Cynthia Bay, Lake St Clair

Site Plan 2004
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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 Cynthia Bay section of the Lake St Clair Visitor Services Zone.

This plan was prepared for the Parks and Wildlife Service by Inspiring Place Pty Ltd.

Note: This document has the same content as the Site Plan Cynthia Bay, Lake St Clair March 2003. However it has been updated to reflect the final approval of the plan in February 2004.

APPROVAL

This Cynthia Bay, Lake St Clair Site Plan was completed in March 2003 and was approved by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Ministerial Council on 27 February 2004.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND - THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA AND THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (WHA) covers some 1.38 million hectares or about 20% of Tasmania. It includes Tasmania’s four largest national parks: The Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, the Southwest National Park, the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and Cradle-Mountain Lake St Clair National Park. The area was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1982 and expanded in size in 1989 in recognition of it’s outstanding natural and cultural values.

The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 provides for the protection of WHA properties in Australia. The framework for management of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas is the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999 (WHAMP). The WHAMP “defines management prescriptions both as policy and as management actions to realise [the objectives of the WHAMP], and establishes monitoring systems to evaluate whether the objectives are being met” (WHAMP 1999:12).

Within the WHA, zoning is used as a means of recognising “the nature and distribution of natural and cultural values and in the patterns and types of visitor uses” (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 firsthand experience of the WHA’s values. To this end the WHAMP identifies a number of Visitor Services Zones and Sites where major facilities for recreation and presentation are to be provided, typically at the margins of the WHA and accessible by the State’s road network.
The key objectives of Visitor Services Zones are to:

“provide a range of appropriate facilities strategically located to facilitate visits to the World Heritage Area and to enable all visitors to gain a first hand experience of a range of the values of the World Heritage Area; and

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 1999:60),”

A number of prescriptions are provided for the Visitor Services Zone within the WHAMP (1999:60). These include:

- catering for visitors and especially day visitors with limited time;
- providing for high levels of day and some overnight use by developing and/or maintaining a range of facilities and services that may include park accommodation to suitable design and scale, campgrounds, refreshment sales, interpretation and education centres, visitor information and appropriate recreational and management facilities;
- permitting concessionaire-operated facilities and seek private sector investment in the provision of some facilities where appropriate; and
- preparing site plans prior to commencement of any new development or significant upgrading of facilities.

The WHA Management Plan also sets out objectives and management prescriptions for visitor facilities, recreation opportunities and tourism within the World Heritage Area that are relevant to this Plan. These objectives relate to the provision of high quality and varied visitor experiences whilst minimising impacts on World Heritage and other natural and cultural values of the WHA (WHAMP 1999: 130, 170, 177).

Under the WHAMP development in Visitor Services Zones is guided by detailed, non-statutory Visitor Services Zone Plans that expand upon the general provisions of WHAMP and give special consideration to the coordinated and integrated development of these intensively used areas. The WHAMP requires that site plans be prepared for all Visitor Services Zones and major Visitor Services Site prior to commencement of any new development or significant upgrading of facilities.
One of the two key Visitor Services Zones identified in the WHAMP is at Lake St. Clair (hereafter, the VSZ) (see Map 1). Lake St Clair is located some 180 kilometers to the west of Hobart and 95 kilometers to the east of Queenstown and is one of the prime access points for visitors to the WHA.

The Lake St. Clair VSZ comprises an area bounded by Lake St. Clair on its north, Watersmeet at its western extremity, the Derwent River on its eastern edge and the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park boundary on its south. Derwent Bridge, a Visitor Services Centre, is located in the far southeastern corner of the VSZ on the Lyell Highway.

Lake St Clair is Australia's deepest lake (Kiernan 1992) and is surrounded by dolerite-capped mountains including Mt Olympus (1447m), Mt Rufus (1416m) the Du Cane range (1400m) and the Traveller Range (1200m). The Lake St Clair VSZ includes spectacular scenery, areas of Aboriginal and historic heritage importance, a wealth of biological values and areas of scientific interest.

At present there is no Visitor Services Zone Plan for the Lake St. Clair Visitor Services Zone as a whole, although two approved site plans do exist for Cynthia Bay and Pump House Point¹ that are within the VSZ.

### 1.2 The Cynthia Bay Site Plan

#### 1.2.1 Background

Cynthia Bay is located at the southernmost end of Lake St. Clair and is 5 kilometers from the Lyell Highway via State Road C193 (Map 1). Cynthia Bay is the current focus of visitor facilities within the VSZ receiving over 110,000 visitors in 2001-2002 of whom 16,500 (15%) were Tasmanians (Rundle *pers. comm.*).

Facilities at Cynthia Bay include a visitor centre and concessionaire facilities including a restaurant/gift shop, cabin accommodation and campground, all located within a short distance of the lake’s edge. The Parks and Wildlife Service management facilities are also located in the area and a number of important walks, including the Overland Track commence from Cynthia Bay.

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¹ Pump House Point is located at the southeastern corner of Lake St. Clair. A development proposal for the site is presently proceeding through the New Proposals and Impact Assessment process as required by the WHAMP.
Planning Area for the Cynthia Bay Site Plan

Lake St. Clair Visitor Services Zone
The Cynthia Bay area is also a location within the VSZ where further development of visitor facilities is likely to be concentrated given the extent of existing visitor infrastructure, the high level of visitation to the area and the need to protect natural and cultural values elsewhere within the balance of the VSZ.

A Site Plan was completed in 1993 for Cynthia Bay and approved by the Minister under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970* in December of that year (PWH 1993) (hereafter the *1993 Site Plan*). Since then there have been a number of substantial developments within the Cynthia Bay area including:

- the building and operation of the visitor centre;
- the introduction of park entry fees;
- construction of a large car and bus parking area;
- expansion of the accommodation facilities;
- development of new PWS management and staff housing facilities;
- restoration and revegetation of some areas; and
- upgrading of nearby walking tracks.

### 1.2.2 The 2003 Cynthia Bay Site Plan

This current plan seeks to review and update the *1993 Cynthia Bay Site Plan*. Revision of the *1993 Site Plan* is required in response to the development which has occurred since that plan, increased visitor numbers to the area, recent research which has expanded the knowledge base concerning the area and its values and the recommendations of the WHAMP (which was revised in 1999).

As with the *1993 Site Plan*, the focus is on the visitor facilities area immediately adjacent to Cynthia Bay and the linkages (existing and potential) to this area.

The intention of the revised Site Plan is to guide the long-term development of the Cynthia Bay area and ensure that development proceeds in a coordinated and integrated manner in line with the requirements of the WHAMP. In particular and in line with the WHAMP, the objectives of the current Site Plan are to:

- maintain and protect the natural and cultural values of the Cynthia Bay area;
improve the value of the Cynthia Bay area as an important
gateway to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area;

provide for necessary park management facilities for the VSZ; and

encourage the development of a range of visitor facilities to
provide for a wide range of users and appropriate uses.

The 1993 Site Plan included more specific objectives for environment and landscape,
visitor facilities and park management facilities. These have been incorporated
within the current Site Plan.

1.3 Other Planning Requirements

A range of legislative requirements apply to the management of the World Heritage
Area, including Cynthia Bay, in addition to those set out in the Environmental
Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the WHAMP. Of particular
importance, because of their role in daily management of the area and in terms of
development assessment processes are:

the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity and
Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act);

the State Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994;

the State National Parks and Reserves Act 2002;

the State Nature Conservation Act 2002;

the State Threatened Species Protection Act 1995;

the State Aboriginal Relics Act 1975;

the State Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995;

the State National Park and Reserves Regulations 1999; and

the local government Central Highlands Planning Scheme 1998.

