeological supervision. A replacement shelter has been proposed ever since.

Arson fires are known to have occurred in January and November 1981 and again in 1987. This significantly altered the vegetation structure and composition of the VSS, particularly in the vicinity of the carpark near the Devils Backbone.

3.2 Physical, Biological and Cultural Values

The following section presents an overview of the park's physical, biological and cultural values as well as the specific values of the proposed site of the day shelter at the Devils Backbone. Section 5 discusses the Issues and Considerations for each of the precincts and prescribes measures to protect the values and address issues.

3.2.1 Physical Values

Climate

Marking the eastern edge of the south-west wilderness and with an altitude ranging from 160m to 1254m (a.s.l.), the climate of the Hartz Mountains is cool and wet with a mean annual precipitation of about 1700 mm. Temperature extremes range between 40°C and -12° C. Mean temperatures range between 12.1° C and 15.4° C in January and 3.8° C and 7.2° C in July.

The prevailing winds are from the north-west to south-west with greatest strength and persistence during late winter. Snow showers and hail may be experienced on the mountains at any time of the year with the heaviest falls confined to late winter and spring. Frosts may occur year round. As a consequence of the climate, conditions for visitors are variable and frequently not conducive to outdoor activity, particularly for the casual visitor or tourist who is not equipped for poor weather.

Geodiversity

Much of the following information comes from a report by Sharples (1992).

The Hartz Mountains National Park falls within the Eastern Tasmanian 'Fault Structure Province' where features are largely determined by the effects of weathering and erosion. Erosion-resistant dolerite forms the residual high caps of mountain peaks such as the Devils Backbone.

The geology of the Hartz Mountains National Park has been extensively impacted by several periods of glacial erosion and deposition. The cirques, horn peaks, aretes and glacial troughs were all formed during glacial activity on the Hartz Range. These examples of glacial landforms and other types of geomorphic features are of world heritage value as they represent a major stage of the earth's evolutionary history. The best example of these glacial landforms is the Picton Valley Glacial Systems located in the south-west of the park. This site is listed on the Tasmanian Geoconservation Database.

The sedimentary rocks of the lower altitudes, in the south of the park, are amongst the oldest rocks in the park. They were formed from sediments deposited by marine, glacial and freshwater sources between 355 and 180 million years ago.

The flats and slopes on the high altitude dolerite country typically contain a shallow (0.4m) soil consisting of very dark brown, fibrous peat over a shallow muck peat on an olive-brown mottled clay.

Crests and ridges have shallow stony brown uniform clay loams, while moorlands and drainage flats contain a peat or organic loam surface over dark brown clay loams on light yellowish brown clay.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

The area of the proposed day use shelter adjacent to the Devils Backbone turning circle/carpark is situated on a gentle east-dipping slope. Dolerite bedrock is exposed at the surface of this site. Other areas close to the turning circle support several metres of cobble to boulder-size slope deposits. The talus has a yellow-brown clayey matrix, and is overlain by soil comprising a 0.2 – 0.3m dark brown organic-rich A Horizon over a very stony yellow-brown gritty and clayey mineral soil. The soil plus talus thickness varies from nil to 3.0 metres or more.

While the clayey dolerite soils are likely to be moderately permeable, where they are poorly drained, then the soils may be prone to water-logging and boggy.

The slope angles are in general low enough that landslide risk is negligible.

3.2.2 Biological Values

Flora

Since a vegetation survey was prepared by Walsh in 1992 for the VSS, detailed mapping of the park for the TASVEG database has occurred.

Much of the following information was provided by the Biodiversity Conservation Branch of the Department of Primary Industries and Water.

The vegetation of the Hartz Mountains National Park is diverse and contains significant areas of alpine communities, sub-alpine woodland, rainforest and wet eucalypt forest.

Found at lower altitudes are mixed forests dominated by stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), rainforest communities with myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*), sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*), leatherwood (*Eucryphia lucida*) and native laurel (*Anopterus glandulosus*). At higher altitudes the vegetation continues to change in response to the lower temperatures and extreme conditions. Alpine communities and sub-alpine communities dominate and are a feature of the park.

The sub-alpine forests are dominated by three eucalypts, snow gum (*Eucalyptus coccifera*), varnished gum (*E. vernicosa*), Australia's smallest eucalypt, and yellow gum (*E. subcrenulata*). The understorey is made up largely of heath plants, including the Tasmanian waratah (*Telopea truncata*).

In the vicinity of Waratah Lookout through to Keoghs Pimple, wet forest predominates, with areas of sedgeland and heath occurring along the road in wet areas.

Plant species of primitive genera with links to ancient Gondwanan biota are of significant world heritage value as they represent a major stage of the earth's evolutionary history. Known to occur within the VSS, are species from the following primitive genera: *Nothofagus*, *Eucryphia*, *Telopea*, *Orites*, *Lomatia*, *Gleichenia*, *Banksia*, *Athrotaxis* and *Phyllocladus*.

Genera not so far recorded for the VSS but which occur within the park elsewhere include: *Agastachys*, *Archeria*, *Bellendena*, *Cenarrhenes*, *Dicksonia*, *Diselma*, *Hymenophyllum*, *Isoetes*, *Microcachrys*, *Podocarpus*, *Prionotes*, *Sticherus* and *Tetracarpaea*.

Endemic genera are also of world heritage value. Endemic genera within the park include *Agastachys*, *Anodopetalum*, *Athrotaxis*, *Bellendena*, *Campynema*, *Cenarrhenes*, *Isophysis*, *Microcachrys*, *Milligania*, *Prionotes*, *Pterygopappus* and *Tetracarpaea*. It is recognised that most of these species are widespread, common and well reserved in the WHA.

Within six kilometres of the VSS are three flora species recorded on GTSpot database. These include:

- *Centrolepis paludicola* recorded from the Lake Osborne track is now taxonomically included with the widespread and common species *Centrolepis monogyna*. It is therefore no longer listed at the State level but still is at the national level.
- *Agrostis aff. hiemalis* now *Agrostis propinqua* listed as rare, is known from Hartz Pass in vegetation not found within the VSS; and
- the rare *Geum talbotianum* also is found in the park but is unlikely to be recorded for the VSS due to the lack of appropriate habitat.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

Extensive areas of *Eucalyptus coccifera* subalpine woodland are found in the vicinity of the turning circle near the Devils Backbone. *Eucalyptus subcrenulata* is

also found in the area as identified by Walsh (1992). Subalpine woodland borders alpine heath to the south of the turning circle.

The precinct has been impacted by past fire and disturbance by road construction and visitation and as such the condition of the vegetation is reduced in comparison to other more pristine areas of the WHA.

The construction of the proposed day shelter within the area will not affect conservation status of WHA botanical values.

The site is however valuable for the interpretation of flora values including the presentation of subalpine eucalypt woodlands dominated by endemic and cold tolerant eucalypts such as *E. coccifera* and *E. subcrenulata*; cool temperate *Nothofagus* rainforest and 'Central mountain' alpine vegetation all of which have world heritage significance.

Fauna

The following information is comes from a report by Phillips (1992).

It is thought that about sixty percent of Tasmania's native land animals, including bats and over forty species of birds occur in the park. However no systematic mammal survey has been conducted.

The endemic long-tailed mouse (*Pseudomys higginsi*) is known to occur in the park while the Eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) and the little known white-footed dunnart *Smithopsis leucopus leucopus* is recorded from mixed forest in the Arve Valley. These species are likely to occur in similar habitat in the park.

Buttongrass moorland in the south of the park provides habitat for the ground parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus wallicus*) and the southern emu-wren (*Stipiturus malachurus*). The endemic Tasmanian thornbill (*Acanthiza ewingii*) and scrubtit (*Acanthornis magnus*) are common in areas of rainforest.

Five of the eleven species of frog known from Tasmania are found in Hartz Mountains National Park. This assemblage includes the moss froglet (*Bryobatrachus nimbus*) a species which was first recorded in 1992, has its type locality in the Hartz Mountains and is restricted to the southern part of the WHA. Chytrid disease of frogs has recently been detected in water holes at the base of Hartz Mountain.

Of world heritage value are several invertebrates including archiearine day-flying moths, mountain peripatus (*Ooperipatellus decoratus*) and the mountain shrimp (*Anaspides tasmaniae*). The mountain shrimp is one of the most ancient representatives of the Crustaceans.

The park is the type locality for many invertebrate animals.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

No fauna issues have been identified for the site of the proposed visitor shelter and toilet in the Devils backbone precinct (Phillips, 1992).

3.2.3 Cultural Values

Aboriginal Heritage

The Mellukerdee people would have travelled inland from the coastal areas for wallabies and plant foods. The Hartz Mountains area and surrounding forests continues to have significance for today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

While evidence of Aboriginal occupation has been recorded at lower altitudes, the Aboriginal Heritage Office has advised that there are no sites recorded for the VSS on the Tasmanian Aboriginal Site Index.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

The site of the proposed shelter was inspected in 1992 by an Aboriginal Heritage Officer (Noble, 1993) and again in 2006 by an Aboriginal heritage-trained PWS officer. Information and photos were provided to the Aboriginal Heritage Office following this inspection. The indication was on both occasions that the site was inspected that Aboriginal heritage sites are unlikely, but if they were to occur, they would be significant.

