Pencil Pine-Cradle Valley

Visitor Services Zone Plan 2006
Pencil Pine - Cradle Valley
Visitor Services Zone Plan
2006
Pencil Pine - Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone Plan 2006

This site plan has been prepared under the provisions of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999, (p. 60, 171) and provides for the development and upgrading of facilities within the Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone.

APPROVAL

This Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone Plan 2006 was approved by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Ministerial Council on 9 March 2006.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (the WHA) covers some 1.38 million hectares or about 20% of Tasmania and includes Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park.

The framework for management of the WHA is the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999* (WHAMP). 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.

Under the WHAMP, development within Visitor Services Zones is guided by detailed, non-statutory Visitor Services Zone or Site Plans which expand upon the general provisions of the WHAMP and give special consideration to the coordinated and integrated development of these small but intensively used areas. One of the key Visitor Services Zones identified in the WHAMP is the Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone (the VSZ). The Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone is one of the prime access points to the WHA – a destination that is likely to continue to increase in popularity in coming years.

This Visitor Services Zone Plan (hereafter, the Zone Plan 2006) follows from a previous plan in effect since July 1993 (hereafter, the 1993 Zone Plan) and is intended to provide a basis for planning and management decisions within the VSZ over the next 5-10 years.

This Zone Plan has been developed by the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS). It uses as its base and draws information from a Draft Visitor Services Zone Plan (hereafter the draft Zone Plan 2002) developed by Inspiring Place Pty Ltd, January 2002.

The draft Zone Plan 2002 consulted widely with PWS staff, the Nature Conservation and Cultural Heritage Branches of the Resource Management and Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment. Advice and information was also gathered from a range of other agencies and community based organisations including the World Heritage Area Consultative Committee, PWS Cradle Mountain Infrastructure Committee, the PWS District Community Consultative Committee and Friends of Cradle Valley. It was released for public comment in January 2002 and resulted in 53 written submissions, which have been taken into account in the present Zone Plan 2006. Copies of the "Review of Public Comment" for the draft Zone Plan 2002 can be made available on request.
In summary, the Zone Plan 2006 gives effect to the following concepts:

- catering for the increasing number of visitors – particularly their infrastructure, and access needs – without degrading the physical, biological or cultural heritage values of the park;

- developing and enhancing the special features and distinctive roles of the main visitor precincts within Cradle Valley to provide a range of quality experiences suitable for a broad spectrum of visitors; and

- presenting Cradle Valley as a showcase of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Although not formally adopted, parts of the draft Zone Plan 2002 were progressed to completion. Sections relating to the road sealing and the shuttle bus service trial only required minor pathway approval under the WHAMP’s New Proposals and Impact Assessment process. During 2003 the road and car parks from Pencil Pine Creek including Waldheim, Connells Avenue and Dove Lake were sealed and a park transport system was introduced as part of the Cradle Tourism Development Plan (Inspiring Place et al 2003). Both of these changes have gone a long way towards reducing the traffic congestion on the national park’s roads and parking areas.

The draft Zone Plan 2002 also detailed the framework for major infrastructure redevelopment throughout the valley consisting of the construction of services mains between Dove Lake, Waldheim and the visitor centre including electricity, sewerage and communications. Integral to the services mains is the new walking track linking the visitor centre with Connells Avenue. There was an urgent need to progress management of sewage generated within the park. This was progressed though the major pathway of the WHAMP New Proposals and Impact Assessment process. This project has also been completed as part of the Cradle Tourism Development Plan (Inspiring Place et al 2003) providing enhanced facilities and more environmentally secure sewage management throughout the Visitor Services Zone.

The Zone Plan 2006 brings together further issues from the draft Zone Plan 2002. It prescribes strategies and actions for the development and enhancement of the four main visitor precincts within the VSZ: the Visitor Centre, Waldheim, Ronny Creek and Dove Lake. Each of these precincts will be developed to enhance its special qualities and to fulfil a distinct role, thereby offering visitors a range of opportunities and attractions.

**Visitor Centre Precinct**

In the immediate future, the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre will continue to function as the headquarters for park management. It will continue to provide visitor
orientation, information and interpretation for all visitors and a high level of visitor services and facilities. In the longer term, with the establishment of the Cradle Mountain Village, a new visitor centre will provide for visitor needs re park entry, visitor orientation, and a park shop. In either case, the precinct will function to enhance visitor awareness and experiences of the WHA. It will also have high quality easy walking tracks and be the starting point for the new track linking the visitor centre to Ronny Creek and the Overland Track. Shuttle bus stops are provided at the Visitor Centre and Snake Hill collecting passengers travelling into and out off the park. This strategy remains unchanged from the draft Zone Plan 2002.

**Ronny Creek Precinct** (including Connells Avenue junction).
Ronny Creek will continue to be used as an area for families to picnic and children to explore and enjoy the creek environment. The area of the former timber mill at Ronny Creek will continue to be rehabilitated. The existing staff accommodation at Connells Avenue junction will be removed and the sites rehabilitated. Facilities at Ronny Creek will be enhanced with the inclusion of shuttle bus shelter and toilet facilities. This has varied from the draft Zone Plan 2002 which planned to relocate car parking and facilities from Ronny Creek to Connells Avenue junction and rehabilitate the Ronny Creek site. This change is proposed to provide an uninterrupted first view of Cradle valley for people arriving rather than a foreground view of parked cars and buses. Shuttle buses will collect and set down passengers travelling both directions at Ronny Creek.

**Waldheim Precinct**
Emphasis in the Waldheim precinct will focus on the presentation of the park’s historic structures, early history and pioneers. Adhering to historic heritage conservation principles, maintenance may be carried out on the Waldheim chalet and nearby infrastructure to ensure the safety of visitors whilst ensuring that the simple/rustic character of the area is retained. A park shuttle bus stop and associated day use shelter and toilets will be provided to service the precinct. Only shuttle buses without trailers travelling into the park will stop at Waldheim. The precinct will also function as a link to local walking tracks. The Waldheim accommodation cabins will be maintained as basic low cost public accommodation operated by the Cradle Business Enterprise. This strategy remains unchanged from the draft Zone Plan 2002.

**Dove Lake Precinct**
Emphasis in the Dove Lake precinct will focus on the experience of the outstanding natural scenery within and viewed from the precinct. Facilities within the precinct will include a well designed and sited viewing shelter associated with a park shuttle bus stop, and limited parking. The proposed facilities will be of an appropriate standard and designed to have minimal visual impact. The precinct will continue to
serve as a major link to walking tracks, including tracks suitable for the majority of
visitors. Unused disturbed areas will be rehabilitated. This strategy reflects one of
the four options presented in the draft Zone Plan 2002.

Community consultation will be undertaken to clearly define the visitor experiences
to be provided at each of the precincts prior to detailed design work progressing.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (the WHA) covers some 1.38 million hectares or about 20% of Tasmania (Map 1.1). The WHA includes Tasmania’s four largest national parks: the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, the Southwest National Park, the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. Together, these and other areas recognised as having outstanding natural and cultural values, were inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1982 and expanded in size in 1989.

The overarching framework for management of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area 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 a monitoring system to evaluate whether the objectives are being achieved” (WHAMP 1999:12).

"The WHA is diverse both in the nature and distribution of natural and cultural values and in patterns and types of visitor use. Zoning is a way of recognising this diversity . . .” (WHAMP 1999:54). The zoning plan establishes where the major presentation points are to be, in recognition of the fact that Tasmania depends heavily on the WHA as a drawcard for visitors to the State, and that there is an expectation that visitors will be able to gain a first-hand 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.

Under the WHAMP, the development of Visitor Services Zones and Sites is guided by detailed, non-statutory Visitor Services Zone or Site Plans which expand upon the general provisions of the WHAMP and give special consideration to the coordinated and integrated development of these small but intensively used areas.

One of the key Visitor Services Zones identified in the WHAMP is the Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone (the Visitor Services Zone or VSZ). The Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone is one of the prime access points to the WHA. PWS estimates that 181 000 people visited Lake Dove in the 2003/4 financial year. This is the highest figure on record and comes at the end of a three year
expansion phase where visitor numbers increased by an average of 11% per year. Between 1995 and 2001, visitor numbers increased by an average of two per cent annually. Preliminary figures suggest that the expansion phase is at an end and that the difference between 2004/5 figures and that of the previous year will be in the order of two per cent. There are periods of increase and stability in visitor numbers for Cradle Mountain. This plan aims to develop a system that can cope with either situation.

This Visitor Services Zone Plan 2006 follows from a previous plan in effect since July 1993 and is intended to provide a basis for planning and management decisions within the VSZ over the next 10 years. It has been developed by the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and uses as its base and draws information from a Draft Visitor Services Zone Plan 2002 developed by Inspiring Place Pty Ltd.

1.2 The Visitor Services Zone

This plan applies to the Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone of Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park (the VSZ) as designated in the WHAMP. The VSZ extends from the park boundary at Pencil Pine Creek to Dove Lake, and covers a broad swathe of land following the Cradle Mountain Road and extending up the hillsides on either side of the valley (Map 1.2).

Much of this area is unsuitable for development because of steep slopes, the high conservation value of the undisturbed vegetation, and the scenic value of the corridor. This Visitor Services Zone Plan, therefore, focuses on the valley floor along the Cradle Mountain road as the area where visitors are likely to congregate and where services will need to be provided.

The Cradle Tourism Development Plan (Inspiring Place et al 2003) provides for development from Learys Corner along the northern approaches to the park and through the park to Dove Lake. That plan, which was prepared for the Cradle Valley Steering Committee (comprising State Government, Kentish Council, and Cradle Coast Authority representatives) through the Tourism Development Steering Committee (the State Government Head of Agency level committee appointed by the Premier to advise the Government on tourism matters), identifies a vision, priorities for tourism development and a process for implementation. The Plan does not alter the statutory responsibilities for managing the WHA values but looks at ways of achieving better integration with the use, development and management of land outside the WHA. It identifies the requirements for development for the Cradle Village area. It also details the introduction of the Park Transport System (shuttle service) and outlines the concept for the Cradle Mountain Village.
Map 1.1 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area
Map 1.2 Pencil Pine – Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone
1.3 Planning Objectives

This Visitor Services Zone 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 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (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). The WHAMP also provides a set of other objectives of management that are related to identifying values; protecting conserving and rehabilitating values; presenting values; engaging the community; and managing with excellence.

Of particular relevance to planning for Cradle Valley are the following objectives from the WHA Management Plan related to Visitor Services Zones:

"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 WHAMP also prescribes to "Design Visitor Service Zones and 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).

In addition to the objectives for the VSZ as defined in the WHAMP, the following more specific objectives, developed for the 1993 Zone Plan, have been adopted for the Zone Plan 2006:

- to manage and develop the VSZ as a major visitor access point to the WHA;

- to provide day and overnight visitors with a quality experience of the WHA, and to assist them to appreciate and enjoy their visit in safety;
to provide a range of non-intrusive recreation opportunities and facilities that present the special features of the area while catering for the needs and interests of a wide spectrum of visitors;

to minimise further disturbance of the natural environment by making optimal use of existing facilities and structures, and of areas already disturbed; and

to identify means of improving the basis for future planning and management decisions.

1.4 Zone Plan Structure

The Visitor Services Zone Plan is in three parts:

Chapter 1 (Introduction) gives a background to the Zone Plan and establishes the objectives for planning within the Visitor Services Zone.

Chapter 2 (Existing Conditions) describes the current situation in the VSZ in terms of its values, facilities, condition and current use.

Chapter 3 (Management Strategies for the Visitor Precincts) describes the future protection, use and development, including the upgrading of infrastructure within the VSZ.