The Building Code of Australia and the Australian Standards Association specify the
standards that are to be achieved by development within the area. The ICOMOS
Burra Charter is widely accepted as the standard for heritage conservation practice
and provides guidelines for the conservation of places of cultural significance.
CHAPTER 2
PLANNING CONTEXT

This Chapter provides contextual background to site planning for the Cynthia Bay area and includes a:

summary of the natural (Section 2.1) and cultural features (Section 2.2) of the area;
discussion of the importance of the area as a tourism destination (Section 2.3);
description of the existing park management and visitor facilities within the area (Section 2.3); and
a brief summary of some of the key implications for future management of the area arising out of the contextual information presented in the previous sections (Section 2.4).

The descriptive material related to natural and cultural features has been gleaned from a number of sources. These include the 1993 Site Plan and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Draft Resources and Issues, 1991. Other sources are noted in the text. On the whole, little specific data is known for the immediate area of Cynthia Bay and so broader area descriptions have had to be relied on where required.

2.1 NATURAL FEATURES

2.1.1 Climate

Cynthia Bay lies at an altitude of approximately 740 metres above sea level. Severe climatic conditions are experienced, even on occasions in summer. Mean monthly temperature ranges from a low of 6.6 C in July to 18.9C in February. Rainfall averages around 1600 mm a year falling on more than 220 days. The highest falls occur in winter (July – August) when snow and sleet are also common, although they can occur at any time of the year. Frosts and strong winds are also characteristic at Lake St Clair with the prevailing winds coming from the west and northwest.
2.1.2 Geomorphology and Soils

The valley in which Lake St Clair lies now is likely to have been place 20 million years ago, a result of the mountain building processes associated with the break up of Gondwana. During the Pleistocene Period, however, multiple glaciations served to reshape and further gouge the valley to its present depth (at 167m Lake St Clair is recognised as the deepest glacial lake in Australia) (Kiernan 1992).

Owing to deposition as the glaciers receded, Cynthia Bay is comprised of an impressive array of end latero-terminal moraines forming slightly elevated ridges and intervening poorly-drained swales throughout an otherwise relatively flat landscape. This deposition of material, known as Cynthia Bay till, is of particular geoconservation interest and is considered internationally significant. The morphology of the lake area in general is also of some geoconservation significance as a characteristic example of the extent of modification of Tasmania’s alpine areas during the Pleistocene glaciation (Pemberton 1994).

Previous site development within the Cynthia Bay area has mainly occurred on moraine ridges, resulting in obliteration of the microtopography in these areas.

The soils of in the Cynthia Bay area vary considerably according to drainage. Well-drained sites such as moraine ridges tend to demonstrate poor soil development and are predominantly yellow-brown gradational soils, grading quickly to unconsolidated till below. In contrast, black organosols (peats) occur between the moraines and in the poorly-drained swales. Similar soils occur in other parts of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area although not in this moraine-swale context (Pemberton 1986, 1994).

2.1.3 Vegetation

The vegetation at Cynthia Bay is predominantly eucalypt forest with an understorey on the moraine ridges that includes Banksia spp. and Hakea spp. and on the wetter and poorly drained areas, Leptospermum spp., Callistemon spp. and Gahnia. spp. There are some small areas of buttongrass moor within the area. The dense scrub and eucalypt forests of Cynthia Bay provide an important refuge and shelter for animals.

2.1.4 Fauna

The diversity of habitats in a relatively small area around Cynthia Bay, including eucalypt forest and woodland, rainforest, buttongrass moorland, wet scrub, freshwater creeks and the deep Lake St Clair supports a correspondingly diverse
fauna. Cynthia Bay has a special significance for scientists as the taxonomic type locality for many invertebrate species. There is a high diversity of butterflies, including the spectacular Macleay’s swallowtail, and a number of species of Oreixenica. It is also an excellent location for visitors to see Tasmanian dragonflies. Around the lakeshore, the strikingly coloured blue and orange stonefly (Eusthenia spectablilis) is common. This primitive insect is one of the world’s largest stoneflies. Other invertebrates of particular interest, which inhabit the lake itself, include the ancient mountain shrimp (Anaspides tasmanica) and the freshwater crayfish (Astacopsis franklinii). The climbing galaxid (Galaxias brevipennis), a variety of amphibians and the introduced brown trout are also evident in the lake.

Observing and interacting with the wildlife at Cynthia Bay is a highlight of many visitors’ experience. Bennetts wallaby (Macropus rufogriseus) and the endemic rufous wallaby (or Tasmanian pademelon, Thylogale billardierii) are the most conspicuous of the mammals, and can usually been seen browsing in forest around the visitor day-use area. The endemic black currawong (Strepera fuliginosa) is another common species in the day-use area and is well known to visitors for its audacity in taking food, although feeding currawongs undermines their role as a vital agent in dispersal of many indigenous plant species. At least a further ten Tasmanian endemic bird species and a diverse assemblage of honey-eaters inhabit the area.

The brushtail possum (Trichosurus vulpecula) frequents the camping and cabin areas at night in search of food scraps. The ringtail possum (Psuedocheirus peregrinus) and both light and dark phases of the endemic eastern quoll (Dasyurus viverrinus) are common in the surrounding forests and woodlands. The Tasmanian devil (Sarcophilus harrisii) is not often seen but also roams through the region.

2.2 CULTURAL FEATURES

2.2.1 Indigenous Values

Lake St. Clair, or Leeawuleena, formed the western boundary of the territory of the Larmairremener band of the Big River people. Usage of the high country around the area was likely to be seasonal (Jetson 1989).

Discussion with the Aboriginal community (as represented by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council) indicates that all physical evidence for Aboriginal history of the area, despite location, size or nature, provides cultural links and connects today’s Aboriginal community with the previous lifestyles of their people through their existence and the information they contain. It is also important to the Aboriginal community that the naturalness of the landscape that existed prior to
European invasion is maintained to provide these links to the past. This would be achieved by protecting the visual values, native vegetation, fauna and geomorphological features described elsewhere in the current report and in other reports about the Cynthia Bay area.

Other than the community itself, sources of information related to the Aboriginal values of the Cynthia Bay area include studies such as:

*Aboriginal Management of the World Heritage Area* (TALC 1996);

the *Aboriginal Interpretation Strategy for the World Heritage Area* (Lehman 1995). and

*Trounekarte Mabberle - Viewing the Aboriginal Values of the Frenchmans Cap –Overland Track Precincts* (McConnell and Hamilton 2001).

McConnell and Hamilton indicated that generally the margins of Lake St. Clair are highly sensitive for Aboriginal sites and heritage values. They also note that artifact scatter sites are known from the general area of Cynthia Bay. McConnell and Hamilton recommended that “any surface or subsurface disturbance occurring in the course of the upgrading and/or development should be minimised” (2001:72).

There is scope for further investigation of Aboriginal heritage issues within the Cynthia Bay area and for further interpretation of Aboriginal values.

Research into Aboriginal culture is subject to the provisions of the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. The WHAMP describes the requirements and conditions surrounding such investigations in the WHA.

Lehman (1994) provides clear guidance in regards to interpretation of Aboriginal values in the WHA including the development of such interpretation in consultation with the Aboriginal community. The development of the Aboriginal Cultural Walk (Larmairremener Tabelti) (using the former Woodlands Walk) is an indication of the *Aboriginal Interpretation Strategy for the WHA* in action at Cynthia Bay.
2.2.2 European Heritage

Terry (2002) provides a history of the development of Cynthia Bay as a tourist destination dating from the late 1800s and as the operational headquarters for park management following the proclamation of the Lake St. Clair Reserve in 1922.

Recent investigations have shed light on the historical cultural heritage values of various historical elements at Cynthia Bay (Terry 2002). In particular it was found that the Old Ranger’s House/Office, the Picnic Shelter and Mimosa Cabin are of local and state historic cultural heritage significance, the latter two structures having, amongst other values, social value to the bushwalking community.