Historic Heritage

The following information comes from a report by Noble (1993).

The Old Hartz Track and a hut (known as the Hartz hut) were constructed by the Geeves family of Geeveston in 1896. The Geeves were well known in the region as explorers, track cutters and prospectors. As a result of this track, Hartz Mountains became one of Tasmania's earliest popular bushwalking destinations.

The original Hartz hut was the site of the death from exposure of two members of the Geeves family in 1897. A memorial to the two men is located in the park near the place where they perished, only five minutes walk along the Hartz Peak track.

The original hut was destroyed by fire and subsequently replaced by a four room cottage constructed with split palings and stone footings. This cottage also burnt down. A paling hut was built to replace the cottage in the 1930s. Oral history suggests that the last hut was also altered then finally removed due to its very poor condition in 1995 under archaeological supervision. Original panels, covered with graffiti dating back to the 1930s were recovered at this time and are in storage.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

The site of the proposed day shelter and toilet in the Devils Backbone precinct is at least 70 metres from the site of the Hartz hut and 60 metres from the Old Hartz Track. There is no recorded archaeological evidence at the site of the proposed day shelter.

Social Values

While there has been no direct research on the social value or significance of the Hartz Mountains National Park to the community, a visitor survey conducted in 2002 provides some insight into the significance of the park.

Over 40% of respondents appreciated the walking tracks and more specifically their construction and maintenance that minimised the impacts on the environment. Peace, silence and the pristine nature of the park were also appreciated by about 20% of respondents.

The local community still value and use the picnic shelter at the Waratah Lookout. This shelter was constructed in the 1970s by friends and relatives of members of the Geeveston branch of Country Women's Association.

The significance of the Hartz hut was assessed of having either local or regional social significance. It is probable that the social significance of the place resides in the concept of a hut (ie. a functioning shelter) at this site rather than that particular example of a hut.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

The Hartz hut was an important recreational facility for both local and regional groups. A replacement shelter has been proposed ever since it was demolished. The local community support the construction of a day shelter.

Landscape Values

The park is centred on a rugged dolerite massif which has been sculptured by periods of glaciation. The resultant landforms are of high aesthetic value and provide scenic views from two of the visitor services precincts.

While Waratah Lookout offers limited views of the park itself, it does offer panoramic views out of the park to the surrounding State forest and cultivated lands. These views contrast with the views from Hartz Peak which provides a panorama of the south-west heart of the WHA wilderness with views of Federation Peak to the west and Precipitous Bluff to the south.

Although the full panorama of the Devils Backbone is only partially revealed from the carpark at the end of Hartz Road, the massif comes into full view on the approach to Lakes Esperance and Osborne where it forms part of a spectacular backdrop.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

The Devils Backbone with its north-west to south-east orientation will effectively block the view of the proposed day shelter from the south-west mountain peaks further within the WHA. The massif also effectively blocks the view of the carpark area from Hartz Peak.

An analysis of the seen area of the proposed day shelter from points along the walking tracks is provided in figure 2. From this analysis, the proposed shelter is likely to be partially visible through the trees from short sections of the start of track to Lake Esperance near Geeves Monument. The vegetation near the site will prevent the proposed shelter being seen from the other walking tracks.

Wilderness Values

The PWS has recently updated the wilderness mapping for the WHA. Mapping is based on the method used for the National Wilderness Inventory (Lesslie, 1995) where wilderness quality is determined as a function of remoteness and naturalness. It is scored between 0 and 20.

The north-eastern part of the park near and including the VSS, has a lower wilderness quality score (8.4 to 10.0) than the more remote southern and western part of the park where values range from 10.0 to more than 14. See figure 3.

The park plays a key role in protecting the highest quality wilderness values at the core of the WHA by acting as a buffer to activities that may lower this value.

There is also a unique interpretation opportunity to give visitors a better understanding and appreciation of WHA wilderness values.

Proposed Day Use Shelter Site

The location of the proposed day shelter is adjacent to an existing turning circle and carpark. There is minimal encroachment into non-impacted areas.

3.3 Weeds and Plant Diseases

There are no records of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* in the park but there is a *Phytophthora* Management Area in the distant south-west of the park where *Phytophthora*-sensitive vegetation occurs.

Areas identified as having a 'variable susceptibility' to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* include the low-lying, wet area to the west of the Hartz Road as it passes through the Waratah Lookout and an area either side of the Hartz Road for a distance of 1.5 kilometres about 200 metres after the park entrance.

A number of weeds are known to occur either within, or near the visitor services site, mostly associated with the road verge. These include blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), canary broom (*Genista monspessulana*), thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), fog grass (*Holcus lanatus*), plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), wintergrass (*Poa annua*) and ferngrass (*Catapodium rigidum*).

A visitor's experience of the park may be negatively impacted by the presence of roadside weeds. Weeds also reduce the integrity of vegetation with world heritage value and can impact on the conservation significance.

3.4 Visitor Facilities

Hartz Mountains National Park Road is the only road into the park and the VSS. For the vast majority of visitors to the Hartz Mountains National Park access is via this road in a private vehicle. Hartz Road does not meet the Australian Standard for gravel roads.

Within the VSS there are four visitor precincts: at the park entrance, Waratah Lookout, Arve Falls and Devils Backbone. Visitor facilities for the VSS comprise of a picnic shelter, unformed carpark, information booth and toilet at Waratah Lookout, a formed carpark at the start of the Arve Falls track and a formed carpark with information booth at the Devils Backbone.

The park offers a range of well maintained short and medium length day walks, which commence from the main visitor precincts. Many of these have been upgraded over the past few years.

The structures and facilities are described in more detail in conjunction with the management strategies for each of the precincts in Section 5.

There is no permanent ranger presence.

3.5 Current Use

3.5.1 Visitor Numbers

Until 2001, there was a slow decline in visitor numbers to about 11,000 per annum. Since then, visitor numbers have increased by about 6% per annum with about 13,000 visitors coming to the park in 2004-05.

A traffic counter installed for 18 months until June 2001, recorded an average of 13 vehicles per day for this period. Similar figures have been recorded since. The total number of vehicles recorded on any one day is dependant on the weather. If it is a fine day during the peak season, then it is not unusual to see more than 30 vehicles in the park at any one time with the majority of vehicles parked at the Devils Backbone.

3.5.2 Visitor Profile

The park is essentially a day visit park although some travellers, mainly in camper vans, choose to stay overnight.

Below is a summary of the characteristics and attitudes of visitors based on a sample survey in which 194 interviews were conducted over 12 days in January to March 2002.

Overall, 43% of visitors were Tasmanian (82% from Hobart or south of Hobart), 38% were from the mainland and 19% from overseas. The proportion of Tasmanian visitors is high compared with other WHA sites such as Cradle Mountain where local visitors make up only 16% of the total.

Hartz Mountains is a park where the principal activities are sight-seeing and undertaking day walks. While most visitors undertake a sightseeing activity, walking is the most popular visitor activity which PWS actively manages.

The typical visitor is a first-time visitor on a day trip from Hobart with other adults. This group of visitors are most reliant on facilities as they cannot draw on previous experience to know what the park offers.

In terms of the visitor segments, 27% are Shortstops who stay less than 2 hours, 38% are Comfort Seekers, who stay for two hours or more but who stay on the higher standard tracks and 35% are Getaways, who seek out the challenging walks and explore quite far a field. Typically Tasmanians make up about half the Getaway segment and are not so reliant on the facilities.

Fifty-seven per cent of visitors staying for less than 2 hours (Shortstops) go for a walk during their visit, increasing to 89% of Comfort Seekers and 100% of Getaways. Provision and maintenance of walking tracks with their associated infrastructure (information about walks, interpretation on walks, directional signs) thus has a high priority.

The Comfort Seekers and Getaways are also picnickers: 45% of Comfort Seekers have a picnic — they are the ones who use the picnic shelter at Waratah Lookout. While 63% of Getaways have a picnic, few of these use the shelter as they are more self-reliant.

Forty three per cent of visitors had already visited the Tahune Airwalk prior to turning up at Hartz Mountains National Park, while one third had been to the Geeveston Forest and Heritage Centre.

Schools regularly visit in groups of 20-30 students. The walks in the Hartz Mountains National Park are suited to school groups as they are a high standard and are well maintained.

3.6 Future Potential for WHA Presentation

The WHAMP has designated the access road and facilities in the park as a visitor services site. Because, this particular VSS provides the closest access to the WHA from Hobart, the park has much potential for promoting WHA values to the broader community.

The range of well maintained short and medium length day walks have been upgraded and hardened over the past few years allowing more use of the tracks without additional damage to the environment. A wider cross-section of the community is also able to use these tracks because of their high standard.

Situated in an alpine environment, the Hartz Mountains complements the forest-based recreation experiences offered by Forestry Tasmania at Tahune Airwalk and on the Arve Forest Drive.

Hartz Mountains National Park is one of a number of WHA-based sites in the Huon area with a growing tourism profile and there are plans to promote the Hartz Mountains as a destination and attraction. See Section 4.1 Regional Tourism.