A bibliography is included at the rear of the report where full details for the references used (shown in brackets with source page numbers noted where quotes are used) can be found.
CHAPTER 2
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The present condition of the Visitor Services Zone is a result of the interplay between natural processes and nearly 10,000 years of cultural activity. Most of the information in this chapter has been sourced from the draft Zone Plan 2002 with only minor changes. This chapter outlines the history of development within the VSZ and the current situation in terms of:

- a brief historical background to the current conditions within the VSZ (Section 2.1);
- a range of physical (climate, geology, geomorphology, soils, hydrology), biological (flora and fauna) and cultural values (Aboriginal heritage, historic heritage, aesthetic, wilderness and social values) (Section 2.2);
- the facilities presently found in the area (Section 2.3);
- current levels of use (Section 2.4); and
- rehabilitation efforts and their effectiveness (Section 2.5).

This information will provide the basis for a discussion of the management issues, strategies and actions recommended for the VSZ in Chapter 3.

2.1 BACKGROUND TO CURRENT CONDITIONS

Information in this section is summarised from both the 1993 Zone Plan and the draft Zone Plan 2002. A detailed history of Cradle Mountain area and its surrounds is found in Haygarth (1998).

Aboriginal use of the Cradle Mountain area is presently dated from the last ice age (i.e. less than 10,000 years ago) and is thought to have been non-permanent, probably consisting mostly of seasonal hunting excursions during the summer months.

Little evidence survives of the early European activities of hunting, surveying and mineral exploration. By the 1860s logging was being carried out along Pencil Pine River. During the 1870s over 25,000 super feet of native pines were felled along Dove River.
Some mining was carried out from about 1890 to 1920 between Cradle Mountain and the Pelion area, and several of the present-day walking tracks in this area are tracks that were originally blazed during this period. In about 1930, a small copper mine (the 'Welcome Home' mine) was worked along the Dove River, about 1km from the junction of Dove River and Pencil Pine Creek. However, mining in the area proved uneconomic and was eventually abandoned.

Trappers and hunters frequented the area but little has been recorded of these excursions.

According to a local landholder (R.E. Smith pers. comm. in PWS 1993), snarers and prospectors constructed many huts in the area prior to the 1920s. The death from exposure of one such trapper, a sixteen year old boy, Bert Hanson, in 1906 was the first recorded death of a European in the area and the naming of Hanson's Peak, to the east of Cradle Mountain, recalls this event.

In 1912 Kate and Gustav Weindorfer built a rustic home and guest chalet on a parcel of 200 acres (81ha) of third class Crown Land that Kate had purchased at Cradle Valley. The chalet, which they named 'Waldheim' ('forest home'), was sited in a sheltered position on the fringe of a forest near a running stream and was constructed from local materials using traditional bush carpentry.

The Weindorfers encouraged tourists to visit their remote guesthouse, and shared with them their enthusiasm for the area’s natural and scenic beauty. The Weindorfers' motto, hung on the wall at Waldheim, proclaimed:

'This is Waldheim,
Where there is no time
And nothing matters'

Kate Weindorfer died on 29 April 1916 and was buried at the Don cemetery.

Gustav and a small group of ardent supporters, including Major R E Smith and Fred Smithies, continued to campaign actively to have the Cradle Mountain area reserved. In May 1922, an area of 158 000 acres (63 943 hectares) between Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair was gazetted as Scenic Reserve under the Scenery Preservation Act 1915. The Reserve was divided into two sections – the Cradle Mountain Reserve in the north and the Lake St Clair Reserve in the south. Each section was managed by its own board, which in turn was administered by the Scenery Preservation Board. The Cradle Mountain Reserve was proclaimed a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1927.

Over the years Weindorfer added to the original chalet and constructed a number of outbuildings including a personal accommodation hut, a toilet, fowl shed and yard, stables, workshop, woodshed and bath-house. Weindorfer died on 5 May 1932 and
was buried in front of Waldheim chalet. Following his death, his friends bought the Weindorfer land to ensure its continued protection from logging interests, which were active on adjacent lands.

In 1935 the Scenery Preservation Board appointed Lionel Connell as the first permanent ranger at Cradle Mountain. Connell bought the Weindorfer land and continued to upgrade the facilities at Waldheim. Connell was responsible for the construction of the Trailside Museum and several other buildings and tracks at Waldheim and in the surrounding area.

Although Weindorfer had campaigned vigorously for improved roads into Cradle Valley to increase tourism and visitation, it was the demand for timber that provided the real impetus for road construction into the valley. In 1941 the Commonwealth Government, acting under its wartime powers, funded the major reconstruction of the Cradle Mountain Road from a rough cart track to an all-weather vehicular track.

Whereas previously timber-getters had only been able to remove whole logs from the valley, the new road allowed milled timber to be transported directly from Cradle Valley. A timber mill for King Billy pine operated in the valley from the 1930s through to the 1970s. It is estimated that in the five-year period between 1964 and 1969, over 1 million super feet of native pine were felled in the area.

In 1945 Weindorfer’s original landholding and most of the adjoining land owned by Major Smith (the principal private landholder in the valley) was resumed by the Crown and incorporated into the Cradle Mountain Reserve. By this time, annual visitation to Cradle Valley exceeded one thousand. The Waldheim chalet was extended and additional accommodation cabins were constructed. Other structures built during the 1940s include the Day Hut and Trailside Museum at Waldheim, the Dove Lake boatshed and Kitchen Hut.

The road to Dove Lake was constructed in 1965 by the Scenery Preservation Board to provide access for motorists to the magnificent view of Cradle Mountain from the shore of Dove Lake. During 2003 the road from Pencil Pine Creek to Waldheim and Dove Lake was upgraded and sealed to improve traffic flow and drainage, and to reduce erosion and dust pollution.

In 1971 the reserve was proclaimed a State Reserve under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970, and responsibility for the area was transferred from the Scenery Preservation Board to the newly formed National Parks and Wildlife Service.

At this time the land on which the mill and a private lodge (‘Blandfordia’) stood was resumed by the Crown for inclusion in the park. Logging ceased in the valley in 1972. The mill was removed and its site is now being actively rehabilitated, but the
old homestead (the Mt Kate house) and the Blandfordia Alpine Club remain and are in use.

The Waldheim chalet continued to be used for tourist accommodation until 1974 when it was considered beyond repair and demolished. In 1976 replicas of the original chalet (excluding its later additions) and the nearby bathhouse were built, using the same traditional bush carpentry techniques. The remaining cabins at Waldheim continue to operate as low cost accommodation, managed by PWS through the Cradle Business Enterprise (which is a retail cost/revenue enterprise within PWS, and pays an annual lease for the Waldheim cabins).

In the period following proclamation of the reserve, the Parks and Wildlife Service has built various facilities to assist with park management including workshops near the entry to the park and ranger housing. Three houses remain today at Connells Avenue junction, the most recent of which was built in the early 1980s. The small front office in another of the houses served as the park headquarters for many years.

In 1982 the three large national parks in western Tasmania (the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park, the then Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, and the Southwest National Park) were together nominated and accepted as a World Heritage Area. World Heritage listing gave formal recognition to the international significance of the natural and cultural values of the region including the VSZ. The WHA was enlarged in 1989.

The Parks and Wildlife Service established the Cradle Mountain Camping Ground in 1987. It was located outside the park in recognition that increased demands for such facilities could not be met in a sustainable way within the VSZ. At the time the camping ground was opened, all camping was prohibited within the VSZ.

The Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre, opened in December 1989, is located at the entrance to the park. The centre is a high quality facility designed to welcome and introduce visitors to the WHA.

The most recent development within the park is the Walking Track and Service Mains Infrastructure, which was opened in December 2003. This development provides a high standard, scenic, elevated timber walking track between the park entrance and Ronny Creek. The elevated track structure also supports new infrastructure services i.e. power, sewerage and communications with a design life of 25 plus years. These services are seen as essential management infrastructure to support the increasing numbers of visitors to the park, visitor management technologies, and to assist in limiting environmental impacts within the VSZ.
2.2 Physical, Biological and Cultural Values

The following section presents a brief overview of the physical, biological and cultural value of the VSZ and their significance. The descriptions of values are based on information contained in the 1993 Zone Plan and the results of studies conducted since then. Specialists of the Nature Conservation and Cultural Heritage Branches of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment (DPIWE) provided additional information to Inspiring Place in 2002.

The assessment of the significance of various values is based on:

- the criterion for which the WHA was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1989;
- nationally agreed systems for assessment (e.g. the Register of the National Estate);
- legislative frameworks (e.g. Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 and the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995);
- and/or
- existing policy agreements [e.g. the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) regarding establishment of a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative (CAR) system.

Professionally agreed systems of analysis have also been applied [e.g. the Tasmanian Geoconservation Data Base, the Visual Management System (Forestry Commission 1990), National Wilderness Index (Lesley and Maslen 1995) respectively]. In the case of social values, a systematic approach has been adopted, based on social values assessments conducted during the RFA process.\(^1\)

This information updates and expands on previous descriptions for the area as contained in the 1993 Zone Plan, the 1991 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Draft Resources and Issues report and the WHA nomination document produced in 1989.

In 1999 the criteria for listing of World Heritage properties were modified by UNESCO. DPIWE and PWS have completed a review of World Heritage Values of the TWWHA in response to the amended criteria and recent advances in knowledge. The following overview of values is based on the 1989 criteria under which the TWWHA is recognised rather than the amended 1999 criteria.

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\(^1\) The Tasmanian-Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process included investigations to identify which forested areas of the State have potential National Estate significance (PLUC 1997). The RFA process included social values assessments which used a systematic process for the determination of significance.
2.2.1 Physical Values

Climate

Tasmania has a “temperate maritime” climate (Bureau of Meteorology 1993:1) which the VSZ shares. Gentilli (1972:254) has identified ten different climatic zones within Tasmania based on temperature and precipitation. Gentilli’s map indicates that the VSZ sits on the boundary between the “perhumid cool” and “perhumid cold” zones, where high rainfalls correspond with low temperatures – categorisation which reflects the relatively high altitude of the VSZ (~800m above sea level) and its location relative to the dominant westerly wind patterns which bring rain to the State. Gentilli’s broad categorisations are reflected in detailed climatic data available for the area, which indicate that:

- together with southwestern Tasmania, the VSZ area is the most consistently wet area in Australia, experiencing on average 234 rain days per year and fewer sunshine hours per day (average 4 hours) than anywhere else recorded in Australia;
- the VSZ experiences frequent frosts and icy conditions although long-lasting snow cover is rare; and
- the harshest conditions occur during winter, although at any time of year fine weather can deteriorate rapidly to blizzard conditions.

Geodiversity

Data in this Section was summarised by Inspiring Place 2002 from Pemberton 2001.

The VSZ is an area of marked geological contrasts.

The dominant hard rock geology is metamorphic in origin, part of an extensive geological terrain stretching from South West Cape to Ulverstone dating from ~1100 million years ago. In the area of the visitor centre and north and northeast across the Middlesex Plains, basalt flows formed an extensive plain about 8 to 16 million years ago, a portion of which outcrops at Pencil Pine Falls.

The hard rock geology of the VSZ has been extensively impacted by glacial erosion and deposition over the past 2 million years. The various glaciers which covered the area have left behind a variety of glacial features including the "u" shaped valley of the Dove River, kettle and kame moraines, numerous lakes and tans, meltwash channels, circular disintegration mounds, drainage diversions and outwash deposits/patterns.
Other glacial features of interest in the VSZ include the spectacular rock basin that forms Dove Lake and the striae around it, the rounded ice-scoured bedrock at Eagle Hill, Mount Kate, and Hounslow Heath, and the small rocky knolls near Waldheim Junction. Dove River is a relatively unusual example of a glacial "u" shaped valley superimposed by a fluvially eroded "v" shaped valley.

Blanket bogs consisting of organosols, which are associated with buttongrass moorland, cover large parts of the VSZ. Basalt soils occur around the area of the Visitor Centre.

Surface waters within the VSZ are plentiful, with numerous permanent streams and rivers feeding mountain lakes, tarns and smaller water bodies. Water quality is relatively high and is likely to have low nutrient levels, very low levels of solutes and a relatively high pH owing to the tannins found in the water.