Other sites within the area with potential heritage significance include:

- Manuka cabin;
- the storage garage;
- Fergies camp [including a tree fern stump in what is believed to have been the site of Albert Fergusson’s (‘Fergy’) dining tent];
- shoed tree;
- Fergy’s Paddock;
- scarred tree;
- stone bridge and walling; and
- campground woodshed.

Of these it has been conjectured that the first four have high significance as they appear to be demonstrative of mid-twentieth century ranger and visitor facilities at Cynthia Bay (Terry 2002).

The ‘earth-integrated’ ranger residence at Cynthia Bay may have some architectural interest as an early example of this type of construction in Tasmania.
2.2.3 Scenery and Viewfields

The outstanding scenery of Lake St Clair is of particular value and interest. The visual experience associated with Cynthia Bay begins along the Lake St Clair Road from Derwent Bridge. The relative narrowness of this road (in comparison to the Lyell Highway) and the imposing semi-dense wet eucalypt forest surrounding it provide a sense of enclosure in what is a generally flat landscape, with only occasional openings to buttongrass moorland. The Derwent River flows along the edge of the road for much of its length.

At the lake itself, views of particular value and visitor interest include the views across the waters of Lake St Clair to the vegetation-clad far shore and backdrop of Mt Olympus. The close views along the Cynthia Bay beach also provide some of the most outstanding scenery within the Cynthia Bay area with the Traveller Range and Mt Ida being prominent landscape features. Views of the lake and lakeshore from the primary tourist areas such as the visitor centre, restaurant and lookout deck are also significant while the views on arrival are also important to the overall image of Lake St Clair as a destination.

2.3 Importance as a Tourism Destination

2.3.1 Visitor Numbers

The Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park is recognised as one of the natural icons for the State. In 2001/2002, Cynthia Bay attracted 110,000 visitors of whom 15% were Tasmanians, the bulk being from interstate and overseas (e.g. 16,500) (Rundle pers. comm.). These numbers are swelled by those completing the Overland Track (in 1999/2000 this numbered 6500 walkers). General visitation to the area has been steadily increasing in recent years.

PWS records² indicate that there were 15700 nights spent at Lake St. Clair in 1999/2000 by 13000 people, providing an average of 1.2 nights stay. This represents roughly 11% of the total visitors to Lake St. Clair.

PWS routine monitoring of walkers at Lake St. Clair indicate over 1600 overnight walkers started from and returned to Lake St. Clair in 1999/2000 and over 1300 overnight walkers commenced their Overland Track from Lake St. Clair in 1999/2000.

² Based on information provided by Lakeside St. Clair Wilderness Holidays Pty. Ltd. who manage visitor accommodation at Lake St. Clair.
The Tasmanian Attractions Study (Tourism Solutions et al 2000) identified Lake St Clair as a potential ‘cluster’ on the major ‘Wilderness Journey’. The ‘cluster’ recognises its existing role as a major focal point for visitors and the inherent potential to extend its capacity as a destination for visitor stays and activities within the State. The strengths of Lake St Clair are considered to include its:

- significance as a major focus for the delivery of WHA experiences within the State including being a convenient motorised access point into the WHA;
- recognition as a stopover point and base for visitor activities;
- high appeal to visitors across all market typologies;
- capacity for further growth in visitor numbers and yield; and
- ability to be marketed as a distinctive identity.

Market research for Tourism Tasmania has indicated the need to ‘nourish the base’ of the Tasmanian tourism industry, to lift the value of the wilderness product and improve the yield from the natural wonder experiences within the State. Lake St Clair is strategically located, between the major destinations of Strahan and Hobart, to deliver visitors a World Heritage experience and capture increased yield.

### 2.3.2 Visitor Profile

PWS carried out an extensive survey of day visitors (regardless of their residential origin) to Lake St. Clair during the peak of the 1999 visitor season (PWS 1999b). The visitor survey identified that:

- 70% of the respondents were from interstate, 15% from Tasmania and 14% from overseas;
- 80% of the visitors were on their first visit to Lake St Clair with Tasmanians more likely to be the repeat visitors;
- the majority of Tasmanian visitors were from Southern Tasmania (65%);
- about 40% of the visitors were making a short stop and often were breaking their journey (median of 1 hour stay), a similar proportion were staying longer but were not necessarily motivated by specific recreation (median of a 2 hour stay) and the remaining 20% were using the park for specific nature-based recreation (median of a 6 hour stay);
22% of the groups included children;

the average group size of visitors was 2.9 people;

the main reasons for visiting Lake St Clair were to see a specific feature of the park (39%), passing by (27%), to go for a walk (15%), holiday package (5%);

the outstanding facility seen by the majority of visitors was the visitor centre, then the walking tracks, shop and staff;

only 37% of the respondents nominated a disappointing feature or service at Lake St Clair and reference was made to aspects of information provision, shop, accommodation and toilets;

the facilities/services expected by visitors (only commented on by 14% of respondents) included better and/or more accommodation, better restaurant, better range of goods at the shop and better signposting of walks; and

Lake St Clair ranked third after Highfield and Cradle in terms of visitor satisfaction but was higher than Mt Field, Freycinet, Arthur Pieman, Coalmines and Rocky Cape.

The survey identified that the most frequently undertaken activities at Lake St Clair were 69% short walk, 39% photography, 17% long walk (>2hrs), 12% history study, 12% meditation, 11% picnicking, 7% boating/canoeing 4% swimming and 3% fishing.

Respondents also indicated that they would like to learn more about Aboriginal heritage (52%), plants (38%), animals (38%), geology (32%) and European history (17%).
2.4 Existing Infrastructure and Facilities

2.4.1 Visitor Facilities

A range of visitor facilities have been developed at Cynthia Bay to support its role as a visitor services centre. Map 2 shows the existing facilities at Cynthia Bay. The facilities include a car park, interpretation centre, restaurant/retail area, viewing platform, picnic facilities, boat ramp, walking tracks, lake cruise operation and accommodation. Table 2.1 provides a brief summary of the existing visitor facilities at Cynthia Bay.

The visitor accommodation is located in an area off the Lake St Clair access road just prior to the entrance fee booth. The existing accommodation includes self-catering cabins, a bunkhouse powered campsites and tent campsites.

Other commercial accommodation is available within the village of Derwent Bridge located outside the National Park, some 5 kms from Cynthia Bay. Over recent years, the State Government has also been seeking potential tourism operators for the development of major tourist accommodation facilities at Pump House Point at the eastern boundary of the Visitor Services Zone within the National Park.

2.4.2 Park Management Facilities

Some park management facilities have also been upgraded and/or relocated since the 1993 Site Plan was completed.

New staff housing has been located to the south of the visitor centre and PWS workshop facilities, and is accessed from a separate service road. Some of the older housing structures located between the overflow car park area and the visitor centre, remain as ranger housing and are used for casual staff housing. The Senior Ranger house is located to the west of the boatshed. The old ranger’s office/park management centre (prior to the new visitor centre being constructed) has been used for summer interpretation and visiting housing including use by the artist in residence program (a total of ~200 nights in 2001).

The visitor centre building contains new offices for the PWS. The offices are located within the interpretation and information building space, easily accessible to visitors immediately on arrival at the centre from the car park.