Changes in the travel pattern of visitors to Tasmania have been observed over recent years with a trend towards visitors taking a short break of 3-4 days in the state compared to decline in the number of visitors taking longer touring holidays. These short-break visitors tend to choose an accommodation base from which to take a range of day trips. Hartz Mountains National Park is an ideal destination for this emerging visitor segment.

4 Pre-visit Management Strategies

It is acknowledged that visitor experience and expectations begin before entering the park so strategies to improve experience and expectations have been included in this plan.

4.1 Regional Tourism

4.1.1 Current Situation

Hartz Mountains National Park is considered one of the key icon tourist attractions in the Huon area, along with Tahune Airwalk, Hastings Caves and Cockle Creek.

The walks to Lake Esperance and Hartz Peak are included in *Tasmania's 60 Great Short Walks* brochure.

A tourism strategy for the Huon Region is about to be developed and there is a recent proposal for accommodation in the vicinity of the Airwalk. Both will be promoting the Hartz Mountains as a destination and attraction.

4.1.2 Issues and Considerations

The park presents a unique opportunity to showcase the WHA close to Hobart and is well situated to be included as a destination for the short-break visitor.

The popularity of the Tahune Airwalk and associated proposed accommodation may result in additional pressure on park facilities as more visitors include the Hartz Mountains in their day trip to the area.

While park facilities cater only for day visitors, overnight camping occurs as there is no information to restrict this activity in the park or information about more suitable campsites.

4.1.3 Response to the Issues

- Liaise with Forestry Tasmania to ensure that proposed developments provide complimentary experiences.
- Ensure that PWS provide appropriate information about the park's WHA values and visitor opportunities in the formulation of the Huon Valley Tourism Strategy.

4.2 Pre-visit Information

4.2.1 Current Situation

From the visitor survey conducted in 2002, about one third of respondents required more pre-visit information. Only 4% of visitors had referred to the PWS website to obtain information.

4.2.2 Issues and Considerations

There is limited information available on the PWS website and at local information sites to assist with pre-visit planning.

4.2.3 Response to the Issues

- Liaise with Forestry Tasmania (Tahune Airwalk) and the Forest and Heritage Centre at Geeveston to ensure that these attractions have appropriate information about the Hartz Mountains National Park.
- Organise an information session at the beginning of each tourist season to ensure that staff at the Forest and Heritage Centre and Tahune Airwalk are well-informed about the park's attractions.
- Provide information about camping within the Huon area as an alternative to camping within the park.
- Update the PWS website to provide some basic information about facilities in the park.

4.3 Getting to the Park

4.3.1 Current Situation

While the area at the junction of the Arve Road and Hartz Road is outside of the VSS, the following information and prescriptions are included as visitors rely on information at this point and at the park entrance to make an informed decision about whether to proceed or not.

Along the Arve Road, there are green routed directional signs provided by Forestry Tasmania. About 100 metres before the turn-off to the park (in each direction) there are signs indicating to visitors that they are approaching the access road to the park. A Forestry Tasmania sign at the turn-off advises that it is 8km to the park.

Part-way up the access road to the park there is a standard metal directional sign which reads "C632 Hartz Mountains Nat Pk 5".

4.3.2 Issues and Considerations

Signage at the turnoff to Hartz Mountains National Park is sub-standard, difficult to see and does not flag the park's World Heritage status.

There is not enough warning given of the approaching turn-off especially from the direction of the Airwalk. The bend in the road exacerbates this.

The distance given on the roadside sign is to the park boundary and not to the first visitor precinct and facilities at Waratah Lookout.

A low standard gravel road combined with poor weather can result in potentially hazardous driving conditions. There are no road hazard warning signs.

4.3.3 Response to the Issues

- Liaise with Forestry Tasmania about the design and installation of a more attractive roadside sign at the junction of Arve Road and Hartz Road.
- Investigate the construction of a turn-around bay and information panel near this junction as recommended by Hayes (2002).
- Aim for a standard wording for the park's title.

5 Management Strategies for the Precincts

The Hartz Mountains National Park Visitor Services Site includes four distinct locations along the Hartz Road where visitors are provided with information or facilities. The first is at the park entrance while the other three precincts provide visitors with facilities that enable access to one or more of the park's attractions. See figure 1.

A key issue is that there is no design theme that links the facilities and signs of the four visitor precincts together.

The PWS' Reserve Standards Framework (RSF) defines current and optimal facility levels and standards across Tasmania's reserve system. The RSF category, Day Use Comfort (mid) best describes the standard of facility that should be provided for a typical visitor to this VSS. This category correlates with the extant area of the VSS. See Appendix 1 for the definition of Day Use Comfort (mid).

The WHAMP sets two objectives for tourism and recreation and the developments associated with providing facilities for these uses. These being to manage such uses:

“in a sustainable manner so as not to compromise the World Heritage and other natural and cultural values of the WHA or the quality of the visitor experience; and

in a manner which is responsive to market demands and furthers presentation of the WHA” (WHAMP 1999:176).

The WHAMP also prescribes to:

“Design visitor service sites to cater for a wide range of visitors, providing principally for the needs, interests and abilities of day visitors. These visitors usually have a limited amount of time and are less active than visitors to the more remote zones” (WHAMP 1999:60).

Bearing these objectives in mind, improvements to the presentation of WHA values and facilities are proposed in order to better cater for the current visitor profile and expected future needs.

5.1 Park Entrance

5.1.1 Current Situation

Much of the information and many of the recommendations below regarding signs and interpretation, come from Hayes (2002).

About 7.6 kilometres along the access road to the park (at the park boundary), is a large routed wooden sign on the right hand side of the road which features the park's name and its WHA status. It also refers to the park entry fee structure.

This sign is legally required to indicate that the visitor is now entering the national park and WHA. It incorrectly describes the park as “Hartz Mt National Park”.

In addition to the park boundary sign, at approximately eight kilometres along the road to the park, there is a wooden, routed ‘Welcome’ sign, situated on the left hand side of the road. Metal pictograms have also been attached to this sign.

Hartz Road does not meet the Australian Standard for gravel roads.

5.1.2 Issues and Considerations

The signs at the park entrance are faded, do not reflect the WHA status of the park and are not welcoming.

The park boundary sign is on the wrong side of the road and there is not enough key information regarding orientation, essential regulation and safety considerations.

Visitors rely on information at the park entrance to make an informed decision about whether to proceed or not. There is no indication of distance or time to the next facility, walk or feature.

The gravel road combined with poor weather could result in potentially hazardous driving conditions.

Snow makes the road unsafe for travel for a small number of days each year. There is currently no system to close the road if it becomes dangerous for travel due to snowfall. Gating the access road during periods of heavy snowfall has been considered in the interest of public safety. There is no turn-around bay and no hazard warning signs.

Frost heave causes damage to the road surface, making it more susceptible to erosion and increasing siltation.

5.1.3 Visitor Experience and Objectives

Visitor Experience Statement

Visitors entering the park should be welcomed. They should immediately be aware of the park's world heritage status, be confident that the park is worth exploring and that information is available.

Planning Objectives

- To minimise impact on all identified site values.
- To welcome visitors and provide visitor information that is understandable at a glance.
- To communicate the park's WHA status and other essential regulations that may apply when entering the park.
- To reflect the character and design of the sign furniture at the other visitor precincts in the design of the entrance.
- To upgrade then maintain the Hartz Road to the Australian Standard required for a gravel road.

5.1.4 Response to the Issues

Visitor facilities

Investigate and review the options for constructing a turn-around bay and/or installing a barrier to prevent visitors from proceeding in snow conditions.

A site-specific plan will be developed if a turn-around bay needs to be provided.

Access Road

Investigate, prioritise and cost a works program for upgrading the Hartz Road to meet Australian Standards over the next 5 years in accordance with the report prepared by Sinclair, Knight, Merz (2001).

Information, Interpretation and Directional Signs

The first sign encountered by visitors should be a welcome message and feature the WHA logo. It should be positioned on the left hand side of the road. This sign should replace the two existing signs.

Incorporate into the design of the sign's furniture:

- A "Welcome to" message;
- "Park entry fees apply" message;
- Pictograms which depict essential regulations (e.g. no pets or firearms),
- Distance information to the Waratah Lookout and information booth.
- Hazard or road warning information if practicable otherwise provide a separate sign for this purpose.

Investigate and review the options for warning visitors of the hazards associated with driving in snow conditions in accordance with the PWS Public Risk Management Policy.

The individual visitor precincts should be linked together through a commonality and cohesiveness which is expressed through the design of the signs installed at each precinct.

Professional design and interpretation services will be employed to assist with developing a cohesive sign design which links the four precincts.

5.2 Waratah Lookout Precinct

5.2.1 Current Situation

Waratah Lookout provides the first facilities that a visitor encounters after entering the park. It consists of a readily accessible lookout, a picnic shelter and toilet, an information booth with some wind shelter provided by existing vegetation.

There are direction and information signs on either side of the road of different ages, condition and legibility. The road through the site widens out to provide an unformed parking space.

The information booth, located on the road verge on the right hand side, is highly visible and is the first facility seen by visitors after entering the park. It contains a full colour information panel, fuel stove only sign, visitor comment cards and park entry self-registration information.

The lookout is accessed by a short (5 minute) walking track which starts at the information booth. There are two interpretive panels along the walk. The platform, safety fence and track were constructed in 1994 and replaced a rather haphazard chain-link fence and a (natural) rock platform.