A number of these geodiversity features are of World Heritage significance including:

**Natural Criterion 1 : Outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth’s evolutionary history:**

The VSZ contains:

- Precambrian quartzites; phyllites and schists;
- Quaternary glacial and fluvioglacial deposits;
- extra-glacial areas (e.g. solifluction sheets, block streams, rock glaciers and landslip deposits);
- tertiary basalt (near the park boundary);
- peatland soils; and
- undisturbed river systems which show particular geomorphological processes (e.g. Dove River).

**Natural Criterion 2 : Outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man’s interaction with his natural environment.**
The VSZ contains:

- sites where processes of geomorphological and hydrological evolution are continuing in an uninterrupted natural condition including periglacial, fluvial deposition and development of peat soils and blanket bogs.

**Natural Criterion 3: Contains superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.**

The VSZ contains:

- dolerite capped mountains (e.g. Cradle Mountain);
- deep, glacial lakes, tarns, cirques and pools; and
- superlative examples of glacial landforms and other types of geomorphic features.

It should be noted that the blanket bogs of the WHA are considered to be the most extensive of their type in the southern hemisphere and that those of the VSZ occur at a particularly high altitude.

The glacial features of the VSZ are also listed on the Tasmanian Geoconservation Database (TGD) and are considered to be of outstanding national significance. It is also likely that the Dove River will be added to the interim list of the TGD.

It should also be noted that the basalt soils of the VSZ are poorly represented in the WHA and the Tasmanian reserve system and are amongst the highest and wettest such occurrences in the State.

### 2.2.2 Biological Values

**Flora**

Information in this section was provided by Dr J. Whinam and J. Balmer, Nature Conservation Branch, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment to Inspiring Place for the Draft Zone Plan 2002.

The vegetation of the VSZ comprises a diverse mosaic of vegetation communities from rainforest to grassland. In general the level of speciation within the vegetation communities of the VSZ is relatively high, a total of 104 native species having been recorded by Freeman and Whinam (1996) along the Cradle Mountain Road corridor.
and the whole of the Cradle Mountain-Lk St Clair National Park being known to harbour more than 450 native higher plant species many of which are threatened, rare or endemic to Tasmania (Kirkpatrick and Balmer 1991, Freeman and Whinam 1996).

Together, the plant communities and their species represent all four Natural Criterion for listing as a World Heritage Area including:

**Natural Criterion 1 : Outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth’s evolutionary history:**

The VSZ contains:

- relict biota which show links to ancient Gondwanan biota including:
  - endemic conifers (including the King Billy pine *Athrotaxis selaginoides*, pencil pine *Athrotaxis cupressoides*, the hybrid *Athrotaxis laxifolia* and celery top pine *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius*);
  - plant species in the families Cunoniaceae (*Bauera rubioides*) and Winteraceae (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) but other families could also be cited as showing links with Gondwana, e.g. Stylidiaceae (*Stylidium graminifolium*) etc.;
  - the plant genera *Bellendena* in the Proteaceae (*Bellendena montana*); and
  - other plant genera with Gondwanan links (e.g. *Nothofagus gunnii* and *N. cunninghamii*).

**Natural Criterion 2 : Outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man’s interaction with his natural environment.**

The WHA has outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial and fresh water ecosystems and communities, including:

- ecosystems which are relatively free of introduced plant and animal species. There are however weeds along the road corridor although relative to many places these are minor management concerns that are having little impact so far on the health of the ecosystems in the region
(24 weed species are present but all are small herbaceous species confined to previously disturbed areas);
ecological transitions from moorland to rainforest (with ecotones of *Eucalyptus* woodlands);
examples of active speciation in the genus *Eucalyptus*, including sites of:
clinal variation (e.g. *E. subcrenulata*); (while this region may not be of specific importance in demonstrating the clinal variation of the species the population provides an example of the statewide variation of the species;
habitat selection (e.g. *E. gunnii*); (see caveat above);
plant groups in which speciation is active (e.g. *Gonocarpus, Ranunculus* and *Plantago*);
conifers of extreme longevity (pencil pine and King Billy pine); (the ages of the conifers along the road are not known and may not be great, however, they have the potential to reach great age); and
endemic members of large Australian plant families (e.g. heaths such as *Richea pandanifolia, Richea scoparia*) and other endemics.

**Natural Criterion 3: Contains superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.**

The VSZ contains rare or unusual flora. The montane pencil pine rainforest communities bordered by native grasslands located at the entrance of the national park are a beautiful vegetation assemblage. Sphagnum peatlands near the road are rare in Tasmania and represent an unusual and aesthetic community type along the corridor.

**Natural Criterion 4: Contain the most important and significant habitats where threatened species of plants and animals of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation still survive.**

The VSZ contains:

- habitats important for endemic plant taxa and taxa of conservation significance, including:
rainforest communities (including montane pencil pine communities, the rainforest communities are particularly important for non-vascular species);

habitats which are relatively undisturbed and of sufficient size to enable survival of taxa of conservation significance including endemic taxa; (although the corridor itself is small, it is part of a larger area which meets this criterion); and

plant species of conservation significance - two vascular species occurring along the road corridor are listed as rare on the schedule to the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 these are Viola cunninghamii and Gnaphalium supinum (now Euchiton sp.).

The Tasmanian Vegetation Strategy 1998 identifies the following forest vegetation types occurring in the VSZ as significant for conservation:

all native grasslands including the Poa tussock grassland and grassy woodland communities contained within the road corridor are of significant conservation value at a state-wide and regional level. One of the poorly reserved grassland communities includes Eucalyptus delegatensis over Poa grassland;

native riparian vegetation is of significant conservation value within the Tasmanian Central Highlands bioregion as are wetland vegetation types; and

Sphagnum peatland communities are habitats for a distinctive and unusual flora and are of conservation significance at a state and national level - the community of particular significance within the road corridor is rainforest—sphagnum mire.

The eucalypt forests and rainforests within the road corridor are all well reserved community types that are therefore not being further targeted for additional reservation. Other communities have importance at a state level because they are poorly reserved or have been extensively impacted on by European settlement including:

rainforest - Sphagnum mire; and

Eucalyptus delegatensis (gum topped stringy bark) over Poa (snow grass) grassland.

At a State level the following species listed as rare or threatened under the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 are found within the VSZ:
Boronia rhomboidea (rare and only reserved in the VSZ);

Libertia pulchella var. pulchella (rare); and

Grevillea australis var. tenifolia (unknown risk status).

Fauna

Information in this section was provided to Inspiring Place for the 2002 draft Zone Plan by M. Driessen, Nature Conservation Branch, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment.

The VSZ contains a wide range of faunal habitats that are home to a diversity of fauna species. These species live in a reasonably undisturbed environment and include a number of Tasmanian endemic mammals, birds and invertebrates which contribute to the value of the natural setting and are of interest to visitors.

For instance, the VSZ is home to an assemblage of the world's largest carnivorous marsupials including the Tasmanian devil (Sarcophilus harrisii), the spotted-tailed quoll (Dasyurus maculatus) and the eastern quoll (Dasyurus viverrinus). Two of the world's only three surviving monotremes; the most primitive group of mammals in the world are also found in the VSZ including the platypus (Ornithorhynchus anatinus) and the short-beaked echidna (Tachyglossus aculeatus).

Animal species in the area represent all four natural criteria for listing as a World Heritage Area including:

Natural Criterion 1: Outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth’s evolutionary history:

The VSZ contains

- monotremes;
- marsupials including the Tasmanian devil, Tasmanian pademelon (Thylagale billardierii) and eastern quoll;
- invertebrates of the phylum Onycophora (velvet worms);
- fish in the family Galaxiidae (galaxids);
- aquatic insect groups with close affinities to groups found in South America, New Zealand and Southern Africa (e.g. dragonflies, stoneflies and caddis-flies);
crustaceans (e.g. Anaspidacea, and the burrowing crayfish Engaeus sp.);

primitive taxa showing links to fauna more ancient than Gondwana (e.g. the pencil pine moth Dirce aesiodora, an alpine moth in the subfamily Archiearinae); and

the pencil pine moth, Dirce aesiodora, - a day-flying alpine moth which occurs in the VSZ and belongs to the Archiearinae, the most primitive family of the large cosmopolitan family of moths, the Geometrid moths, whose closest relatives live on mountains in South America, Europe and North America, thus implying links to the ancient super-continent Pangea.

Natural Criterion 2: Outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man’s interaction with his natural environment.

The VSZ contains:

endemic members of invertebrate groups which show extraordinary diversity (e.g. stoneflies); and

examples of evolution in mainland mammals (e.g. sub-species of Bennett’s wallaby - Macropus rufogriseus, swamp antechinus, Antechinus minimus; southern brown bandicoot, Isoodon obesulus; common wombat, Vombatus ursinus; eastern pygmy possum, Cercartetus nanus; the swamp rat, Rattus lutreolus) and many birds.

Natural Criterion 3: Contains superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.

The VSZ contains:

the Tasmanian devil and the spotted-tailed and eastern quolls.

Natural Criterion 4: Contain the most important and significant habitats where threatened species of plants and animals of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation still survive.

The ecosystems of the VSZ contain important and significant natural habitats where threatened species of animals of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation still survive, including:
habitats for endemic animal taxa and taxa of conservation significance, including:

- wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*)\(^2\) - listed as endangered on national and state legislation,
- spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) - listed as vulnerable on national legislation and rare on state legislation, and
- ptunarra brown butterfly (*Oreixenica ptunarra*) - listed as vulnerable on state legislation.

habitats which are relatively undisturbed and of sufficient size to enable survival of taxa of conservation significance including endemic taxa (although the VSZ itself is small, it is part of a larger relatively-undisturbed area);

animal species of conservation significance, such as:

- spotted-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus*
- Ptunarra brown butterfly *Oreixenica ptunarra* (listed as vulnerable by the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*).

Note also that the Tasmanian pademelon and eastern quoll, which are common in the VSZ (and in much of Tasmania), are now extinct on mainland Australia and therefore of conservation significance, although not listed in either state or federal threatened species legislation.

### 2.2.3 Cultural Heritage Values

Cultural Heritage includes Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values both for their pre-history and value to the contemporary Aboriginal community, historic heritage values arising since colonial occupation of the area and aesthetic, wilderness, social and recreation values.

#### Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Information in this section was provided to Inspiring Place for the draft Zone Plan 2002 by Caleb Pedder, of the then Cultural Heritage Branch, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, now Manager, Aboriginal Heritage Service, Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts.

\(^{2}\) Note that no wedge-tailed eagle nests are currently known in the VSZ but eagles can be seen flying over the area.
The assessment of Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania is changing. There is a need to consider the broad range of Aboriginal values rather than just individual Aboriginal sites. This approach encourages Aboriginal people to become more involved in management of the WHA. Aboriginal values encompass the widest range of aspects of the landscape and renew and strengthen the connections Aboriginal people have to that land.

Aboriginal values are associated with the cultural place values - for example, spiritual associations, sites, fire, interpretation, traditional practices, wildlife, vegetation, places, landscapes and continuing and ongoing associations with the land.

The WHAMP notes that "all Aboriginal sites within the WHA are important to the Aboriginal community" and that "the perception of values, in many situations, does not divide natural from cultural values e.g. plants and animals are of cultural value to the Aboriginal community" (WHAMP 1999:24). Aboriginal values are inclusive of all things associated with the land and these have importance to the Aboriginal community.

McConnell and Hamilton (2001) looked at the range of Aboriginal heritage values of the Overland Track - Frenchmans Cap areas within the WHA. Their overview of the history of these areas indicated

"that Aboriginal history is one of continuous use, with land use being modified as environmental conditions changed, particularly during the last glacial maximum around 18,000 years ago to take account of changing resource distribution and accessibility and travelling routes due to ice cover in the high country (2001:15)."