3 A Site Plan was prepared for Pump House Point on behalf of Merit Developments Pty Ltd and HMG Management Group Pty Ltd in 1995 (Tasque, 1995) but the company did not proceed with the development and the State Government subsequently cancelled the development rights. The Government is currently assessing a new proposal from Doherty Hotels Pty Ltd for a development at Pump House Point.
### Existing Visitor Facilities

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<tr>
<th>Existing Visitor Facilities</th>
<th>Comment on Existing Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access road</td>
<td>Sealed access road from Derwent Bridge (Lyell Highway) to Cynthia Bay. The road is in good condition and can cater for coaches, service trucks and visitor vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car parking</td>
<td>Developed to support the visitor centre and caters for about 78 car spaces, 16 long term car parking spaces, 5 emergency / loading parking spaces at the main entry and 3 bus spaces. In busy periods overflow car parking is directed onto the service road and turning circle near the start of the Overland Track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional and directional signs to Cynthia Bay</td>
<td>Signposts at Lyell Highway and upon arrival to the entry booth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor centre</td>
<td>The centre is designed as two buildings linked by the entry steps and covered walkway/verandah. One building incorporates interpretation facilities, information and the PWS office. The other building contains restaurant/retail area, booking office and public toilets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic shelter</td>
<td>An old style picnic shelter/day hut is located in front of the visitor centre and contains a picnic table and open fireplaces. The shelter attracts some use by walkers, and has been used for summer ranger interpretation programs but is generally unsuitable for picnics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake lookout</td>
<td>A large wooden deck has been constructed overlooking Lake St Clair and incorporates steps to the beach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking tracks</td>
<td>Walking tracks currently start from the overflow car park area and include the short walk Watersmeet Nature Trail (including the Aboriginal Cultural Walk – Larmairremener Tabelti and Platypus Point) and longer tracks e.g. Overland Track, Mt Rufus Track, Shadow Lake – Little Hugel and the Cuvier Valley Track. All of these tracks other than Cuvier Valley Track are listed in the Tasmanian Walking Track Strategy for upgrading and promotion under Natural Heritage Trust funds, some of which has already been undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public jetty</td>
<td>The jetty is located on the foreshore to the north east of the visitor centre and is used primarily as the boarding facility for the passenger ferry service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake cruise</td>
<td>A ferry operation and lake cruise operates from Cynthia Bay. The ferry, operated by a concessionaire under lease and license arrangements, provides a service for walkers and sightseers to Narcissus Bay and Echo Point. These areas are outside the site planning area of this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor accommodation</td>
<td>Visitor accommodation is located to the north east of the visitor centre within a precinct established in the 1993 Site Plan. Accommodation includes 6 self-catering cabins, bunkhouse, powered campsites and tent campsites. Amenity facilities and service buildings also exist on the site. ‘Mimosa’ cabin (capacity 8 bunks) is located near the campground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoe and bike hire</td>
<td>Canadian canoes and bikes are available for hire at the visitor centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat ramp</td>
<td>A boat-launching ramp is located on a spur road to the east of the visitor accommodation area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.1** Brief Summary of existing Visitor Facilities
The main workshop, storage and fuel facilities are located off the service road to the south of the visitor centre, and are generally out of sight for most visitors to the area.

The wastewater treatment plant has been installed in the last 5 years. All sewage from the buildings and Cynthia Bay area is pumped via a series of pump wells to a Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) sewage treatment plant located on Pump House Point Road. The aeration lagoons previously used for treatment located about 1 km to the south of the main visitor facilities now serve as holding lagoons along this route. Sewage is treated in the treatment plant for removal of biological contaminants and nutrients including phosphorus. Discharge occurs into the Derwent River just south of Derwent Bridge. The system has capacity to treat additional waste associated with future tourism development at Cynthia Bay.

Potable water supplies are delivered via a dual system with a gravity fed main servicing the Concessionaire facilities and a pressurized main servicing the PWS facilities and the Senior Rangers house. The pressurised system also provides water to fire pressure requirements for fire fighting.

The Telstra line services between Cynthia Bay and Derwent Bridge have been recently upgraded.

### 2.5 Implications for Planning

The context for planning described in Sections 2.1-2.3 have a number of implications for future planning at Cynthia Bay.

Weather conditions can change quickly and this has implications for visitors using the area. The cold and wet conditions dictate some specific needs for site planning, and in particular, provision of shelters for visitors at bus stops, picnic areas and, in some cases along or at the start of walking tracks. Walker registration booths also allow PWS to monitor potential users of the more remote walking tracks.

Despite the extensive development that has occurred in the area and the intensive use to which parts of the area are put, it retains a number of values of importance and areas with natural integrity that are valuable in their own right. Site works within the Cynthia Bay area, therefore, should be kept to a minimum to avoid impacts on the identified geomorphology and soils features. In particular, developments that do occur should be sited or designed so as to avoid impacts on moraines.

Protection of native vegetation and fauna habitat is also a priority. Where possible, development should be sited on previously disturbed sites and where new sites are
to be used, then the emphasis should be on minimum impact and maximum restoration of natural vegetation.

Whilst there have been no Aboriginal Heritage surveys undertaken for this Plan, the WHAMP sets out management prescriptions for protecting, conserving and where appropriate presenting Aboriginal values. The Plan refers to partnership arrangements between the PWS and the Aboriginal community to achieve the above management prescriptions.

Specific attention needs to be given to the management of the foreshore as a sensitive area.

Viewfields that are seen frequently by the public, and hence require special scenic protection, include the public access road corridors, viewfields from walking tracks (especially high access nature trails) and viewfields from high access public areas and facilities such as picnic areas, public shelters, and accommodation areas.

It is expected that visitor numbers will continue to increase at Lake St Clair, especially from the overseas and interstate visitor market, and this will place further pressures on the existing visitor infrastructure including the capacities for car parking, day use facilities, short walks and overnight accommodation. Visitor management and the development of visitor facilities must occur within the framework of the WHAMP including its objectives for the protection, conservation, presentation and where appropriate rehabilitation of the values of the WHA. New development must specifically be approved under the New Proposals and Impact Assessment Process of the WHAMP (WHAMP:67).

Increased visitor numbers have the potential to impact on the values of the area. Therefore, visitor management systems and infrastructure (e.g. walking tracks, day use facilities, risk management, etc.) must be of a high standard to protect the integrity of the area. Current infrastructure (sewer, power and water) has additional capacity to cope with substantive increases in usage. The current strategy proposes a number of alterations to existing management systems (e.g. improved access, car parking arrangements, etc.) that should accommodate increased visitor numbers that might occur during the life of the plan.

There is also the need to continue to discourage the feeding of the native animals and to effectively manage the rubbish and litter generated from high visitor use to the area.
CHAPTER 3
SITE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The planning objectives for the Cynthia Bay Visitor Services Zone remain unchanged from the 1993 Site Plan. These deal with the broad areas of:

- the site’s environment and landscape (Section 3.1);
- the visitor facilities (Section 3.2); and
- park management facilities (Section 3.3).

For each of these planning objectives, the following sections provide:

- identification of the key issues affecting achievement of the objectives;
- an outline of the opportunities to respond to these issues; and
- key recommendations for the Site Plan.

3.1 ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

3.1.1 Planning Objectives

The objectives for environment and landscape planning are to:

- retain or enhance the natural and scenic qualities of the area;
- protect the area from environmental degradation and restore disturbed areas, particularly the foreshore area;
- increase opportunities for passive recreation, especially in the foreshore zone;
- make maximal use of areas already disturbed;
minimise clearance of vegetation, especially mature trees, thick scrub along watercourses, and undisturbed areas of dense vegetation; and

retain or where necessary, re-establish vegetation as visual buffers and wildlife habitat.

### 3.1.2 Key Issues

The key issues affecting achievement of these objectives at Cynthia Bay are the need to:

- address matters related to carpark layout and service yard (rear of the visitor centre);
- minimise the impacts of tourism development on the natural and cultural value.

### 3.1.3 Responding to the Issues

**Car Park Layout and Visual Impacts on Arrival**

First impressions upon arriving at Cynthia Bay are diminished by an approach, which brings the visitor abruptly to car park with the main entry views being to the service portion of the concessionaire development (e.g. LPG tanks, parking, and bins). Such an approach fails to build upon the sense of anticipation of a natural setting that is fostered on the drive in from Derwent Bridge.