On the upper side of the road, there is a stone-walled picnic shelter with a fireplace and several picnic tables, a small enclosure containing rubbish bins and a Clivus composting toilet. Being constructed by the Geeveston Branch of the Country Women's Association in the 1970s, the picnic shelter is valued by the local community. While it was extended in the early 1990s, the hut retains its original character and design and remains open to the public at all times.

The picnic facilities were built on a ridge of intensely fractured dolerite. Soils in the vicinity comprise mostly of a very thin dark brown stony fibrous peat over the dolerite bedrock. Where there are patches of deeper soil, there is also very clayey subsoil.

Wet eucalypt forest predominates in the vicinity of the Waratah Lookout through to Keoghs Pimple, with areas of sedgeland and heath occurring along the road in wet areas.

5.2.2 Issues and Considerations

A fundamental difficulty with the Waratah Lookout precinct is that the features and facilities are located on both sides of the main Hartz Road. The road at the lookout winds through a long left hand curve. This places vehicles, associated passengers and pedestrians in a vulnerable position and represents a safety issue. To a substantial degree, the topography of the site necessitates the splitting of the site's facilities.

Sight lines associated with the curve of the road means that the optimal location for any future parking is along the lower outside edge of the road. The land on this side of the road however is, unsuitable for a carpark as it falls steeply away and/or is a wet marsh area.

The mix of sign styles that greets visitors near the information booth creates a disjointed appearance rather than one of cohesiveness and harmony.

Some information on the main information panel in the booth is inaccurate.

It is not obvious to first-time visitors that there is a toilet at this site above the road.

The existing toilet is considered to be out-dated technology with liquid waste being disposed of into trenches.

The 5 minute walk to Waratah Lookout is the most popular walk in the park due to its length and standard which allows nearly all visitors to complete it. For many visitors, particularly on days when weather is wet, windy and cold, this may be the only walk they will undertake in the park.

While the aluminium interpretation signs along the lookout track are in reasonable condition, the supports are inadequate for the wet conditions. This makes the signs unstable and exposes them to vandalism and other damage.

The sign hardware does not convey the "high standard" interpretive services recommended in the WHAMP (1999:126).

There is some trampling of vegetation in front of each sign, indicating that some visitors are leaving the track to stand closer to the signs.

The existing interpretation focuses on the flowering vegetation, which can only be seen on a seasonal basis and makes no reference to WHA values.

Visitor comment cards indicate a desire to have the view at the Waratah Lookout interpreted. The interim management plan for the park (PWS, 1989) also highlighted the need for interpretive signs which "enhanced visitor enjoyment of the viewfield" at this lookout.

Substantial overland water flow is likely to occur after rain on areas above the road due to the presence of thin soils over bedrock.

5.2.3 Visitor Experience and Objectives

Visitor Experience Statement

Visitors arriving at the Waratah Lookout are enticed from their vehicles to enjoy a panoramic view of distant mountains or on cloudy days are rewarded by a view of Keogh's Falls. They can find out what other activities and facilities are available both here and further in the park.

Planning Objectives

- To minimise impact on all identified site values.

- To provide a safer pedestrian environment than currently exists.
- To provide visitor information that is intuitively useable, functional and promotes visitor satisfaction and safety.
- To develop high quality interpretation materials that emphasise the areas world heritage values.
- To create and develop a sense of continuity between the precincts (i.e. the park entrance, Waratah Lookout, Arve Falls, Devils Backbone).
- To provide high quality visitor facilities that have nil or negligible impact on the environment and meet the standards specified in the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*.

5.2.4 Response to the Issues

Visitor Facilities

Waratah Lookout will continue to be used as an area for picnicking and relaxation, providing an opportunity for visitors to gain a greater appreciation of the WHA and its flora values.

Investigate the replacement of the existing toilet with a close vault system in a more obvious and accessible location.

Maintain the lookout track to a Class 2 – 3 (AS 2156) standard (PWS W2 class) so it can be used by people with a wide range of fitness and skill levels.

Maintain the picnic shelter at the current standard.

Any extension to the existing parking arrangement will be subject to a detailed site-specific plan which considers the site constraints and the need to slow vehicles passing through the site.

The plan will be subject to the PWS internal Reserve Activity Assessment process. Future parking should as far as is practicable, make use of the existing rough track and site disturbance above the road.

A high standard of drainage works is required in the event of any further developments in the future.

Pedestrian Safety

A 'pedestrian warning' sign will be erected on the approach to the Waratah Lookout precinct.

If use levels and visitor behaviour necessitate, speed limiting devices will be considered to slow traffic through the Waratah Lookout precinct.

Information, Interpretation and Directional Signs

Develop a location sign that has a design theme and furniture in common with the other three visitor services precincts to create a sense of arrival and continuity between visitor precincts.

Succinct information should be provided about the Arve Falls and Devils backbone precincts.

The following information derived from Hayes (2002) is endorsed by this plan.

The information panel in the Waratah Lookout information booth should have the local content updated and the map correction made. The walks chart should remain a focus. All information for the walks should be up-to-date and accurate.

The existing signs on the walk should be replaced with a new interpretive series that highlight the variety of vegetation types found in the park.

These signs should be full colour and highlight the park's WHA values and give visitors a strong impression of the WHA significance of the park.

Professional design and interpretation services will be employed to assist with developing a cohesive sign design which links the visitor precincts.

5.3 Arve Falls Precinct

5.3.1 Current Situation

The next precinct encountered by visitors is the carpark and signage that indicates the start of the Arve Falls track. Besides the gravelled carpark, there is only a wooden sign routed sign announcing the Arve Falls destination.

5.3.2 Issues and Considerations

There is little sense of interest or enticement at the carpark.

While the metal interpretation signs along the track are in reasonable condition and contain some good information, they cover many topics but are not well-linked by an overall theme. The supports are unstable.

The sign hardware does not convey the "high standard" interpretive services recommended in the WHAMP (1999:126).

The need for these information signs is questionable. It may be more appropriate for visitors to just "enjoy the walk" without having their view and experience distracted by unnecessary signs.

5.3.3 Visitor Experience and Objectives

Visitor Experience Statement

Visitors arriving at the Arve Falls carpark are enticed from their vehicles to enjoy a mildly challenging walk to the beautiful Arve Falls, either on route to Devils Backbone or on their exit journey. Visitors will be able to experience the beauty of the natural scenery and the pleasant walk without being distracted by unnecessary signage.

Planning Objectives

- To minimise impact on all identified site values.
- To provide visitor information that is minimal, functional and promotes visitor satisfaction and safety.
- To create and develop a sense of continuity between the precincts (i.e. the park entrance, Waratah Lookout, Arve Falls, Devils Backbone).
- To provide high quality visitor facilities that have nil or negligible impact on the environment and meet the standards specified in the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*.

5.3.4 Response to the Issues

Visitor Facilities

Emphasis in the Arve Falls precinct will focus on the experience of the natural scenery and the pleasant walk.

Facilities within the precinct will be minimal.

Maintain the Arve Falls track to a Class 2 – 3 (AS 2156) standard so it can be used by people with a wide range of fitness and skill levels.

Information, Interpretation and Directional Signs

Develop a location sign that has a design theme and furniture in common with the other three visitor services precincts to create a sense of arrival and continuity between visitor precincts.

Professional design and interpretation services will be employed to assist with developing a cohesive sign design which links the visitor precincts.

The interpretation signs for this walk will be limited to the Arve Falls carpark, the start of the walk and at the lookout above the Arve Falls.

Interpretation signs will be removed from along the walking track.

5.4 Devils Backbone Precinct

5.4.1 Current Situation

Human nature decrees that most visitors will drive to the end of the Hartz Road just to see what is there. From the turning circle, at the end of the road, limited but beckoning views of the Devils Backbone can be obtained.

Unlike the Waratah Lookout where the majority of visitors stay only long enough to enjoy the 10 minute return walk, visitors to Devils Backbone spend a substantial amount of time in the carpark area as they prepare to undertake one or more of the walks or picnic from their car boot.

Conversely, some visitors only stay long enough to have a quick look at the information booth before driving away. When the weather is poor many visitors choose not to leave their vehicles at all.

A walker registration and information booth is located on the edge of the turning circle and is highly visible. It presents full colour information panels, visitor comment cards and a walker's registration book.

Most of the walking tracks to the major scenic attractions of the park start here. The Lake Osborne walking track commences on the right hand side of the turning circle at its entrance while the track to Hartz Peak, Lake Esperance, Ladies Tarn and Hartz Lake commences on the southern side of the turning circle near the information booth. These tracks were rerouted in the 1990s to commence at the current locations.

The derelict Hartz hut which is located about 70 metres from the carpark to the south-east, was demolished under archaeological supervision in 1995. Samples of early graffiti have been salvaged for interpretation purposes.

The existing carpark is a single loop turning circle with non-designated vehicle parking bays located at the end of the unsealed Hartz Road. Some restrictions exist for small buses and larger campervans due to variable road conditions and limited carparking capacity. The current capacity of the carpark is approximately twenty conventional vehicles assuming they are efficiently parked at right-angles. The turning circle is signposted as a one-way loop circuit.

There are currently no toilet facilities provided in this precinct.