Reference: is also made to the

"nature of the sites in the area (sic Overland Track - Frenchmans Cap) and their patterning suggested that this varied everyday life included all the environments of the area in the course of hunting, plant food collecting and consumption, tool stone collection, with short term camping in a range of environments, and with more permanent camps scattered through the area by the larger lakes and in the sheltered major low valleys." 2001:15)

Both references highlighted the difficulties associated with stating and explaining Aboriginal values. Neither reference reflected the spiritual, emotional and social attachment that Aboriginal people clearly have to the land. The remnants of Aboriginal occupation of the land are only a small indication of Aboriginal values associated with an area. The focus in the WHA will need to be shifted from a sites
based focus to an inclusive values focus. This will encourage the Aboriginal community to be an active participant in WHA management.

The key finding from the field investigations undertaken in the VSZ were that Aboriginal occupation of the area was extensive and prolonged. That Aboriginal values were present and that the Aboriginal community should have input into the management of the VSZ.

Cradle Valley and the surrounding areas contain many Aboriginal living areas or sites. These living areas are generally identified by the stone tools still present. There are many stone tools to be found at Cradle Valley still. There are caves or rock shelters that contain evidence of Aboriginal use. There are also stone sources or quarries, where people sourced the stone for making stone tools. These sites are a small part of the story of Aboriginal occupation and use of the area. These sites are protected by State and Federal Legislation and should not be interfered or removed.

Aboriginal sites within the World Heritage Area including those of the VSZ are considered to be of World Heritage significance, relating to the following criteria:

* Cultural Criterion 3  *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilisation which has disappeared.*

The VSZ contains:

- Pleistocene archaeological sites that are unique, of great antiquity and exceptional in nature, demonstrating the sequence of human occupation at high southern latitudes during the last ice age.

* Cultural Criterion 5  *an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.*

The VSZ contains:

- archaeological sites which provide important examples of the hunting and gathering way of life, showing how people practiced this way of life over long time periods, during often extreme climatic conditions and in contexts where it came under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural and economic change.

* Cultural Criterion 6  *directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance.*
The VSZ contains:

archaeological sites including Pleistocene sites, which
demonstrate the adaptation and survival of human societies to
glacial climatic cycles and periods of long isolation from other
communities (e.g. the human societies in this region were the most
southerly known peoples on earth during the last ice age).

**Historic Heritage**

Information in this section was summarised by Inspiring Place 2002 from McGowan 2001.

Four phases of historic periods of use within the VSZ have been identified (Bannear 1991):

- pioneering development, pre 1890s to 1910s;
- the Weindorfer era, 1912-1932;
- national park development, 1932 to 1945; and
- walkers only, 1951 to present.

Amongst these periods a great deal is known about the Weindorfer era and a
significant sense of romanticism has grown around this period and its role in the
creation of the Cradle Mountain Scenic Reserve and the development of the tourism
industry in Tasmania.

No historic features or historical archaeological sites were included in the WHA
nomination document.

Places and objects from the Weindorfer era are considered to be significant as
assessed against criteria for listing on the Tasmanian Heritage Register (THR)\(^3\) under
the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* (McGowan 2001). These include:

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\(^3\) The THR criteria for listing are:

A. It is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Tasmania’s history;
B. It demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Tasmania’s heritage;
C. It has potential to yield information that will contributed to an understanding of Tasmania’s history;
D. It is important as a representative in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of cultural places;
E. It is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement;
F. It has strong or special meaning for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual
   associations;
G. It has a special association with the life or work of a person, a group or an organisation that was important
   in Tasmania’s history.
Waldheim chalet (including Weindorfer's grave and all of the buildings, structures and gardens at Waldheim) and the Cradle Mountain Road (THR Criteria A, B, F and G);

Trailside Museum (THR Criteria A, D, E, F, G);

Dove Lake Boatshed (THR Criteria B, G);

Crater Lake Boatshed (THR Criteria B, G); and

Overland Track (including the Horse Track) (THR Criteria A, D, F, and G).

Section 2.3.2 gives greater background on the history of the Waldheim chalet, the Trailside Museum and the Dove Lake Boatshed.

A number of other items within the VSZ are likely to have local heritage significance or interest  (McGowan 2001) including:

the remains of Crater House;

the Scout Lodge (“contemporary social value for the group who use it”);

Cradle Mountain Sawmill site;

Picnic Hut;

Blandfordia Alpine Club (“contemporary social value for the group who use it”);

Cradle Mountain Road tree stump telephone poles;

Waldheim Precinct tourist accommodation complex; and

Mt. Kate Hut.

Aesthetic Values

The outstanding natural scenery of the VSZ, and that viewed from within it is one of the prime attractions for visitors to the Cradle Mountain area. Aesthetic value is one of the key criteria for listing of the WHA on the World Heritage list. A number of superlative features occur within the VSZ or are viewed from within the VSZ which are of World Heritage value including:

Natural Criterion 3: Contains superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.
There are a number of superlative natural phenomena recognised as World Heritage Listed Values (DEH) including:

- rainforests framing undisturbed rivers;
- buttongrass, heath and moorland extending over vast plains;
- wind-pruned alpine vegetation;
- sheer dolerite-capped mountains including Cradle Mountain;
- deep, glacial lakes, tarns, cirques and pools;
- the relatively undisturbed nature of the property;
- the scale of the undisturbed landscape; and
- the juxtaposition of different landscapes.

The view of Cradle Mountain across Dove Lake is undoubtedly the best known and most photographed natural vista in Tasmania. Other views that warrant special consideration because of their outstanding scenic value include:

- panoramic views of Cradle Valley from scenic vantage points such as Marion’s Lookout, Cradle Mountain summit and Mount Campbell;
- views along the narrow rainforest enveloped road to Waldheim chalet;
- scenery along the water courses of Pencil Pine Creek and Dove River including the sensitive riverine habitat along the valley floor between the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre and Dove Lake.

Viewfields that are seen frequently by the public and so warrant special consideration include:

- viewfields along the road corridors, including the extensive views across low buttongrass moors and peat bogs, and close views within forest canopies;
- viewfields from Waldheim Road and car park over the glacial tarns and low vegetation of Cradle Valley;
- viewfields from all walking tracks, especially high access nature trails and tracks with vantage points offering panoramic views; and
viewfields from high access public areas and facilities such as the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre, and public shelters.

Wilderness Values

Wilderness value underpins “the Tasmanian Wilderness WHA’s success in meeting the criteria as a natural property and is the foundation for the maintenance of the integrity of both the natural and cultural values of the area (WHAMP 1999:23)”.

Wilderness as defined in the WHAMP is predominantly judged on the basis of remoteness from mechanised access, the lack of disturbance by colonial and modern technological society and the need for an area to be of sufficient size to protect its natural systems and biological diversity.

Within Tasmania, wilderness values have been mapped as part of a National Wilderness Inventory (Leslie and Maslen 1995). In general, the whole of the VSZ has a Wilderness Quality rating of less than 10. A rating of >12 out of 20 is the threshold for ‘high wilderness quality’.

The relatively low wilderness value of the VSZ is a result of development, which has occurred in the area since the earliest European occupation of the area around the 1860s. These ratings are tempered compared to other settled areas of the State by the relative naturalness of the bulk of the VSZ.

Areas, which have not been disturbed, have significance as places where biological, ecological and evolutionary processes can occur largely free from human interference. Such undisturbed areas have values, which are of scientific, educational and recreational importance to the world community. Many people believe they are also of intrinsic value, i.e they have value in and of themselves.

Social Values

Despite the relatively disturbed nature of the VSZ many visitors find opportunities for reflection and inspiration as a result of contact with the relative naturalness of the area. For non-visitors, there may be some satisfaction in knowing that such seemingly natural places exist. For others, the direct experience of the VSZ is likely to provide challenge and adventure outside their daily experience with some therapeutic and/or character building benefits.

The historic development of the area provides a direct link between the spirit of tourism in the past (e.g. adventure, wilderness, etc.) and eco-tourism in the present.
Maintenance of the social value of the area relies on the retention of the expansiveness of the natural or apparently natural areas within the VSZ and the ability to experience them with some degree of solitude and/or within a comfortable personal space which enables the development of a personal appreciation of the place.

2.3 Existing Facilities

2.3.1 Access, Roads and Parking

Access for the vast majority of visitors to the Cradle Mountain area is by private car. Regular bus services operate to Cradle Mountain from Launceston, Devonport and Strahan, with higher frequencies of service being provided in the summer months. Tour coaches also regularly visit the area. On arrival at the site of the former Cradle Mountain airstrip (closed December 2003), visitors are encouraged to park on a sealed car park and take a shuttle bus service into the national park.

Cradle Mountain Road is the only road into the VSZ, commencing outside the park at Learys Corner and terminating at Dove Lake. Outside the park, the section of Cradle Mountain Road from Learys Corner to the park boundary has been substantially upgraded in the past decade including improvements to road geometry, road widening, sealing and line marking. Relatively recently, the Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources (DIER) has installed additional traffic calming measures between the park boundary and Learys Corner to reduce wildlife road kills.

From the visitor centre at the park entrance, the Cradle Mountain Road extends about 8km into the park to its terminus at the Dove Lake car park. This section of road is a winding and narrow bitumen road, which was upgraded and sealed by the DIER in 2003. The road meanders through woodland and button-grass moorland.

A narrow spur road, Connells Avenue, approximately 500m long, branches off the Cradle Mountain Road 2.5 km before Dove Lake and winds through myrtle rainforest to the Waldheim chalet and cabins. In addition, minor vehicular tracks provide management access to the Mt Kate house via a ford across Dove River at Ronny Creek and to the PWS workshop area near the park entrance.

Within the park, there are four main visitor precincts: at the Visitor Centre, Waldheim, Ronny Creek and Dove Lake. Each of these areas has some provision for parking.
The car park associated with the Visitor Centre at the entrance to the park is sealed. Bollards and simple timber barriers define the edges of the car park. There is a shuttle bus stop, passenger set-down area and turn-around loop for coaches at the entrance to the Visitor Centre. At Snake Hill a small pull off area is located on the eastern shoulder of the road to allow shuttle buses to set-down and pick-up passengers. A similar area is required to enable north bound shuttle buses to set-down and pick-up passengers and to enable passengers to alight from the bus away from the flow of the traffic.

A sealed car park is provided at Ronny Creek near Connells Avenue Junction. This car park provides parking for people commencing the Overland Track, undertaking short walks or day use activities in this area. The Waldheim car park is a small sealed area that caters for day visitors to the chalet area. Waldheim cabins have individual parking for guests. Parking is provided for guests at Blandfordia Alpine Club in a small sealed car park south of the Ronny Creek car park at Lilla Creek.

The Dove Lake car park is the terminus of the Cradle Mountain Road. It is a broad sealed area clearly marked for parking and turning of cars and small buses. There is an earth-integrated toilet building, and a temporary shuttle bus shelter. A number of walks commence here including short and long day walks and overnight walks. Dove Lake, Cradle Mountain and the surrounding ranges that form Dove Lake catchment are viewed from here.

### 2.3.2 Structures and Facilities

**Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre**

The Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre at the entrance to the park is a high quality visitor facility that incorporates a visitor reception area, interpretive and art displays, publications outlet, and park management offices. The facility provides warm and comfortable surroundings in which visitors can browse through displays and talk to PWS staff. Linked to the Visitor Centre is a high standard nature walk through myrtle rainforest and eucalypt woodland to viewing platforms in the rainforest and overlooking Pencil Pine Falls. This walk has been designed to provide opportunities for less mobile people including those who are physically disabled, visually impaired, elderly, infirm, and parents with prams and strollers. Also in the vicinity are the Enchanted Walk and the start of the Cradle Valley Boardwalk, which links the visitor centre to Ronny Creek, the Overland Track and Dove Lake.

The siting of the Visitor Centre near the park boundary at Pencil Pine Creek was chosen to minimise development intrusion on the natural environment of Cradle Valley, to maximise visitor contact through easy access from the accommodation.
facilities, and to take advantage of the diversity of habitats in the area. Nestling unobtrusively amongst the trees at Pencil Pine, the centre has achieved wide acclaim for complementing the natural attractions of the park.