Investigation of the above visual impacts indicated that the best option to improve the situation was to create a new entry into the car parking area that would significantly improve the approach sequence. A new 70m long entrance road off Lake St Clair Road is proposed which would provide a new link to the northern end of the existing car park. The proposed new entry (see also Section 3.2.3) would also allow:

- creation of an island at the entry point for directing traffic flow to the car park or directly through to the accommodation area;
- development of an entry booth in the island space (if needed depending on other options currently being explored for PWS to deal with collection of entry fees);
improved turn-around arrangements for visitors not wishing to enter the Park;

the opportunity for visitors to view available parking spaces when entering the car parking area with a clear understanding of the location and distance to the visitor centre;

scope to free up the traffic movements outside the visitor centre and main turning circle through the improved traffic flow arrangements;

convenient bus car parking along the entry road with access to a bus shelter;

construction of a path partly around the southern side of the car parking area, which will allow bus visitors to avoid the need to walk along the road to reach the visitor centre; and

the views of the service area for the concessionaire development to be less prominent and only seen on the exit road from the car park (and the visual impact is substantially reduced because of the road alignment and existing vegetation).

MINIMISING SITE IMPACTS

The development of visitor facilities has the potential to contribute to impacts on the natural and cultural values of the Site. Given the significance of Cynthia Bay as a major gateway into the WHA, it is critical that the potential risk for causing site impacts is identified, assessed and addressed through the planning approval and management processes.

Opportunities to minimise site impacts include, but are not limited to:

identifying suitable sites for developments and requiring the design of the facilities to respect their surroundings and be responsive to the landforms, landscape elements, orientation and views;

keeping site works to a minimum with new developments designed to minimise disturbance to existing known values;

giving preference to previously disturbed sites and where new sites are to be used, then the emphasis should be on minimum impact and maximum restoration;
using the local topography to site buildings and to avoid cut and fill;

using above ground construction techniques to avoid ground disturbance, especially where values are known to exist on the site;

breaking up of building form into smaller elements to reduce the size and bulk of buildings;

maintaining a low building height relative to existing environment (eg. accommodation facilities should not exceed two storeys (8m);

using suitable building materials mindful of potential fire risks within the area;

avoiding highly reflective materials and illumination which may cause visual impact; and

ensuring the buildings demonstrate a restrained and sensitive creative flair, which neither dominates its setting nor ignores the importance of good design in such a location.

External works can also be planned, developed and managed with a view to:

directing uses and development to suitable locations which fit the environmental opportunities and constraints of the site;

guiding design so that it appropriately responds to the landscape character of the area;

managing the construction process to minimise impacts on the values of the site;

retention of considerable native vegetation buffers between the developments and also between individual buildings;

retaining and using locally indigenous vegetation as part of the general landscaping and visual buffers for the facilities;

clustering buildings where possible and locating individual buildings to minimise impacts on values;

reducing roading lengths, pavement widths and limiting through traffic;
identifying areas for rehabilitation and preparing a rehabilitation plan;

upgrading walkways to service visitor movement;

using decks in selected locations to focus visitor activity and thus help reduce site impacts; and

not introducing other exotic species into the site.

In all cases, the WHAMP sets out provisions for the approval of new developments in the WHA (WHAMP:67). Depending on the scale of the proposal (e.g. major or minor), an Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan may be required. Where an EIA and EMP are required, PWS will prepare a scoping document that identifies matters of significance which must be addressed in addition to those specified in the WHAMP.

It is noted that where rehabilitation is considered, the long-term nature of the activity must be considered. Many rehabilitation activities have seasonal constraints and/or require long lead times to ensure the availability of suitable materials (e.g. seed collection, appropriate soils or organic materials, etc.). Protection from wildlife browsing, on-going monitoring and maintenance must also be accounted for.

### 3.1.4 Recommendations

1. Construct a new entry road from Lake St Clair Road to enter the northern end of the existing car park, with some reconfiguration of the car park layout to maximise parking spaces and amenity values (see also Section 3.2.3).

2. Adopt measures (such as those listed in Section 3.1.3) to minimise the impact of new visitor facilities/development on natural and cultural values.

3. All new development (e.g. buildings, tracks, roads, etc.) is to be assessed according to the New Proposals Impacts and Assessment process of the WHAMP (WHAMP:66-72).
3.2 Visitor Facilities

3.2.1 Planning Objectives

The objectives for visitor facilities are to:

- introduce visitors to the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park and Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and assist them to appreciate and enjoy their visit;
- make a range of first-hand experiences of the park available to a wide spectrum of visitors and extend the experience of those visitors who would otherwise use the area only as a ‘rest’ stop;
- upgrade and expand day visitor facilities to cater for an increase in the number and duration of stay of day visitors;
- provide some opportunity for visitors to enjoy the park during adverse weather conditions;
- provide a range of accommodation facilities and amenities that are accessible to the average family group; and
- make provision for appropriate concessionaire operated visitor services and facilities, subject to relevant controls and guidelines.

3.2.2 Key Issues

The key issues affecting achievement of these objectives at Cynthia Bay are the need to:

- upgrade signage upon arrival at Lake St Clair National Park;
- improve the layout, capacity and functioning of the car park area to better service visitor needs and tourist coaches;
- continue current interpretive programs and expand these programs where appropriate;
- create a better awareness and promotion of the short walk experiences at Lake St Clair with better signs, interpretation and track links;
- develop better picnic and day use facilities;
cater for increased capacity, range and quality of accommodation
facilities at Cynthia Bay; and

ensure public safety and risk management procedures are
undertaken.

3.2.3 Opportunities for Responding to the Issues

SIGNAGE

The existing signs for designating Lake St Clair National Park as one of the gateways
to the WHA require upgrading:

- to improve the visibility of the entry to the WHA at Derwent
  Bridge and thus directing visitors to the National Park;

- to better inform visitors to the WHA that having turned onto Lake
  St Clair Road about the facilities, activities and entry fees at
  Cynthia Bay;

- to welcome in a more positive way, visitors upon arrival to
  Cynthia Bay.

There are poor directional signs for visitors to reach the walking tracks and jetty near
the visitor centre. These can be upgraded as part of the overall plans for improving
the amenity and functions of the area immediately north of the visitor centre (refer to
picnic and day use facilities in this Section). This recommendation was also made as
part of the Recreation and Tourism Strategy (workshop and report of 1999).
The need to improve the access arrangements to the existing car park have been discussed in Section 3.1.3 with regard to reducing visual impacts and improving parking capacity and traffic flow.

The problems with the existing car park are:

at peak use times (Easter and summer days) the car park is completely full from 11am until 2pm, requiring PWS staff to redirect traffic to an overflow area located 150m south of the visitor centre near the start to the Overland Track (this can involve up to 50 vehicles and currently occurs about 6 times per year) – this issue has become more problematic over the summer of 2002-2003 with a large increase in users at Cynthia Bay;

only 3 bus parking spaces are provided but 5-6 coaches can be visiting at the same time in peak periods and often buses are parked around the turning circle;

the existing layout of the car park does not provide designated spaces to cater for increasing numbers of caravans and vehicles with trailers and this can often lead to these vehicles taking up available bus parking spaces;

the lack of any safe areas or facilities to satisfy the requirement of walkers and other users for loading and unloading gear within the car park;

the vegetation rehabilitation fences helped to provide some visual cues for vehicle direction within the car park, but these have since been removed and visitors are not fully aware of the parking layout;

the lack of any facility to cater for coaches wishing to provide self-catering services adjacent to their bus;

the lack of any shelter for visitors waiting for bus services;

there are no picnic and barbeque facilities located near the car park area;

the lack of any designated pedestrian paths to separate people from vehicle movements;
the ‘tight’ design of the turning circle for buses especially when parking occurs around the outer edge;

damage to the road surface caused by the ‘hard’ maneuvering of buses within the car park;

the designation of a section as “long term car parking” for walkers poses security problems and is often not used due to concern about theft and vandalism;

PWS do not have the resources to ‘police’ or enforce parking practices;

the desire of many drivers to want to ‘drop-off’ people as close as possible to the front entrance of the visitor centre; and

the poor layout of the concessionaires parking and drop-off area.