A day shelter at the Devils Backbone precinct would improve visitor safety, orientation, experience, and comfort while the provision of a toilet will reduce the incidence of vegetation trampling and pollution.

5.4.2 Issues and Considerations

Refer to Section 3 (Existing Conditions) for a description of the values at the site of a proposed day shelter next to the turning circle.

Visitor Facilities

There is a trend towards short-break visitors who are looking for a range of attractions to visit from an accommodation base. It is likely that these visitors will be first-time visitors. This segment is generally less prepared for variable weather conditions.

Currently the precinct essentially acts only as a transit point for the more adventurous visitor to access the majority of the park's premier walks and attractions.

In poor weather, the unprepared or less hardy visitor often leaves without any meaningful experience of the park's alpine environment or WHA values.

School groups and other community-based organisations are not well catered for. Currently, these visitors gather and organise for their walk in sometimes exposed conditions.

There is no toilet facility provided. As a result there is a considerable amount of trampling of vegetation and toilet waste from visitors needing to use the bush.

Existing visitor impacts at the day use site include the gravelled surface of the carpark, the walking tracks that commence from here as well as various, less obvious tracks that have resulted from the lack of toilet facilities.

On fine days the carpark often fills to capacity with vehicles being parked back along the Hartz Road.

The considerations associated with protecting the values from impacts associated with construction of a day use shelter are described below.

Physical Values (Climate, Geodiversity)

The climatic conditions are variable and frequently not conducive to outdoor activity, particularly for the casual visitor or tourist who is not equipped for poor weather.

The following information comes from a report by Sharples (1992).

Dolerite bedrock is exposed at the surface in places around the turning circle, with the soil (plus talus) thickness varying from nil to 3.0 metres or more.

While the clayey dolerite soils are likely to be moderately permeable, where they are poorly drained, then the soils may be prone to water-logging and bogginess.

Landslip risk is negligible.

The introduction of construction materials such as gravel may introduce weeds or pathogens.

Poor design and management of storm water drainage and silt trap may cause erosion, siltation and/or ground destabilisation.

No sites of geoconservation significance are listed on the Tasmanian Geoconservation Database for any feature within the VSS.

Biological Values (Flora, Fauna)

No significant vegetation values have been identified for the site of the proposed day shelter works (Walsh, 1992). This has been confirmed through recent internal assessment of the proposed site.

Within six kilometres of the Devils Backbone VSS are three flora species that are listed under State or Commonwealth legislation. None of these species have been located at the site of the proposed shelter in the Devils Backbone precinct or in the other precincts. See Section 3.2.2.

The precinct has been impacted by past fire and disturbance by road construction and visitation and as such the condition of the vegetation is reduced in comparison to other more pristine areas of the WHA.

The construction of the proposed day shelter will not affect the conservation status of WHA botanical values.

The proposed removal of six individual trees will not affect the conservation status of the *Eucalyptus coccifera* woodland found in the vicinity of the turning circle.

The area is valuable for the interpretation of flora values including the presentation of subalpine eucalypt woodlands (dominated by endemic and cold-tolerant eucalypts such as *E. coccifera* and *E. subcrenulata*), *Nothofagus* rainforest and alpine vegetation which have world heritage significance.

It is important that the quality of the interpretation reflects the importance of the region's flora.

There is some potential for increased trampling of vegetation around the proposed visitor shelter due to increased use of the site if connecting tracks are not well located.

A recent internal assessment of the site confirmed that there are not likely to be any threatened fauna issues.

There is potential that works associated with implementing this plan may affect some vertebrate and/or invertebrate individuals.

The presence of the moss froglet (*Bryobatrachus nimbus*) that has its type locality in the Hartz Mountains and the threat of Chytrid disease to this species present a unique educational opportunity.

The park is the type locality for many invertebrate animals of world heritage significance which could be interpreted.

Cultural Values (Aboriginal, Historic, Social, Landscape, Wilderness)

Aboriginal heritage sites are unlikely, but if they were to occur, they would be significant.

It is possible that works associated with implementing this plan may still reveal Aboriginal heritage sites even though the potential is considered to be low.

There is potential that works may still reveal European archaeological evidence associated with the earlier occupation of the Hartz hut even though the potential for this is considered to be low.

The local community support the development of a shelter.

From the seen area analysis (see figure 2), the shelter is likely to be partially visible through the trees from short sections of the start of track to Lake Esperance near Geeves Monument. Parked vehicles and the gravelled surface of the carpark are moderately visible from this location on the track.

The existing carpark and proposed shelter do not intrude into the views from the majority of the walking track to and from Hartz Peak. The proposed shelter is likely to partially screen the parked vehicles and the carpark from the Lake Esperance track.

The entire panorama of the Devils Backbone is not fully revealed from the carpark.

The main attractions of the park are only revealed and come into view after progressing along the walking track if the weather permits.

Any new infrastructure in the park could potentially diminish wilderness quality. However the impact of the proposed shelter is minimised by locating the

building adjacent to the existing turning circle and minimising encroachment into non-impacted areas.

Weeds and Plant Diseases

There are no records of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* in the park but there is a *Phytophthora* Management Area in the distant south-west of the park.

Site works, by their nature are often associated with the introduction and/or spread of weed seed and disease. Active management is required to limit this effect.

There is potential for construction vehicles, machinery and equipment to introduce and/or spread *Phytophthora* and weeds.

5.4.3 Visitor Experience and Objectives

Visitor Experience Statement

Visitors are well oriented, knowing which walks are available, the degree of difficulty involved and exactly where to go to begin their chosen walk. They can easily find refuge from adverse weather conditions and their basic needs will be met. Visitors find the facilities well presented and functional.

Visitors will have the opportunity to find out about the park's alpine environment, WHA values and history even when the weather is poor.

Planning Objectives

The following objectives are from the WHAMP (1999: 130, 170 - 171):

- Provide for recreation opportunities that are based on the special features of the WHA and take account of opportunities not available elsewhere in the State.
- Manage visitor activities and infrastructure to provide a quality experience for users.
- Design and engineer facilities to be durable, low maintenance, cost appropriate and cost effective (that is, so that capital and running costs are commensurate with anticipated use levels and environmental sensitivity).
- Design and engineer facilities to be unobtrusive and, as far as practicable, clad with natural materials whose texture and colour complement or match the surrounding environment.
- Design and engineer facilities with a consistent or integrated design for each visitor services zone or site. However, allow for different styles and types of facility to be developed between zones and sites to complement the special qualities of individual sites and to avoid duplication of recreation settings.

Further planning objectives are:

- To minimise impact on all identified site values.
- To provide a shelter for visitors for both comfort and safety reasons and encourage less hardy visitors to stay and gain a WHA experience.
- To provide sufficient carparking to cope with most demand situations over the next 5 years.
- To provide a building which has a sculptural appearance that compliments the rolling nature of the Devils Backbone and blends well with the colours and textures of the landscape.

- To develop a visitor and walker reception facility that is intuitively useable, functional and promotes visitor satisfaction, education and safety.
- To best present the scenery and landscape values given the carpark's current location.
- To develop interpretation that includes the historic context of the area and the significance of the WHA.
- To create and develop a sense of continuity between the precincts (i.e. the park entrance, Waratah Lookout, Arve Falls, Devils Backbone).

5.4.4 Response to the Issues

Proposed Visitor Facilities

Day Shelter

It is proposed that a day visitor shelter be constructed adjacent to the turning circle in the Devils Backbone precinct to improve visitor safety, orientation, experience, and comfort.

Its function is to:

enable visitors to organise and orientate themselves under shelter before and/or after undertaking one or more of the walks;

provide a degree of comfort to visitors where they are unable to undertake the walks; and

provide interpretative information about the WHA values.

It is proposed that the shelter be located immediately adjacent to the carpark turning circle on its southern side to take advantage of the views to the south which are possible due to the open nature of the surrounding vegetation.

The scale of the shelter is determined to match current visitor use and also to account for future growth in visitor numbers. See Sections 3.6 (Future Potential for WHA Presentation) and 4.1 (Regional Tourism). The proposed structure is to be moderate in size with a floor area of approximately 100 square metres. It is expected that this capacity is required to match the demand of peak and shoulder periods.

The shelter's curved shape (lenticular) is designed to reflect the surrounding landscape and is considered an improvement on the traditional square-shaped building.

The orientation and shape of the building minimises the area of the shelter seen by visitors entering the carpark turning circle. A visual aid for the proposed day use shelter has been provided in figure 4.

To blend with the surrounding environment, it is proposed that non-reflective, natural colours (such as Colorbond 'Bushland') be used on metal surfaces together with timber for the external cladding.

The footings of the shelter will mostly sit on exposed bedrock that is devoid of vegetation and will only require minimal clearing of vegetation.

Some basic site furniture within the shelter construction is proposed to allow for wilderness landscape appreciation, picnicking and walk preparation.

Rubbish will not be collected from the site. Visitors will be encouraged through signage to take their litter home or dispose of appropriately.

Toilet

A new toilet facility will be provided next to the proposed visitor shelter on the edge of the turning circle and adjacent to the proposed shelter so that it is universally accessible by visitors. It will be connected to the day shelter by timber decking. The toilet will utilise a sealed vault, pump-out system for waste removal.

A Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) process under the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area's New Proposals and Impact Assessment process (pages 66 -72 of the WHA plan) and other necessary planning approvals processes are to be completed prior to undertaking construction of the proposed day use shelter and toilet facilities.

It is anticipated that facilities will be completed in readiness for the summer period of late 2006.

Vehicle Parking

Additional vehicle parking may be constructed on the northern side of the turning circle and linked to the existing turning circle, if the need arises.

Specialist advice will be obtained before committing to this option. The carpark will be designed and engineered according to the newly determined capacity and assessed via the Reserve Activity Assessment process. Other planning approvals will be obtained as necessary.

All roads and carparks will comply with relevant Australian standards and adhere to the prescriptions in this plan.

Information, Interpretation and Directional Signs

A location sign that has a design theme and furniture in common with the other three visitor services precincts will be developed to create a sense of arrival and continuity between visitor precincts.

Interpretation for the proposed day shelter should include themes such as the WHA, the moss froglet, alpine (and primitive) vegetation and the geoheritage of world heritage significance.

Interpretation for the new shelter should include a reference to the original Hartz hut and its history. Sections of the old Hartz hut's graffiti-covered internal wall panels should also be incorporated into the interpretation displays.

Professional design and interpretation services will be employed to assist with developing a cohesive sign design which links the four precincts.

Protection of Values during Construction

PWS staff will brief contractors about the *Environmental and Visitor Management Plan* (see Appendix 2) and the prescriptions contained in this plan to minimise impacts on values during construction.

The supervising PWS officer will report any nests or unusual sightings of fauna prior to construction commencing to the PWS manager and seek specialist advice.

A historic heritage specialist will supervise all excavations.

Archaeological discoveries will be reported to PWS historic heritage staff for advice.

An Aboriginal heritage trained PWS officer will supervise all excavations.

The supervising PWS officer will report all Aboriginal sites discovered to the Director, in accordance with the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1976*.

If Aboriginal heritage sites are found then work at the general location must be stopped and an Aboriginal Heritage Officer be contacted.

Any discovered Aboriginal heritage sites will not be deliberately disturbed unless the Director determines there is no practicable alternative and a written authority has been issued under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1976*.

Quarrying guidelines in the Walking Track Management Manual and *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003* must be followed with regard to the supply of additional off-site fill material for any construction activities.

The shelter and toilet must be located as close as possible to the carpark to minimise disturbance of vegetation. Use existing disturbed sites or areas exposed dolerite rock for facilities.

Further specialist advice should be sought for any additional facility such as a carpark.

Prepare site rehabilitation plans, documenting active rehabilitation works for any new developments in accordance with the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*.

Contractors undertaking works in the park will be required to adhere to the guidelines for 'Storm water Run-off Control' provided in the *Environmental and Heritage Management Plan* (Appendix 2) and other provisions of the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*.

Minimise direct impacts on all flora associated with the site retaining as many existing trees as possible.

Contractors undertaking works in the park are required to adhere to the guidelines for Vegetation Removal specified by the *Environmental and Heritage Management Plan* (Appendix 2) and other provisions of the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*.

Disturbance of plants with known world heritage values should be avoided where possible although it is recognised that most of these species are widespread, common and well reserved in the WHA.

In areas subject to rehabilitation and direct planting, plant species will be restricted to local provenance native plant species, preferably salvaged from the construction site.

Store and reuse small plants that need to be removed from the construction site before considering the use of cultivated stock for rehabilitation purposes.

Contractors undertaking works in the park will be required to adhere to the guidelines for *Phytophthora* hygiene specified by the *Environmental and Heritage Management Plan* (Appendix 2) and other provisions of the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*.

Contractors undertaking works in the park will be required to adhere to the guidelines for controlling the introduction of weeds specified by the *Environmental and Heritage Management Plan* (Appendix 2), provisions of the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003* and the *World Heritage Area Weed Management Plan 2002*.

Monitoring

It is proposed that a simple monitoring program be set up that will test the following Key Desired Outcome:

There is no expansion of tracks or decrease in vegetation cover through trampling or damage by visitors in the vicinity of the proposed visitor shelter at the Devil's Backbone precinct.

A series of photo monitoring points adjacent to the shelter will be established to determine if vegetation is being damaged and if walking tracks previously closed are being used to any great extent.

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- Sharples, C. 1992, *Hartz Mountains Visitor Services Site Earth Science Survey* unpublished report prepared for Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage, Hobart.
- Sinclair Knight Merz 2001, *Hartz Mountain Road, Geeveston Condition Assessment and 10 Year Works Programme* Final Report to Parks and Wildlife Service, Hobart.
- Walsh, D. 1992, *Vegetation Survey re Hartz Mountains National Park proposed picnic and interpretation site developments Site Survey 50-27-17* unpublished report for Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage, Hobart.

Appendix 1

Day Use – Comfort (mid, complex, visitor centre)

Day Use – Comfort visitor sites cater to visitors who stopover for up to two hours to look at features usually on the way to another destination. Such visits often incorporate a drink/meal break, a stretch of the legs or a short walk and viewing natural and/or cultural features that may be accompanied by interpretive signs. Such sites also provide the opportunity for day-long visits that are restricted to the site and are often associated with family or other social group outing. Activities may include barbeques/picnics, as well as group recreation such as ball games. These sites may also provide a base for beach activities, boating and fishing in adjacent areas. These sites provide a natural (or rural) setting that foster a sense of space and freedom. Visitors to such sites can enjoy for low risk experiences associated with high standards facilities. Hazards are managed to a neutral or moderate level depending on the characteristics of the site and the level of service provided.

Appendix 2

Barwick & Associates

Landscape Planners & Architects

VISITOR SHELTER AND TOILET FACILITY

HARTZ MT. NATIONAL PARK

for Parks and Wildlife Service

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this plan is to minimise environmental and heritage damage during construction. (PWS, Hartz Consultancy Brief, version 1, 23/9/2005)

METHODOLOGY

The method for developing this Management Plan will be as follows:

1. Identify the items of environmental value on the site, or that could be affected by the construction project.
2. List the basic elements of the project that will be carried out.
3. Consider the construction procedures, and which could potentially cause a negative impact.
4. Identify the natural values of the site that are likely to be disturbed or otherwise impacted by the works activities.
5. Outline the management and protection safeguards that are to be put in place to reduce impact, and rehabilitate after the works have been carried out.

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

1. Items of environmental value

All natural areas are vulnerable to human impact, and although no specific species or features have been marked for particular attention on this site, there will be ongoing monitoring for aboriginal heritage values. The Contractor is required to be careful and vigilant in all activities, and following site items have been identified as having environmental value, that could potentially be affected in some way, by the construction project:

- Earth
- Water
- Air
- Vegetation
- Fauna

2. Basic elements of the project

The project will consist of the following basic elements:

- Shelter structure
- Footpaths and other ground works associated with the shelter
- Elevated walkway
- Toilet structure
- Services
- Temporary structures and other works required to allow the buildings etc to be constructed

3. Construction procedures

The following construction procedures and elements will be required to complete the project, and some or all could potentially cause a negative impact on the site's environmental values.

Careful and vigilant construction procedures/practices in relation to all these items will be effective in minimising any negative impacts.

(* Marks activities that will be confined to the established carpark, with negligible impacts expected)

- *Transport
- *Materials storage, site administration, etc.
- *Personal comforts of builders
- Site boundary definition and protection of 'no go' areas
- Unsuitable weather conditions
- *Temporary services
- Removal of reusable materials
- Site stripping (Very minimal expected. Generally confined to toilet base pad)
- Formwork and scaffolding
- Foundations
- Walls and roofs
- Cleaning up
- Site rehabilitation
- Rubbish
- *Vehicle control

4. Natural values of the site that are likely to be disturbed

Based on the items identified above, it is anticipated that the following natural values of the site might be disturbed or otherwise impacted by the works activities:

Earth (Anticipated to be minimal)

- Rock
- Sub-soil
- Topsoil
- Mulch/humus

Water (*Anticipated to be minimal)

- *Soil erosion
- *Siltation
- *Contaminated runoff
- *Storm water
- *Clean water

Air (*Anticipated to be minimal)

- Noise pollution
- *Dust
- *Odours
- Strong winds

Vegetation (*Anticipated to be minimal)

- *Root damage
- *Canopy damage
- *Compaction of roots
- Temporary working over vegetated areas
- *Vegetation removal

- Vegetation reinstatement after completion
- *Seed collection
- *Saving slashed materials
- *Temporary relocation of plants
- Diseases and plant pathogens (*Phytophthora* Hygiene to be undertaken)

Fauna (Possible but most likely N/A)

- Habitat removal
- Trapping within enclosures
- Frightening
- Interference with the construction works

5. Management and protection safeguards

The following management and protection safeguards are to be put in place to reduce any potential negative environmental impacts arising from the works, and to rehabilitate disturbed areas after the works have been carried out. Contractors are expected to work carefully and responsibly at all times.

SPECIFICATION

Works site plan

Before undertaking any works on the site, the Contractor shall make an assessment of the works site, and the activities that will be required to support the construction works.