**Waldheim Chalet and Associated Structures**

**Waldheim Chalet**

The Waldheim chalet is a small rustic cabin of split King Billy pine and shingles, built using traditional bush carpentry techniques. After the original guesthouse, built by Gustav Weindorfer in 1912, was demolished a replica was built in 1976 using some of the original materials. Nearby is a similarly reconstructed replica of Weindorfer's bathhouse. Both structures have significant aesthetic, social and historic value. In recent years, the chalet has been fitted out with interpretive displays including a mock-up of the kitchen area, interpretive panels and a sound installation.

Once a year, on New Year's Day, the grave becomes the focus for the Weindorfer Memorial Service. The service, which is organised by the Weindorfer Memorial Service Committee, commemorates Gustav Weindorfer and the early days of 'the Reserve'. The Weindorfer Memorial Service Committee has played a vital role in keeping alive the memory and traditions of Gustav Weindorfer.

The woodshed behind the Waldheim chalet is used for the storage and cutting of firewood for the nearby accommodation cabins. The structure, which is made of timber poles and framing, is covered with shingles. It has a high 12-foot gabled roof, which is believed to be the renovated remains of Weindorfer's stables. The survival of some original building fabric from the Weindorfer era is historically significant.

**Trailside Museum**

The Trailside Museum at Waldheim was built between 1940 and 1942. It is a basic timber hut built on a platform excavated into the ridge.

The structure was originally intended to function as a museum 'to display models and natural history specimens to assist bushwalkers to identify animals, plants and rocks seen during walks through the park and give visitors and school classes a concise summary of its natural features'. However, following construction, the museum project lapsed and arrangements were made for the structure to be used as an evacuation shelter/bunkhouse during World War II.
After the war, the building was used for a period as ranger accommodation. In 1962, under a co-operative arrangement between the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVM) and the park management authority, the Trailside Museum was fitted out to fulfil its intended function as a museum. Much of the work on the museum displays and exhibits was carried out on a voluntary basis by staff of the QVM.

During the later phase of the museum's life, uncontrolled high humidity inside the museum was causing damage to the displays and in 1980, the QVM removed the exhibits from the building. The museum was thereafter used for temporary displays and as a venue for talks and slideshows for the public by rangers. Following construction of the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre at Pencil Pine, the Trailside Museum became largely redundant. The building is open to the public to view but is largely unused apart from occasional use for functions (e.g. for the annual Weindorfer Memorial service).

**Day Hut**

The Day Hut (or Picnic Hut), adjacent to the Waldheim car park, was constructed in 1941 and was largely re-built in 1965. In 1993 the Friends of Cradle and members of the Northwest Walking Club assisted PWS with some major maintenance work including the addition of the deck area. The hut is used by visitors as a shelter and lunching venue, especially during inclement weather. Although it has no formal listed heritage values, the Friends of Cradle Valley consider that the Waldheim day hut has heritage significance based on the contemporary social value for the community groups providing voluntary labour and those that use it.

The building is made of weatherboard and has a gabled roof of shingles. The large single room has gas heaters and is furnished with several fixed bench seats along the walls and two picnic tables. The deck off the front of the building provides outdoor space with panoramic views over the glacial tarns and vegetation of Cradle Valley.

**Mt Kate House**

The Mt Kate house is a small picturesque bush cabin located on the Ronny Creek flats. The house was built as the homestead associated with the Cradle Valley timber mill and is the only structure surviving from the timber milling industry. By association, the Mt Kate house has a high cultural significance.

The house is currently used for temporary accommodation by park staff, seasonal rangers and track maintenance crews. Vehicular access to the house is via the ford across Dove River. The house has no toilet facilities, and when staff are staying for
extended periods, a portable toilet unit is towed to the site and located adjacent to the house.

**Blandfordia Alpine Club**

The Blandfordia Alpine Club is located on the hillside above the Mt Kate house and is accessible only by foot. The club is constructed of King Billy pine produced by the former nearby timber mill.

The lodge is used by members of the Blandfordia Alpine Club and guests and through arrangement with the Club, by schools and a range of community groups and clubs.

**Dove Lake Boatshed**

The Dove Lake Boatshed is a well-known and picturesque feature of the Dove Lake scenery. Built during the 1940s, the boatshed is largely of original fabric, although some sympathetic repairs have been made. Primarily because of its contribution to the Dove Lake scenery, the boatshed is recognised as being culturally significant.

**Picnic and Barbecue Facilities**

Two barbecue shelters are located adjacent to the Visitor Centre at Pencil Pine Creek and reflect the architecture of the Visitor Centre. These shelters provide electric barbecues and outdoor tables and seating, and are particularly suited to group use.

Other picnic facilities within the park are of a basic nature. A few basic picnic tables are located beside the Waldheim and Ronny Creek car parks. The Day Hut at Waldheim is used as a lunching venue, especially during cold wet conditions. Visitors often picnic from their cars in the car parks at Dove Lake, Ronny Creek and Waldheim.

**Public Toilets and Amenities**

Within Cradle Valley, public toilets are located at the Visitor Centre, Dove Lake car park and at Waldheim. All are linked to the recently completed integrated sewerage system and sewage is pumped off park for treatment. All are accessible by wheelchair. Showers are provided at the Waldheim amenities for the use of overnight guests staying at the cabins.
The toilets at Dove Lake were constructed in 1984 in an 'earth-integrated' building designed to minimise the visual intrusion of these amenities on the scenic quality of the area. The toilet and shower facilities behind the Waldheim Chalet were refitted in 1989 to replace the former inadequate amenities. They were connected to the integrated sewerage system in 2004.

**Walking Tracks**

Cradle Mountain is the starting point for Tasmania's most renowned extended walk – the 80km Overland Track to Lake St Clair. Preferred locations for people to commence this walk are either from the Visitor Centre or from Ronny Creek. There are also numerous shorter overnight and day-walks in the Cradle Mountain area, which provide visitors with a multitude of walking opportunities ranging from exploring sheltered mossy rainforests to climbing mountain peaks.

There are three main starting points for walking tracks within Cradle Valley:

- **the Pencil Pine - park entrance area which includes:**
  - the Rainforest Walk (linked to the Visitor Centre),
  - the Enchanted Walk,
  - the Dove River Canyon track,
  - the Cradle Valley Boardwalk, and
  - a variety of tracks outside the park encompassing several land tenures including private land and conservation area.

- **Dove Lake car park area (all of these tracks are outside the VSZ but can be accessed by tracks starting from the Dove Lake car park) which includes:**
  - Dove Lake Circuit,
  - the Cradle Valley Boardwalk via Lake Lilla to Ronny Creek,
  - Wombat Pool track,
  - Marions Lookout track/Overland track, and
  - Lake Rodway track, Mt Campbell and Hanson's Peak,
  - Face track, Cradle Summit.
Waldheim - Ronny Creek area which includes:

- the Cradle Valley Boardwalk,
- Weindorfer’s Forest Walk,
- Maryland track,
- Hounslow Heath track,
- Crater Lake track,
- Horse track,
- Overland track to Lake St Clair\(^4\).

The short nature trails at the Visitor Centre and at Waldheim are extremely popular. While the medium-length and long tracks are also popular, some involve climbs of 200-300m onto the Cradle plateau, which make them unsuitable for many inexperienced or less fit walkers. The majority of the lengths of these longer walks lie outside the VSZ.

The existing track network in the Cradle Mountain area is extensive and complex with some considerable effort having been made in recent years to rationalise the network in line with the day walk plan for the area. Nonetheless, in some areas, tracks are badly sited and prone to erosion and/or braiding while in other areas, parallel tracks duplicate walker experience. In 1994 a detailed walking track management strategy was prepared for the WHA (PWS 1994). This strategy outlined management actions and works priorities for walking tracks within the WHA including Cradle Mountain. This document is still referred to when setting works priorities for walking tracks within the VSZ.

**Visitor Accommodation**

The Waldheim public accommodation cabins are managed by the Cradle Business Enterprise and are located inside the park just beyond the Waldheim chalet. The cabins provide basic facilities including bunks, table and chairs, gas stove, sink and heaters. Two out of the eight have a combination of slow combustion wood and electric heaters, while the other six have gas heaters. The cabins cater for a total of 44 people. Some cabins can be reserved for park staff as temporary accommodation.

Associated with the Waldheim cabins are two small amenity blocks (providing toilets and showers) and a woodshed.

\(^4\) Note that apart from the Cradle Valley Boardwalk and Weindorfer’s forest walk, all of these tracks are outside the VSZ but can be accessed from the Waldheim area.
All other visitor accommodation is located outside of the national park and therefore outside of the VSZ, with the exception of specialist club huts such as the Blandfordia Alpine Club and the Scout Hut.

**Park Management Facilities**

**Staff Accommodation**

Four houses for staff are located within the park at Cradle Valley. Three are located near Connells Avenue Junction, and the fourth is situated near the workshop compound on a service track near the park entrance. A number of other staff houses are located in Vale of Belvoir Conservation Area, adjacent to the Cradle Mountain Campground.

**Workshop**

A workshop compound is located in an area screened from public view on a service track off the Cradle Mountain Road near the park entrance. Additional workshop facilities are located near the staff accommodation outside the national park.

**Helipad**

Helicopters are used regularly for a variety of park management purposes including transport of materials for track and hut maintenance, fire detection and suppression, and search and rescue operations. The Service's helipad and storage area is located at the former Cradle Valley airstrip outside the park.

2.3.3 Site Services

**Shuttle Bus Service**

Two trial services have been held as a prelude to introducing a shuttle bus service to Cradle Mountain. The initial trial shuttle bus service between February 2003 and April 2003 operated with one bus on a one-hour return schedule. Passengers were charged to use this service. This trial service was not successful because the one-hour schedule was inconvenient for passengers, road works were occurring at the time, which also delayed trips, and people were not willing to pay for the service.
The second trial operated from December 2003 until the end of April 2004, with an adjusted service between May 2004 until September 2004. From December until May there were up to eight buses operating on a 20 minute return schedule. From May until September the trial operated on weekends and public holidays only.

Access to the shuttle buses was included as part of the park pass fee. One third of the visitors to Cradle Mountain made use of this service.

The success of the second trial resulted in formal introduction of the shuttle bus system providing a year round alternative for people travelling into the park. A five-year contract has been awarded to McDermott's Coaches to operate the shuttle bus service.

Electricity

The Visitor Centre, nearby workshop compound, Connells Avenue junction, Waldheim, Ronny Creek and Dove Lake car parks are all supplied by mains electricity. The electricity is run into the park in the integrated services channel underneath the Cradle Valley Boardwalk.

Water

Water supply to the facilities within Cradle Valley is pumped or gravity fed from local streams and creeks. Water supply to the Visitor Centre is provided from the Cradle Mountain Lodge reticulated water supply. The Waldheim cabins and nearby staff houses receive untreated water from Crater Creek. Water to the Dove Lake toilets is pumped from Dove Lake into tanks on Eagle Hill and to Blandfordia Alpine Club and Mt Kate house from a small creek above Blandfordia Alpine Club.

Fire hydrants are located at the Visitor Centre, adjacent to the Waldheim cabins, and near ranger houses.

Sewage Treatment

The national park facilities and Cradle Mountain Lodge share a high standard sewerage scheme on the property of Cradle Mountain Lodge which operates under licence to the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. Wastewater from Dove Lake, Waldheim and Ronny Creek is pumped out of the park to the treatment plant along a sewerage line integrated with the services under the Cradle Valley Boardwalk. In the future sewage from the park and park entrance is to be treated in a new high performance central treatment plant outside the park.
The Blandfordia Alpine Club toilets rely on a septic system.

2.3.4 Lease and Concession Arrangements

Blandfordia Alpine Club

The Blandfordia Alpine Club was built by handy men and women in the early 1960s on land owned by Major Smith. The timber mill below the hut was still in operation at the time and provided the King Billy pine used for cladding; the myrtle flooring was also obtained locally. The Blandfordia Alpine Club entered a 99-year lease commencing in 1962 with Major Smith. The annual rent for the lodge was ‘four bushels of best quality wheat per year delivered to the lessor’ (which was in keeping with many leases during this period). The wheat was used to feed wallabies.