Currently there is provision for 78 car spaces, 16 long term car parking spaces, 5 emergency/loading parking spaces at the main entry and 3 bus spaces. PWS staff parking generally occurs at the workshop, just a short walk from the visitor centre/office. However, some limited parking occurs close to the centre for convenience and to ensure a quick response to situations that might arise.

Map 3 indicates a new car park layout that includes the proposed entry road and changes to the flow through the existing parking area. The key features are:

a separate access road to the turning circle with pull-over parking for buses and logical access points into the main car parking area (which is viewed from the entry road);

use of the existing access road as a one-way exit thus allowing for some over-flow parking and convenient parking for vehicles with trailers and caravans;

parking for PWS and people with disabilities near the visitor centre;

creation of a landscape island within the car park with a shelter;

a new shelter located on the eastern side of the entry road;

a bus shelter near the turning circle;

a pathway around the southern side of the car park and along the exit road; and
rationalisation of the concessionaires parking and drop-off area
all within previously disturbed areas

The proposed new car park layout and road design allows for a capacity of about ±140 vehicles, 5 buses, and staff parking and parking spaces for people with disabilities. The adoption of a one-way exit along the current access road allows for a designated area for cars with trailers and for overflow bus and vehicle parking. The plan shows the option of extending the car park further if this is ever necessary. Such an extension could increase the parking capacity by an extra ±20 spaces.

**IMPROVED AWARENESS OF THE SHORT WALKS**

There are some problems with visitor awareness of the short walk opportunities at Lake St Clair.

There is limited directional signage about the short walks after visitors leave the front of the visitor centre. One sign refers to ‘All Walks’ and this directs visitors along a PWS service road until they reach the over-flow car park area and then start the walking tracks. Consequently visitors start their walk within a very modified management setting dominated by the road, large gravel car park and PWS buildings. This route is the start to all the walks – short nature walks, day walks and the Overland Track. Visitors return from the short walks on the same route.

A number of improvements are proposed:

- the interpretative sign for the Great Short Walks be located in a prominent position on the service road about 80m from the front entry of the visitor centre;
- the visual character of the service road be altered by:
  - restricting vehicle use to only essential PWS management purposes with no vehicles proceeding beyond the old rangers house/office;
  - reducing the width of the pavement to the minimum required for management access purposes;
  - converting the existing service road between the visitor centre and the current summer interpretation/staff accommodation building to a walking path only;
  - narrowing the bitumen surface along the service road and path and/or reverting to a compressed gravel surface that is more consistent with the image of walking tracks;
varying the alignment of the service road to help reduce its appearance as a road; and

rehabilitating edges of the service road with native vegetation to create a more natural landscape;

 revegetation of the centre of the existing ‘over-flow’ car parking area to reduce the visual impacts and create a more natural landscape at the start of the walks; and

removal of the additions and carports from existing buildings that are located off the service road that have no significant cultural heritage or functional value.

The question of where walker registration facilities are best located should be resolved by PWS pending investigation of the various options.

It is also proposed that a new walking track link be investigated from the lookout deck around the foreshore and through the bushland to connect to the current walking tracks. Visitor information sheets list the foreshore as a walk but this can be difficult at times due to high water levels, shoreline rocks and foreshore vegetation. The beach is appropriate for the initial section of the walk, but an alternative route would be required where access becomes difficult. This would require creating formed track through the foreshore bushland (just past the boatshed and to the north of the Senior Rangers house) that then connects with the access track to Fergies Paddock and the current walking tracks. The walk needs to be well directed around the Senior Rangers house to maintain privacy. The walk is considered to be a more interesting walk but there still may be times where the beach is not easily accessed due high water levels.

The route cannot be made wheelchair accessible without substantial costs and impacts (it would require a boardwalk along the beach and considerable ramping for access and egress from the beach). The use of the foreshore behind the beach for a constructed walkway was not considered appropriate given the high visual impacts from removal of vegetation and crossing of drainage lines.

The idea for a walking and bike track between Cynthia Bay and Derwent Bridge has been identified in past site consultations [e.g. WHA Recreation and Tourism Strategy Workshop (PWS 2001)]. It would provide a safer route for both walkers and cyclists than Lake St Clair Road given the lack of public transport services. This idea should be investigated.
INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Numerous interpretive and related programs are conducted by PWS at Cynthia Bay including:

- interpretive installations in the visitor centre and elsewhere;
- interpreted walking tracks;
- the summer ranger program; and
- the artist in residence program.

Rangers are also available at times to work with specific groups such as schools or other visitor parties.

PWS also interprets Lake St. Clair (and the other properties which it manages) through its website.

Interpretation is a key focus of the WHAMP for presenting the values of the WHA to the public and enhancing the visitor experience of the WHA. (see WHAMP:125-129). Amongst the recommendations of the WHAMP is that for an “interpretive action plan” for Lake St. Clair (WHAMP:126).

Interpretation is guided by the *World Heritage Area Interpretation Strategy* (Saunders 1990) and the *Aboriginal Interpretation Strategy for the World Heritage Area* (Lehman 1995).

Opportunities for improving existing programs and for expanding into new interpretive areas should be explored as funds permit.

PICNIC AND DAY USE FACILITIES

The 1993 *Site Plan* refers to a new day use cooking shelter being developed in a location to the north of the visitor centre. It was to provide electric barbeques, a wood fire, and picnic tables and seating and information/interpretation displays. Consideration was also given to the relocation or removal of the existing picnic shelter/day-hut once a new facility was erected. This was considered appropriate at the time due to the condition of the building (disrepair and structural concerns), its inappropriate design in terms of light and views and the negative impact of its location within the viewfield from the visitor centre. This recommendation was also made in the absence of a heritage assessment of the building.

A recent study has indicated the cultural heritage significance of the existing picnic shelter (Terry 2002), therefore, the picnic shelter should be stabilised to prevent
further deterioration. Further discussion is required as to the longer term future of the picnic shelter, given that it remains a prominent impact on the view to the lake from the visitor centre and its acknowledged shortcomings for its function. Any proposals to alter (e.g. make improvements beyond stabilisation), remove or relocate the picnic shelter should be in compliance with the requirements of the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*.

There is limited demand for dedicated picnic facilities at Cynthia Bay (according to the 1999 PWS Visitor Survey). However, there is an argument for the development of a covered seating/eating/display area for walkers awaiting transport, for visitors who have purchased food at the kiosk, for temporary shelter from the rain, for walkers to store gear securely and to spread some of the peak visitor load away from the visitor centre.

The opportunity to provide these additional day use facilities should be investigated.

A site adjacent to the visitor centre, in an area previously used for car parking has several advantages as a location for day use facilities. These advantages include:

- facilities there would be positioned outside of the main view-lines to the foreshore and lake from the visitor centre;
- the site allows facilities to be designed within existing vegetation screening to minimise visual impact;
- the site has northerly aspect and would receive better sunshine without shading from trees;
- the site was previously disturbed being leveled for car parking and can be developed without impacts on any values; and
- it would be located at the start of the walking tracks and also the end point for the Overland Track.