Make a list of all activities to be accommodated near the works, including site offices, vehicle parking, materials stockpiles, timber cutting areas, generators, power supply, etc. All these ancillary activities shall be kept off the site of the shelter and other construction works, and shall be located on the existing carpark. After approval, securely fence off the area of the carpark that is to be used for the works depot.

Works depot (Confined to the established carpark area)

Locate all activities possible within the works depot, including toilets, work breaks, vehicle parking, administration, etc. All vehicle movements shall be confined to the existing carpark and works depot. Store all materials, and cover all piles of loose materials with Hessian or similar. Bring the building materials to the site progressively, as required for use. Regularly cart away all rubbish and waste materials. Keep the site clean and tidy at all times.

At the conclusion of the works tidy up and remove all accumulated and unused materials, etc. Remove all temporary fencing, and reinstate the carpark to its original condition.

Limited site extent

Before commencing any on-ground works, the Contractor shall make an assessment of the minimum working area required to carry out the work. Ensure that the area is sufficient for all necessary building activities, including scaffolding and boxing. The Contractor shall mark the proposed area on a copy of the site plan, and submit to the Supervisor for approval. More than one working enclosure may be required to allow for the different elements of the construction.

After approval from the Supervisor, this area shall be marked out with a fence 1m high, of star pickets not more than 3m apart, and red plastic safety mesh. The mesh shall be securely wired onto the posts, with at least 3 wires per post, and shall be maintained as a fully-functioning fence throughout the entire period of the contract works. No activities shall be undertaken on the site before erection of the boundary fence. No activities shall be undertaken at any time on the natural ground outside the limit of the fence. Nothing shall at any time be thrown, dropped or discharged onto any natural ground outside the fence.

No vehicles shall be permitted to enter the works site at any time, but shall be confined to the existing carpark (including the works depot).

Clearing by others

Under the coordination of the Supervisor, officers of the Parks & Wildlife Service (PWS) will selectively clear the works site, and remove and store some plants that are eventually to be restored after completion of the works.

Once this clearing has been completed, the Contractor may move onto the delineated site.

Hygiene (*Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC) Hygiene procedures to be followed.)

A danger to natural areas is the spread of weeds and plant diseases. Such material is usually brought onto a building site through the transfer of dirt on vehicles, boots or clothing. Sometimes adverse material is also carried in with building materials from an infected quarry or other unhygienic materials store.

To avoid the spread of weeds and diseases, carry out the following controls:

- Follow the Parks and Wildlife hygiene procedures for *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC), which can be downloaded from <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/veg/phytop/manage.html>
- Inspect any source quarries, and refuse material that is weedy, or from a weedy environment that might have spread weed seeds around.
- Ensure that all vehicles entering the works depot or construction site are cleaned of mud and vegetative material before they enter. All vehicles are to be confined to the existing carpark, at all times.
- Check workers' boots and clothing to ensure they are clean and clear of built up dirt or vegetative material before they enter the works site.

Soap and water is the best cleaning agent.

Reject any unacceptable equipment and materials before they enter the site. Take care not to clean off dirt in a location that could easily wash or be transferred onto the natural areas around the site.

Ground protection

The shelter has been designed with pier footings so that ground disturbance will be kept to an absolute minimum.

Within the fenced area, lay a continuous blanket of thick jute matting over all areas of ground (including any areas of vegetation) that are not required for the building footings or underground services. Provide at least 150mm lap at all joins, including side laps. Pin the jute in place with galvanised pins at about 2m centres. To guard against soil compaction, never park any vehicles on any areas of vegetation, or under the canopy of trees.

Maintain the jute matting in place throughout the entire extent of the construction activities. At completion of all works the jute should be carefully rolled up with all its contents intact, and carted away to the Council refuse area.

Storm Water Run-off control

Note: It is expected that contaminated or siltation run-off will be negligible in this contract. due to minimal excavation and soil disturbance associated with construction activity. Accordingly, it is not anticipated that silt control measures will need to be undertaken. However, details are included here as a precaution, and they should be applied if required.

Before opening up any area of ground, control all water run-off and run-on associated with the construction site. Prevent water running onto the construction site from the associated works depot in the carpark by using straw bales (only if sanitised or certified free of seed), sandbags or a silt fence constructed from geo-fabric. Prevent water running off the works site onto the surrounding natural areas by using straw bales (only if sanitised or certified free of seed), sandbags or a silt fence constructed from geo-fabric. Ensure the silt fences and all silt-trapping devices are regularly cleaned out. Discharge onto vegetated ground if possible.

Ground clearing

Do not remove any vegetation (including overhanging branches of trees), unless absolutely necessary, and with the explicit approval of the Supervisor.

If vegetation must be removed, first check with PWS to ascertain whether they wish to collect seed from either the standing or cut vegetative material. To remove vegetation, first cut off the tops and windrow at the edge of the site, or stockpile this material in a clean location on the carpark within the works depot, for reuse. Next scrape off any soil and root material, and stockpile at the edge of the works site or in the works depot, for reuse. Next remove any site rock material or waste from the site, and store in the works depot for reuse.

Do not cart away any native rock, topsoil or vegetation, but retain for reuse.

As soon as possible after completion of this part of the construction, first return the materials, including soil and roots, and suitable rock fragments. Lastly apply the slashed vegetation tops as a mulch and seed source. Large or woody vegetation may need to be cut into manageable lengths, or preferably mulched.

Tree pruning

If overhanging limbs are to be cleared away, ensure these are properly pruned off with a saw, not bashed or broken off.

Cut each limb individually, by first docking off the end to about 1m away from the trunk union. Then undercut the limb near the trunk to prevent bark stripping down, and finally cut off the branch from the top, at exactly the branch collar point. Do not apply any chemicals or sealing agents to the cut, and never fill holes in a tree with concrete or other materials.

Cart away the pruned wood, but in natural areas leave docked heads and small or mulched woody material for rehabilitation work.

Work off the building platform

Once the building has progressed far enough, most construction activities should be able to be carried out on the building platform. Once this stage is reached, confine all possible activities to this area.

Completion

As noted above, at the conclusion of the works carry out the following tasks:

- Roll up the protective jute from the works site complete with all its contents, and cart away to the Council refuse area.
- Cart away all unused and excess materials from the works depot.
- Carefully remove all temporary fences, silt fences, security fences, etc.
- Reinststate any areas of bare ground in the natural areas by re-applying the previously stripped site topsoils and broken rock, and then applying the slashed tops of trees and shrubs as a mulch and seed source.
- Clean up the old works depot in the carpark, reinststate the carpark and leave in original condition.

Appendix 3

Submissions received on the Draft Hartz Mountains National Park Visitor Services Site Plan May 2006

Name	Organisation
Mr Kevin Doran	himself
Mrs Pauline Kile	(Former member) Geeveston Branch of the Country Women's Association
Mr Robert Campbell	Tasmanian National Parks Association
Mr Mike Pemberton	Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment

Figure 1 - Hartz Mountains Visitor Service Site

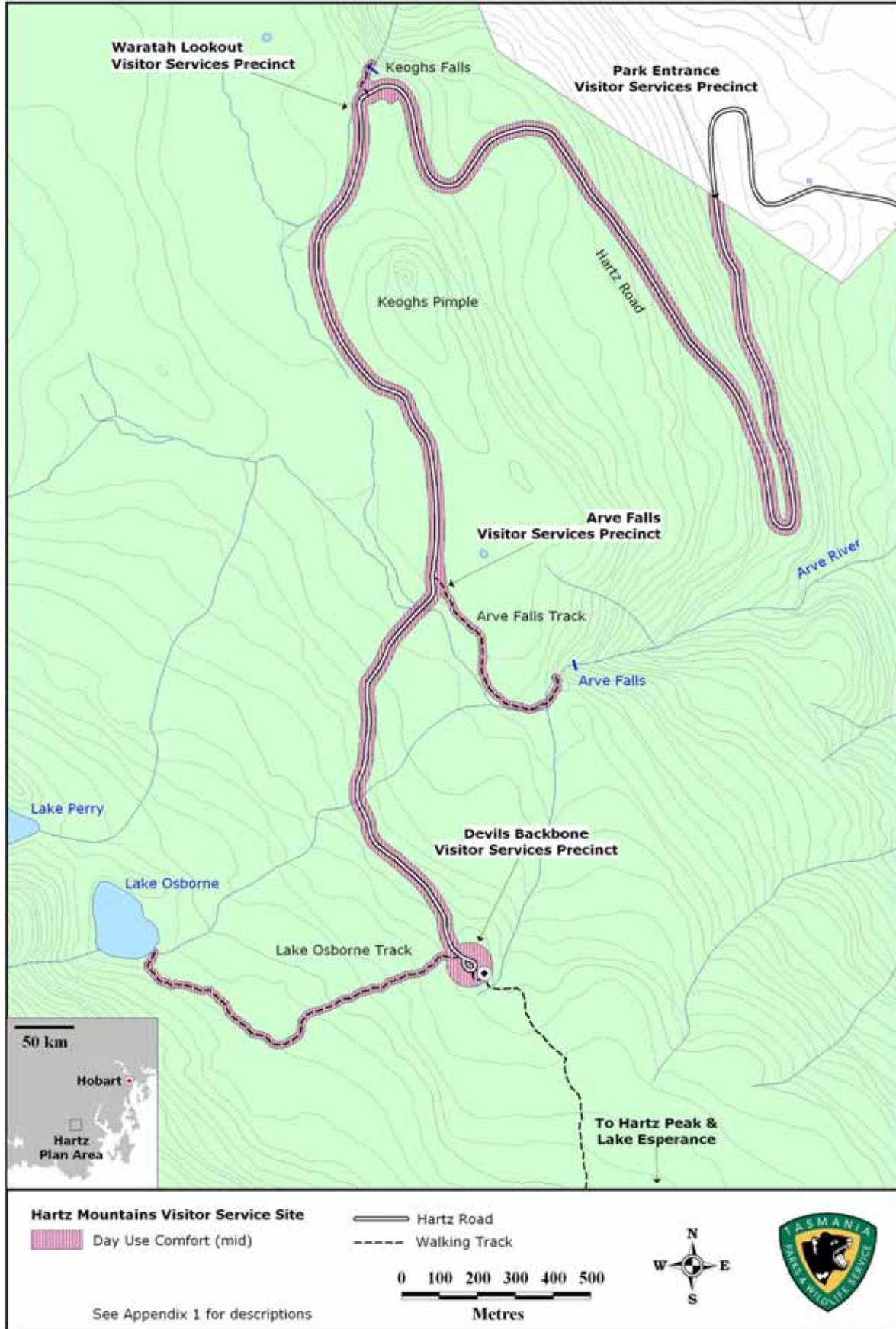


Figure 2 - Line of sight visibility to proposed shelter

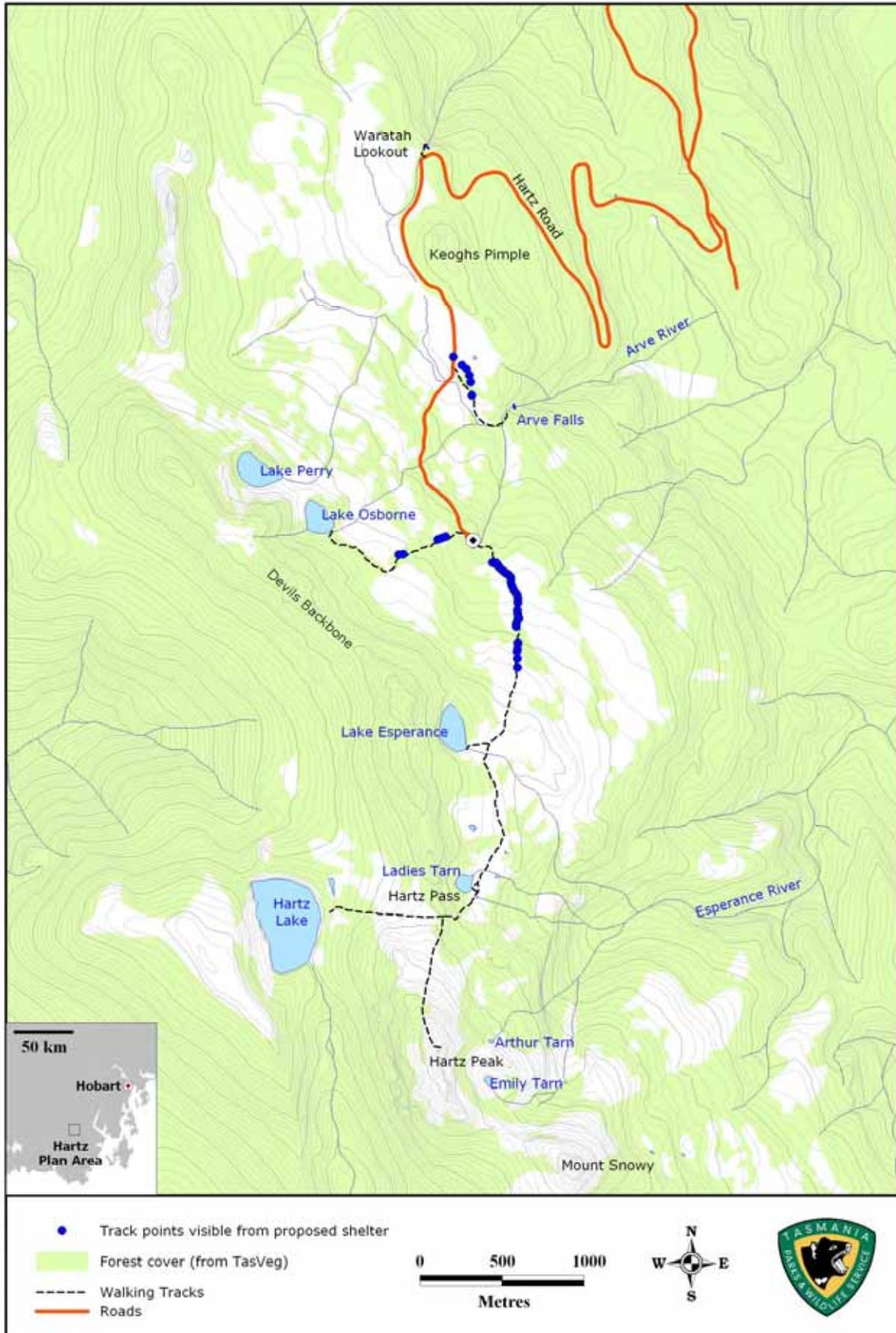


Figure 3 - Wilderness Quality (based on National Wilderness Inventory)

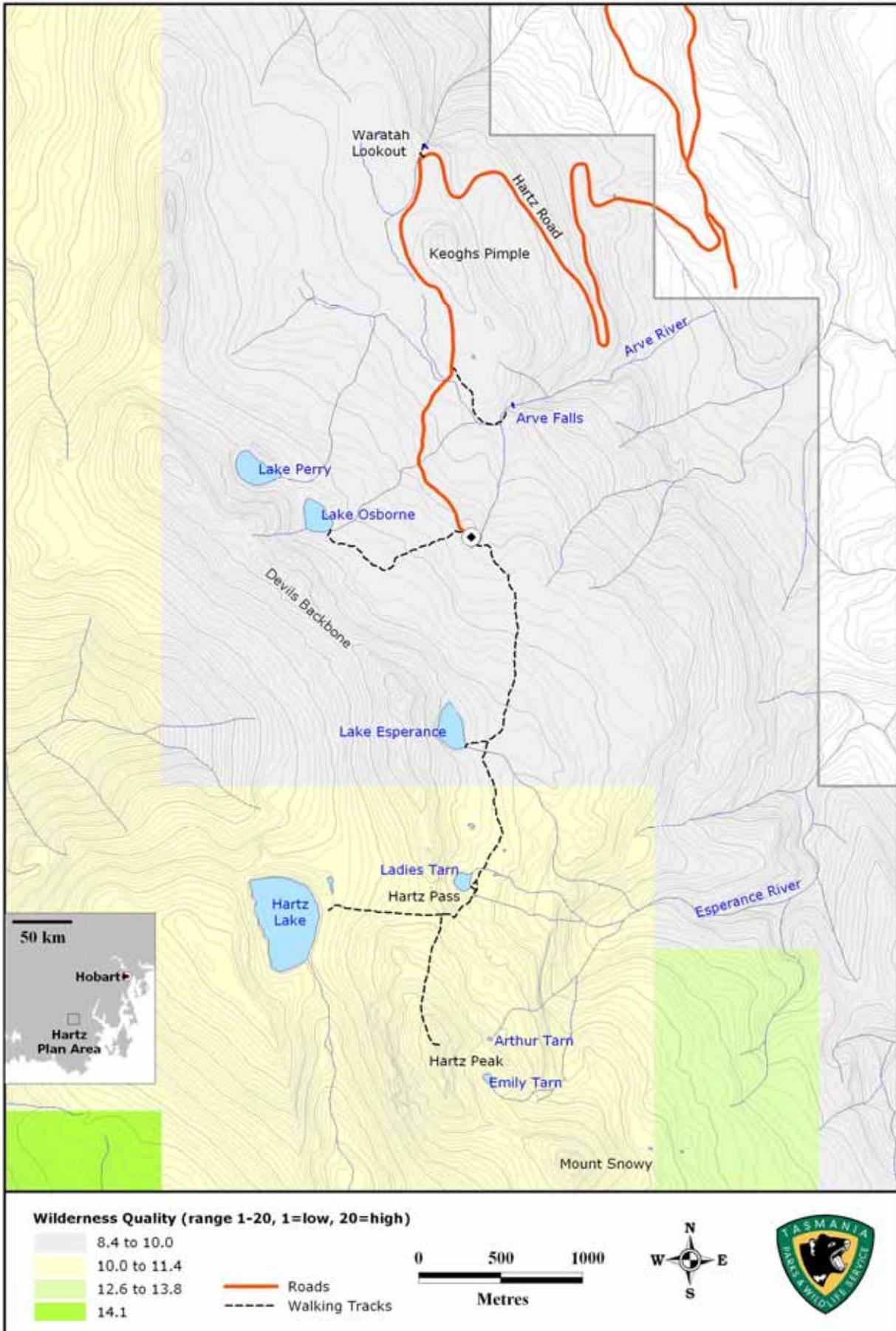


Figure 4 Visual Aid Concept Design of Day Visitor Shelter