Following Major Smith's death, the land was acquired by the Crown in 1971 and incorporated into the national park. With the resumption of the land by the Crown, the Blandfordia Alpine Club’s interest in its 99-year lease with Major Smith was compulsorily acquired. Commencing in June 2003 a new lease was entered into under the National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 continuing for the balance of the existing lease period until 2061. The present annual rent is also set at 4 bushels of wheat in recognition of a previous era, or the monetary equivalent (currently $140). As a reflection of changing values and knowledge, the wheat has not been fed to the wallabies for several years now. The Club continues to use the lodge.

2.4 Current Use

The WHAMP recognises that the WHA is a major plank of Tasmania’s tourism industry. The WHAMP sets two objectives for tourism and recreation in the WHA, 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 2001:176).

In an effort to achieve its objectives in relation to tourism and recreation, the WHAMP establishes Visitor Services Zones and Sites. These are areas where the
majority of visitor facilities will be located and where the majority of visitors will experience the WHA as discussed in Section 1.3.

This section describes current visitors to the VSZ (Section 2.4.1) and their opinions about their experiences of the area (Section 2.4.2). Information for this section has been provided by Sue Rundle, Research Officer - Statistics, from Parks and Wildlife Service.

2.4.1 Visitor Statistics

In the 2003/4 financial year there were 181,000 visitors to Cradle Mountain, of whom 84% were from mainland Australia or overseas. These data suggest that the only time of year when the majority of visitors are Tasmanian are during Sundays and public holidays in the off season (May-mid September), when they comprise half of the visitors present at the site.

Visitor characteristics have not changed greatly since the early 1980s. The majority of non-Tasmanian visitors are from the urban south-eastern seaboard of mainland Australia. Few travel with children: in 2004, 13% of groups had children with them. The overwhelming majority of non-Tasmanian visitors are on their first visit to Cradle while the overwhelming majority of Tasmanians are repeat visitors. One third of visitors were staying in accommodation at Pencil Pine while a further three per cent were staying in huts within the park. Most of these were staying at Waldheim.

Changes in visitor volumes at Cradle Mountain are directly related to changes in access, either locally or to the state. The notable example of a local change in access is the construction of the Cradle Link Road and the sealing of the access road to Pencil Pine in the middle to late 1980s. Visitor numbers are estimated to have increased by 75% between 1987/8 and 1990/1. An example of a change in access to the state is found in the cluster of factors that led to a substantial increase in visitor arrivals to the state in 2002/3. These included the introduction of the dual ferry service in September 2002, the increase in air capacity to the state, and the upswing in the domestic tourism market in the face of SARS, September 11 2001 and a strong Australian dollar. Over the ten years between 1991/2 and 2001/2, visitor numbers to Cradle increased at an average of 2.6% annually. Between 2001/2 and 2003/4, visitor numbers increased by 12% each year. This will not be repeated in 2004/5: as of March 2005 the increase over 2003/4 looks to be in the region of 2-5%.

5 Source: PWS routine monitoring. A visitor is defined as someone who visits the park for purposes of recreation, nature or cultural appreciation. Repeat entries by that person into the park while they are on the same trip away from their usual place of residence are not taken into account. Estimates are derived from a combination of automated traffic counts, bus and shuttle counts undertaken on site and visitor exit surveys.

Forecasts of visitor arrivals to Tasmania undertaken by BDA Marketing Planning in September 2004 for Tourism Tasmania suggest that the rapid growth phase experienced since 2002 will plateau at some time in the next two years and remain relatively flat until 2010. An 11% increase in arrivals to the state is forecast from June 2004 to June 2010, with most of that increase occurring in the next two years.

Key drivers of slowing growth for Tasmania include:

- the increasing affordability of overseas travel for Australians;
- a softening in demand for both interstate and intrastate domestic travel nationally fuelled by both the growth in outbound travel and the emerging tightening of the Australian economy;
- a decline in market share of a strengthening inbound market to Australia;
- a decrease in preference and intention of interstate visitors to travel to Tasmania (albeit some 3 million Australians still suggest they prefer Tasmania as a holiday destination)
- the emergence of more competitive destinations for Tasmania driven by low cost carrier expansion and increasing spend by other state tourism organisations (notably New Zealand).

Furthermore, changes in the travel pattern of visitors to the state have been observed over the past twelve months. Decline has been observed in the proportions undertaking longer (10 to 14 days) touring holidays in the state, which previously has been Tasmania’s strongest market and that with most propensity to visit national parks. Additionally there has been an increase in visitors taking a short break (3-4 days) in the state. These visitors tend not to travel into the regions with consequent concern over the dispersal of tourism benefits statewide. The behaviour is typically being fuelled by low cost air fares and the resultant growth in visiting friends and relatives traffic at the expense of normal holiday visitors.

If these factors continue, and in the absence of any major development in the Pencil Pine area resulting in significant increases in accommodation capacity, it is unlikely that there will be another rapid expansion phase in the next five years and that visitor numbers will be similar to current levels.
2.4.2 Visitor Opinion

It has been a consistent and totally unsurprising finding of visitor surveys conducted at Cradle that contact with the natural world is the predominant motivation for the park visit. Most visitors achieve this by undertaking a walk. In 2004, 82% of visitors undertook a walk of some description. Most of these were short—less than two hours’ duration—but the walk acts to immerse the visitor in nature so that they can experience the sights, sounds and smells of a relatively unmodified natural environment.

Day use visitors are classified into three major categories, these being the Short Stop, Comfort Seeker and Getaway segments.

Short Stops stay for less than two hours. While their stay is short this does not mean that they are confined to their car. Most of these will undertake a very short walk such as the Boatshed on Lake Dove, or Glacier Rock, or the Enchanted Walk. Short Stops account for 17% of the day visitor audience.

The most populous segment is that of the Comfort Seeker. These account for two thirds of day visitors: they stay in the park for more than two hours —on average they are there for more than three hours—and undertake the less physically challenging walks.

The Getaways, on the other hand, seek out the challenging walks and explore quite far afield. They account for 14% of visitors and stay for an average of over five hours. Visitors who are staying overnight at Waldheim or at Pencil Pine are more likely to fall in this segment than visitors who do not. This is a finding unique to Cradle of the high profile Tasmanian national parks; at those other sites the Getaway segment is dominated by Tasmanians. A corollary of this is that increases in accommodation capacity locally are likely to lead to an increase in demand for the longer, more challenging walks, all of which are in the more fragile alpine area of the day use zone.’

The focus of the park visit is Dove Lake. More than half of all visitors undertake a partial or complete circuit of Lake Dove: in fact 34% undertook the entire Circuit. This compares with five per cent of visitors who either walked the Enchanted Walk, or up to Marions Lookout or to the summit of Cradle Mountain. Only seven per cent walked any part of the new Cradle Valley Boardwalk. Of the two most frequent reasons why visitors did not walk this new track was either that they didn’t have time or that other walks had priority. Inevitably the ‘other walk’ was the Lake Dove Circuit. Again, those visitors staying overnight in the area were more likely to walk the boardwalk.
The two recent visitor surveys undertaken at Cradle (1999 and 2004) have both emphasized that the provision of walking tracks in itself is not sufficient. Visitors expect a suite of information that will aid in orientation within the park, assist in the visitors’ choice of activity and inform them of the special and unique features of the park.

That some visitors were having trouble orientating themselves in the park was a finding in the 2004 survey that was not present in 1999. There were some instances documented in the survey where visitors drove down to Lake Dove and had no idea where they were. This is most likely related to a number of factors: the removal of the entry fee booth and the plethora of roadside signs leading into Pencil Pine that would serve to confuse and disorientate the new visitor rather than assist.

Information about activity choice and the special and unique features of the park has historically been housed in the visitor centre, located at the park boundary. Findings from the 2004 Visitor Survey suggest that only 50% of visitors pay a visit to the Visitor Centre; indeed 20% of first-time visitors do not visit either the Visitor Centre or the newer Information Centre adjacent to the shuttle bus turnaround area. They are entirely dependent on road-and-track-side signs and whatever information they bring with them from outside the park. Since the 1999 survey day walk information signs have been located in the Visitor Centre, at Ronny Creek and in the shelter at Lake Dove. While they were well received in the 2004 survey, effort must be placed into updating the sign clusters at the start of tracks —being the last point at which visitor choice can be influenced—so that they include information about track difficulty and distance as well as average time.

Furthermore, a need for interpretative signs on the Lake Dove circuit was identified in both the 1999 and 2004 surveys. Track-side signs are one way of meeting this need. Another way lies in the provision of guided walks, which has the advantage in that it reduces sign clutter.

Three quarters of visitors to Cradle considered that their Lake Dove visit was a ‘wilderness experience’. The naturalness of the setting, its remoteness, the relative lack of facility (e.g. no trams or MacDonalds or mobile phone coverage), its tranquillity, contact with wildlife and the uniqueness of the landscape and vegetation are some of the attributes that made visitors think this way. Many visitors, both Australian and from overseas, were of the opinion that there is nothing else in Australia or the world that compares with Lake Dove in respect to its unique landscape.

There were also many mentions of the abundance of water and of greenery. Tasmanians take this for granted but for many a drought-stricken mainlander it is, sadly, a unique feature in itself.
The ease of access to Lake Dove, while appreciated by the majority, was one of the most frequent reasons why it was not considered as wilderness by the other 25% of visitors. The bustle of the Lake Dove carpark detracted from the experience for some, as did the number of people encountered on the track. Adverse comments about the numbers of people encountered were received through the survey period from January to April but this was related to the time of day that they walked the track. Those who walked it at the extremes of the day commented favourably on the lack of crowding.

As one of these visitors put it, the Lake Dove precinct is ‘tamed wilderness’. Other visitors who hold a purist view of wilderness will never consider it to be so. Of course, for some people the concept of ‘wilderness’ is not part of their personal lexicon. But whether it is termed wilderness or not, the natural attributes of the precinct are outstanding and need to be managed very carefully to maintain their unique qualities.

A shuttle bus service was introduced in December 2003. This operated daily until the end of April 2004 at a frequency that varied with the time of year. For instance, in peak summer, a fleet of seven buses was in use between the hours of 8am and 8pm. The shuttle acted to decrease traffic on the Lake Dove Road by 25%, and demand on the Lake Dove carpark by 33%.

One third of visitors to the national park made use of the shuttle service. Visitors tended to use either shuttle or private car, there being little overlap. Teething problems aside, shuttle users evaluated the service very highly. Overseas visitors were more likely to catch this service than Australians, with Tasmanians visiting as part of a day trip from home least likely to use it. Those visitors lugging gear around (for example carrying a lot of expensive photographic gear, or the gear associated with young children) and those with mobility problems were also understandably disinclined to use the service.

The 2004 survey findings suggested that shuttle passengers tended to evaluate all aspects of the park visit more highly than those based in their own vehicle. Whether this was a problem with the sample or whether it was a real effect is not clear and could be investigated further. What is clear however was that the provision of information and walking tracks was considered most important to visitors irrespective of their means of access. While the shuttle eliminated the hassle of driving and parking and reduced the activity of the road and carpark, ultimately it is the immersion in nature that visitors obtain on the walking track network that makes the greatest impression.
2.5 Rehabilitation

The WHAMP indicates that rehabilitation ranks as one of the primary management objectives in the World Heritage Convention. It further states that rehabilitation is “an integral part of the work at new developments in Visitor Services Zones . . .”, suggesting that “Existing roads, vehicular tracks and walking tracks must be well maintained to minimise erosion, sedimentation and reduce the need for rehabilitation” (WHAMP 1999:114).

Rehabilitation includes planning, surface preparation and revegetation. Rehabilitation can be a highly involved process in terms of excavation and shaping of landforms, the broadcasting of seed and fertiliser, planting of seedlings, laying of protective cover, etc. or a more passive activity in terms of assisting natural regeneration to occur. A number of sites within the VSZ have been partly rehabilitated including some roadside verges, the timber mill at Ronny Creek, some old logging tracks on Mt. Kate and the quarry to the south of the Visitor Centre. In most cases it has taken more than a decade to achieve acceptable levels of revegetation.