Map 4 provides a conceptual plan for a new walker/day use shelter in the area of the visitor centre. It shows an indicative maximum development proposal that may or may not, depending on the outcomes of the proposed investigations, include cooking, heating, secure storage and/or shower facilities. On due consideration of the actual requirements, detailed architectural plans should be prepared.
ACCOMMODATION

The WHAMP requires the following in relation to accommodation at Cynthia Bay:

The number and layout of cabins at Cynthia Bay will be determined in accordance with a detailed site design and will be located within the cabin accommodation and campground area as specified in the Cynthia Bay Site Plan. The detailed site design will ensure that provision is made for the equitable use of the site area including adequate provision for the full range of accommodation including camping, caravanning, low cost cabin and high quality cabin accommodation. (WHAMP:133)

The 1993 Site Plan designated a ‘Cabin Accommodation and Campground Area’ in which various accommodation facilities could be proposed and assessed. The current site plan has revised these boundaries with regard to:

- no buildings being located within the foreshore area to the north of the existing road between the jetty and boat ramp so as to limit the visual impacts of buildings when viewed from the lake; and
- allowing sufficient area for a range of visitor accommodation facilities to be developed.

However, consideration may be given to the following developments within the foreshore area to the north of the existing road between the jetty and boat ramp:

- construction walking tracks;
- construction of a deck space or hardened surface to cater for public viewing and relaxing; and
- provision of interpretation, information and/or other signage.

Proposals for all new development in the Cynthia Bay area will be assessed using the New Proposals and Impact Assessment Process of the WHAMP and should be guided by the following policies:

- all accommodation is to be contained within the ‘Cabin Accommodation and Campground Area’ as shown on Map 5; and
- a range of accommodation needs are to be provided including tent-based camping, caravan, campervan, bunkhouse and cabin accommodation;
- a detailed site design will be developed and agreed between PWS and the proponent of the development; and
accommodation will take full account of the setting and adhere to the general development guidelines set out in section 3.1.3.

Additional accommodation development beyond the ‘Cabin Accommodation and Campground Area’ is not proposed in this Plan.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is a major concern for the PWS given its role in managing natural areas and developing facilities for visitor activities. In accordance with WHAMP the PWS aims to protect visitors from undue, unnecessary and unreasonable risks, which may expose visitors to harm during their visit to Cynthia Bay. This should continue to be done in a manner that does not detract from the ‘natural’ experiences available at Cynthia Bay.

Present risk management is primarily focused on the provision of education that raises visitors’ awareness of their individual responsibility for their own safety, particularly whilst bushwalking, or being exposed to extreme weather conditions. No specific risk management programs have presently been undertaken for Cynthia Bay. This Site Plan identifies the following as examples of possible risks within the Study Area:

- being injured whilst walking through the car park to reach or return from the visitor centre or when packing/unpacking gear within the car park;
- poor condition of walking tracks and lack of adequate handrails;
- limb failure from trees;
- injury as a result of interaction with wildlife;
- risk of bushfire;
- anti-social behaviour and vandalism;
- becoming lost whilst walking in the surrounding area;
- lack of maintenance or cleanliness of public facilities; and
- risks associated with aquatic activities on Lake St Clair.

WHAMP recommends the establishment of a risk management system for regular identification, inspection, reporting and amelioration of risks to public safety as a key desired outcome for the WHA (WHAMP:158). Such a system is likely to apply across the WHA, although individual assessments would need to be undertaken for
key visitor areas, including Cynthia Bay. The Management Plan also recommends an asset inventory and management program be undertaken to enable PWS to manage, maintain or replace facilities and infrastructure to ensure public safety. This is particularly important in Cynthia Bay where a large number of PWS managed facilities exist.

The opportunities to deal with safety and risk issues at Cynthia Bay may include the PWS engaging the professional services of a risk assessor to undertake an assessment of Cynthia Bay as part of a broader risk management system for the WHA. The risk assessor would need to consider the current liability situation and to identify options for reducing, transferring or dealing with the identified risks and in particular, how to respond to:

the duty of care obligations of the PWS;
matters of reasonable foresee ability;
breach of duty;
standard of care to be provided;
the onus upon the PWS as an occupier with a general duty of care responsibility; and

the options available to the PWS to reduce, transfer, manage or make safe within the guidance of sound management practice and management systems.

PWS may deal with risk management issues by:

preparing an inventory of the existing facilities and then to identify safety risks and practical responses; and

undertaking necessary works to deal with the above identified safety risks in accordance with the risk management assessment.

It is likely that the PWS will need to adopt ‘best practice’ approaches to its management, supervision, engineering, inspection, maintenance and contracting activities. The adoption of Codes of Practice that incorporate measurable performance standards would need to be developed if the risk is to be effectively managed.

The opportunities for managing risk and safety at Cynthia Bay are:

generally improving the traffic movement flow and access into the car parking area;
providing the capacity for increased car parking in one centralised location rather than diverting traffic during peak periods to other locations that are used as part of walking tracks;

providing a walking path on the southern side of the car park;

formalising picnic facilities into designated areas outside of traffic movement;

establishing better and safer walking track connections to the visitor centre and minimising vehicle movements along parts of the walking tracks;

upgrading of signs for walking tracks;

developing a separate walking track and cycle path from Derwent Bridge to Cynthia Bay in the longer term; and

preparing a fire management plan for the Cynthia Bay area.

### 3.2.4 Recommendations

1. Improve the visibility, design and message presentation of the signs upon entry to the WHA (Derwent Bridge and Lake St Clair Road) and upon arrival at Cynthia Bay.

2. Improve the layout, capacity and functioning of the car park area to better service visitor needs and tourist coaches. This would involve construction of a new entry road, establishment of an entry booth (if required), use of one-way roads, re-design of the car parking layout, increased parking capacity, provision of overflow parking spaces, shelter facilities, bus shelter and new walking paths.

3. Improve the connections of the visitor centre to the walking tracks with landscape design that will reduce the visual impacts, improve the amenity values and the awareness of the walking tracks.

4. Investigate the need for, value of and potential impacts of a new walking track link from the existing lookout deck along the beach through the bushland to connect with the existing walking tracks.

5. Investigate the need for, value of and potential impacts of a new walking track and bikeway from Cynthia Bay to Derwent Bridge.
6. Retain and stabilise the existing picnic/day use shelter between the Lake and the visitor centre and investigate construction of a new day use shelter to the south of the visitor centre.

7. PWS continue to monitor the need for picnic facilities within the Derwent Bridge to Lake St. Clair area.

8. Consolidate development of future accommodation facilities within the ‘Cabin and Campground Area’ and require all development applications to meet the requirements of the New Proposals and Impacts Assessment Process set out in WHAMP (WHAMP:66-72).

9. Address risk management and safety issues at Cynthia Bay by adopting ‘best practice’ approaches to management, supervision, engineering, inspection, maintenance and contracting activities. Undertake risk assessment process in accordance with a wider risk management system for the WHA.

10. Prepare a fire management plan for the Cynthia Bay area.

11. Investigate options for improving existing interpretation programs and/or for expanding into new interpretive areas as funds permit.

### 3.3 Park Management Facilities

#### 3.3.1 Objectives

The 1993 Site Plan for Cynthia Bay identified the following objectives for park management facilities:

- provide facilities necessary for effective park management; and
- consolidate management facilities in defined zones at the least obtrusive locations.

#### 3.3.2 Key Issues

The key issue with park management facilities is the need to consider further rationalisation and consolidation of park management facilities at Cynthia Bay, and in particular, the buildings along the service road directly to the south of the visitor centre.
3.3.3 Opportunities for Responding to the Issues

The development of the visitor centre has altered the management operations of the PWS through:

- the location of visitor interpretation and information services within the centre;
- the creation of new PWS offices and associated facilities within the centre;
- freeing up the former Rangers office for temporary visiting staff accommodation and summer interpretation programs;
- removal of a previous ranger house;
- creating a new road to access the stores, workshop compound, ranger houses and other buildings; and
- altered vehicle and parking arrangements, including limited vehicle access to the jetty area.