Successful rehabilitation within the VSZ is extremely slow and requires careful planning and implementation. The harsh environment, high altitude, short growing season, frost heave and heavy browsing from native mammals all contribute to slow plant growth rates making rehabilitation of disturbed areas difficult and slow.

Successful rehabilitation relies on good planning as many tasks have seasonal constraints and/or require long lead times to ensure the availability of suitable materials (e.g. seed collection, and propagation of plants, etc.). Project planning, therefore, is a critical requirement if rehabilitation is to succeed.

Given the slow rate of rehabilitation it is crucial that any proposed works aim to minimise disturbance of intact areas and wherever possible be confined to areas that are already disturbed.

Experience with past rehabilitation works in the VSZ also indicates that on-going monitoring and maintenance of rehabilitation works is required and must be adequately resourced.
CHAPTER 3
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE VISITOR PRECINCTS

Chapter 2 identified a number of values of world, national, state and regional significance within the VSZ which are to be protected. Also described was the existing range of facilities provided to meet the objectives as one of the primary localities for visitor enjoyment of those values in the WHA.

Recently there have been improvements in services and infrastructure including sewerage, mains power, the introduction of the shuttle bus service and sealing roads and car parks. To further protect natural and cultural values and improve the visitor experience of the area, Chapter 3 identifies future strategies and actions for infrastructure at the four visitor precincts in the zone. These include:

Continuing the high standard of visitor experience and information at the Visitor Centre. Relocating staff housing and workshop outside the park when suitable land becomes available.

Improving facilities at Waldheim and Ronny Creek, including a shuttle service into Waldheim, shuttle bus shelters and toilets, picnic facilities, and removal of staff housing at Connells Avenue junction.

Improving facilities at Dove Lake, including the provision of a permanent shuttle bus shelter and viewing area, upgrading toilet facilities, providing bus turning, car and bus parking and rehabilitation of all unused disturbed areas.

Each of these key issues will be dealt with under the headings of Background, Role of the Precinct and Management Strategies for each of the four visitor precincts. This is preceded by a section covering general management strategies for the Visitor Services Zone.

GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR THE VISITOR SERVICES ZONE

The PWS Reserves Standards Framework (PWS 2003a) defines standards and maintenance requirements for services and assets across parks and reserves in Tasmania. The four visitor precincts in the VSZ have been assessed under this
framework. The existing service levels, proposed aspirational service levels and RSF visitor site descriptions are included in Appendices A and B.

A Cradle Mountain Interpretation Plan will be prepared to identify the experience and interpretation requirements for the VSZ including the existing Visitor Centre. Detailed planning for the visitor precincts will be based on the desired visitor experiences that are defined in consultation with stakeholders. Thus provision of facilities will be driven by the nature of the visitor experiences to be provided.

Major developments, such as the proposed changes to the Dove Lake precinct and possibly the Waldheim precinct, will require a major pathway assessment process under the WHAMP (see WHAMP page 67). This involves a thorough and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment and the development of an Environmental Management Plan that will be available for public comment.

New development works in the other precincts will require environmental impact assessment through the PWS Reserve Activity Assessment process (a minor pathway assessment process under the WHAMP, (see page 67). As well as testing compliance with relevant legislation, identifying significant values that may be affected and proposing measures to avoid or mitigate any damaging impacts, this assessment will include detailed site designs and consultation with stakeholders.

A development application to Council under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* may be required to be submitted for some new elements proposed.

As part of an overall emergency response for the Cradle Mountain section of the national park, coordinated response procedures to accidents, incidents and evacuations within the VSZ will be developed.

Further fine tuning of the shuttle bus system will also occur as the changes at the precincts are finalised, this will include the development of a safe pullover area at Snake Hill shuttle bus stop for north bound buses.

In collaboration with the project *Enhancing Management of the Overland Track*, consideration will be given to a formal commencement point for the Overland Track at Ronny Creek. This will provide photo opportunities for those commencing the walk and a point of interest for other visitors. Opportunities to market the first part of the track as a ‘taste of the Overland Track’ will also be considered.
3.1 Visitor Centre and Workshop Precinct

3.1.1 Background

The Pencil Pine Visitor Centre Precinct contains PWS workshops, one staff house and the visitor centre with associated infrastructure (including boardwalks and picnic shelters). All infrastructure in this precinct has been assessed under the PWS Reserve Standards Framework - current and proposed aspirational standards are listed in Appendix A.

Walks commencing in this area including the Rainforest walk, Enchanted walk, Dove Canyon track and Cradle Valley Boardwalk. The Cradle Shuttle bus stops at the Visitor Centre and further along the road at Snake Hill. Visitors can embark and disembark at these locations.

The proposed establishment of the Cradle Village on the old airstrip site, as outlined in the Cradle Tourism Development Plan (Inspiring Place et al 2003) will enable PWS to critically review services and infrastructure requirements in the Pencil Pine Visitor Centre Precinct. Staff houses and workshops will no longer be necessary or appropriate in this precinct.

3.1.2 Role of the Precinct

This precinct will remain as the entry into the national park and the WHA. In the short term it will remain the key site for detailed information, interpretation and education. The Visitor Centre will focus on education and experiences that further visitor knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the WHA and Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park.

This precinct will offer high quality short walks along Pencil Pine Creek, some of which will link to accommodation and facilities outside the park. It will provide easy access experiences of the Cradle environment for people staying overnight near the Park, especially in bad weather. Carparking will be retained at the existing level should people wish to drive themselves to this precinct. The shuttle bus will continue to drop off and pick up at both the Visitor Centre and Snake Hill. People will be encouraged to use the shuttle bus service to access all sites within the park.
3.1.3 **Management Strategies**

The Visitor Centre and workshop precinct, Dove Canyon track and Cradle Valley Boardwalk will be managed at the existing assessed standard (see Appendices A and B).

Management infrastructure will be progressively removed and relocated to the proposed Cradle Village outside the northern boundary of the national park. Upon relocation the house/workshop site will be rehabilitated according to a detailed rehabilitation plan. Works will include clearing the site of all debris and surplus materials, decontaminating any areas of fuel or chemical spillage and rehabilitating the area to reflect surrounding ecosystems.

Other infrastructure (including the Visitor Centre, boardwalks and picnic areas) at Pencil Pine will remain and be modified as required to enhance visitor experiences in the park. Existing car and bus parking and pick up areas will be retained.

A new information centre is planned to be built at the proposed Cradle Village site outside the national park to provide entry and orientation information and advice to visitors and a park shop. Park management administration will be transferred from the visitor centre in the park to the new information centre.

3.2 **Waldheim Precinct**

3.2.1 **Background**

This precinct contains the historic Waldheim Chalet, outbuildings and gardens; the Waldheim Cabins; Trailside Museum; Day Hut; Weindorfers Forest walk; and the commencement of the Hounslow Heath, Maryland Track and other high country day walks.

All infrastructure in this precinct has been assessed under the PWS Reserve Standards Framework - current and proposed aspirational standards are listed in Appendix A.

The current parking layout at Waldheim is difficult for bus access and therefore the current shuttle service does not stop at Waldheim. There are also access difficulties with shuttle buses returning from Dove Lake turning into Connells Avenue. These difficulties will be eliminated by only south bound buses accessing Waldheim. Park visitors that use the shuttle service and wish to visit Waldheim are required to walk...
from Ronny Creek, either via the road or along the boardwalk that runs parallel to Ronny Creek to access the site.

Private passenger vehicles and tour buses use the car park at Waldheim. Waldheim cabins have individual parking for guests.

No day use toilets are provided in the area. Visitors to Waldheim are required to share the Waldheim cabin toilets behind Waldheim Chalet.

### 3.2.2 Role of Precinct

The Waldheim precinct will function as:

- A focus for interpretation and celebration of the parks’ historic structures, early history and pioneers;
- A location for limited day use activities including walking and picnicking; and
- A site for low cost charming public accommodation.

### 3.2.3 Management Strategies

The Waldheim Chalet and Cabin area will continue to be managed at the current assessed standard (see Appendices A and B).

Subject to detailed precinct planning, the shuttle bus service will run to Waldheim and people will be encouraged to use the service to access the Waldheim area.

The Waldheim chalet will continue to function as a 'living museum', with interpretive material bringing to life the early history of the park and, in particular, the contribution made by Gustav and Kate Weindorfer. Interpretive devices will assist in re-creating the hospitable atmosphere for which the chalet was renowned during its early years, to reflect Gustav Weindorfer's love of the Cradle area, and his dream of a national park for the people for all time.

The Waldheim accommodation cabins will be maintained as basic low-cost public accommodation operated by the Cradle Business Enterprise. The number of cabins will not be increased. No other commercial facilities will be permitted within the precinct. The 'Beltana' cabins and facilities will be made accessible for disabled
people and future planning will incorporate disabled access into other areas of the Waldheim precinct where possible. Weindorfer’s bathhouse will be refurbished.

The ablutions block immediately behind Waldheim Chalet will be removed and the site rehabilitated. A new ablutions area will be attached to the rear of the 'Beltana' cabins off the veranda.

The cabins and ablution block will be converted from gas to electric heating, cooking and hot water, as resources become available.

The vehicle track from Waldheim car park to the cabins will be sealed and access will continue to be restricted to service and guest vehicles only.

The future use of the Trailside Museum site will be determined, in conjunction with the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, on the basis of a review of the management requirements, the conservation plan for the building and in light of the upgraded services to the area.

The existing car park at Waldheim will provide for a suitable bus-turning area and for a small number of car/bus parking spaces. A sympathetically constructed building will be developed as a bus shelter, with associated facilities adjacent to the bus-turning area. This building will be carefully sited so as not to impact on the traditional approach view of Waldheim Chalet from Connell’s Avenue, or the view from Cradle Valley. The facilities will be of a simple standard and designed to respect the Waldheim Chalet and complement other traditional structures in the precinct.

The bus shelter will be a covered, insulated building that will provide basic seating, communication and associated day use facilities. The level of these facilities will depend on assessment of the existing Day Hut. Unisex and disabled toilets will be part of the shelter building. An orientation/activities map of the Waldheim area will also be provided. An assessment of historic and social values, condition and future use of the Day Hut will be undertaken in cooperation with North West Walking Club and Friends of Cradle.

Infrastructure services (including power, communications, water supply and sewerage) will be upgraded (where applicable) to Waldheim chalet, cabins, the Trailside Museum and the new bus shelter. Site, infrastructure services and maintenance plans will be prepared for the Waldheim area to address priorities for future maintenance works and identify areas which require rehabilitation. Site design and layout plans will be prepared as guide to new works.
Upgraded and expanded interpretation in the Waldheim precinct will be guided by a plan based on the Strategic Interpretation Framework (2004).

Gustav Weindorfer's grave will continue to be maintained and interpreted and the annual New Years service will be supported.

Walking track access will continue to be maintained from Ronny Creek car park to Waldheim along the walking track running adjacent to Ronny Creek. Weindorfer's forest walk will be maintained.

3.3 Ronny Creek Precinct

3.3.1 Background

The Ronny Creek precinct consists of the Ronny Creek car park, Mt Kate Hut, Blandfordia Alpine Club hut, a section of the Cradle Valley Boardwalk, the walking track along the creek to Ronny Creek foot bridge and up to Waldheim cabins and three staff houses.

All infrastructure in this precinct has been assessed under the PWS Reserve Standards Framework - current and proposed aspirational standards are listed in Appendix A.

Ronny Creek has a small sealed car park which is currently used by short stop day users and overnight walkers on the Overland Track. There is a small walkers registration booth and some picnic tables beside the river. No day use toilets are provided in the area. Visitors to Ronny Creek are required to share Waldheim cabin toilets behind Waldheim Chalet.

The Shuttle bus stop at Ronny Creek has no shelter. Passengers embarking and disembarking on north-bound buses wait and exit on an uneven road verge with no protection from other traffic.