New ranger houses have been constructed in a location to the south of the stores and workshop compound area.

It is appropriate that the PWS consider the long term role of former service buildings. Table 3.1 outlines possible approaches to dealing with particular park management facilities at Cynthia Bay.

The Site Plan provides car parking for PWS staff with a space close to the entry of the visitor centre and offices and continued car parking near the workshop. Use of the visitor car parking spaces outside of peak period times is appropriate.

The options for retaining the role of the entry booths at National Parks are being reviewed by the PWS. Provision has been made in the Site Plan to position an entry booth at the entry to the revised car park if it is required. One of the alternative option being considered is ticket machines located within the car park that would allow visitors to pay entry fees for day passes etc. and display the sticker on the vehicle. At present the PWS offices can provide entry passes to visitors for day, extended times and annual periods.
Facility | Possible Actions
--- | ---
Former rangers offices currently used for Summer Ranger accommodation and interpretation | Consider removal of the more recent additions, car port, paling fences and out sheds so as to reduce the visual impact of these facilities (if these features are not considered essential for management purposes). The building itself shall be retained in the short term until such time as funding permits relocation of current uses to a new, more appropriate location within the precinct. There should be no substantial investment in upgrading the current building for residency purposes although minor improvements that enable continued use as a field centre for artists in residence and/or the summer interpretation programs are appropriate. Any changes to the existing situation are to be in accordance with the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*.

Various sheds located outside the stores and workshop area | Assess the use of existing sheds with the aim of consolidating park management away from the primary visitor area. Remove any sheds considered to be surplus to requirements and not having historic heritage value.

General storage/workshops | Continue the policy of consolidating works and storage functions and ranger residences in a precinct to the south of the visitor centre

Senior Ranger’s residence | Retain the earth-integrated Senior Rangers house

Service vehicle access | Investigate options for ensuring a ‘Y’ turn-around for trucks using the existing road layout, rather than turning within the former over-flow car parking area.

Offices | Investigate the spatial requirements of PWS staff in light of increased staffing levels including options for extension or refit of the visitor centre.

Jetty and Boat Ramp | These facilities are considered adequate for their current usage. Changes may be acceptable provided that the requirements of the New Proposals and Impacts Assessment Process (WHAMP:66-72) are met.

**Table 3.1** Options for consolidating park management facilities

### 3.3.4 Recommendations

1. Consider the opportunities for further rationalisation and consolidation of park management facilities at Cynthia Bay. In particular, investigate measures to reduce the impact of the buildings along the service road directly to the south of the visitor centre including removal of buildings and rehabilitation of sites. Note that where such buildings have heritage significance, any alterations or demolitions will need to meet the requirements of the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. 
CHAPTER 4
SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Site Plan (Map 5) shows the recommended upgrading of facilities at Cynthia Bay as discussed in Chapter 3. Approval for any new developments recommended here are subject to the New Proposals and Impacts Assessment Process of WHAMP (WHAMP:66-72).

4.1 VISITOR DAY-USE FACILITIES

4.1.1 Access and Vehicle Parking

1. Construct a new access road from Lake St Clair Road to enter the northern end of the existing car park for the visitor centre.

2. Improve the layout, capacity and functioning of the existing car park to better service visitor needs and tourist coaches including:

   development of an entry and information booth at the new entry point (if required);

   use of one-way road system for access and egress to the car park;

   re-design of the car parking layout to take account of the new entry road arrangements;

   increasing the parking capacity of the car park including provision for cars, buses, vehicles with trailers and caravans;

   extension of the car park to the north;

   provision of over-flow parking spaces along the edge of the existing road and potentially at right angles to the new entry road;

   improving the safety for pedestrians walking to the visitor centre by creating clearer walkways through the carpark;
landscaping and rehabilitation works to improve the amenity values (where possible the present vegetation within the carpark will be retained); and

rationalisation of the concessionaires parking and drop-off area.

Rework the layout of the visitor car park as shown in Site Plan to provide:

parking for ±140 vehicles;
separate coach parking for 4 buses;
2 parking spaces for vehicles used by people with disabilities;
parking spaces PWS vehicles; and
over-flow parking areas for buses, vehicles with trailers, caravans etc.

The location for additional car parking is shown on the plan if it is required.

4.1.2 Signs

1. Improve the visibility, design and message presentation of the signs upon entry to the WHA (Derwent Bridge and Lake St Clair Road) and upon arrival at Cynthia Bay.

2. Upgrade directional signs for the walking tracks and jetty near the visitor centre.

4.1.3 Walkers and Day Use Shelter

1. Investigate construction of a new walkers/day use shelter to the south of the visitor centre within the area formerly used as a car park.

4.1.4 Car Park Shelters

1. Construct new shelters within the visitor car park after the layout, capacity and functioning of the car park area has been improved (see Section4.1.1). The shelters will include, tables and seating with space for other facilities to be added if required.

4.1.5 Bus Shelter

1. Construct a bus shelter on the southern side of the car park including seating.
4.1.6 Walking Tracks

1. Upgrade walking tracks to reduce the visual impact of existing roads and buildings, to improve visitor awareness of the walking tracks and to improve the connection of the tracks to the visitor centre.

2. Investigate the need for, value of and potential impacts of construction of a new walking track link from the existing lookout deck on the lakeshore towards Fergies Paddock. Investigate the use the beach before having a constructed walk through the bushland to connect with the existing walking tracks. Pending the outcomes of the investigations, and subject to the New Proposals and Impacts Assessment Process (WHAMP:66-72) construction of such a track may occur.

3. Ensure a full range of day walks are available and promoted to visitors at track heads and within the visitors centre.

4. Investigate the need for, value of and potential impacts of construction of a new walking track and bikeway connecting Cynthia Bay to Derwent Bridge. Pending the outcomes of the investigations, and subject to the New Proposals and Impacts Assessment Process (WHAMP:66-72) construction of such a track may occur.

4.1.7 Jetty and Boat Ramp

1. These facilities are considered adequate for their current usage. Changes may be acceptable provided that the requirements of the New Proposals and Impacts Assessment Process (WHAMP:66-72) are met.

4.2 Visitor Accommodation and Concessionaire Facilities

1. The “Cabin Accommodation and Campground Area’ at Cynthia Bay shown on the Site Plan (Map 5) aims to:

   consolidate accommodation facilities within a designated area at Cynthia Bay;

   promote tourist facility development with the aim of achieving a critical mass of accommodation facilities to support Lake St Clair’s development as a major WHA destination; and

   provide a range of accommodation types from tent camping to serviced rooms.
2. The boundary shows that no buildings will be located to the north of the existing foreshore road so as to limit impacts on this sensitive environment. Consideration can be given (pending environmental impact assessment) to the construction of public facilities such as walking tracks, interpretation, signs and a deck/hardened space for a lookout or relaxing.

3. In any case, all development must be approved under the New Proposals and Impacts Assessment Process (WHAMP:66-72).

4.3 **Park Management**

1. Consider the opportunities for further rationalisation and consolidation of park management facilities at Cynthia Bay, and in particular, the buildings along the service road directly to the south of the visitor centre.

2. Investigate and, where appropriate, implement the following:

   reduce the visual impact of the former ranger offices by removing paling fences out buildings and recent lean-to additions;

   review the usage of storage sheds within the main visitor use area (particularly between the visitor centre and the start of the Overland Track) and remove those poorly utilised;

   ensure further construction of storage facilities occurs in the vicinity of the stores and workshop area; and

   review service access and staff carparking in accordance with the Site Plan to reduce conflict between visitor facilities and park management activities.


Parks Wildlife and Heritage (PWH) 1993.  *Cynthia Bay Site Plan*  Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage.