The Cradle Valley Boardwalk continues from Ronny Creek via Lake Lilla to Dove Lake. This section of the walk is not boardwalk the entire way and can become boggy during the wetter months.

3.3.2 Role of Precinct

Ronny Creek precinct will function as:
A precinct for day use activity

A focus for ongoing traditional accommodation (Mt Kate Hut and Blandfordia Alpine Club)

It will be promoted as the preferred starting point for the Overland Track.

3.3.3 Management Strategies

The Ronny Creek precinct will be upgraded from the current site standard (see Appendices A and B).

Ronny Creek will be a day use area for families that will include car parking and a bus shelter. The bus shelter will be built near the car park and will allow for the safe access to and from shuttle buses and provide shelter and information for visitors waiting for buses. Consideration will be given to a safe means of disembarking bus passengers from north-bound buses. This may include minor expansion of the road verge in this area.

This shelter will also include unisex and disabled toilet facilities, interpretation and walker registration.

The existing basic picnic tables provided at Ronny Creek car park will be retained and maintained.

The Mt. Kate Hut will be maintained and utilised in accordance with the Conservation Plan (Noble, 1994).

Any works on the Blandfordia Alpine Club building will be in accordance with agreed lease arrangements, which will be subject to an environmental impact assessment and the meeting of agreed performance criteria.

Investigations will be undertaken to determine costs and works associated with connecting Mt. Kate house and Blandfordia Alpine Club into the integrated services (sewerage and electricity).

New infrastructure will be built within existing disturbed areas, i.e. the bus shelter on the location of the existing walker registration shelter. The existing car park size will be maintained with limited parking spaces available for day users. Overnight walkers will be encouraged to catch a shuttle bus into the park or begin their walk from the Cradle Visitor Centre.
Parking will continue to be provided for guests at Blandfordia Alpine Club in a small sealed car park south of the Ronny Creek car park at Lilla Creek. The walking track from the car park to the Alpine Club will be jointly maintained by the Club and PWS to the junction with the Mt Kate House track. Blandfordia Alpine Club will take responsibility for maintenance of the track from this junction to the club house.

Rehabilitation of the former saw mill site is an ongoing process. This process will continue as per the rehabilitation plan.

The view field to Cradle Mountain from the Cradle Mountain road will be improved by the removal of the staff houses at Connells Avenue junction. New staff accommodation is to be constructed in Cradle Village outside the national park enabling the houses at Connells Avenue Junction to be removed and the sites rehabilitated. The house on the western side of the road "NP2", will be assessed for its heritage and social values in the context of it possibly being one of the original National Parks and Wildlife Service houses at Cradle and one of the first in a rugged, remote location. If it is of significant value it can be retained.

The section of Cradle Valley Boardwalk from Ronny Creek via Lake Lilla to Dove Lake will be upgraded to a comfortable standard that best fits the terrain and minimises the use of duckboard. The footbridge that crosses Ronny Creek leading along both the Cradle Valley Boardwalk and the Overland Track is in good condition and meets current building and safety standards. It will be maintained to continue to meet these standards. Walking access will continue to be provided to Waldheim via the track along Ronny Creek.

3.4 **Dove Lake Precinct**

3.4.1 **Background**

The Dove Lake precinct includes the area of the existing car park, toilets, temporary bus shelter and commencement of walking tracks at the terminus of the Cradle Mountain Road.

Public access to Dove Lake by private vehicles was provided in the mid 1960’s with the extension of the Cradle Mountain Road from Ronny Creek and construction of the car park, less than 100 metres back from the lake’s edge. Subsequent improvements include further expansion of the car park, toilets, new and upgraded walking tracks, a walker registration booth, closure of some walking tracks and installation of sewerage, power and communications services. With the commencement of the shuttle bus service, a temporary bus shelter was constructed at
the entrance of the Dove Lake car park - a two-walled building with a steep roofline that provides only limited shelter in adverse conditions and is very noticeable in the landscape.

The draft Zone Plan 2002 canvassed several options for the redevelopment of this precinct:

- developing a new car park and infrastructure at Eagle Hill either 100 or 350 metres north of the existing car park;

- using a mixture of the Eagle Hill option and the existing car park; or

- reducing and rehabilitating a portion of the existing car park but using the balance to create a shuttle bus shelter with minimal visual and environmental intrusion on the site and an appropriate level of parking.

The public comment received on the draft Zone Plan 2002 varied widely. A subsequent workshop involving a range of interested parties including representatives from tourism operators, the WHA Consultative Committee, Friends of Cradle Valley, Government agencies, and consultants was held in April 2002 to try and determine the best option – again resulting in a spread of opinion. PWS staff undertook a further assessment in May 2004.

The resolution from the assessment of all these sources has been that the option which best meets the WHA criteria for management, namely -"to identify, protect, conserve, present and, where appropriate, rehabilitate the World Heritage and other natural and cultural values of the area", is to minimise further disturbance by concentrating future development in the existing disturbed area. The plan is to design and place on disturbed ground new facilities that are as unobtrusive as possible and which will serve to further disguise the existing car park.

Since its inception, the road and car park have been opposed by some on the basis of its visual and physical intrusion into the head of the valley. The issue of the visual impact of the road and car park was recognised in the 1993 Zone Plan through a recommendation to seal the road to reduce its visual impacts (PWS 1993:28) and that of the WHAMP to “landscape and mute the Dove Lake car park ” (WHAMP 1999:160). Sealing the road and car park during 2003 has gone some way towards implementing these recommendations, although landscaping is still required to further mute the Dove Lake car park.

All infrastructure in this precinct has been assessed under the PWS Reserve Standards Framework - current and proposed aspirational standards are listed in Appendix A.
3.4.2 Role of the Precinct

The Dove Lake precinct will function as:

A precinct for public access and visitor experience of the outstanding alpine scenery of the park, notably for viewing the classic view of Cradle Mountain across Dove Lake; and

A location for high quality day walks including tracks suitable for the majority of park visitors.

3.4.3 Management Strategies

Dove Lake precinct will be upgraded from the existing standard (see Appendices A and B).

The Dove Lake car park will be maintained and carefully landscaped as an area where visitors can stop and view Cradle Mountain and Dove Lake. Visitors to the area may arrive by shuttle bus, tour bus or private cars. Visitors will be encouraged to use the shuttle bus service to access all sites within the park. On arrival they will have access to a sheltered, low-profile viewing area of Cradle Mountain and Dove Lake, that will contain areas for shuttle bus waiting, walker registration and information.

The viewing shelter will be located on the south-west edge of the existing car park adjacent to the toilet. In view of the sensitivity of the location, the shelter will feature:

- design in harmony with the landscape;
- partial in-ground and earth-covered construction;
- non-reflective glass;
- provision for people to wait for, board and alight from shuttle buses undercover;
- landscape design to further mute the car park and shield traffic and parked cars from the view field;
- retention and redevelopment of existing toilets to cater for increased demand;
- communications, heating and other appropriate services for visitor orientation and safety.
The car park will allow area for shuttle and mini-bus turning and access to the visitor shelter. Mini-bus and trailer parking will be provided parallel to the road where the current shuttle bus stop is. Parking will be provided for about 30 to 40 cars and 6 to 8 buses, preserving the view field to the south on approach to the car park. Access for disabled people and less able walkers will be provided by the path along the edge of Dove Lake to the boat shed and on the first section of the Glacier Rock track.

All work will be designed to reduce the visual and physical intrusion of the car park and visitor shelter, without further disturbing the atmosphere and grandeur of the area. This will be achieved through expert creative landscaping to ‘dissolve’ and integrate the car parking and buildings into the landscape.

The existing temporary bus shelter will be made weatherproof during the interim period and will be removed and the site rehabilitated following the construction of the new viewing shelter.

3.5 Detailed Planning, Approval Processes and Implementation of the Zone Plan

This Plan will act as the overall planning document for the Visitor Services Zone. Detailed designs for each of the four visitor precincts will be undertaken, based on the concepts outlined in Section 3 and following community consultation to clearly identify visitor experiences that the facilities are to enable and support. The designs will include conceptual and detailed site layout drawings, visual assessments of proposed structures, landscape designs and rehabilitation plans. These detailed precinct designs will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the World Heritage Area Consultative Committee, Friends of Cradle and Cradle Valley Tourism Development Committee.

Due to the sensitivity of its location, site design and development planning for Dove Lake and possibly Waldheim Precincts will be conducted under the Major Pathway Assessment process defined in the WHAMP (see p 67). This process has avenues for further stakeholder involvement and public comment on the Environmental Management Plan and Development Application. Design professionals will be engaged to undertake works through the major pathway process and to develop the building concept and plans for the integrated shelter and car parking area.

Designs for the other precincts will be prepared and assessed under the PWS Reserve Activity Assessment process following consultation with key stakeholders.

Local Council planning approval will be sought as part of these processes, where necessary.
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### APPENDIX A

#### ASSESSED SERVICE LEVELS FOR CRADLE INFRASTRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>CURRENT STANDARDS</th>
<th>ASPIRATIONAL STANDARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dove Lake Carpark</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Mid Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Visitor Centre Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove Lake Circuit</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Mid Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Mid Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High day walk tracks, including to Kitchen Hut and Hounslow Heath</td>
<td>Day Use Get Away Site Basic Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Get Away Site Basic Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overland Track and Side Tracks</td>
<td>Bush-camping Backcountry Site Mid Standard</td>
<td>Bush-camping Backcountry Site Mid Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldheim (excluding cabins and chalet) and Ronny Creek area.</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site Mid Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site Complex Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldheim Cabins and Chalet</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Visitor Centre Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Visitor Centre Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Centre Complex</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Visitor Centre Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Visitor Centre Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove Canyon Circuit</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Mid Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Mid Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Valley Boardwalk and Cradle Valley Road.</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Mid Standard</td>
<td>Day Use Comfort Site - Mid Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Areas</td>
<td>Natural Site</td>
<td>Natural Site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

RESERVES STANDARDS FRAMEWORK VISITOR SITE DESCRIPTIONS

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, bathing 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.

Day Use – Get Away (mid, basic)
Day Use – Get away sites provide visitors with the opportunity to undertake one or more nature-based activities in a natural setting. The typical get-away visitor seeks to go beyond the security and comfort of facilities such as toilets, barbeques, picnic benches and shelters, and often undertake walks of two hours or more in duration. Such sites provide experiences in natural settings that foster a sense of space and freedom. Visitors to such sites must be prepared to encounter hazards of a moderate to severe nature depending on the site’s characteristics and the level of service provided.

Easy Access Camping (basic, mid, complex)
These campsites are easily accessed and allow visitors to camp with a family group and or with friends. Predominantly natural settings are sought and sites providing basic, mid or a complex level of service are managed to ensure facilities are well kept and hazards are maintained at either a neutral or moderate level. The easy access camping experience can be described as social or solitary. For social campers, the social aspect of the camping experience (eg. parties, group games and activities) is as important as the natural setting. In contrast, solitary campers favour small groups and little or no contact with other people. Campsites predominantly serve as a base-camp with activities pursued off site.

Bushcamping Backcountry (basic, mid, complex)
Bushcamper backcountry sites provide visitors with the opportunity to travel and camp in semi-remote bush areas with some facilities provided. Degrees of comfort vary depending on the level of service provided (basic, mid or complex) and vary from commercial hut-based experiences to those where accommodation is tent-based and visitors are expected to be self-reliant. The major activity is bushwalking, but may also include rafting, kayaking, fishing and hunting (where permitted). Visitors to such sites must be prepared to encounter hazards of a moderate to severe nature depending on the site’s characteristics and the level of service provided.

Bushcamping Remote (basic)
Bushcamps remote sites provide visitors with the opportunity to venture into areas with few, if any, facilities. In these locations, facilities are provided for environmental purposes only. Access is usually on foot but may also be by boat or air and visitors are expected to be self-reliant. Visitors to these sites must be capable of coping with severe hazards associated with remote areas.

Not Managed for Visitor Services
In these locations, facilities are provided for environmental purposes only. Visitors to these sites must be capable of coping with severe hazards associated with remote areas.